

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE STUDIES

CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

**DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM IN ETHIOPIA: EXAMINING THE ETHIOPIAN
BROADCASTING CORPORATION'S WATCHDOGGING ROLE OF FUNDAMENTAL
RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS**

BY: MULUNEH ZEGEYE AGAJE

JUNE 2015

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES OF ADDIS
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JUNE 2015

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that ‘Development Journalism in Ethiopia: Examining the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation’s Watchdogging Role of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms,’ is my own original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The central focus of this study is on assessing the effects of the practice of ‘development journalism’ model of media functioning in the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation on its wider roles as a watchdog in the protection and enhancement of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. Specifically, this thesis attempts to assess the media policy of the country and the programs produced by EBC which fits the watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms in their content with nine key informants’ ideas to show how the development journalism approach in practice has been affecting the quality of EBC’s presentation of human rights issues accurately and persistently.

The study employed mixed approach, both qualitative and quantitative. The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were elicited through in-depth interviews with key informants whereas secondary data were gathered from sources like books, articles, official documents and other pertinent publications. Selected programs produced by EBC-1 were also examined.

After examining the ‘development journalism’ policy documents of a country, ascertaining the view of key informants, content analysis of selected programs of EBC-1 productions and other written documents, the study has come up with the following findings.

The Ethiopian ‘development journalism’ policy document didn’t consider watchdogging role of the EBC (state media) as a noble role that media could play. It considered such media as instrument to achieve development. It framed EBC to stand with government policies and strategies, and initiate the public to participate in development endeavors of the government. The watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms is negatively understood. Hence, most of program presentations in EBC are positively discharged, even though there are many defects in the country which needs to be covered. The EBC’s coverage of human rights issues and ability of entertain diverse opinion is weak. The approach of reporting is also top-down approach. However, the study also showed that EBC has been producing some productions which are playing role in protection and promotion of human rights like Aend Le Aend (one to one) program, and some sessions of its documentary series. But, such programs are subject to frequent interruption and change. Under this situation the challenges like, absence of editorial independence, inadequate budgeting for investigative programs, lack of professional journalists, self-censorship ... preclude EBC from performing watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens.

ACRONYMS

BBC -- British Broadcasting Corporation

BPR -- Business Processing Reengineering

CPJ -- Committee to Protect Journalists

EBC -- Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

EPRDF -- Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front

ERTA -- Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency

ETV -- Ethiopian Television

FDRE -- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GNP -- Growth National Product

GTP -- Growth and Transformation Plan

HF -- House of Federation

HPR -- House of Peoples' Representatives

ICCPR -- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR -- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

ICHRP -- International Council on Human Rights Policy

NIEO -- New International Economic Order

NWICO -- New World Information and Communication Order

OPDO -- Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization

PCIJ -- Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism

PR -- Public Relation

PSB -- Public Service Broadcasting

SABC -- South African Broadcasting Corporation

SEAPA -- Southeast Asian Press Alliance

UDHR -- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNCTAD -- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNESCO -- United Nations Education Science Cultural Organization

US -- United States

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In relation to media and human rights, the media can be expressed as a two sided sword. On the one side ‘the media can play an enormously important role in the protection of human rights through exposing human rights violations and offer an arena for different voices to be heard in public discourse.’¹ Scholars have often characterized the media or the press as being a separate player on behalf of the public against the agencies of power.² In the Northern hemisphere, many parts of the international arena, the mass media are the most important sources of information about human rights violations.³ On the other side ‘the power of the media can be misused to the extent that the very functioning of democracy is threatened’⁴ which leads to serious violation of human rights. Some media outlets have been turned into propaganda megaphones for those in power and others have been used to incite xenophobic hatred and violence against minorities and other vulnerable groups.⁵

Many have endeavored to define the term media. Media is an all-encompassing term referring to the presentation and transmission of information by a multiplicity of outlets (radio, television, print and the Internet).⁶ The media encompasses a range of platforms, including web-based platforms, such as internet sites, and mobile television.⁷ Based on their formation and service delivery there are various kinds of media outlets: state media, public media, commercial media, community media, etc.

Such media ‘can play a number of different roles in society, including informative, educational or entertaining.’⁸ They inform about politics, religion, celebrities, arts, sports, revolutions and wars,

¹ Thomas Hammarberg et al., eds. *Human Rights and a Changing Media Landscape* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2011), 7.

² Sheila S. Coronel, “The Role of the Media in Deepening Democracy,” (2013): 6. And Masudul Biswas, “Media Freedom, Governance and Civil Society,” *Conference Paper*, (2009): 3, <http://www.allacademic.com/one/prol/prol01/index.php?cmd= prol01>

³ International Council on Human Rights Policy, *Journalism, Media and the Challenge of Human Rights Reporting*, (Vernier, Switzerland: ATAR Roto Press SA, 2002), 16.

⁴ Hammarberg et al., *Human Rights and a Changing Media Landscape*, 7.

⁵ Hammarberg et al., *Human Rights and a Changing Media Landscape*, 7.

⁶ ICHRP, *the Challenge of Human Rights Reporting*, 20.

⁷ Justine Limpitlaw, *Media Law Handbook for Southern Africa: Volume 1*, (Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2012), 12.

⁸ Limpitlaw, *Media Law Handbook*, 12.

and most important of all, they are “public watchdogs”.⁹ The public watchdog role of media is fundamental role for democracy and protection of human rights. Making the facts known to the public is often the first, essential step in redressing human rights violations and holding those in power accountable.¹⁰

The core notion of watchdog journalism can be understood to encompass investigating the behavior of the powerful and instigating reports about alleged malfeasance, and as well as disseminating general information about public affairs which was previously hidden from public attention, such as reporting hearings from public inquiries or court prosecutions.¹¹ Watchdog reporting covers an array of malfeasance: from sex and personal scandals to financial wrongdoing, political corruption, enrichment in public office, and other types of wrongdoing.¹²

The role of media as watchdogs of fundamental rights and freedoms of the people varies from country to country based on the development of democracy and theory of media (press) countries apply in relation to their media. Media in the world have been using different theories of media (press).¹³ These include the Authoritarian model, the Libertarian model, the Social Responsibility model, the Soviet-Totalitarian model, and Development model.¹⁴ Development model of the press (media) is the model that has been operational in many developing countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

The rise of the concept of development theory of media (development journalism) is highly attached to the rise of theories of development communication.¹⁵ The discussion about development communication in mid 1940s represents the starting point for development journalism.¹⁶ Development communication is the process of intervening in a systematic or strategic

⁹ Hammarberg et al., *Human Rights and a Changing Media Landscape*, 7.

¹⁰ Hammarberg et al., *Human Rights and a Changing Media Landscape*, 8.

¹¹ Pippa Norris, “Watchdog Journalism,” In *the Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability*, ed. Mark Bovens, Robert E. Goodin, Thomas Schillemans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 528.

¹² Sheila S. Coronel, “Corruption and the Watchdog Role of the News Media,” In *Public Sentinel: News Media & Governance Reform*, ed. Pippa Norris (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2010), 113.

¹³ The ‘Press’ in this sense is similar with ‘the media’.

¹⁴ Alexander G. Flor, *Development Communication: The Fifth Theory of the Press* (Los Banos: University of the Philippines, 1995), 6.

¹⁵ Jackson Banda, “An Appraisal of the Applicability of Development Journalism in the Context of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB),” *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research* 33 (2) (2007): 154.

¹⁶ Christine L. Ogan, “Development Journalism/Communication: The Status of the Concept,” *Gazette*, Vol. 29, (1982): 3-5.

manner with either media (print, radio, television, video, and the internet), or education (training, literacy, schooling) for the purpose of positive economic, personal, spiritual, social, cultural, or political change.¹⁷

Different scholars view development journalism differently. Some consider development journalism as advocacy or propaganda journalism manipulated by governments because they believe journalists mostly depend on government handouts and it is just government says so journalism.¹⁸ Others view development journalism as reporting on ideas, programs, activities and events, which are related to an improvement of the living standard, mainly in the rural regions and it is fit for third world nations to counteract their problem of development.¹⁹ Xu (2009) in his article argues that development journalism still has global value. Xu defines the practice of development journalism through five characteristics: it reports on achievements and shortcomings in development; it focuses on long-term development; it stays independent from government and critiques its leaders; it focuses on development issues while working constructively with the government in nation-building; and it empowers ordinary people.²⁰

Despite the debate among such scholars on development journalism that either development journalism is fit for third world nations to counteract their problems of development or it is just government say so journalism, many developing countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa, including Ethiopia, have been in favor of this journalism model to mobilize the public towards development.

In Ethiopia, development journalism has been officially introduced in recent years after the country adopted democratic developmental state model of government. The Government Communication Affairs Office of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia presented a draft policy document which established development journalism as the official reporting style for the state media²¹ in

¹⁷ Thomas L. McPhail, *Development Communication: Reframing the Role of the Media*, (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009), 3.

