

# The role of media in addressing human trafficking issues: A study on Durame FM community radio

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## Abstract

*This study aimed to investigate the role of media in addressing human trafficking issues with a case study of Durame FM community Radio station. Agenda setting theory and radio reporting have direct impact in the skeleton of the story. This study used agenda setting theory as a main theoretical framework. The study employed mixed research methods. Content analysis and Semi structure in-depth interview was employed as a data gathering instrument. Interviews were conducted with journalists and editors of Durame FM radio. Durame FM community radio contributes to promote multi perspective approach. However, they do less emphasis for human trafficking issues in their news coverage due to limited air time. Additionally, feature and news types of programs are highly used while interview and infotainment types of radio programs are less covered. Interview data also illustrated that; interview type of radio program had got less coverage due to human trafficking victims are not always volunteer to be interviewed.*

**Key Words: Human Trafficking, media, Community FM Radio, Durame**

## 1.INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, human trafficking has become the biggest human rights challenge and serious problem that is affecting many people throughout the world. Aronowitz, (2009: 23) states that “Human trafficking occurs both in terms of internal migration from rural to urban areas and external from developing countries to more industrialized nations, and both documented and undocumented immigrants are at risk of being trafficked into forced labor or sexual exploitation”.

Human trafficking is not a recent phenomenon. Its history has count more than thousand years ago. The Old Testament Holly Bible story showed that migration was activating during the time of Israeli exodus to Egypt. In addition to this Arabian were migrate to Ethiopia during Arabia civil war around 8<sup>th</sup> century (Habtamu, 2006).

The US State Department report of 2006 estimates that about 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked annually across borders. According to UNDOC (2008), 80% of the victims, mostly women and young girls, are forced into prostitution, while the remaining 20%, often boys or men, are faced with forced labor.

Currently, human trafficking has grabbed the attention of the media since it is an increasing global character. It is real that media’s role is not confined only about presenting and depicting information and images but it has also the ability to shape opinions and presenting a certain version as reality.

Kembata and Tembaro zone (KT zone) is one of the 14 administrative zones within the Southern Nations Nationality and Peoples Region (SNNPR) of Ethiopia. It is situated approximately 250 km south-west of the

capital Addis Ababa. The zone is bordered on the north-west by *Hadiyazone*, on the east by *Oromia* region, on the south by *Wolayita* zone, on the south-west by *Dawaro* zone. The inhabitants of the zone are primarily ethnic Kembata and Temabro people.

Based on the 2007 Census, the total population of Kembata and Tembaro zone is estimated about 768.3 thousand. The average population density of the zone is 504.3 inhabitants per square kilometer. The zone is marked by a very high population pressure. Kembata commonly called Durame FM community radio station was established in 2000E.c. With legal registration under Ethiopian broadcast authority however the trial program was aired in 2002E.c.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia is among the most affected nations in Africa by internal and external human trafficking problems. As Habtamu cited in US State Department (2008), rural Ethiopian children are trafficked to urban areas for domestic servitude and, less frequently, for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor such as in street vending, begging and traditional weaving. Young women, most with only primary education, are subjected to domestic servitude throughout the Middle East, as well as in Sudan and South Sudan. Many young women transit through Djibouti, Egypt, Somalia, Sudan, Kenya and Yemen as they emigrate for seeking jobs.

Local media like (Debut FM 10.9) claimed that some areas are highly exposed for human trafficking. As commonly thought Kambata and Hadiya zones are highly affected areas by human trafficking due to several reasons. It is real that media coverage of social issues and problems is very important. Habtamu (2015) cited in Kensicki, (2004: 54) explains that “the public gets information about social problems mostly through the media”.

It is understood that media is a powerful tool in influencing public opinion and raising awareness about certain issues. In addition to this, it puts its own impact on the decision and policy makings to societal problems like family health care and human trafficking. In this regard local community radio has its own fundamental role.

The local research conducted on human trafficking in media is confined to the electronic media and its coverage. The study conducted by Ephrem, (2008) on the coverage of human trafficking on the ‘enewaq’ programme of FM 97.1 Radio Station dealt with the coverage of human trafficking only. It didn’t investigate how the radio framed and address human trafficking issues.

