CULTURE, MEDIA & FILM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The emphasis of community radio programs in enhancing socio-economic development issues: Sidama radio in focus, Yirgalem, Ethiopia

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Abstract: Community radio is an important tool in bridging the information gap and in mobilizing society for development activities. This study aimed at investigating the emphasis of community radio programs in enhancing socio-economic development perspectives: the case of Sidama Radio in Yirgalem town, Ethiopia. The study employed qualitative methods; and in-depth interviews, FGD, and document analysis were the data collection tools used for this study. To select the FGD employees, availability sampling employed, and purposive sampling for one program coordinator and one manager from the station. The findings of the study demonstrated that the Sidama radio gave more airtime and emphasis on local issues and social development programs. The findings also revealed that Sidama radio produces different social, entertainment and education programs with the social development perspectives of the community. The findings depicted that there are also programs that promote the local language and culture through local music, and narration. The study also depicted that the community members participate in the administration of the station as well as in the production of the programs as the radio provides a platform for community and community participation and

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Community radio is an important tool in bridging the information gap and mobilizing society for development activities. This study presents the emphasis of Sidama community Radio Programs in enhancing socio-economic development issues in Ethiopia, and the study shows Sidama Radio has played a key role in emphasizing socio-economic-based programs. The study displayed that the radio gave more airtime and emphasis to local issues and social development programs. The study revealed that the station exists to serve the community at large. It was found out that Sidama radio produces different social, entertainment and education programs in line with development perspectives. The findings revealed that there are also programs that promote the local language and culture through local music, and narration. The findings also depicted the community audiences participating in administrative activities and the production of the programs as the radio provides a platform for community and encourage participation and empowerment.
empowerment as many of the volunteer journalists are from the community. The media practitioners have the same understanding of the role of community radio for social interaction and empowerment although lack of finance and skills man-
power were problems of the radio. It was recommended that continuous research in the area should be undertaken.

**Subjects:** Mass Communication; Development Communication; Media Communication; Journalism; Media Communication; Radio

**Keywords:** radio; development; platform; programs; Sidama; community

### 1. Background of the study

According to Rennie (2006), the effective use of the mass media, which has the potential for increasing public understanding of the goals and activities of society, can influence the decisions of legislators, policymakers, and public officials dealing with these programs and services. This indicates that media can help people function better in the community, by providing information that can support the coping capacities of persons under stress and, consequently, significantly enhance the influence of social development in any community.

Among all types of media, community media is one. Community media is often defined by the parameters with which groups have to work, including organizational structure, production techniques and programming (Rennie, 2006). From community media, community radio is commonly used in many parts of the world, particularly in the developing world to meet the development needs of their citizens.

The World Association of Community Broadcasters lists a multitude of definitions. The prevailing ideas of citizen participation and ownership as well as an opportunity to give voice to the previously unheard are the common denominators. Community radio is a type of radio made to serve people; a radio that encourages expression and participation and that values local culture (AMARC, 2003). It is stated that Lewish Hill built the first transmitter of community radio, and he played a role as a pioneer of community radio in the United States. Latin America, Bolivia and Colombia used community radio for social change as well as used it for a direct political struggle to counter the dominant political culture (Servaes, 2002).

Community radio emerged in Africa three decades ago. The Government of Kenya was the first to open the door to UNESCO’s proposal for setting up a community radio in May 1982 (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda were operating the community radio in the absence of a regulatory framework (Wanyeki, 1999). Central and South Africa started a more advanced community radio. Similarly, Ghana, Burkinafaso and Nigeria are developing legal frameworks to promote community radio (HOACBP, 2002).

Radio broadcasting began in Ethiopia in September 1935. (Ethiopian Radio, 2000: 6). Since then, it has played a significant role in public information dissemination. Despite Ethiopia’s lengthy history of radio broadcasting, the program has yet to reach the country; “current coverage of radio broadcasting in Ethiopia is roughly 70% … in eight indigenous languages,” according to the program (Ministry of information, 2004:5). Furthermore, in Ethiopia, where over 70 languages are spoken, broadcasting in only eight languages may raise questions about the importance of providing programming that is regionally relevant and accessible to many people. The construction of community radio stations in various sections of the country is critical for closing this gap and developing participatory communication. As a result, community radio is regarded as the most effective medium for spreading information, debating social concerns, and building democratic culture at the grassroots level (AMARC and Panos, 1998).
In Ethiopia, community radio is a recent phenomenon when compared with developed countries. For the first time, the idea was raised and discussed at a symposium held at the Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa, in January 2002 (HOACBP, 2002:1). Ethiopia is a country of many nations, nationalities and people with different languages, cultures, norms, geographic locations and other social traditions. It is challenged to meet the interests of all the nations, nationalities and people regarding ensuring equitable access to media. However, the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) in, Article 29, and No. 2 assured the right to freedom of expression (Negarit Gazeta, 1995).

In 2005, the Ethiopian Broadcast Authority approved the proclamation. Under Article 47 of the broadcasting proclamation No. 533/2007, “Community Radio Proclamation directive” was cited. The Broadcast Authority believes that community media are necessary to fulfil the information, education and entertainment needs of each nation and nationality and people of Ethiopia. Community radio in Ethiopia is a few as it is a recent phenomenon. Sidama Radio is the early community radio focusing its programs in mobilizing the living standard of the community. This study was aimed to the role of this radio in enhancing socio-economic development agendas. The radio embraces different employees: most of the volunteers’ journalists who are got paid and some of the paid journalists who got education related to media and communication.

Referring to Walz and Hoffmanni’s study on communication socialization, Rennie (2006) stresses the importance of information for the active participation of community members in the whole development of the community in the following words: A much wider range of community residents can be reached, not only those who might benefit from the social services rendered but also persons and groups that may be willing to provide tangible and intangible support from these efforts, as a result of being better informed about them. In other words, the mass media can serve a variety of important public relations, public education, and prevention of wrongs in human services (Ibid:19).

What has been meant here is that development communication is the process of eliciting positive change that is, social, political, economic, moral, cultural, and environmental, etc. Through the effective exchange of pertinent information to induce people to action. It includes information dissemination on developmental schemes/projects, communication for eliciting positive change, interactivity, feedback on development issues, feedback/reverse communication for eliciting social change and transformation for better life and welfare.

As to Servaes (2002), to support social development, media need the right environment, such as freedom, capacities, and checks and balances. They should be viewed not as instruments for the dissemination of information and irrelevant entertainment, but as vehicles for carrying development messages and imparting knowledge and skills.

This shows media focus in disseminating information should be on furnishing social development. When media talk about social development, it need have to have amicable conditions like freedom of information and freedom of expression and check and balances as well.

Development communication as a concept is the improvement of a community using information and technology. Communities’ ability to maintain the created ideal state without compromising their environment and resource is central to social change and development. Community participation in a development activity with full knowledge of its purpose will allow the community members to grow individually and as a community. This is possible by recognizing the power of communication as a catalyst for social development. It is also the utilization of existing communication tools and applicable theories for result-driven strategies that can bring about the advancement of society (Moemeka, 1994). The mobilizing function of the mass media is very important to developing countries like Ethiopia. Media provide information and education and have a significant place in personal identity formation, entertainment and, most importantly, in
integration and social interaction by giving insight into the circumstances of peoples and helping with the growth of social empathy.

1.1. Statement of the problem
Community radio has significantly played a crucial role in developing countries around the world. It has been credited with playing significant roles in political and social struggles across the globe. Community radio stations have played a major role in what scholars have referred to as “participatory communication for social change (Dorgan, 2001).

To fulfil the needs of each nation and nationality, the Ethiopian Broadcast Authority has passed a directive for the establishment of community radio and the procedures for the granting of a license for any interested community as well as nongovernmental organization to operate community radio. The directive states the importance of community radio as follows: A community broadcast service plays a significant role in fulfilling the education, information and entertainment needs of the community, which the commercial and government broadcasting service do not cover. It is necessary to expand and develop the service to fulfill the needs for information, education and entertainment of each nation, nationality and people of our country (EBA: ECRBS, No. 2/2008).