¹⁸ Muniruddin, *Journalism Outlines*, (New Delhi: J. K. Kumar publications Pvt. Ltd, 2005)

¹⁹ Jeffrey Wimmer, Susanne Wolf, "Development Journalism Out of Date? An Analysis of its Significance in Journalism Education at African Universities," *Münchener Beiträge zur Kommunikationswissenschaft* Nr. 3, (2005) ; and Fackson Banda, "An Appraisal of the Applicability of Development Journalism in the Context of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB)," *Volume 33, Issue 2*, (2007): 154-170.

²⁰ Xu Xiaoge, "Development Journalism," In *Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2009), 367.

²¹ In Ethiopia it is difficult to identify Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation as Public Media since it is controlled by the government and all its activities characterized it under state media even though, as per proclamation 858/2014, it

order to make the media and journalists play an active role in the country's development scheme.²² The Government adopted 'democratic developmental state political economy'²³ with the purpose of bringing about socioeconomic and political transformation of the country.²⁴ Accordingly, 'the media are entrusted the role of promoting development, democracy and good governance and a new journalism model, i.e. development journalism has been introduced.'²⁵ A development journalism model of communication is a media philosophy of communication operational in the Ethiopian Broadcast Corporation today.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Journalists often fail to adopt a comprehensive approach in reporting human rights abuses.²⁶ Those who strive to reveal hidden truths are generally courageous individuals concerned with protecting the public's right to know.²⁷ International, regional and local journalists and editors are under a professional and moral duty to report and explain human rights issues as precisely as they report in other domains; give the facts, avoid bias, provide context.²⁸ This has not been done well enough and, as a result, audiences that rely on the media to inform them are not in a position to understand or judge properly the actions and policies of governments and other authorities.²⁹

In Ethiopia there is the argument that, the media, especially the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, has often failed to report human rights abuse through a critical or watchdog reporting. Journalism in the state media is guided by 'an official development journalism policy document',³⁰ thus, on ETV's evening news, many stories are development-oriented and much of the remaining

is restructured as corporation (public media). Accordingly, the researcher will use state media and EBC interchangeably.

²² Ethiopian Press Agency, "Our Media's Developmental and Democratic Working Philosophy: Basis and Directions," Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia government policy document (2008).

²³ Democratic developmental state is the political economy which is adopted by Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia government which believes that in every market system, whatever less or more, there is the market limitation or problems and the selective intervention of the government is necessary to solve such limitations of the market.

²⁴ Negeri Lencho, "Communicating for Development and Democratization in Ethiopia: Journalistic Practices and Challenges," (Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2012): 124.

²⁵ Negeri, "Communicating for Development and Democratization in Ethiopia," 126.

²⁶ Victoria Chioma Nwankwo, "The Role of the Media in Promoting Human Rights: An Analysis of the BBC Documentary, 'Chocolate: The Bitter Truth'," (M.A. Thesis: University of Gothenburg, 2011), 3.

²⁷ McPhail, *Development Communication*, 2.

²⁸ ICHRP, *the Challenge of Human Rights Reporting*, 23.

²⁹ ICHRP, *the Challenge of Human Rights Reporting*, 25.

³⁰ Ethiopian Press Agency, "Our Media's Developmental and Democratic Working Philosophy: Basis and Directions," Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia government policy document (2008).

programs are devoted to ‘soft’ critical contents rather than ‘hard’.³¹ Very often, the ruling government has repeatedly expressed that lack of good governance, corruption and rent seeking are obstacles for the country’s rapid growth and sources for the abuse of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. In such situation, the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation can help decrease these obstacles if it performs its watchdog role accurately and consistently. While the Ethiopian Broadcast Corporation has occasionally produced critical stories, they are mostly against specific government officials (through One to One (*Aend Le Aend*, for example) and other non-governmental institutions (through documentary series). But, the EBC has never produced critical programs against the central government administration. The watchdog or investigative role of the media has been severely suppressed in the name of the ‘greater good’, reporting on development issues.

It has been argued that the reason behind the limitations of watchdog reporting on fundamental rights and freedoms is the policy of development journalism that the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation follows. In Africa development journalism is a relatively vague concept charged with political rhetoric and that the press is largely elite-oriented with little relevance to the interests of the masses.³² The term development journalism is popularly used in developing countries where the state controls the media and discourages objective reporting of voices critical of government policies and practices.³³ Accordingly, a government can also use the idea of “development” to restrict freedom of speech for journalists, however, journalists are told not to report on certain issues because it will impact the “development” of the nation in question, and therefore citizens are not actually being given access to the whole picture.

But, the professional aspect of developmental journalism puts a duty on journalists to critically examine and evaluate the relevance of development project to national and local needs, the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation, and the difference between

³¹ Terjs S. Skjerdal, “Revealing the Political Bias in Media Content: Analysis of a Documentary on Ethiopian State Television,” *African Journal of communication*, Vol.1, no.2 (2013): 255.

³² Jerry Komia Domatob and Stephen William Hall (1983), *Development Journalism in Black Africa*,

³³ Kunczik (1995: p. 84), cited in Jeffrey Wimmer, Susanne Wolf (2005), *Development journalism out of date? An analysis of its significance in journalism education at African universities*, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich.

its impact on people as claimed by government officials and as it actually is.³⁴ Yet, the experience has been quite different.

Negeri Lencho (2012), in the study which assessed the practice and challenges of development journalism in media institutions in Ethiopia, said that the practice of development journalism is a good beginning in promoting socioeconomic development basically by practitioners of the government-owned media institutions where development journalism model has been officially embraced. However, the journalistic practices in promoting good governance and democratization seems to be insignificant compared to other development contents. Skjerdal stated that the implementation of development journalism in Ethiopia appears to repeat some of the troubles of development journalism elsewhere.³⁵ Dejene Tesemma (2010) tried examine the Dejene Tesemma (2010) examined how development reporting is practiced in Addis Zemen in light of the claims of the contemporary development journalism theories and the role of media should play in development. Accordingly, Dejene concluded that ‘development reporting in Addis Zemen is commonly government-centered, uncritical and excessively soft option oriented’.³⁶ Abdulaziz Dino (2010) also assessed the level of acceptability as well as the level of implementation of development journalism by Radio Ethiopia. To Abdulaziz ‘development journalism is well accepted as relevant and essential to the media, and hence, to Ethiopia yet it is misrepresented by deconstructing and then reconstructing it in a way it loses its widely accepted version which allow significant amount of criticality’.³⁷

Bereket Yeheyeh (2012) conducted his study on the practice of investigative journalism in the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA), focusing on the *Aynachin* Program.³⁸ Actually this program is not among the programs aired by Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation today (2015). Bereket found that the program has observed some ethical problems like intervening and excessive use of ambush interview and coming up with sketchy information that is below the

³⁴ Narinder Agarwal, “What is Development News?” *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1979):181, Quoted in Wimmer and Wolf, “Development Journalism Out of Date?” 2.

³⁵ Terje S. Skjerdal, “Development Journalism Revived: The Case of Ethiopia,” *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 32(2) (2011): 58.

³⁶ Dejene Tesemma, “Promoting Development Journalism in State Media: The Case of Addis Zemen News Paper,” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis: Addis Ababa University, 2010).

³⁷ Abdulaziz Dino, “Acceptability and Implementation of Development Journalism,” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis: Addis Ababa University, 2010).

³⁸ Bereket Yeheysh, “The Practice of Investigative Journalism in the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency,” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis: Addis Ababa University, 2012).

people's expectation. The other study is an inquiry into the perception of Ethiopian journalists with regard to the watchdog role of journalism by Befrdu Weldeamanuel (2012). Befrdu found in his study that journalists perceive watchdog journalism as western literature portrays it, 'to be the public's eye in monitoring and exposing power abuse, maladministration, and corruption, to serve as a check and balance on the government or a fourth estate to monitor the three branches of the government.' Befrdu recommended that watchdog journalism needs redefining in our context to play the role in the realm of development journalism although he didn't explain in what context we shall redefine watchdog journalism.

Most of the available literature on the practice of development journalism, especially in investigative reporting, in Ethiopia presented that the practice does not fit the real concept of development journalism. There is call from literatures that a balance in reporting has to be maintained in the Ethiopian development journalism practices by stating that the public does not like both extremes, i.e. only positive or only negative stories. There is, however, little effort on the part of literatures to assess the practice of development journalism in state media in Ethiopia in light of the roles of such media as watchdogs of fundamental rights and freedoms. This study has been instigated to fill this gap in the state of knowledge in the field.

Hence, in light of the multifaceted problems of the media in relation to the successful discharge of their role and on the basis of the actual problems that beset the sector in Ethiopia, this paper endeavors to assess the impact of the practice of development journalism model of media functioning in the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation on its wider roles as a watchdog in the protection and enhancement of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens.