In this regard, little research has been done on media and human trafficking in general and the alternative media and human trafficking in particular. As a result, this article is believed to fill the gap how the Durame FM community radio address and frame human trafficking issues.

## 3. Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the Role of Kambata local community radio news/program coverage in addressing human trafficking issues.

#### 4. Research questions

The following research questions are derived directly from the main objective of this study.

1. How was the frequency of the coverage of human trafficking issues in Kembata community radio?
2. What kind of radio program was employed to stop human trafficking?

#### 5. Research Methodology and design

This study design is mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative). According to McMillan (2000), quantitative research will help to presents statistical results represented with numbers; qualitative research presents facts in a narration with word. Therefore, one complements each other for better output. Quantitative data gathered through Document analysis; this is because document analysis can help the study to assess the frequency of issues which are produced by the Durame FM community radio regarding issues of human trafficking.

Qualitative research methods (interview) assist in elaborating answers to questions that needed words with journalists expressing their ideas and experience about human trafficking and how they are framing the agenda for the audience.

The study employed in- depth interviews as supplementary data collection instrument so as to substantiate the study and obtain adequate information and details that quantitative content analysis alone could not provide.

Mytton, (1999: 141) defines as “In depth interviews can provide quite detailed and rich data on individual behavior and attitudes”.

This study has used in- depth interviews in order to collect and get better and deeper understanding of how stories of human trafficking are framed and how the journalists and editor give salience to the issue.

To meet with the objective of the research, the researcher purposely select Durame FM community radio because of their coverage is highly economic, political and social affairs, and their one year program of for the purpose of quantitative data. The findings of the coded data were presented in terms of graphs with their analysis and discussions.

#### 6. Analysis, conclusion and recommendations

The data collected quantitatively and qualitatively through content analysis and in- depth interviews would be presented respectively. The collected data focused on how Durame Community radio gave a coverage on human trafficking issues/stories within the time period from September 2014- August 2015. The data were collected from the radio station which is broadcasted by using coding sheets during the sample period from September 2014- August 2015. Additional data were also collected by using in- depth interviews with journalists. The interviews were conducted to obtain responses that the quantitative content analysis alone could not provide. The results of the content analysis and in- depth interviews are presented at the same time. Thus, the results are compiled and presented in graphs with their appropriate analysis and discussion.