The role of community radio in Ethiopia has to be imparting information to the public. As the country is in critical development problems, one expects the media to supplement and encourage the process of producing informed citizens. As to Olana (2009), citizens can decide and act upon the development information to involve in transforming the nation.

As it was discussed earlier, the establishment and development of community radio in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon. As far as the present researcher's knowledge is concerned, a few studies have been carried out in the area of study in Ethiopia. For instance, Bayable (2012) conducted a study on the practice of Kombolcha community radio. He found out that the practice of Kombolcha community radio seemed to be poor in covering the issue of social development and serving the voice of the community at large. Another person Getahun (2006) carried out on The Theory and Practice of Community Radio in Ethiopia. His findings focused on the development initiatives of Sidama Radio and Kore Radio. Moreover, Kassahun and Wadojo (2012) carried out his thesis on the contribution of Jimma community radio for social development. His finding of the study depicted that contribution of Jimma community radio for social development has tremendous value.

Similarly, at the international level, White et al. (2015) conducted a dissertation entitled, as Community Radio as a Tool for Development: a case study of Community Radio Stations in Malawi. The outcome of his finding revealed that two community radios of Malawi have played a lot about the contribution of development and participation. But this study focused highly on programs in line with their role in social development.

The role of community radios in social development is not well researched, mapped, and received scant attention in discussing communication for development in Ethiopia. As to researcher knowledge is concerned, no study has dealt with the emphasis of community radio programs in enhancing development perspectives, particularly Sidama radio. To fill the gap, this was part of the reason that motivated the researcher to carry out the topic of this study. Therefore, the researcher believes that there is an immense need to study the emphasis of community radio programs in enhancing socioeconomic development perspectives: the case of Sidama Radio in Yigalem town, Ethiopia.

1.2. Objectives of the study

1.2.1. General objective
The general objective of this study was to investigate the emphasis of community radio programs in enhancing socio-economic development perspectives: the case of Sidama Radio in Yigalem town, Ethiopia.
1.2.2. Specific objectives
The following were the specific objectives of the study.

- To identify the categories of different programs aired by Sidama Radio concerning educating and motivating the community to engage in development activities
- To examine the emphasis of Sidama Radio programs in improving the social welfare and lives of their communities along with community participation and empowerment
- To assess the perceptions of media practitioners regarding Sidama Radio as a platform of social interaction and social empowerment

1.3. Basic research questions
In consideration of the above objectives, the study sought to answer the following basic research questions:

(1) What are the categories of the different programs aired by Sidama Radio with regard to educating and motivating the community to engage in development activities?
(2) How is the emphasis of Sidama Radio programs in improving the social welfare and lives of their communities along with community participation and empowerment?
(3) How do media practitioners perceive Sidama Radio as a platform of social interaction and social empowerment?

1.4. Significance of the study
The outcome of the study might be valuable for journalists, administrators and community members in shedding light on the actual practice of Sidama radio. More importantly, the results of the finding would be helpful for the community members to exercise and develop their own identities, cultures, interests, languages, work habits, skills, moral rearmament and thereby developing their knowledge.

Moreover, the findings may serve as a springboard for other researchers who are interested in carrying out further studies and may be useful in providing insight into the roles of community radio in development perspective in the years to come. Since very little has been researched in this regard, this study may contribute to an academic understanding of the role of community radio for social development.

1.5. Scope of the study
Owing to time and resource constraints, this study was confined to focus on investigating the emphasis of community radio programs in enhancing socio-economic development perspectives: the case of Sidama Radio in Yirgalem Town in SNNPRS, Ethiopia. The station is community radio and they are different from other radios. The study did not incorporate other radios as part of this study.

2. Theoretical framework
Like other media of communication, community radio also borrows its concepts from different communication theories. Here, the researcher tries to raise the main concepts that are believed to influence the discourse of community radio, giving a particular emphasis to participatory communication. That is because the participatory communication theories reflect most of the ideal features of community radio.

2.1. The essence of alternative media
Alternative media definitions can be classified into subjective and objective approaches (Fuchs, 2010; Sandoval & Fuchs, 2010). People organize and govern the media themselves through DIY processes—alternative media are regarded participative, as “citizens” media (Atton, 2002; Carpentier, 2011). The content is more important to objective approaches. Alternative media, they argue, disseminate
content and worldviews that challenge dominant realities, provide critical information, and give voice to critical viewpoints that are often marginalized in mainstream media—particularly those of progressive social movements and activists—and have a vision of a society free of dominance (Downing, 2001; Negt & Kluge, 1993; O’Sullivan, 1995).

Table 1 depicts an ideal-typical alternative media paradigm. It recognizes alternative media’s numerous potential characteristics and contrasts them with capitalists’ mainstream’ media. The approach is based on a media communication paradigm that separates media actors (media producers, media consumers, audiences, and users) from media structures (ownership and control structures, form, and content structures) in a structure-agency dialectic. Media producers create content that is delivered in society through certain organizational structures and media forms, reaching media consumers who react to the content in a variety of ways, creating additional incentives for media production Table 2.

2.2. Communication for development and social change

In 1997, through Article 6 of General Assembly Resolution 51/172, the United Nations adopted the following formal definition of Communication for Development. It is communication for development that focuses on the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns and participate in the decisions that relate to their development.

The definition of Communication for Development (C4D) shows that it needs dialogic and two-way communication models for social development. This means communication for development should not be linear; rather it has to initiate interaction and participation community in decisions process in ration to development. Therefore, C4D is a social process that promotes dialogue between communities and decision-makers at local, national and regional levels. The goal of C4D is to enhance, improve and execute policies and programmes that augment the quality of life for all.

Servaes, (2000)Communication for:7) states “Communication for Social Change (CFSC) stresses the notion of dialogue as central to the development and the need to facilitate poor people's participation and empowerment. CFSC stresses on the forum of dialogue processes through which people can overcome obstacles and identify ways to help them achieve the goals they set for themselves”

The above expression of Sarvæs demonstrates CFSC uses participatory approaches. It focuses on the significance of horizontal communication, the role of people as agents of change, and the need for negotiating skills and partnerships. By the processes of public and private conversation, all members of civil society—women, men and children—define who they are, what they want and need and what has to be changed for them to have a better life. A CFSC approach focuses on moving towards collective community action and long-term social change and away from individual behaviours. CFSC is supported by rules of tolerance, self-determination, equity, social justice and active participation.

| Table 1. Alternative and capitalist media characteristics (based on Sandoval, 2009; Sandoval & Fuchs, 2010) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Media Structure | Capitalist mass media | Ideal alternative media |
| The economic form of media products | Media product as a commodity | Non-commercial media |
| Media Actors | Consumers, Producers | Many consumers, few producers | Critical consumers, critical producers |
Table 2. Programs of Sidama Radio

| No | Name of Programs in Sidamu Afo | Meaning of Programs in English Version |
|----|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1  | Budenke                         | Culture                                |
| 2  | Qarqaru Agarooshhe              | Environmental protection               |
| 3  | Dancha Gashoote                 | Good Governance                        |
| 4  | Gibrinna                        | Agriculture                            |
| 5  | Boreessammnet Battala           | Literature World                       |
| 6  | Beeza Wedelle                   | Redemption for Generation              |
| 7  | Isporte                         | Sport                                  |
| 8  | Wedella                         | Youth                                  |
| 9  | Fayyimma                        | Health                                 |
| 10 | Syirrinsenna Teki               | Science and Technology                 |
| 11 | Dagoomu Sirba                   | Song of nation nationalities           |
| 12 | Roso                            | Education                              |
| 13 | Eo Lattishshaho                 | Income for Development                 |
| 14 | Ma Loose Egenantu               | What made them a celebrity             |
| 15 | Lamalate Wasincho               | This week’s Guest                      |
| 16 | Meento                          | Women                                  |
| 17 | Dagoanna Hodhishsha             | Road and Transport                     |
| 18 | Suugo                           | Saving or Let us Save                 |
| 19 | Kettamanke Higga               | Our Cities                             |
| 20 | Dagooma                         | Law and Society                        |
| 21 | Hitsanat                        | Children                               |
| 22 | Tseremusina                     | Anti-Corruption                        |

Source: Data compiled from the station program schedule(2017)

2.3. The democratic-participant media theory

Based on the idea of McQuail (1994) proposes the need for alternative or grassroots media that resist the dominance of the main mass media. He further elaborates the importance of the theory as “The theory supports the right to relevant local information, the right to answer back and the right to use the new means of communication for interaction and social action in small-scale settings of community, interest group or subculture: McQuail (1994:131).