1.3. General and Specific Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the functioning of the media through a case study of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, identify if state media journalism in Ethiopia could be labeled as development journalism and eventually investigate if this model equips the institution to play its watchdog role in protecting and enhancing fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens.

Other specific objectives of the study are to:

- ✓ Identify the basic principles of development journalism both generally and as applied in Ethiopia;

- ✓ Assess the diverse opinion entertaining capacity of the EBC;
- ✓ Examine the impact of the practice of development journalism in Ethiopia on the quality of EBC's presentation of human rights issues through its watch dog role;
- ✓ Scrutinize the specific challenges, if any, which precluded the EBC from playing its watchdog role of fundamental rights and freedoms.

1.4. Research Questions

The key research question this paper intends to answer is whether and how the media's watchdog role of fundamental rights and freedoms has been practiced within the framework of the development journalism model of communications policy in the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. The paper also intends to answer the following questions:

- ✓ What are the basic principles of development journalism, as applied in Ethiopia?
- ✓ To what extent do the practice of development journalism in Ethiopia affect the quality of EBC's presentation of human rights issues through its watchdog role?
- ✓ How is the capacity and working procedures of the Ethiopian Broadcast Corporation in entertaining diverse opinions?
- ✓ What are the challenges, if any, in Ethiopia that have hitherto precluded the EBC from playing its watchdog role in promoting and protecting fundamental rights and freedoms?

1.5. Research Methodology

In analyzing the EBC's watch-dogging role of protecting and promoting fundamental rights and freedoms through the practice of development journalism in Ethiopia, the study has employed both quantitative and qualitative approach. It is possible to triangulate qualitative research with quantitative research method.³⁹ Accordingly, the study examines both primary and secondary data through these approach.

Quantitative approach was used to analyze the data collected through content analysis of news, documentaries and *aend le aend* (one to one) program of EBC in figures and percentages while a qualitative method (interview) was employed to gather information on the issue. So as to extensively assess the EBC's watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms, content

³⁹Bryan, A., *Quantity and Quality in social research* (London: Rutledge, 1988).

analysis has been used in the study. As Berger (1998) points out content analysis is an approach that aims at measuring the extent of an issue in a representative sampling of some mass mediated popular art form.⁴⁰ Accordingly, content analysis as one method of qualitative approach is employed in this study in addition to interview.

In this context, the inquiry would be directed at examining the EBC's watch-dog role of protecting fundamental rights and freedoms through the practice of developmental journalism in Ethiopia; the approach examined documents, news, documentary programs, regular and especial programs, and other related programs produced by the EBC and conducted interviews with experts, professional journalists, editors and reporters.

1.5.1. Sources of Data

This study employed both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from experts, professional journalists and from government officials by conducting interviews. Secondary data was gathered from books, journals, reports, news, documentaries, and regular and special programs produced by the EBC and internet sources.

1.5.2. Methods of Data Collection and analysis

Participant observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, focus groups and qualitative examination of texts are data collection tools often used in qualitative research.⁴¹ Analysis of text like (spoken word, visual representations, written texts, and artifacts) is the other method used in qualitative research.⁴² From these, interviews and examination of texts, program structures, contents and dissemination methods have been the main data collection tools which employed in this study.

In this context, the researcher has conducted interviews with experts from Addis Ababa University's Graduate School of Journalism and Communication, with government officials in various agencies, with opposition political parties and civil society organizations. The in-depth

⁴⁰ Berge, A., *Media Research Techniques* (London: SAGA Publication, 1998)

⁴¹ Ritchie, Jane and Lewis, Jane, *Qualitative Research practice; A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2003).

⁴² Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods, *Textual Analysis*, (The SEGA publications, 2008), quoted in Yitayew Alemayehu and Wondemegegn Tedesse, *Human Rights Research: A Practical Guidebook on Methodology and Methods*, (Center for Human Rights: Addis Ababa University, 2013), 128.

interviews have enabled the researcher to get a detailed understanding of the watch-dog roles of the EBC and its failures in doing so in its years of practice of developmental journalism in Ethiopia. The researcher has also undertaken reviews and analysis of secondary documents as one way of data collection; adequate caution has been exercised to ensure compliance with requirements of ‘reliability, adequacy and suitability’ to the study undertaken.⁴³

1.5.3. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The technique employed to select the key informants has been what is called ‘purposive sampling’ - a technique in which respondents are selected on the basis of certain predefined criteria. This technique has been selected by the researcher since it enables to identify participants who have closer connection to and knowledge of the subject matter under investigation. When the total number of individual interviews is larger than 50, the quality of data collection method and analysis becomes difficult.⁴⁴ In line with this presupposition, the researcher has conducted interviews with a sizeable number to the extent that the objectives of research will be realized.

The researcher also used purposive sampling to select the EBC productions. It was impossible to assess all documented productions existing in EBC library. The researcher decided to focus the EBC documented productions which fit or related to watchdog role in their content. The assessment of programs includes the documented productions starting from July 2014, in which ERTA is officially reformed as EBC as per proclamation No 858/2014 ratified by House of Peoples’ Representatives (HPRs), up to March 2015.

The three months, January, February and March, news produced by EBC were assessed. The reason why researcher is interested in those recent three month news is because of three reasons. First, this recent news truly reflects the current status of news in playing their watchdog role of fundamental rights and freedoms since the EBC is changing after time to time. Secondly, because of the time and other related resources, and being difficult to manage, it is difficult to assess all seven month news productions of EBC. Thirdly, as the researcher is one of individuals who watch the day to day news of EBC, he understand that most of the issues covered in EBC news are not as such fit watchdogging function in their content. The seven months of ‘*fit le fit*’ (face to face)/

⁴³ C.R. Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*, (2nd eds), (New Age International (P) Ltd. Publishers, 2004).

⁴⁴ Ritchie and Lewis, *Qualitative Research practice*, 26.

now ‘*aend le aend*’ (one to one) weekly program is assessed. Since the content of this program is more critical, all production produced in seven months are the subject of this study. EBC also produced the most critical documentaries within this seven months. Accordingly, the documentaries which fit watchdog role in their content were assessed.

1.5.4. Coding process

The coding process was conducted by three individuals; one graduate student in human rights, one who have MA in human rights and one who have MA in journalism and communication. The coders will be given the coding sheet in close ended answers; yes or no. the questions were developed from literatures such as Semetko, A., and Valkenburg, P. (2000) in line with the human rights issues.

1.5.5. Reliability and Validity

Inter-coder reliability was assessed through Holistic formula where:

$$3*M/ (N1+N2+N3)$$

- ✓ M represents the number of coding decisions on which the three coders agreed.
- ✓ N1, N2 and N3 shows the total numbers of coding decisions by the first, second and third coders respectively.
- ✓ The inter-coder reliability across all categories ranges from 1.0 to 0.91 for all selected news, anid le anid program and documentaries that were coded by the three coders.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the assessment of the watchdog role of the EBC in its practice of development journalism in Ethiopia. A detailed presentation of other roles of such media is therefore, beyond the scope of the study. What is more, the private media and the potential roles or limitations it may have in relation to the issues framed in this research have not been included within the scope of this study.

1.7. Significance of the Study

The watchdog role of the media is crucial in promoting and protecting human rights. It brings out human right violations to the public and assists in creating a culture of civic discourse, transparency, and government accountability. It helps to shape public opinion against corrupt governments and generate public hostility against those who abuse the rights of citizens. The study, inspired by such considerations, could help to comprehend the status of watchdog role of the EBC in the particular context of policies and actual functioning of the sector in Ethiopia.

This will help in understanding the place of watchdog role of journalism in general and whether the EBC and its practice of development journalism in Ethiopia could and has in fact served such lofty objectives. The study could as well be used as a source of data for further investigations on the issues under investigated.

1.8. Limitations

The study has focused only on some selected productions of EBC from July 2014 to March 2015. Hence, by just analysing such selected programs in this specific period may give a general highlight about the EBC's general watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms but still may lack to conclude or generalize about the whole activities of the organization in past years. The other limitation is some of the documentaries and one edition of one to one (*aend le aend*) weekly program were not found in the EBC archives and their absence might have impact on some of the results. During conducting interview, because of bureaucratic structure problems, the researcher didn't find limited number of informants. Even though it is impossible to say that it adversely affect the validity of the study, it may have its own effect on the results of the study.

1.9. Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the background, preliminary literature review, research problem, research objectives and questions, methodology, sources of data, methods of data collection, significance as well as scope of the study. The second chapter emphasizes on major roles of public media, and possible effects of development journalism on the traditional role of such institutions as watch dogs of fundamental rights and freedoms.