### 6.1. Frequency of the coverage on human trafficking issues in Kembata community radio

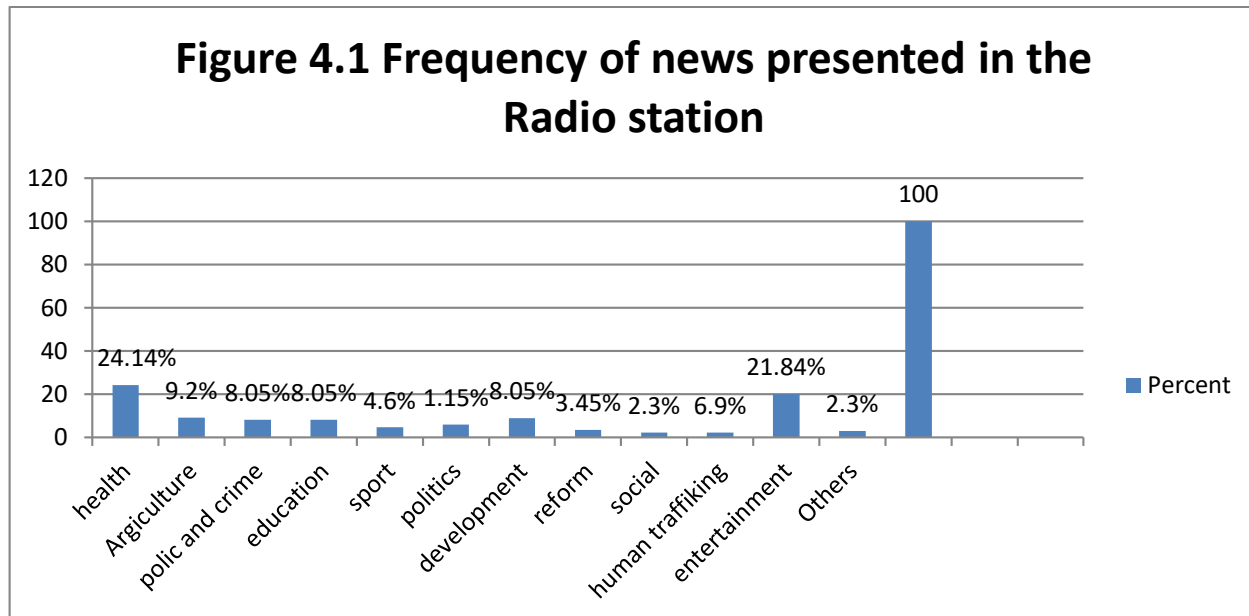


Figure: 1

The finding of the current study indicate an extensively media give focused for health reporting especially community radios. The above figure 4.1 shows majority of the news and programs was broadcasted about health and entertainment stories. 24.14 % were attributed health and related stories are aired while human trafficking and sport accounts less that 7 % of the total released stories.

The above result revealed that dominantly the radio station gave high time for health issues which is 24.14 % followed by entertainment 21.84 %. Eventually, out of the mentioned stories social and others were employed for 2.3 %.

Concerning the frequency of the stories aired in the radio station, the informants of the radio station emphasized that they had used health and related stories dominantly because of getting information from health sector is not difficult like other sectors. Additionally they reasoned that the government policy direction is to mobilize women and children free from any victims. So they are playing to foster the goal of the nation.

Informant 1 said that human trafficking did not get enough coverage like other issues that are being covered by the radio station such as agricultural and health issues. According to him, the factors for the less coverage of the issue are; it doesn't have its own fixed air time, lack of commitment, financial and human resources. He noted that these factors had a direct effect on the quantity and quality of the coverage of the issue during news preparation.