Here, McQuail rejects the bureaucratization of public media and the profit-driven attitude of private media. More importantly, the theory points out the failure of the mass media to satisfy the needs of the public. “In their place should be encouraged multiple, small-scale, local, non-institutional, committee media which link senders to receivers and also favour horizontal patterns of interaction” McQuail (1994:131–132). Hence, media are ideally represented as small-scale forms that serve the public by creating horizontal participation.

It can be inferred that the democratic-participant media theory of McQuail is about each citizen and minority group having rights of access to media and deserved rights to be served by media as per their own need of information and determination. The organization of media content ought not to be subject to monopolized political or government control. Media should exist primarily for their audience and not for media organizations, professionals or the clients of media.

McQuail (1994: 132) argues that the model can be implemented in different media, which include alternate press, pirate radio, community cable television, and micro-media in a rural setting, neighbourhood media, wall posters, and media for women and ethnic minorities.
2.4. Participatory communication theory

The proponent of this approach stresses the model of dialogue as a catalyst for individual and community empowerment adopted from the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire)" (Morris, 2005:226).

Thomas, 1994, 54 cited in Morris (2005,226) state that the participatory model emerged in part as a reaction to the underlying assumptions of the diffusion model. Comparing this model with the diffusion one, Morris adds that participatory communication is not a vertical process of information transmission from the knowledgeable to the less knowledgeable, but rather a horizontal process of information exchange and interaction. Participatory behaviour cannot be imposed from the above.

As it has been demonstrated above, participatory communication theory is not linear; not top to bottom rather it is a horizontal way of exchanging information. Thus, in participatory communication, there has been interaction and coordination among the top managers and people at the grassroots. Concerning communication development, Servaes addresses the necessary components of the participatory communication model (Vatikiotis 2017).

Thus, the model holds the conceptual framework of multiplicity and another development. “It focuses the vitality of the cultural identity of local communities and democratization and participation at all level international, national, local, and individual” ((Servaes, 1995:47).).

One can deduce that such a participatory model grounds its communication style at the local or community level. Participatory communication thus involves the presentation and consultation of the public in decision-making and the formation of communication policies and plans. For such purposes, decentralized and participatory media become more meaningful and practical.

Using the ideas of different scholars, Servaes (1999:92) summarizes what participatory media are:

- Participatory media are internally organized on democratic lines (as worker cooperatives or collectives);
- Participatory media are recognized by their opposition to cultural industries dominated by multinational corporations;
- Participatory media may be traced to the liberation of linguistic and ethnic groups following a major social transformation;
- The strong existence of participatory media may be explained in terms of class struggle within the society;
- Participatory media may be identified as “molecular” rather than “molar” (a collective of individual autonomous units rather than one that is homogenized and—dimensional);
- Participatory media requires a creative and varied reception from its audience.

Here, participatory media generally imply democratic media that involve the audience in controlling, managing and producing at the grassroots level. Because of these, Servaes (1999:260) considers community radios as one of participatory communication media.

To summarize, it is possible to say that the theories reviewed above have direct and indirect influences on the discourse of community radio. Hence, the central themes of community radio as participatory, empowering and culturally specific are generated from these theories. Therefore, in researching Sidama radio, emphasis is given to its participatory nature and to its role in treating locally important issues as development perspectives.
3. Methodology

3.1. Research design
For the study, a descriptive survey design was employed. There were two reasons why this design had been selected. The first reason was that it enabled the researcher to identify and examine the existing situation. Kumar, 1994 mentioned that a descriptive survey serves as the direct source of valuable knowledge concerning human behaviours. For the other reason, this research design let the researcher use a flexible approach when vital issues were raised during the study.

3.2. The research approaches
To collect and analyze data for this study, a qualitative method was employed through triangulation. The method of “Triangulation” in social research can be described as the use of more than one method of investigation and hence more than one type of data. Within this approach, quantitative and qualitative research methods are seen as different ways of examining the same research problem” (Strelitz, 2005:87).

3.3. Data collection tools
In this study, the data was collected through interviews, and focus group discussion and document review. The tools chosen allowed the researcher to triangulate the results gained from each method.

3.3.1. Focus group discussion
Kumar and A.I.D. Program Design And Evaluation Methodology Report No. 8 (1987) indicated that Focus Group Discussion is a wide assessment, semi-structured data gathering tool in which a purposively selected set of participants gather to discuss issues and concerns based on key themes listed and drawn up by the researcher/facilitator. What one can point out from Kumar’s definition of focus group discussion is that it is a research tool in which a small group of participants gathers to discuss a specified topic or issue to generate data.

To maintain the session on the right track while allowing informants to speak freely and spontaneously, the facilitator uses a discussion guide that lists the main topics or themes to be covered in the session. It serves as a roadmap that guides the facilitator in covering the list of topics and keeping the discussion on track (Krueger, 1988).

In conducting a focus group discussion, the emphasis should be placed on the interaction among group members. Rather than the moderator posing questions, the group members are encouraged to communicate with one another, exchanging ideas and comments on each other’s experiences or points of view. Therefore, six participants from employees of Sidama Radio sat for FGD. The two FGD sessions were held on Sidama Radio. The researcher facilitated the discussion of FGD with employees.

3.3.2. In-depth interview
An in-depth interview is a technique of qualitative research that embraces carrying out an intensive exclusive interview with a small number of informants to probe their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. The reason to use in-depth interviews arose out of the need to corroborate the data gathered through focus group discussion and further elicit in-depth responses from the informants. Hence, it is in light of this potential of the in-depth interview that individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study.

Interviews are appropriate for eliciting individual experiences, opinions, feelings and addressing sensitive topics (Cohen & Rence, 1994). The study employed interviews as a tool for gathering information about the social development roles of the stations. Station managers and coordinators of each station were the target respondents. The research took audio records while interviewing the selected participants.
3.3.3. Document review
As supplementary to the above data collection tools, this study made use of written documents (i.e. Program schedule and board and general assembly agendas of the station) for cross-checking the social development programs in the station.

3.4. Sampling technique and sample size
For FGD and in-depth interviews, media practitioners were selected by using non-probability sampling (i.e. purposive sampling and availability sampling). Employing purposive sampling, key informants (one program coordinator and one manager) from the station were taken as interview participants. With regard to FGD, using availability sampling, two groups with six discussants were formed. The two discussion sessions were made on Sidama Radio.

3.5. Data analysis technique
Data was analyzed qualitatively; coding for qualitative data had been employed using thematic categorization. The study employed methodological triangulation. Hence, the different data coming from focus groups and interview respondents ‘will be synchronized, distilled, gleaned for evidence.

4. Result and discussion

4.1. Background of sidama radio
Sidama Radio (in this study, SR stands for Sidama Radio). Sidama Radio was established in 1989 E.C at Yirgalem town, which is 30 km far away from Hawassa City and 320 km far from Addis Ababa. The station used Sidama language as media of transmission and used medium wave and 954 KHZ. The frequency allocated to the station is 314 MW. It was established a two-decade ago with the joint collaboration of Sidama development program (SDP) and Irish Aid around 1987 E.C (informant 4/Chief Executive of SR/and informant 6/Coordinator of SR/, 2017).

According to informant 4 (personal interview, 2017), the station transmission covers a 188 km radius. The transmission of the station covers the whole area of the Sidama zone and some adjacent zones southern region such as Wolayita and Gedeo as well as some parts of Oromiya region.

Accordingly, Sidama Radio broadcasts two major types of programs, formal educational programs and general audience programs. The educational programs are prepared to support the formal teaching-learning process of primary schools, whereas the community programs are aimed at promoting cultural, social and economic development of the Sidama people as obtained from the personal interview with a coordinator in the radio station (informant 6: 2017). According to informant 5, a coordinator of the station programs, the station gives two services per day. Every Monday to Friday, from 1:00 am-2:00 am in the morning local time, news and different entertaining programs are presented. Then, there is education by radio program, which starts at 2:00 am in the morning and ends at 11:00 pm in the afternoon local time every Monday to Friday per week. Sidama Radio has 29 programs. These all programs are aired on Saturday, and some of the most decisive programs are aired in repetition on Sunday. All programs are aired at the weekends—Saturday and Sunday.