Chapter three deals with Ethiopia's state media journalism and whether it really fits into the embrace of development journalism. Chapter four presents the empirical investigations related to

problems of the practice of development journalism in Ethiopia in playing its watch dog roles of protecting fundamental rights and freedoms. Programs produced by the EBC would be analyzed in terms content to check if they fit the standards of watch-dogging role. News, documentaries, and one to one (*aend le aend*) programs would be thoroughly scrutinized, attended by information obtained through interview analyses. Chapter five deals with some overarching challenges of EBC in its practice of watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms. Finally, a brief conclusion and recommendations are be provided under chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PUBLIC MEDIA: EFFECTS OF ‘DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM’ MODEL ON THEIR ROLES AS WATCH DOGS OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

2.1. Public Media in Brief

Actually, it is difficult to find the media which really fit the characteristics of public media in Ethiopia. Most importantly, after ERTA is restructured as EBC per proclamation 858/2014 in July, EBC has been on the way of establishing itself to Public Service Broadcasting. Some individuals, especially from government side, use public media and EBC interchangeably. Accordingly, brief explanation about public media is important.

Most often, the concept of public media and the state or government media are overlapping, especially in the developing world. However, the concept of public media does not necessarily refer to state or government media owned by such structures, financed out of public money and directly controlled by them. The concepts of public media or Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) have been portrayed in different literatures. The UNESCO Media Development Indicators (2008) defines Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) as:

*Broadcasting media, financed and controlled by the public, for the public. It is neither commercial nor state-owned. It is free from political interference and pressure from commercial forces. Through PSB, citizens are informed, educated and also entertained. When guaranteed with pluralism, programming diversity, editorial independence, appropriate funding, accountability and transparency, public service broadcasting can serve as a cornerstone of democracy.*⁴⁵

Other literatures also explain the concept of public media or Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) as ‘media that produce and transmit public-interest content, are funded by the state or the public and have boards appointed by public bodies.’⁴⁶ Public media are commonly defined as non-commercial, publicly funded broadcast outlets with a mission to meet the civic and educational needs of the community or broader public.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ UNESCO Media Development Indicators, *Indicators of PSB*, (UNESCO, 2008), 54, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001631/163102e.pdf> (accessed on April 13, 2015)

⁴⁶ Hammarberg et al., *Human Rights and a Changing Media Landscape*, 135.

⁴⁷ Barbara Cochran, “Rethinking Public Media: More Local, More Inclusive, More Interactive,” *A White Paper on the Public Media Recommendations of the Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy*, The Aspen Institute, Washington, D.C., U.S.A. (2010): 3.

2.2. Major Roles of Public Media

Since public media are media that produce and transmit public-interest content, are funded by the state or the public and have boards appointed by public bodies, many such institutions are established under a proclamation or charter with the specifically listed mandates of promoting public purposes.

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) were two important media firms selected by the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency as bench marks while undertaking Business Processing Reengineering (BPR) in 2009. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has the mandates of promoting public interest and purposes as listed under the Royal Charter which established the BBC.⁴⁸ Accordingly, the BBC's main activities shall be to achieve these objectives by means of television, radio and online services, as well as related services that provide information, education and entertainment.⁴⁹ The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) consists of two separate operational entities, a public service and a commercial service which are separately administered.⁵⁰ The public service provided by the South Africa Broadcast Corporation must, among others, provide significant news and public affairs programming which meets the highest standards of journalism, as well as fair and unbiased coverage, impartiality, balance and independence from government, commercial and other interests.⁵¹

Naturally, public media has many functions as portrayed in many literatures. It serves different and crucial function: as a form of communication for assessing and resolving differences, challenging entrenched or unjust powers, and generally to create and inform civic action;⁵² providing education, entertainment, information.⁵³

In general one can conclude that 'most public broadcasting services have a threefold mandate to inform, educate, and entertain, and rest on the basic principles of universality, diversity and

⁴⁸ Broadcasting copy of Royal Charter for the continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation, article 3, (2006).

⁴⁹ Article 5 of the Royal Charter.

⁵⁰ Section 9 of chapter IV of the Broadcasting Act of 1999 (as amended in 2002 and 2009) of Republic of South Africa.

⁵¹ Section 10 of chapter IV of the Broadcasting Act of 1999 (as amended in 2002 and 2009) of Republic of South Africa.

⁵² Pat Aufderheide and Jessica Clark, *Frequently Asked Questions: Public Media*, (Center for Social Media, School of Communication: American university, Washington, D.C., nd), 6.

⁵³ Ayesha Sadaf, "Public Perception of Media Role," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 1 No.5 (2011): 229.

independence.’⁵⁴ Within these labels fall a range of specific functions that extend to public watchdogging roles, detective roles, public education roles, and roles as relating to the strengthening of democracy and good governance.

According to Limpitlaw (2012), the public watchdog role can take many forms depending on the nature of the medium concerned and on the state of democracy and development in a particular country; they provide information – or become the ‘eyes and ears’ of the public in monitoring what is happening in public life by reporting on daily events as they unfold. Watchdog reporting in modern society includes reporting on government, reporting on economic developments, and reporting on social issues. The detective role of the media deals with journalistic investigations into wrongdoing in the administration of public affairs. This ‘media as detective’ role is evidenced when the press is able to engage in fairly long-term, detailed, in-depth investigative journalism – the kind that is able to report to the public on large-scale systematic wrongdoing by public (or private) officials, which may include nepotism, corruption, fraud or other kinds of criminality. The public educating role of the media focuses on informing the adult population about a wide range of educational topics, including nutrition, health (especially in relation to diseases such as HIV and Aids, malaria and diabetes), basic money management and budgeting, developments in agriculture, child care, etc. On the other hand, the media’s role in the areas of advocating democracy and good governance dwells on media comments on issues of the day and advocates improved democratic practices and good governance. This role is closely linked to the watchdog role of the media; however, it goes further. The media in this regard advocates not only on what is happening, but also on what should be happening.

It is from such broader roles of the public media that this research has endeavored to examine the possible roles of the media as watchdogs of fundamental rights and freedoms of people in the Ethiopian context as well.

2.3. The Media’s Specific Roles in Promoting Human Rights

Following the horrible events of the two devastating world wars which were by massive violations of human rights, the issue of human rights has become one of the most contemporary issues across the globe. The UN Charter adopted in 1945 was the first international document to recognize the

⁵⁴ UNESCO Sector of Communication and Information Division of Communication Development, *Public Broadcasting Why? How?* (Paris Cedex, 2001), 11-13.

protection and promotion of human rights as an obligation to be carried out by individuals as well as states.⁵⁵ The subsequent adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, and the subsequent adoption of two covenants, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1966 by the United Nations General Assembly turned the issue of human rights into the main agenda in the policy setting of states across the globe. In addition to effort of the UN, states have been the main actors in the promotion and protection of human rights. They remain under obligation to safeguard human rights. Unfortunately, states are often the very abusers of the rights of the citizens they are required to protect.⁵⁶

In fact, despite the existence of international human rights instruments, countless human rights violations occur across the globe. Violations are committed by states (government) or non-state actors through direct involvement or indirectly when they consent to such violations.⁵⁷ In such processes, the media plays significant role by disclosing violations to the concerned body and to the world community at large.

Of course strictly speaking, the media have no legal obligation to cover and report or promote human rights to the public unless specifically mandated by a national legislation. This is because under international law, ‘human rights are drawn vertically, not horizontally, which means that international human rights law places all the legal duties on states and creates a few or no private duties.’⁵⁸ Therefore, it has been argued that there is no legal ground to claim that the media has an obligation to disclose human rights issues.

However, there are also positions that argue that the media can involve in promoting human rights. First, at the international level, most large media organizations are government owned.⁵⁹ Hence, states, as duty bearers of international human rights instruments, have the obligation and the opportunity to use the media as a vehicle in their effort to the promotion and protection of human rights. Second, it is important to note that everyone has a moral responsibility to engage actively

⁵⁵ Langley, W., *Encyclopedia of human rights issues since 1945*, (West Port: Greenwood Press, 1999)

⁵⁶ Hakemulder, J. Ac De Jonge, F & Singh, P., *Mass media*, (New Delhi: Ammol Publications, 1998)

⁵⁷ Nwankwo, “The Role of the Media in Promoting Human Rights,” 2.

⁵⁸ John H. Knox, “Horizontal Human Rights Law,” *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 102, No.1, *American Society of International Law*, (2008): 1.

⁵⁹ Simeon Djankov, “Who Owns the Media?” *Journal of Law and Economics*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2003): 341.

in the enforcement, protection and promotion of human rights.⁶⁰ Accordingly, journalists as individuals and the media as institution have the responsibility to promote and protect human rights.

In recent times, it is not uncommon to see that a stream of international media groups report human right violations through their news and documentaries. One reason for the growing interest of the media on human rights issues is because of the fact that many governments and international institutions have integrated human rights principles in to their policy frameworks. The importance of the attention given to human rights by the media is noteworthy because their coverage highlights the level of abuses occurring throughout the world.⁶¹ When the media is free to reveal human rights violations, it will enhance the confidence of individuals that violations will not go unpunished.