## 6.2. Extent of the Program the Radio's Coverage of Human Trafficking Issues

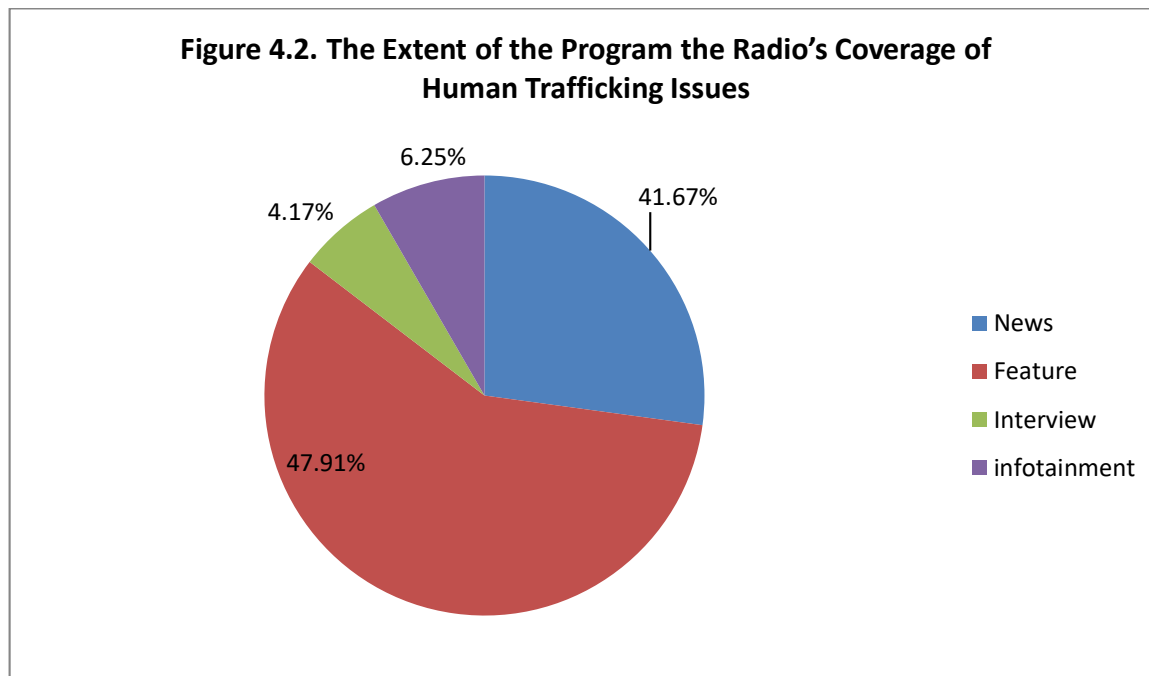


Figure: 2

Out of 330 released news during the time period from September 2014- August 2015, there were 38 stories that were concerned with issues of human trafficking and related issues. As it can be seen above in Figure 4.2, 18 (47.36%) were feature stories including different programs, 13 (34.21%) were presented as news stories, 4 (10.52%) were written as infotainment and 3 (7.89%) were interviews. On the other hand music and dramatic message of human trafficking issues were not employed due to this research delimitation.

From this illustration we can understand that Durame FM community radio human trafficking coverage extents highly dominated by feature types of stories. Feature stories can be timely or timeless mostly with detail story presentation. Human trafficking agendas were also secondly dominant practice of the media through news stories type. While interview and infotainment types of stories were less practiced. According to this numerical data we can explicit that though the frequency of human trafficking issues moderately covered by the media, still the way it presented is not satisfactory. Because, now in this days audiences are familiar about what happening in related to human trafficking. However, the main concern should be; how can mobilize the community to stop such aggravated activities.

In regards of the extent of human trafficking stories, according to informant 2, human trafficking in the newspaper was covered frequently when the problem was highly prevalent that is why news and feature types of stories dominated. She said, "We used to cover human trafficking consistently on the areas which were highly affected by the problem". Furthermore, she noted that covering human trafficking in the program is like a onetime issue. When the problem aggravates, more issues of it are covered. She strongly believes that human trafficking did not get enough coverage in their station. Similarly, Informant 1 stated the same reason as Informant 2 in terms of the factors that had influenced the quality and quantity of human trafficking stories in the newspaper. These are lack of commitment, priority, financial and professional constraints. Most importantly, she stressed that let alone by the community radio stations, the issue of



human trafficking hasn't got attention in the country yet. In addition to this informant 2 reflect that human trafficking victims are not volunteer to be interviewed for radio program. She reason out that they might be blamed by the society if they tell all what they had during being trafficked.

## 7. Summary of the Research

Human trafficking is a great source of worry for many countries in the world today as many of them suffer the effects of it especially in the developing nations. It is seen as a modern day form of slavery which is as dehumanizing and deadly as slavery in the 16<sup>th</sup>. Ethiopia is a source and, to a lesser extent, a destination and transit country for men, women, and children who are subjected to human trafficking. Trafficking in Ethiopia is believed to occur at two levels, there is the internal trafficking of children and young women from rural to urban areas for domestic work and prostitution and secondly, there is that on the international level which constitutes of trafficking of women and children into other African countries and the Middle East predominantly for domestic labor.

Based on the result from document analysis and interview data, the following major findings have been obtained.

- Kembata Tembaro community radio contribute to promote multi perspective approach. However, they do less emphasis for human trafficking issues in their news coverage. While agriculture and health issues have got dominant coverage's. The interview data vivid that journalists gave less emphasis for human trafficking agendas due to limited air time, no scheduled for this issues and because of limited human resource.
- In regarding of dominant radio program employed in the radio station; feature and news types of programs are highly used while interview and infotainment types of radio programs is less covered. In addition to this interview data illustrated that, interview type of radio program had got less coverage due to human trafficking victims are not always volunteer to be interviewed.

**8. Recommendations** – Durame community FM radio must give wider and continuous coverage by providing its own air time and news reporting which can help the media achieving informing, educating and empowering roles of the media. Plus, they shall use primary information providers such as victims, potential migrants and traffickers for human trafficking stories to enable the reporting more strong, authentic and share the severity of human smuggling.

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