4.2. Data obtained from FGD and in-depth interview informants
This section discusses FGD and interview data collected from the manager and coordinator, journalists and staff of Sidama radio. The analysis of the data mainly focuses on educational and developmental-based themes aired by the community radio programs under the study. The analysis of the data is classified into 10 major thematic categories. Therefore, these are the emphasis of news and important public message, health-related issues, culture and language-oriented issues, agricultural and educational-based issues, and gender-related issues, and youth-based issues, good governance and political themes, other social issues, modes of community
participation and the practitioners’ perception of the role of the community and opportunities and challenges of SR. Accordingly, these all are analyzed qualitatively below.

4.2.1. News coverage and programs contents in Sidama Radio(SR)

News and important public messages are among the major daily programs transmitted by the Sidama radio in the Sidama language. According to the document analysis of the daily program format of the Sidama radio, the focus group discussion and the individual in-depth interview participants, the station presents the news one time per day every Monday to Friday; the prime times for presenting the news are 1:00 am in the morning. Moreover, it presents 1:00am in the morning and 7:00 in the afternoon in local time every Saturday to Sunday. In terms of the news content coverage, in an individual interview, the coordinator of programs said that they give 80% of the airtime for local news, 10% of airtime for national, and the remaining 10% for international news. This shows that the majority of news content coverage is local. This means there is high coverage of local news in the station. From this, one can deduce that the station serves the local community at large. They cover national and international news that they may think to have a direct or indirect influence on the local audiences.

The theoretical principle of community radio is serving the local community with different social development issues. Community radio serves as the mouthpiece of the local community. It provides a voice to the voiceless social groups. In general, it gives focus on issues that affect the lives of the local community. In line with this, one of FGD participants remarks “We give more emphasis and focus on local issues programs. This is because people want to know what is happening around them, in the town, in the nearby woredas, in the neighbouring regions, zones, etc. According to the manager of the SR, the news bulletins mainly cover the news of the Sidama Yirgalem city, sub-cities including 19 districts des in Sidama Zone. In addition, they cover national and international news bulletins from the internet, Ethiopian radio and television agencies, etc. This local, national and international news makes up the content of the news headlines and bulletins. According to him, mostly they present the local and national news in detail and the international news in brief.

Almost all FGD participants claimed that they prefer local news largely more than national or international news. In light of this, one volunteer journalist says:

“I prefer SR. Besides, I am a regular listener of it. I especially like the way they present the news. They focus on the local news which other media cannot cover and that may have a significant influence on my life as one member of the Sidama community. Moreover, they present national news that enables us to think rationally and to have a national feeling about our country. Moreover, we will have information about what is going on in the city.”

Furthermore, sources of news are Yirgalem town, the local government, the community and other concerned bodies in relation to the community operation. Mostly the news focuses on the activities of the infrastructure projects, health, education, agriculture, good governance and other social development issues. According to a documents review of the station, let’s look at list of programs that are supposed to be informative and of more social development. There are in Sidama language and their translations in English.

The above programs are presented in Sidama Radio mainly emphasizing local community issues and local development of the community. In the upcoming section, their themes with regard to how they are important for the social development of society and the contribution of the media practitioners in producing those programs will be discussed.

Mainali (2008) noted the objective of community radio as to raise widespread awareness on issues like education, health, environment, sustainable development, human rights and community development, it is true in the case of Sidama radio. The next part will focus on these issues.
4.2.2. Educational and agricultural issues in SR

Education is an important means of the eradication of illiteracy and poverty. Educated citizens contribute much to the overall development of a given society. Among the roles of community radio, broadcasting educational issues is the most important one. Empowering community members through education and training is the central part of the eradication of poverty and illiteracy in a community. Encouraging youths and children to give due attention to their academic development is the important role a community radio should play. According to the program format of the SR and individual in-depth interviews held with a coordinator of the program, the SR has programs on educational and agricultural development issues. For example, Roso, which means *Education in English*, is an educational program aired by the Sidama community radio. The program is aired twice in the weekend; every Saturday from 1:30 pm—2:00 pm local time in the evening and again Sunday afternoon from 10:30 pm 11:00 pm local time. The objective of the program is also to encourage youths and children to attend their education carefully.

In light of this, a program producer participated in the FGD session forwarded:

“The Roso program called education program is aimed at importing different educational issues that can encourage children and youth to attend their education properly; it also informs the community and other concerned bodies to give due attention to educational matters.

Moreover, one of the FGD participants also said that we strive to avoid illiteracy, which is a serious factor for poverty and backwardness. We prepare programs that inform the community members about the importance of sending their children to school and helping them with education. In addition, we teach youth and children by emphasizing the advantages of attending school actively and regularly. This is because the issue is of serious concern for us.

Furthermore, there is also another program called *Science and Technology*. This program is also educational takes 15 minutes airtimes. According to the program coordinator of the station, this program is aired aiming at teaching the community about new technology and innovation, particular to make students aware of advancing technology. In addition to this, after news from 2 a.m into the morning to 11 pm in the afternoon local time, we regularly broadcast education by radio every Monday to Friday he added.

On the other hand, the Sidama radio also disseminates programs on agricultural development issues. The program is named *Gibirinna* which is Agriculture in English. This program is broadcast twice in the weekend; Sunday afternoon from 10:00 pm to 10:30 pm and evening from 1:00 to 1:30 local time. It has the aim of teaching both the rural and urban farmers to adopt modern agricultural technologies like fertilizer to increase their productivity. It is aimed at promoting productivity in the agricultural sector.

The strength of community radio as an extension tool is widely regarded to lie in its ability to reach illiterate farmers and provide them with information relating to all aspects of the production of agriculture in a language they perceive Dargan, 2001, p. 15).

Another program on the issue of agriculture is *Qarqaru Agarooshshe that means environmental protection* in English. This program is presented to the audience mainly focusing the farmers to afforest and reforest the plant rather than deforesting the plants. Generally, according to the producer of the program, the program creates awareness for the community about the importance of the plants so that they protect the forests from deforestation.

The program producers invite individuals who are thought to be the best experiences and success from the urban and rural areas with regard to farming. The guests appear to the studio and share their experiences and activities to the audience. Then the audiences grasp valuable knowledge and experience from the life of the guests (Source: FGD participant).
In relation to this, here is the narration of one of the focus group discussion participants about her farmer father:

My father is a farmer; he is often able to listen to only Sidama language program. He usually listens to the Gibirina program aired by SR. Before he started to listen to the Agriculture program, he had been using the traditional agricultural method. He was not in a position to accept the advice of development agents. As a result, he was not able to use the modern way of farming. Thus, he had been leading the traditional way of life. But now after he started to listen to this program, he had much knowledge and experience from the invited guests. This experience and knowledge helped me to use modern agricultural practices in order to maximize my productivity. Therefore, now he has changed his life and our family's life as well.

This shows that many urban and rural communities who are engaged both in rural and urban farming have changed their ways of living and now they are leading a new way of life that they never experienced before.

4.2.3. Language and culture issues in SR
Culture and language are the two sides of the same coin. Both language and culture are highly interlinked with the lives of any society. According to Jan Servaes, culture is the dynamic synthesis, both at the consciousness level of the individual or collectivity of the historically conceived material or spiritually reality of society (Servaes, 2002, p. 63).

What can be sorted out from this point is that culture is the shared meanings of signs, values, attitudes, and religion, knowledge, and belief, concepts of the universe and material objects possessed by a given society. This culture can also be expressed through storytelling, local music, dance poetry, theatre, etc. However, due to the expansion of 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. In order to protect this cultural domination, the community radios role is great.

Promotion of local culture and language is the major area where community radio can bring about change. Culture lies at the basis of a society's existence, and it is the centre of their everyday activities. In protecting indigenous culture from western cultural influence, the community radio plays a great role in articulating the culture of the people, their stories, their music, their holidays, etc. In support of this argument, Girard (1992) views community radio as a type of radio made to serve people; radio that encourages expression and participation and that values local culture. Its purpose is to give a voice to those without voices (Girard, 1992, p. 5).