The media can develop the knowledge of people about basic human rights which builds the people confidence in claiming those basic human rights, self-respect and respect for others. An essential prerequisite for the realization of human rights is popular awareness and support for the universally accepted human rights norms and standards by each and every individual.⁶² Media involvement has a great deterrence effect on both the government and any other body who may have an intention or a plan to violate human rights.⁶³ Hence, media can play the great role for the promotion and protection of human rights.

But it also has to be borne in mind that this typical role of the media is directly or indirectly subjected to the underlying philosophies of each political economy and theories of the press (media) which states may wish to implement in any given setting. Needless to state that the media does not operate on the same underlying assumptions and foundational basis when acting within the value framework of authoritarian theories of the media, libertarian, communist or social responsibility doctrines of the media or other approaches which dedicate the media as a means of ‘development communication’. In light of the particular setting and operation of the state media in Ethiopia, the subject of investigation in the following parts will dwell on last theory and possible

⁶⁰ The preamble of UDHR (1948), claims the moral obligation of everyone by stating that every individual and every organ of society has to keep the declaration in mind and shall strive by teaching and education to promote and respect for the rights and freedoms provided under the declaration.

⁶¹ Cole (2000), quoted in Nwankwo, “The Role of the Media in Promoting Human Rights,” 2.

⁶² Hannah Arendt, “Human Rights awareness,” (nd), <http://www.hrawareness.org/>, (accessed on February, 23/2015).

⁶³ Seble Teweldebirhan, “The Role of Media in the Promotion of Human Rights in Ethiopia,” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis: Faculty of Law and Governance, Addis Ababa University, 2011)

roles or limitations of development journalism in fulfilling above stated human rights objectives of the media in general.

2.4. Development Journalism

2.4.1. Historical Evolution

The historical development of development journalism is highly attached to the evolution of the Theory of Development Communication in the mid-1940s.⁶⁴ The conceptual basis of developmental journalism heavily relies on development communication theories.⁶⁵ Banda (2007) argues that the theory of development communication can be postulated in three historical moments; Modernization Paradigm, Dependency-Dissociation paradigm and the ‘Multiplicity’ or ‘Another Development’ paradigm, each with its own basic assumptions.⁶⁶

The Modernization Paradigm which originated from the works of earlier scholars, Daniel Lerner, Everett Rogers and Wilbur Schramm, and which dominated the period from about 1945 to 1965, argues that poor nations could be developed by persuading individual citizens to adopt presumably more efficient Western traditions and values.⁶⁷ Development was then seen as an evolution from the traditional to the modern life practices whereby Western economies were considered the models for other countries to emulate.⁶⁸ The paradigm in this regard identified development communication as an engine of change from the ‘traditional’ to the ‘modern’ society and mass media was seen as the most important tool in influencing, persuading and motivating individual citizens in the underdeveloped world to copy the Western ideologies of development.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Banda, “An Appraisal of the Applicability of Development Journalism,” 155, Skjerdal, “Development Journalism Revived,” 61, Xiaoge Xu, “Development Journalism,” In *the Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. Jorgensen K. and Hanitzsch T. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 357, and Loo, E., “Best Practices of Journalism in Asia,” (Singapore: Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, 2009).

⁶⁵ Thulani Tshabangu, “Development Journalism in Zimbabwe: Practice, Problems, and Prospects,” *Journal of Development and Communication Studies* Vol. 2. Nos. 2/3 (2013): 313, <http://www.devcomsjournalmw.org>. (Accessed on March 17, 2015)

⁶⁶ Banada, “An Appraisal of the Applicability of Development Journalism,” 155.

⁶⁷ Banada, “An Appraisal of the Applicability of Development Journalism,” 156, and Eva Solomon, “Development Journalism and Gender: A Case Study of Broadcasting Media in Tanzania,” (PhD Dissertation, der Freien Universität Berlin, 2014), 11.

⁶⁸ Banada, “An Appraisal of the Applicability of Development Journalism,” 158.

⁶⁹ Banda, 2, and Quebral, N., “Development Communication in the Agricultural Context,” *Asian Journal of Communication* 16 (1) (2006): 102.

The practice however faced major criticisms because of its top-down approach to development.⁷⁰ The people concerned were not involved in the identification, implementation and evaluation of their own development needs and plans, and this leads to another paradigm, the Dependency Dissociation.

Dependency-Dissociation paradigm is associated with the elevation of the aspirations of the newly independent nations of the Third World for political, economic and cultural self-determination and an ideological distancing from Western forms of modernization.⁷¹ To achieve these aspirations, the Third World countries forwarded developmental proposals through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which gave birth to the New International Economic Order (NIEO) in 1974.⁷² In 1974, the United Nations adopted The Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) which aimed at promoting the development interests of Third World countries by improving their terms of trade and increasing development assistance.⁷³ From the perspective of communication, the NIEO focused on the debate about the poor and almost the non-existent role of the Third World media systems in the global flow of information.⁷⁴ This debate resulted in the establishment of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in the late 1970s.⁷⁵ It is often argued that the popularity development journalism gained in Africa in the 1970s was closely connected to the movements of the NIEO and NWICO.⁷⁶ Skjerdal stated the growing popularity of development journalism in 1970s and 1980s must be seen in conjunction with the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) debate;

For the media, the NWICO was an impetus to revert the news flow (with the view to challenge northern dominance); reorient the media content (focusing on stories which had genuine relevance for developing countries); transform the presentation style (emphasizing processes and dialogue instead of breaking news); and reorganize the structural outlook of the media (rather than serving

⁷⁰ Solomon, "Development Journalism and Gender," 12.

⁷¹ Servaes J., "Multiple Perspectives on Development Communication," In *Development and communication in Africa*, ed. Charles C. Okigbo & Festus Eribo (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 56.

⁷² Breda Pavlic and Cees J. Hamelink, *the New International Economic Order: Links between Economics and Communications*, (Paris, France: UNESCO, 1985), 48.

⁷³ Ulla Carlsson, *The Rise and Fall of NWICO: From a Vision of International Regulation to a Reality of Multilevel Governance*, (Nordicom, Göteborg University, nd), 39.

⁷⁴ Solomon, "Development Journalism and Gender," 13.

⁷⁵ Melkote, S. R. & Steeves, H. L., *Communication for development in the third world: Theory and practice for empowerment*. (2nd ed), (London: Sage publications, 2001), 114.

⁷⁶ Xu, "Development Journalism," 340.

*as an isolated fourth estate, the media should work together with other parties in society for national development). In practical terms, the NWICO's media philosophy became manifested in development journalism.*⁷⁷

This paradigm of development journalism gained both academic and political support in the 1970s not only in Asia (Philippines, India, Singapore, Malaysia, China, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Nepal) but also in Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Zaire, Kenya and Tanzania) and Latin America (Bolivia, Columbia).⁷⁸

In Africa, however, the reporting style of development journalism had been practiced earlier, though not under the brand of development journalism per se.⁷⁹ Indeed, the revolutionary journalism philosophy promoted in the 1960's by Africa's first independent leader Kwame Nkrumah has been viewed as an early form of development journalism.⁸⁰ Yet, development journalism in Africa was often dismissed as simply amounting to mouthpiece of ruling governments.⁸¹ On the contrary, in many Asian countries, development journalism was credited for constructively criticizing the government in development processes.⁸²

Consequently, the third paradigm emerged: the Multiplicity Paradigm which capitalizes on the notion of participatory communication based on the Participatory Communication Approach of Development Communication Theory.⁸³ As to Banda, this represents an approach which sets forth the importance of the cultural identity of local communities. It stresses the value of democratization and participation at all levels. It points to a development strategy which is not merely inclusive of, but largely emanating from, the traditional receivers. Central to this model are the concepts of participation, cultural identity and empowerment as well as the Freirian⁸⁴ notions of dialogical communication.”⁸⁵

⁷⁷ Skjerdal, “Development Journalism Revived,” 60.

⁷⁸ Solomon, “Development Journalism and Gender,” 12.

⁷⁹ Skjerdal, “Development Journalism Revived,” 61.

⁸⁰ Domatob, J.K. and S.W. Hall, “Development Journalism in Black Africa,” *International Communication Gazette* 31(1983): 9, and Kwame Nkrumah, *the African journalist*, (Dar-Salaam: Tanzanian, 1965), quoted in Skjerdal, “Development Journalism Revived,” 60.

⁸¹ Domatob and Hall, “Development Journalism in Black Africa,” 15.

⁸² Xu, “Development Journalism,” 382.

⁸³ Melkote and Steeves, *Communication for Development in the Third World*, 220.

⁸⁴ The Brazilian born Paulo Freire was an educator and a progressive humanist. He is renowned for his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* published in the 1970s.

⁸⁵ Banada, “An Appraisal of the Applicability of Development Journalism,” 158.