According to the focus group discussion and individual in-depth interview participants, the SR is preparing programs that can promote the culture and language of the Sidama community. Among the programs, question and answer is the one transmitted in the Sidama language. The program is aimed at absorbing local cultural values and language as well.

Likewise, the Sidama language program called Budenke, which means our culture. This program is aired every Saturday from 8:30 pm—9:00 pm local time in the afternoon. In the program, the program producer invites very popular elders who are culturally well versed in the community, and these elders articulate various local cultures, like traditional beliefs of the community, the traditional wedding ceremony of the community, traditional foods of the community etc.

The program introduces the audience to various cultural sites found in all woredas of the Sidama zone. People of the community express things in their local language. Through listening to this program, the audience can easily know different tourist sites and cultural areas found in the town, rural areas etc
Moreover, another program called *Bareessammeta Battata*, which focuses on literary items of the community or *literature world* of the community. The program presents poems by different writers, letters on various social issues, and narration of novels written by well-known Sidama language writers. This is to encourage the community members to contribute for the development of the language and culture of the community.

Furthermore, the community radio plays different songs with cultural messages in the Sidama language. In this regard, a coordinator of programs has said that we also have a program called *Dagoomu Sirba* means song of nations and nationalities. It lasts for 30 times airing songs that help promote local language and culture. The SR plays various songs of nations, nationalities of the country. This is to show the diverse culture and language of the country.

According to FGD and the individual in-depth interview participants, as the community radio is striving for the promotion of the valuable cultural elements of the community, it is also striving to prevent bad cultures like female genital mutilation, early marriage, corruption, abduction, etc., through the lyrics the local singers use.

4.2.4. Health related issues in SR
Among different other social issues, health issues are the most important ones in any society. It is because of that most people say health matters. To develop either socially or individually, one should stay healthy, otherwise, the issue of social or individual development will remain meaningless.

The healthier population can contribute a lot to their individual and social development. In relation to this, the media especially community radios shoulder responsibility in helping the community live healthily.

According to the individual in-depth interview and focus group discussions, concerning the above-noted issues, the SR is working closely with different NGOs working in the area of health, the local health bureau and the Yirgalem hospital to create awareness in the community about various health matters.

In line with this, in the program schedule of the station, there is a program called *Fayyimma*, which means health in English. This program lasts for 30 minutes. It is aired twice a weekend; Saturday evening from 1:00 to 1:30 and Sunday morning from 1:15 to 1:45.

As to the interview held with the manager of the station, the program touches on whatever issues related to health problems. For instance, cleaning, different diseases that hamper our health are entertained in the program. It is aimed at informing and educating the listeners about HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STD), tuberculosis malaria, etc.

In a similar manner, here is what a producer of the program had to say when the researcher asked him why they undertook the Health program. He remarks as follows:

We produce this program to empower the community psychologically as well as mentally. You know psychologically weak society has nothing to do with the overall development of a given society. As a result, we raise issues that can affect the psychology of the community and the people who have such problems share their experiences by explaining what is happening to them, and how they are psychologically affected. And we invite professionals to help them.

According to the focus group discussion and the individual in-depth interview participants, in the program, medical doctors often appear on-air to educate and inform the public about the nature
of various diseases. They inform the audiences on the ways how they protect themselves from various diseases, and on the ways how they can get medical treatments if they catch diseases.

Additionally, there is also a program on health called Beeza Wedella, which means Redemption for Generation. This program is aimed at focusing on the issues of the unexpected death of mothers during giving birth to a child.

In an interview, a coordinator of the program remarked the following in line with this program:

*We do have a program named ‘Redemption for Generation’ that has got half-hour air time in both Sidama as well as Amharic languages aiming at creating awareness for the people, especially in women mothers since they are vulnerable to a reproductive related problem. In short, the program teaches the community, especially for women about the emergence of hearth related problems.*

Having seen the information mentioned above, one could deduce that the program that SR is transmitting is helpful for the health of the local community, particularly for vulnerable mothers during pregnancy and reproduction.

4.2.5. Youth issues in SR

Empowering these youth to acquire communication skills, develop technical/vocational skills and problem-solving skills is of critical importance and should be given due attention. The Media have an important role in this regard; they can produce awareness-raising programs, which involve involving the youth themselves. When the youth get room to involve in this kind of program, they can gain self-confidence; they can also learn ways to conduct an open discussion with their parents and peers on matters that may affect their future. Thus, the youth empowering role of community radio is more profound than other media outlets.

Bearing the above fact in mind, Sidama Radio is producing youth centred programs in the Sidama language. They have 30 minutes program called Wedella, which is translated as Youth’s program in English. The program is aired every Saturday from 9:00 pm-9:30 pm local time in the afternoon. It is produced by the youth for the youth; and it is aimed at providing a forum for free discussion on reproductive health, drug abuse, political participation and economic issues.

According to the producer of the program, in the program, the youth freely talk about reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases, like HIV/AIDS. The program encourages the youth to talk freely about their sexual relationships, experiences, and their knowledge about sexually related diseases, reproductive health, drug abuse, etc. In addition, the program encourages the youth to involve in income-generating activities and to have some understanding and participation in the activities of the local politics.

Moreover, some programs invite psychologists and professionals to offer advice to the youth in relating to the importance of attending their education activities and protecting themselves from situations that may affect their future.

To draw the attention of the youth and not to make them bored with the programs, the station provides different entertainment programs like short drama, narration, music, etc. These entertainment-based programs also teach the youth while entertaining.

In FGD, a young volunteer journalist said the following about this:

*We produce programs that encourage youth to talk freely about their lifestyle, relationships, HIV/AIDS, gender, peer pressures, etc. We mix messages with entertainment to inform,*
persuade, and empower the youth. All these are done by the young presenters to make the youth feel that they are talking to their best friends.

The program teaches the youth and offers them the opportunity to talk freely to develop their confidence and empower them to be active members of the community. What can be drawn from this is that given the opportunity, young people can bring unique perspectives to media programming and that once empowered, they can successfully create programs that can have a positive impact on themselves, families, and communities.

4.2.6. Gender issues in SR

Women bear almost all responsibility for meeting the basic needs of the family, yet they are systematically denied the resources, information and freedom of action they need to fulfill this responsibility. According to scholars, such as Williams (2005), Kabeer (1999), and Pollard, (2006), when women are supported and empowered, all of the social benefits because they are the burden carriers of the family; their incomes increase and as a result community becomes flourishes. Empowering women to make them key change agents is an essential element in bringing to an end of hunger and poverty. Community radio plays a significant role in ensuring gender equality by producing awareness-raising programs and empowering women to be role players in the development of a given community.

In line with this, the SR is producing programs that promote gender equality and empower women. Meento, which can be translated as a women’s program, is aimed to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. It is aired every Sunday from 2:00 am-2:30 pm local time in the morning.

According to the producer of the program, the objectives of the program are enabling females to engage in income-generating activities that can help them lead their lives and their families in an enriching manner and thereby empower them to be active citizens. In the program, the program producers invite both economically and politically successful women to share their experiences and offer their advice to the audience.

The focus of the program is on the promotion of the social, political and economic participation of women in all community operations. It is aimed at enabling women to occupy prominent positions in the community’s development. Furthermore, the program creates awareness among the community members on the seriousness of unfair treatment of women in the workplace and gender-based violations.

What is more, 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 audience would draw lessons that could improve their own lives.

In an interview, a coordinator of the programs remarks:

We are producing programs that address gender issues from the perspectives of both women and men. We are working towards empowering and promoting women’s participation in every aspect of the community. We are also striving to strengthen the practice of property rights and ownership of women. More importantly, we are trying our best in mobilizing the community to fight violence against women.

According to the focus group discussion participants, the community radio is providing relevant information that encourages women to participate in the small-scale enterprises organized by the government for the express purpose of solving their economic problems. In the FGD, one of the informants’ notes:
Sidama Radio is playing an important role in empowering women. I think the community radio is working in collaboration with the government for the realization of gender equality. It is common to hear programs that promote gender equality and women empowerment from the SR. Currently, women are engaged in decision-making, working in industries and the like which previously was a male-dominated activity. Thus, I can confidently say that the SR is trying its best for the realization of gender equality.