2.4.2. Important Facets of Development Journalism

Following the above approach to development communication, some scholars depict development journalism as ‘an intellectual enterprise in which the journalist should form a kind of free intelligence, critically examine the aims of national development and the applicable instruments in a rational discourse and solve them by reasonable criteria free of social constraints.’⁸⁶

Since development journalism emerged out of the idea of development itself, it is important to start the analyses in this sub-section by briefly surveying the controversial idea of ‘development’.

Melkote and Steeves (2001) base their examination of development on three major perspectives; *modernization, critical, and liberation*. In the modernization perspective of the 1950s and 1960s, development was seen as modeling the Western economic growth with emphasis on the use of modern technologies which was focused on economic growth based on neo-classical economic theory. In the critical perspective, which challenges the modernization perspective and is based on Marxist theory, development was seen as the restructuring of political and economic systems so as to produce even distribution of rewards in society. And the liberation perspective, which is more spiritual than economic, regards development as a process of liberation from injustice, discrimination and oppression. In this approach, liberation is believed to be a key to empowerment and self-reliance and hence, development.

Rogers (1983) states development as a widely participatory process of social change in a society intended to bring about social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment.

The most inclusive and friendly with human rights definition of development was proffered by Amartya Sen’s (2000) famous work, *Development as Freedom*. According to Sen, the central part of the exercise of development is overcoming persistent poverty, unfulfilled elementary needs, occurrence of famines and widespread hunger, violation of elementary political freedoms as well as of basic liberties, extensive neglect of the interest and agency of women and worsening threats to our environment and to the sustainability of our economic and social lives. Development can be

⁸⁶ Michael Kunczik, *Concepts of Journalism North and South* (Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert- Stiftung, 1986), 270, quoted in Wimmer and Wolf, “Development journalism out of date?” 2.

seen as a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy... Growth of GNP or of individual income can, of course, be very important as means to expanding the freedoms enjoyed by the members of the society. But freedoms depends also on other determinants, such as social and economic arrangements...⁸⁷

The central concept of the different definitions of development is “human development”. As to the United Nation document, human development is measured by life expectancy, adult literacy, access to all three levels of education, as well as people’s average income, which is a necessary condition of their freedom of choice.⁸⁸ In a broader sense, though, the notion of ‘human development incorporates all aspects of individuals’ well-being, from their health status to their economic and political freedom.’⁸⁹ It is in this context that this thesis approaches the issue - a human perspective to development which makes development as part of human rights.

As the notion of development itself has varied definitions, this implicitly makes development journalism too to be subjected to varied definitions and hence exhibit slightly different facets.

Development journalism has been attributed different meanings by different practitioners and in this line, the practice of development journalism has different nomenclatures.⁹⁰ Some call it ‘development journalism’ whereas others call it ‘developmental journalism’.⁹¹ In fact, the use of these terms depends on the context of the journalism practice. Anyways, it is wise to note that the development journalism model has very wide scope which deals with all issues related to development.

As to Ogan (1980), development journalism has at least two conceptual meanings; as development support communication and as evaluative and critical of government development programs.⁹² As to the first, Ogan defines development journalism as referring to the communication process used only to serve the development goals of the government in power, and in this context the authoritarian press theory is operative. The rationale for government control of development

⁸⁷ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, (New York: Anchor Books, 200), 4.

⁸⁸ Tatyana P. Soubbotina, *Beyond Economic Growth: An Introduction to Sustainable Development*, 2nd edition, (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2004), 7.

⁸⁹ Soubbotina, *Beyond Economic Growth*, 8.

⁹⁰ T. S. Skjerdal, “The Three Alternative Journalisms in Africa,” *International Communication Gazette* 74 (7) (2012): 642.

⁹¹ Skjerdal, “The Three Alternative Journalisms in Africa,” 643.

⁹² Ogan, “Development Journalism/Communication,” 15-17.

communication is predicated on the need, during the initial periods of growth, for stability and unity, with minimized criticism and a great deal of encouragement for public policies.⁹³ The second definition of development journalism is as evaluative and critical of government development programs. Ogan explains this concept of development journalism as more consistent with the social responsibility of the press; in the end, it belongs either to the authoritarian or the social responsibility theory of the press as it is just another example of new wine in old bottles. Still, Ogan contended of a possible focus of developmental journalism on the ‘critical examination, evaluation and reporting of the relevance, enactment and impact of development programs by mass media that are independent from government.’⁹⁴

The most recent and professional definition of development journalism ‘comprises reporting on ideas, programs, activities and events, which are related to an improvement of the living standard, mainly in the rural regions.’⁹⁵ It is an intellectual enterprise in which journalists should form a kind of free intelligence and should critically examine the aims of national development and the applicable instruments in a rational discourse and solve them by reasonable criteria free of social constraint.⁹⁶ Development journalism perspectives includes journalists as nation builders, government partners, agents of empowerment, and watchdogs and the guardians of transparency;⁹⁷ pro-process, pro-participation, and pro-government.⁹⁸ Pro-government concept of development journalism emphasizes the constructive cooperation between the media and the government, the education role of the media in nation building and economic construction, and the responsible exercise of media freedom.⁹⁹

Broadly speaking, the concept of development journalism in literature can be seen from two dimensions.¹⁰⁰ One is where the concept has been treated as being similar to investigative journalism which comprises reporting which critically examining development projects on the one

⁹³ Lent John A., “A Third World News Deal? Part one: The Guiding Light,’ Index on censorship,” (1977):18, quoted in Ogan, “Development Journalism/Communication” 16.

⁹⁴ Ogan, “Development Journalism/Communication,” 17.

⁹⁵ Wimmer and Wolf, “Development Journalism Out of Date?” 2.

⁹⁶ Banda, “An Appraisal of the Applicability of Development Journalism,” 101.

⁹⁷ A. Romano, “Asian journalism: News, development and the tides of liberation and technology,” In *Journalism and democracy in Asia*, ed. A. Romano & M. Bromley (London: Routledge, 2005), 4.

⁹⁸ Xiaoge Xu, *Demystifying Asian values in journalism*, (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005), 21.

⁹⁹ Xu, *Demystifying Asian values in journalism*, 22.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Kunczik, *Concepts of Journalism North and South*, (Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert- Stiftung, 1995), 90-4, quoted in Wimmer and Wolf, “Development Journalism Out of Date?” 2.

hand and controls government activities on the other hand. In this regard, journalists had a task to observe critically and report on the whole government development process, which included planning, implementation, impact and shortcomings. The second dimension looks at it as benevolent-authoritarian which allows systematic manipulation of information in favor of a subtle development serving the common welfare.

In general, these concepts depict various features of development journalism and its objectives, and incidentally also, the specific actions which the media that use development journalism as their reporting style are expected to subscribe to. Indeed, it is in this dimension that this research has looked in to in the context of the practice of development journalism in Ethiopia. As could be inferred from the above discussions, the practice of some types of development journalism in the public media could in fact make all the difference in the protection of human rights and engage in the exposition of rights violations by playing watchdog roles within defined parameter. In all scenarios, though, one must have a clear understanding of the concept and agree on a generally applicable working definition beforehand - before proceeding to an in-depth analysis of its roles in the field of human rights.

2.4.3. Can ‘Development Journalism’ Actually Play a Watchdog Role?

Through investigative journalism, one approach to look at the nature of development journalism as such, development journalism can certainly contribute to effective watch-dogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms if it is allowed to operate within the right political setting that extends freedom and organizational autonomy. To this extent, investigative reporting, which in some cases has led to the ouster of presidents and the fall of corrupt governments, has made the media an effective and credible watchdog and boosted its credibility among the public.¹⁰¹ Investigative reporting has also helped accustom officials to an inquisitive press and helped build a culture of openness and disclosure that has made democratically elected governments more accountable.¹⁰²

In understanding developmental journalism in this context and explain its nexus with the protection of human rights, perhaps it would be wise to first understand what investigative journalism, a core

¹⁰¹ Coronel, “The Role of The Media in Deepening Democracy,” 1.

¹⁰² Coronel, “The Role of The Media in Deepening Democracy” 2.

feature of such journalistic reporting, actually entails. Investigative journalism involves a number of elements. It is:

*In-depth, long-term research & reporting; documentary research and use of public and private records, following the paper trail; extensive interviewing; crime-solving tools and methods (undercover reporting, hidden cameras, surveillance); revealing information others want to keep secret or information not known to the public; belief in the watchdog role of the media; focus on the accountability of institutions and individuals wielding power; the journalism of outrage: belief in the power of the media to catalyze reforms...*¹⁰³

Derek Forbes (2005) admits that while there is no easy definition of what constitutes investigative reporting, there is agreement on some of its fundamental tenets including that it entails:

- In-depth reporting of serious matters which affect the public interest.
- Proactive journalistic enterprise to reveal information that someone wants hidden or something that may not be that well known or appreciated.
- A long-term process of planning, information gathering and corroboration using a diverse range of sources.
- The application of more sophisticated techniques to interrogate and piece together meaning from fragments of information provided by various sources.
- Investigative reporting needs to be independent of special interests.
- Aggressively serving the public trust.
- With agenda to expose any form of villainy or wrongdoing with the object of inspiring positive change through informed public debate and outrage.¹⁰⁴

Considering these important constituents of development journalism and particularly investigative journalism reporting, one obvious expectation that arises in this regard is how this vital instrument works in facilitating the protection of human rights and freedoms.

As explained above, one of the elemental objectives of development journalism or development reporting is helping a nation to achieve its multifarious developmental aspirations. Development is a human right proclaimed in the Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted in 1986 by the United Nations General Assembly (GA) in its resolution 41/128. While the discourse on the

¹⁰³ The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) and Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA), *Investigative Journalism*, (2004): 3, <http://www.pcij.org/training/ijcourse.html>; (Accessed on march 13, 2015)

¹⁰⁴ Derek Forbes, *A watchdog's Guide to Investigative Reporting: A Simple Introduction to Principles and Practice in Investigative Reporting*, (South Africa: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2005), 26.

subject has always been extremely diverse, one can safely hold that the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.¹⁰⁵

This right is also recognized in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. It also reaffirmed in several instruments including the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, the Millennium Declaration, the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Likewise, the right to development is explicitly recognized under Article 43 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

While it is true that development is a very broad concept and hence that not all aspects of national development are achieved nor necessarily facilitated through development reporting alone, it is clear that development journalism, as its end goal, strives to contribute important inputs to the achievement of overall development - which itself is a key instrument in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The nexus is quite obvious that development journalism can help people fulfill their right to development, a right which has different dimension. But of course, this only represents a relatively narrower analysis for investigative reporting could contribute to 'broader human rights' even far beyond areas that fall within the human constricted horizons of the 'right to development'.

This is evident in the other strong side of development journalism where it can for example be employed as voice of the voiceless in non-developmental contexts as well. Investigative journalism can dig out the real problems of the poor and powerless sections of the society to be heard by the larger community, and even more so play vital role in protecting socio-economic, civil and political rights of all members of the community. This is to say that through investigative reporting, development journalism can expose maladministration, corruption and other related wrong-doings which are obstacle for the realization of human rights.

¹⁰⁵ See article 1 (1) of Declaration on the Right to Development, 1986.

But, this does not mean that development journalism does not have problems: it is in fact susceptible to shortcomings that have their basis in its philosophical underpinning, its exposure to multiple definitions or its actual operation in society.

For the most part, the problem of development journalism is manifested when we assess the experience of such approach in covering human rights violations. It was stated earlier that any better protection of human rights journalism must provide watch-dogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms. Yet, reporting on human rights issues is difficult for journalists who live in repressive governments or in less developed democracies, and the problem is exacerbated given the fact that development journalism is mostly the type of journalism that operates under less developed democracies and in third world countries. In this context, it becomes clear that reporting on human rights violations is a sensitive issue and may often lead journalist either to jail or forced exile. . This poses serious threats on professional autonomy and objectivity of reports of such media enterprises

More fundamentally though the problem of development journalism in playing the conventional roles of the public media (as watch dogs of fundamental rights and freedoms) could be seen from the very philosophical underpinning of its establishment.

As intimated above, development journalism is generally seen as an alternative to the western style of journalism. It has been perceived as the alternative journalism primarily but not exclusively focused on national development enterprises – such as agriculture, family planning, health and rural development projecting to the forefront the plight of the poor masses.¹⁰⁶ In this context, development journalism is mainly community-oriented journalism and hence most of its activities are concerned with advocacy in contrast to Western style journalism which is primarily investigative and entertaining. As a result, as a matter of crucial prioritizing, exposing the violation of human rights through investigative reporting gets lesser attention. In this narrower paradigm, the watchdog role of fundamental rights and freedoms of the media is seen as old role portrayed by western, liberal version of press; the focus of development journalism is more on news which contribute to the development of the nation and not on news which tend to be critical to

¹⁰⁶ Talabi, “The Challenges of Development Journalism in Nigeria,” 83.

government. Critical writing or exposing human rights violations may be not be regarded as the concern of development reporting if it does not positively contribute for development.

A second was to look at the problem is also that the development journalism philosophy shifts freedom of press from government control to freedom to assist government in carrying out its programs. As Sean Kelly succinctly stated:

...those Third World leaders who call for a new international economic and social order have also become increasingly aware of the value of news media in promoting national development; they want to use mass communications as an instrument for bringing about social change. Freedom of the press thus becomes, not freedom from government control, but rather the freedom to assist government in carrying out programs for improving economic and social change. In societies where development is paramount among national priorities, the press is frequently expected to join the team along with everyone else.¹⁰⁷

But, it is equally evident that ‘governments can do, have done, and will continue to do many nasty, even horrible, things to their citizens.’¹⁰⁸ To expose such violations the press (media) should be free from operational government control. But, if the media is controlled by governments in the name of assisting development of nations, it would be difficult and even impossible to criticize the government’s development programs which may seriously violate the rights of ordinary citizens. It is the case for example that huge investments, in the name of achieving development, have imposed serious impact on the ordinary people and local media have in such contexts been kept to stay silent. From this perspective, it could be argued that certain fundamental elements of development journalism philosophy exhibit shortcomings on the role of such journalistic approach as watchdogs of fundamental rights and freedoms.

In conclusion, leaving aside the bitter critics leveled against of development journalism by liberal versions of journalism who at best regard it largely as advocacy or propaganda instrument by governments, there is no doubt that as Kunczik presented, this model of journalism could serve as an intellectual enterprise in which journalists form free intelligence, critically examine the aims of national development and the applicable instruments in a rational discourse, and solve them through reasonable criteria free of social constraint. While it could not be denied that a version of

¹⁰⁷ Sean Kelly, “Access Denied: The Politics of Press Censorship,” *The Washington Paper* (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1978): 27.

¹⁰⁸ Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights: Dilemmas in World Politics*, (United States: Westview Press, 2007).

this journalistic model might be incompatible with the ‘libertarian concept’ which defines the function of the media as providing critical information,¹⁰⁹ and even more so the ambiguity of the concept has created an opportunity for governments to justify a politicized media policy under the guise of recognized journalism model,¹¹⁰ there is still room for development journalism to be introduced as alternative journalism which could influence and foster socio-political changes and serve as an instrument of human rights defense if and when organized within the right ethical frame and operational autonomy.

¹⁰⁹ Loo, Eric, *Best practice of Journalism in Asia*, (Singapore: Konrad- Adenauer-Stiftung, 2009).

¹¹⁰ Skjerdal, “Development Journalism Revived,” 2-3.

CHAPTER THREE

ETHIOPIA'S STATE MEDIA¹¹¹ AND ITS JOURNALISTIC PHILOSOPHY

3.1. Organizational Evolution of Ethiopia's State Media

The media in Ethiopia is commonly described as a polarized state of affairs between the state media and private media outlets.¹¹² It is difficult to find a media which fits the concept of public media. In Ethiopian history, the first television signals were distributed on a closed circuit at the Africa Hall in Addis Ababa in May 1963 on the important occasion of the first meeting of the Organization of African Unity.¹¹³ Ethiopian Television (ETV), the first state owned television station in Ethiopia, began permanent broadcasting on 2 November 1964, coinciding with the 33th coronation of Haile Selassie, with the support of a British firm called Thomson Television International.¹¹⁴ Hence, Ethiopia was among the first nations in Africa to establish a television service.¹¹⁵ The establishment of the Ethiopian television is believed to have played a key role in the political, economic, cultural and social life over the past years.

The first television program began its broadcast service in English and Amharic languages for only two hours every day, most of which focused on English films and limited to the Addis Ababa city.¹¹⁶ The network gradually expanded its service and coverage to the rest of the country. Now it broadcasts in many languages and its coverage is worldwide. On May 1, 2009, after undertaking Business Process Reengineering (BPR) with a view to improve its service, the ETV was officially merged with the National Radio of Ethiopia. Since, it shouldered the motto of “promoting Ethiopian Renaissance”, and operated under a new nomenclature: the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA) until July 2014.

In July 2014 the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA) was officially reformed as the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) under Proclamation No 858/2014. This institutional

¹¹¹ Here the researcher prefer to use state media than public media since the public media is not realized in Ethiopia yet.

¹¹² Terje S. Skjerdal, “Competing loyalties: Journalism culture in the Ethiopian State Media,” (Ph.D., Dissertation: University of Oslo, 2012), 35.

¹¹³ Skjerdal (2012), “Competing loyalties,” 7.

¹¹⁴ Ethiopian Television from where to where? *ETV quarterly magazine*, no.12 (1996): 3.

¹¹⁵ Gabriel Tedros, “Television in Africa,” *Gazette* 8(2), (1962):189.

¹¹⁶ Ethiopian Television from where to where? *ETV quarterly magazine*, no.12 (1996): 4.

reform was undertaken with the view of becoming a competent public media worldwide. Now the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation is organized and recognized as a public media in Ethiopia's communications landscape. Currently, it has apportioned airtime to all regional states although some Regional States such as Oromia and Amhara have also begun running their own television stations along the same model.