Generally, according to the participants of FGD and interview, the outputs of the community radio were also becoming supportive of women in the struggle against violence and mistreatment perpetrated against them. They also pointed out that the community radio under the study is producing valuable awareness creation programs on gender equality and the community is responding well concerning the issues.

4.2.7. Democracy and good-governance oriented issues in SR
Informed citizens influence the agenda of the government. The issue of politics and good governance affects the lives of a community either positively or negatively. To influence the agenda of the government, information plays an immense role. Every act of the local leaders should be transparent. A community needs to know what is going on in its surroundings.

As community radio is owned, operated and financed by the community, its primary role is providing relevant and timely information to the community. It should critically look at the wrongdoings of a local government and strive for the well-being of a community.

According to the focus group discussion and the individual in-depth interview participants, Sidama Radio is trying its best for the promotion of democracy and good governance. It is naturally obvious that people tend to be highly interested in political issues than others. Political news attracts a large number of audiences than other news.

The SR program has the program addressing politics and good governance issues. For instance, *Dancha Gashoote*, which means *Good Governance in English*, is one of the programs that focus on the promotion of democracy and good governance. In the program, they present what the community have encountered and experienced regarding good governance problems and violation of democratic rights. Then, the program producers provide a forum for discussion in order to alleviate those problems affecting the community.

In addition, they invite public service officials to the studio to present the services they are providing for the community and things that the community should consider to get these services. This is just to create transparency and accountability of the offices.

Likewise, the SR presents also another program called *Tseremusina*, which is *Anti-Corruption in English*. This program is prepared in collaboration with the South Radio and Television Agency (SRTA). It lasts 30 minutes of airtime, and it is transmitted in both Amharic and Sidama languages. Out of 30 minutes airtimes, 15 minutes is allotted for Amharic language and the remaining 15 is for Sidama language.

According to a producer of the program, the objective of the program is the same in both languages. The program presents issues related to corruption in both languages. It acts watchdog roles while disclosing corrupted individuals in the community.

On other hand, there is another program called *Dagooma*, which is translated as *Law and Society in English*. As to the coordinator of the program in an interview, in this program, we teach the local community different laws in Ethiopia in general. For instance, civil law, criminal law and family law, etc. The goal of the program is via disseminating those laws people can be aware of different crimes
they are committing knowingly and unknowingly; can know those laws so that this is just to inform the community to act according to the law and protect themselves from committing criminal acts.

Furthermore, Sidama Radio (SR) has programs that create awareness among the community about democracy and human rights. Especially during election time, the radio mobilizes the community to actively participate in the local and national election processes. Furthermore, it platforms for different parties to talk about their programs and plans to enable the community to elect a party that they believe has the best programs and plans for their future.

4.2.8. Other development issues in SR

In addition to the programs discussed above, the SR has different programs promoting the social development and well-being of the community. *Eo Lattishshaho*, which means income for development in English, is one of the programs aired on the station. The program aims to make the community know about income tax is collected especially from merchants for the sake of development.

In light of this, a producer of the program said that they are broadcasting *income for development* program is to make people aware of government bodies who are collecting income tax from different trade sectors via looking at trading license is not their advantages but for development of the nation. Moreover, it is aimed at creating awareness of how and why income tax is collected.

Another program called *Ma Loose Egenantu*, which means what made them a celebrity. In this program, they broadcast the decisive work of someone; what makes him/her famous and renowned at local, national and international levels. For instance, the story of black South Africa President, Nelson Mandela who struggled for freedom is entertained.

In this regard, the coordinator of the program notes:

We produce this program considering the life of a famous person is helpful for the community. More importantly, we bring and air the work of people who are known in the history of Sidama. Therefore, this program teaches the community indirectly and gives a mental encouragement to the local community.

Similarly, they produce the program called *Lamalate Wosincho* means This Week’s Guest in English. This program is similar with that of the above program in that the producer invites the most known person from the community to the studio so that he/she shares his/her experience that teaches the public. *Isporte* called sports program is the one that addresses the issue of promoting Sidama zone sports largely and national and international sports to some extent. Sports program gives priority to Sidama zone sports. The primary objectives aim at promoting both traditional and modern sports of the Sidama zone.

There is also a program called *Doogonna Hodishsha* means Road and transport. This program is aired aiming at raising awareness for the community about the seriousness of traffic accidents.

According to FGD and interview participants, the program teaches drivers to drive slowly; pedestrians take the left-hand side of the road and cross zebra crossing only. Further, the program also teaches passengers not to sit on the vehicle beyond its carrying capacity and driver too not to carry beyond the carrying capacity of the car as far as it aggravates accidents.

Furthermore, another program called *Suuqa* means let us save. This program is broadcast aiming at educating the community about saving mechanisms. According to FGD and interview participants, the program is designed to teach the local community about traditional and modern ways of saving.
What is more, there is also a program called Kattamanke Higgena, which is translated as Cities Development in English. This program focuses on the development of the cities especially towns and cities in Sidama zone. Concerning this, a producer of the program notes that the program is aimed to teach the community about the different infrastructures of the cities. For instance, how the working conditions the infrastructures as road, electricity, etc., are going on in Yirgalem town and out of this town in Sidama Zone. Besides, the program enables the audience to visit the current situation of Yirgalem Town through radio narration. The program assesses in detail the activities of the development projects, the problems that the community is encountering and shows directions to the concerned bodies to take actions to alleviate the problems in question.

4.2.9. Participation of the community in SR
One of the unique characteristics of community radio is the active participation of the community in every process of the station (Tabing, (2002)). Since the community had got the opportunity to listen to programs prepared by its language, their culture and language could have been promoted. The interaction of the community with the station has been entertained.

In terms of community participation, a coordinator of the programs insisted that our community participation could be seen in the angle of issue selection, social dramas, mini debates, interviews, discussion, and giving feedback. The community involvement in issue selection, idea-generating, direct participation in the programs like social drama, mini-debate and discussion, as well as the listening feedback in physical presence in the station, through letters and call-in had been indicated the high-level participation of the community.

Even though the journalists received some amount of payment, they were also working as volunteers in addition to their government position, one of FGD participants says:

The uses of volunteers have been applied in the Sidama Radio. Some journalists including me are working in the basis of part-time in addition to the formal government offices occupations. We received some amount of money for additional participation in the station. However, we were volunteers.

The active participation of the community is still continuous in the current practice of the station. The volunteers’ activities in the direct program production and presentation are also stated as the indicator of the community participation by the coordinator of the programs:

Volunteers are serving the station from the community. For example, music selection, youths, children and letters programs are prepared and presented by volunteers. And also the sports program is prepared by a volunteer whose regular job is teaching. In other programs, the members of the community who have good voice and interest are also participating voluntarily.

In short, participation of the community in Sidama radio is unquestionable; and people from the community are participating in the station in different cases.

Therefore, the above data analysis and discussion answer the two research questions raised at the beginning of this study particularly questions related to Sidama radio. These questions are: what is the emphasis of Sidama Radio programs in the social development endeavours, and community participation and empowerment? And what are the categories of the different issues are raised by Sidama Radio about educating and motivating the community to engage in development activities?

4.2.10. Practitioners’ perception of the community radio in SR
The knowledge and perceptions of the Journalists, the editors, the managers, and the board members about the objectives of the community radio have a tremendous bearing on the right practice of the radio (Kassahun & Wodajo, 2012). If these bodies perceive its role and objective in
a wrong way and if they undertake its activities with just a commonsense, the community radio will fail to meet its objective of safeguarding the community.

In relation to this, the journalists, the editors, the manager, and the board members of the Sidama community radio who participated in an individual in-depth interview have a common understanding and perceptions about the role and objective of the community radio. They view it as being the voice of the voiceless for the community and involve all sectors of the community by creating diverse voices and opinions on air. In an interview, the manager of the SR defines the community radio as:

Community radio for me is a kind of radio that stands for its the community. It is a radio that covers more than 60% of local community issues. In a nutshell, community radio is the kind of radio that lives for the advantage of its community largely.

Likewise, one of the FGD participants expressed his view as follows:

It is a type of radio that creates an opportunity for the community so that community members can share his/her experience with others. It is the radio stands for local, rural and marginalized individuals.

Even though the Sidama people identity and culture were neglected in the past governments, the community can maintain its values. In this regard, the coordinator of the program, informant 5 stated the strong feeling of the Sidama people as:

They still have their calendar and New Year celebration called ‘Fiche’. There is also religious ideology influencing private and social activities. They can also practice their customary law and ethical codes. Maintaining these and other values of the community could not be easy in the past regimes. These could be achieved because of the strong ethical feeling of the community.

For most of the group discussion participants, the strong community ties of the Sidama people also are serving for the existence of the station. Hence, what can be inferred from the above narration of the practitioners, they have the same understanding of the meaning and the role of community radio. Accordingly, the analysis discussion of the date above answers the last research question raised in the first chapter. The question says how do managers and journalists Sidama Radio perceive the role of community radio as a platform of social interaction and social empowerment?

4.2.11. Challenges of the SR

Though Sidama Radio is doing its best in serving the community through various programs, it is also facing challenges. Among the challenges mentioned by the manager of the radio is lack of adequate finance, and lack of well-trained manpower.

(A) Shortage of Skilled Manpower

The lack or shortage of professional journalists and technicians is the problem of all stations in Ethiopia. However, the influence of this problem is one of the major challenges in Sidama radio development initiatives.

Even at the initial period of the station, the problem was identified and several measures were undertaken as informant 4 said:

Most of us are assigned from government departments. We had not any experience in radio journalism. Several of us, I think four staff members including me trained in Kenya. This had done because of the shortage of skilled manpower at that time. Besides, the editorial policy of
community radio also encourages the local community to participate. Still, the shortage and lack of skilled manpower in the field is the challenge of the station.

The coordinator of the station agreed on this:

*Almost all journalists are certified in the field of teaching. Including me, we do not have direct experience of journalism, even though we have participated in some workshops and short-term training. And the majority of employees are volunteers.*

The problem is not only in the journalism practice but also it exhibits in the technical aspect.

In the FGD session, the head of technique department said the shortage of trained technicians is also the major problem of the station.

(B) Financial Problems

According to the manager and coordinator of the station, the development initiative of Sidama Radio was funded by Irish Aid. In addition to the establishment, the Irish Aid and SDP partnership financed both the formal education and community program for five years until the withdrawal of Irish Aid.

That period was the golden time of Sidama radio in terms of finance. After the withdrawal of the Irish Aid and SDP partnership, the financial problem became a major challenge for the station. Due to this, the quality of the programs deteriorated, several employees abandoned their job and worked on and off as well as the transmission was interrupted for several periods (informant 5:2017).

According to informant 6, because of financial shortage, the qualities of the programs remain low quality. We have the problem of budget, because of this we could not cover the rural areas and forced to focus on the surrounding area of Yirgalem town largely as well as working on the limited number of employees. In short, shortage of skilled manpower and budge problem is the major and unsolved challenges of Sidama Radio.

5. Discussion

In the present era of information, community radio is considered a distinct alternative to both governments, commercial and public stations. The capacity of Community media to involve the public in participatory ways to air issues takes on various forms, depending on time and space. As per the result of the study, Sidama Radio is the community educational radio focusing on the coverage of news on local issues and developments programs. In terms of the news content coverage, in an individual interview, the coordinator of programs said that they give 80% of the airtime for local news, 10% of airtime for national, and the remaining 10% for international news. This shows that the majority of news content coverage is local. The theoretical principle of community radio is serving the local community with different social development issues. Community radio serves as the mouthpiece of the local community. It provides a voice to the voiceless social groups. In line with this, one of the FGD participants underlined that they give more emphasis and focus on local issues programs. The finding of the study is similar to that of Mainali (2008) noted that the objective of community radio is to raise widespread awareness on issues like education, health, environment, sustainable development, human rights, and community development. Besides this, the result is in line with Kassahun and Wodojo (2012) who studied the contribution of Jimma Radio and found out the radio air the local and national news in detail and the international news in brief coverage.

The result of the study showed that there are programs related to the issues educational and agricultural in SR. Educated citizens contribute much to the overall development of a given society. Education is an important means of the eradication of illiteracy and poverty. According to the program format of the SR and individual in-depth interviews held with a coordinator of the
program, the SR has programs on educational and agricultural development issues. For example, Roso, which means Education in English, is an educational program aired by the Sidama community radio, and there is also another program called Science and Technology. This program is also educational takes 15 minutes airtimes. According to the program coordinator of the station, this program is aired aiming at teaching the community about new technology and innovation, particular to make students aware of advancing technology. The finding is related to Dargon (2001, p. 15) who found out the strength of community radio as an extension tool is widely regarded to lie in its ability to reach illiterate farmers and provide them with information relating to all aspects of the production of agriculture in a language they perceive. On the other hand, the Sidama radio also disseminates programs on agricultural development issues. The program named Gibirinna which is Agriculture in English. Another program on the issue of agriculture is Qararo Agarooshshe which means environmental protection in English. According to the producer of the program, the program creates awareness for the community about the importance of the plants so that they protect the forests from deforestation.

As per the result of the study, there are programs related to the issues of language and culture in SR. According to the focus group discussion and individual in-depth interview participants, the SR is preparing programs that question and answer is the one transmitted in Sidama language can promote the culture and language of the Sidama community. The program is aimed at absorbing local cultural values and language as well. Similarly, the Sidama language program called Budenke, which means our culture. In the program, the program producer invites very popular elders who are culturally well versed in the community, and these elders articulate various local cultures, like traditional beliefs of the community, the traditional wedding ceremony of the community, traditional foods of the community, etc. In support of this argument, Girard (1992) views community radio as a type of radio made to serve people; radio that encourages expression and participation and that values local culture. Its purpose is to give a voice to those without voices (Girard, 1992, p. 5). Likewise, Servaes (2002, p. 63). Stated culture is the dynamic synthesis, both at the consciousness level of the individual or collectivism of the historically conceived material or spiritually reality of society.

One of the programs aired on Sidama Radio is health-related programs. The program called Fayyimma, which means health in English. This program lasts for 30 minutes. It is aired twice in a weekend; Saturday evening from 1:00 to 1:30 and Sunday morning from 1:15 to 1:45. According to the individual in-depth interview and focus group discussions, the SR is working closely with different NGOs working in the area of health, the local health bureau and the Yirgalem hospital to create awareness in the community about various health matters. Community 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. The study shows the radio transmits various public messages concerning health in between all the programs to educate and promote the wellbeing of the community.

Moreover, youth and gender-related issues are also portrayed on Sidama Radio. The youth-centred programs in the Sidama language, which lasts 30 minutes program called Wedella, which is translated as Youth’s program in English. It is produced by the youth for the youth; and it is aimed at providing a forum for free discussion on reproductive health, drug abuse, political participation, and economic issues. In FGD, a young volunteer journalist said the following in relation to this: “We produce programs that encourage youth to talk freely about their lifestyle, relationships, HIV/AIDS, gender, peer pressures, etc. We mix messages with entertainment to inform, persuade, and empower the youth. In the result of the study, the producer of the program indicated “Meento”, which can be translated as a women’s program that promotes gender equality and empowers women aimed at promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment. In line with this, scholars, such as Williams (2005), Kabeer (1999), and Pollard (2006), when women are supported and empowered, all of the social benefits because they are the burden carriers of the family; their incomes increase and as a result community becomes flourishes. Empowering women to make them key change agents is an essential element in ending hunger and poverty. In this
regard, Kassahun and Wodajo (2012) has shown the consistent finding in the Afan Oromo language program of the community radio has different programs addressing youth issues.

The result of the study depicted that democracy and the good governance-related issue is also one of the focuses of SR programs transmitted to the community. Based on data collected from the focus group discussion and the individual in-depth interview participants, Sidama Radio is striving its best for the promotion of democracy and good governance. For instance, Dancha Gashoote, which means Good Governance in English, is one of the programs that focus on the promotion of democracy and good governance. In the program, they present what the community have encountered and experienced regarding good governance problems and violation of democratic rights. Similarly, the SR presents also another program called Tseremusina, which is Anti-Corruption in English. This program is prepared in collaboration with the South Radio and Television Agency (SRTA). In line with this result, Dahl, (1998, p. 97) showed that the ability of individuals to obtain information about their government is central to democracy.

As the findings reveal, there are other various development issues raised in SR programs. Eo Lattishshaho, which means income for development in English, is one of the programs aired in the station. In this regard, a producer of the program said that they are broadcasting income for development program is to make people aware of government bodies who are collecting income tax from different trade sectors via looking at trading license is not their advantages but for development of the nation. Another program called Ma Loose Egenantu, which means what made them a celebrity. In this program, they broadcast the decisive work of someone; what makes him/her famous and renowned at local, national and international levels. For instance, in this regard, the coordinator of the program notes: “We produce this program considering the life of a famous person is helpful for the community. More importantly, we bring and air the work of people who are known in the history of Sidama. Similarly, they produce the program called Lamalate Wosincho means This Week’s Guest in English in this program well-known guest is invited from the community and share experience to the community. There is also a program called Dooganna Hodhishsha means Road and transport. This program is aired aiming at raising awareness for the community about the seriousness of traffic accidents. Moreover, another program called Suuqo means let us save. This program is broadcast aiming at educating the community about saving mechanisms. According to FGD and interview participants, the program is designed to teach the local community about traditional and modern ways of saving. Besides, there is also a program called Kattamanke Higgena, which is translated as Cities Development in English. This program focuses on the development of the cities especially towns and cities in the Sidama zone. Concerning this, a producer of the program notes that the program is aired to teach the community about the different infrastructures of the cities.

Regarding community participation of SR, a coordinator of the programs insisted that our community participation could be seen in the angle of issue selection, social dramas, mini debates, interviews, discussion and giving feedback. In line with this, Urgoiti (1999p. 76) community participation is the backbone of any successful community radio station. He notes that community participation is a patient ongoing and inclusive process. Similarly, After all, it is a medium “in which the communities participate as planners, producers and performers and it is the means of expression of the community, rather than for the community” (AMARC and Panos, 1998:12). Regarding to this, SR had opened its door to audience participation. However, the result of the study is inconsistent with Tadesse (2006) who found out that Harar Community Radio had opened its door to audience participation. The coordinator of the programs forwarded that the active participation of the community is still continuous in the current practice of the station. The volunteers’ activities in the direct program production and presentation are also stated as an indicator of community participation. The result corresponds with Kassahun & Wodajo, 2012 whose finding showed Jimma Community Radio allowed the volunteer journalists who are performing the journalistic activities are from the community. Community participation should be an ongoing interaction between the radio station and the community. This ensures that the
Community radio station is the voice of that community, representing and putting forward the needs, wants, concerns, feelings and prioritized issues of the people in the area Urgoiti (1999, in Tavhiso, 2009, p. 76). On the other hand, Jordan (2006, p. 2) argues that community participation should not be seen as only getting community support. Thus, SR promotes community participation.

According to the result of the study, the journalists, the editors, the manager, and the board members of the Sidama community radio who participated in an individual in-depth interview have a common understanding and perceptions about the role and objective of the community radio. They view it as being the voice of the voiceless for the community and involve all sectors of the community. The finding is consistent with the finding of Kassahun and Wodajo (2012) who stated that the knowledge and perceptions of the Journalists, the editors, the managers, and the board members about the objectives of the community radio have a tremendous bearing on the right practice of the radio. Likewise, one of the FGD participants expressed his view as follows: “It is a type of radio that creates an opportunity for the community so that community members can share his/her experience with others. It is the radio stands for local, rural and marginalized individuals.” In this regard, Al-hassan, Andani and Malik (2011) have provided a clear concept of community radio stations as, operated, owned, and driven by the communities they serve. Community radio is not for profit and provides mechanisms for facilitating individuals, groups, and communities to tell their own diverse stories, to share experiences and in a media reach the world to become active actors and contributors of media.

The finding of the study showed that lack or shortage of professional journalists and technicians is the problem of all stations in Ethiopia. However, the influence of this problem is one of the major challenges in Sidama radio development initiatives. Besides, informant 4 (Chief Executive of SR) insisted that the editorial policy of community radio also encourages the local community to the participants. Still, the shortage and lack of skilled manpower in the field is the challenge of the station. Similarly, The coordinator of the station agreed on this: Almost all journalists are certified in the field of teaching. Including me, we do not have direct experience of journalism, even though we have participated in some workshops and short-term training. And the majority of employees are volunteers. The result of the study is in line with Wodajo (2012) as he found out the volunteers from the community also leave the station after they have gained some experience, which is very challenging for the station. Another challenge of Sidama community radio is the lack of finance. According to the manager and coordinator of the station, the development initiative of Sidama Radio was funded by Irish Aid. In addition to the establishment, the Irish Aid and partnership financed both the formal education and community program for five years until the withdrawal of Irish Aid. Due to this, the quality of the programs deteriorated, several employees abandoned their job and worked on and off as well as the transmission was interrupted for several periods (informant 5:2017). Contrary to this, Hussain (2007, p. 2) notes that financial sustainability basically means the station ‘s income-generating potential. In a nutshell, shortage of skilled manpower and budge problem is the major and unsolved challenges of Sidama Radio.

6. Conclusions
Several studies have revealed that community radio plays a key role in the development of a society. It can inform and educate the community by providing alternative information, which state-owned, and privately owned stations cannot provide. It gives the community the possibility of making informed decisions and enhances the quality of its lives. It offers voice to the voiceless members of the community. It serves the community as a watchdog and holds those in power accountable for their actions.

The findings of the study have demonstrated that the contribution of SR to social development endeavour is a lot. Moreover, the content of the program of the station reflects local issues, social
development, culture, and language as well. The station provides a platform for the community and encourages community participation and empowerment.

As per the findings of the study, Sidama Radio has given 80% of its program content including the news for local issues related to the social development themes. The rest 20% is given for the national and international issues. This helps the community to have up-to-date information about national and international issues. Moreover, the station gives due emphasis to local issues and news as far as community radio is concerned.

The findings have exhibited that Sidama radio is producing programs that promote the language and culture of the community. This is done through music by local singers, by presenting local literary activities written in the Sidama language. This has significance in terms of awareness creation among the community to preserve their indigenous cultural elements and language as well. According to the analysis of the individual in-depth interview, FGD and the schedule of the program format, Sidama Radio is producing numerous entertainment and educational programs on various social development themes, such as health, educational, agricultural, gender, youth, political and good governance, and language and cultural issues.

Based on the findings of the study, Sidama radio also facilitates dialogue and discussion to safeguard the voiceless and vulnerable members of the community. This helps in creating a diversity of views and opinions. It can be argued that the station is playing a vital role in bringing about platform and participation as long as volunteers from the community are working in the stations. They also provide a forum for dialogue and promote community participation and empowerment, especially for women and youth.

The other point discussed in the data analysis part is that the perception of practitioners on the role of community radio. The finding revealed that the practitioners involved in the individual in-depth interview and FGD have similar concepts regarding the role of community radio. They all viewed it as the radio owned, operated and run by the community it serves. Additionally, they defined it as the radio that serves the voice of the voiceless and marginalized community.

The find of the study showed that though the Sidama radio is playing a crucial role in community development, it faces several challenges in producing the quality of programs. Among the challenges noted by the individual in-depth interview participants, the financial problems, lack of trained journalists, lack of technicians and materials are the major challenges.

7. Recommendations
Based on the finding and conclusion of the study, the following points are recommended.

Continuous research in the area should be undertaken. This study tried to see to what extent the emphasis of the community radio programs is contributing to the social development of the community. The study has touched only the social development-based themes aired by the community radios. Hence, other researchers must look into more aspects of the community radio that need further investigation. Areas that would be worth considering include:

- conducting in-depth studies on the social development challenges;
- comparative study on FM and AM community radios with reference to audience reception;
- the role of community radio in the promotion of religious tolerance among the Yirgalem community; and
- the role of the community radio in increasing awareness in relation to climate change.
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