Today, the 'public' nature of broadcasting services offered by these media institutions emanates from the mandate and objectives stated in the establishment legislation, that is the fact that these outlets are constituted for the purpose of educating, informing and entertaining the public, in the federal or regional states to which government budget is allocated in full or in part, and are accountable to the Federal House of Peoples Representatives or to Regional Councils.¹¹⁷

3.2. The Journalistic Philosophy in Ethiopia's State Media

In the pre-1991 Ethiopia, there was no explicit guideline dictating the type of journalistic philosophy that leads such institutions in the country even though it is not difficult to understand from their very nature how the media behaved and operated previously.¹¹⁸ Since 2008, the Ethiopia has introduced different policy documents which state the journalistic philosophy that should be the basis for the operation of state media in the country officially. The media policy in the country has not yet been formally ratified (May, 2015). But, there are some important policy documents which are regarded as an official media policy documents, all of them are stated development journalism as the country's officially recognized reporting style, especially for state media. The three most important instruments are presented and assessed as follows.

1. 'Our Media's Developmental and Democratic Working Philosophy: Basis and Directions (2008)'¹¹⁹

This document requires the state owned media outlets to pursue the philosophy of development reporting in undertaking all aspects of journalism. It plainly prescribes that the journalistic philosophy of the Ethiopian state media should be development journalism; in this context, the

¹¹⁷ See article 2 (9) of Broadcasting Service Proclamation No. 533/2007.

¹¹⁸ Dejene Tesemma, "Promoting Development Journalism in State Media: The Case of Addis Zemen News Paper," (Unpublished M.A. Thesis: Addis Ababa University, 2010), 6.

¹¹⁹ Ethiopian Press Agency, "Basis and Directives of an Operational Philosophy of our Democratic and Developmental Media," *Draft policy document* (2008), (Original Document in Amharic which is 48 page)

state media is expected to be able to support development endeavors of the government. The policy document submits that the working philosophy that can serve and strength the democratic developmental political economy of the country is the philosophy of development journalism.

The document also provides some justifications for adopting development journalism philosophy. These are predicated on the fact that development journalism is the type of journalism that would enable people to understand proper developmental ideas and liberate them from poverty and backwardness. Development journalism, according to the document, enables people to foster positive development and democratic values, believe in them and participate actively in their implementation. It is journalism that plays greater transformational role in social justice and life improvement.

On the other hand the document also recognizes two inherent limitations of development journalism and how best to deal with them in the Ethiopian context. The first limitation is related to the obvious narrative that the ability of development journalism to bring about change is determined by conduciveness of a given political economy. Second, there is always a risk that such a scheme could be exposed to the danger of being a mouthpiece of governments and propaganda tools under the guise of development journalism.¹²⁰ It was stated above that this threat was depicted as the strongest criticism from the proponents of liberal journalism. But, the document argues that it is possible to overcome these inherent limitations through careful consideration of the facts and devising mechanisms which can fill the gaps. This, among others, involves adopting suitable liberal media techniques and the strengthening of investigative journalism which has itself been presented as one aspect of developmental journalism.¹²¹

2. ‘Developmental Media, Communication and Ethiopian Renaissance (2012)’¹²²

This overarching government document was initiated in 2012 by FDRE Government Communication Affairs Office and was widely employed in training many journalists, including those from the private media, in the course of the Ethiopian summer in August 2012. This policy module is very extensive (89 pages) and argues that the philosophy adopted by the Ethiopian media

¹²⁰ Ibid, 28.

¹²¹ Ibid, 31.

¹²² FDRE Government Communication Affairs Office, “Developmental Media, Communication and Ethiopian Renaissance,” Government Training Document for Journalists, Especially for those who work in State Media, about Development Communication. (Original in Amharic, 2012).

industry should match the political economic philosophical underpinnings of the country pretty much the same as other media outlets elsewhere in the world correspond to the political economy of their respective countries. The module tries to assess how western neo-liberal political economy corresponds with the basic tenets of the media and communication industry in those jurisdictions.

In this light, what is called developmental democratic media and communication should guide the media industry in a manner which matches with the philosophy of political economy Ethiopia has adopted: i.e. developmental democratic political economy. Under the policy development journalism is simply perceived as a reporting style in the country's media industry, especially in state media.

The document particularly highlights that the political economy of a certain country is the basis on which to proceed in the analysis of media communication which exists in any country. The implication is that media and communication could not be separately viewed from the political economy of the countries. The political economy of a certain country creates the media communication schemes which serves its political order and primarily designed to sustain such political economy.

From this premise has been inferred that the neo-liberal media works within narrower interests and for the sake of rich individuals and multi- national corporations, and not on behalf of the larger population. For instance, rather than covering the Wall Street demonstrations in America and Western Europe, it would prefer to cover demonstrations in the Middle East; or instead of than covering human rights violations committed by the U.S. in Iraqi prisons or by the Israelis on Palestinians, it gives emphasis on human rights violations and the absence of good governance in Africa, etc.¹²³ Generally, the neo-liberal media understands the other world from the point of view of its benefit to its own political economy.

The document depicts that neo-liberal media and Ethiopia have not experienced good relations. By ignoring the influence of neo-liberal media and institutions (mainly market fundamentalism), it argues, Ethiopia has started a democratic developmental state since the demise of the Derg regime, although it entrenched this political economy on the ground only after the renaissance

¹²³ Ibid, 20.

movement adopted in the country at a later stage. In this process, the country not only established the directions that should orient its own developmental democratic political economy, it also practiced this ideology and has managed to achieve some changes. These changes are not only developmental in nature, they are also exhibit democratic political economy in characteristics.¹²⁴

In so doing, Ethiopia immersed into ideological difference and struggle with the neo-liberal ideology and its wing: the neo-liberal media communication industry; and since, Ethiopia has received critics from the neo-liberal media in three forms: at the beginning by labeling the new regime as communist, during the Ethio-Eritrean war by supporting Eritrea, and during the 2005 elections as violator of human rights.¹²⁵

In the near times, the Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and CPJ, all of whom the government assumes are associated with western states and neo-liberal media, have leveled intense criticism against Ethiopia on a range of issues including land grabbing, anti-terrorism law, Civil Society Organizations law, Press law etc. Most have taken the view that the government in power cares little to the protection of human rights and sustenance of human dignity.¹²⁶

In reaction to this, but mostly in defying the correctness of the philosophical underpinning on which neoliberal media operates, the document clearly defined the roles and important facets which what it calls a 'Developmental Democratic Media and Communication' should have. The document, which often uses 'developmental democratic media and communication' and 'development journalism' quite interchangeably holds that this is a system which displays the following important facets.¹²⁷

Works for quick and continued change: because of the unique importance of this kind of media communication, countries which follow its model are those who are poor or are on the way of developmental direction which extricates them from underdevelopment;

¹²⁴ Ibid, 22-25.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 24.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 25.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 42-46.

People centered: it works for peoples' active, continued participation and works for the benefit of the people;

Accommodation: it creates accommodation on basic questions of the nation; in this regard, developmental democratic communication's focus and coverage of negative and positive events is held to be very different from the neo-liberal communications system which operates on the principle that 'every good event is not news; what makes the news news is the activity of bad practice. Developmental democratic communication system focuses on good events than bad because of the belief that positive information gives the power to initiate the natural sprite of peoples' working and changing ability, but this system of communication also engages in a balanced reporting of negative aspects.¹²⁸

Emphasis on content than presentation: while developmental democratic communication focuses on content than presentation, it also understands the value of presentation. In contrast, neo-liberal inspired communication systems concentrate on presentation styles and often irrelevant contents are presented in a decorative form which divert the public's real attention;

Non-partisan: this communication model is non-partisan and accommodates diversity; diversified ideas are entertained ad in the process, powerless people get the opportunity to have their voiced heard;

Nurtures local cultural values: it works for the expansion of radical but healthy values and for the survival of good cultural values of such developing nations in the era of globalization.

3. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Government 'Developmental Communication Policy and Strategy (Draft, 2014)'

In 2014, the Ethiopian government produced a draft development communication policy and strategy document.¹²⁹ Largely inspired by the previous texts, it is aimed at developing the communication sector which is based on a two way communication; delivering balanced information on the planning and implementation of policies and strategies designed to benefit

¹²⁸ Ibid, 43.

¹²⁹This policy document is the draft and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Government Communication Affairs Office stated that it is open for discussions with concerned bodies before ratification. The document is called 'The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Government Developmental Communication Policy and Strategy'.

society by making them direct participants and owners of the political, social and economic developments; and helping the institutions to strength and develop democratic values which helps them achieve the country's Renaissance. This draft policy document, including above two policy documents, generally stated that the basic reason to adopt development journalism is the poverty situation of the country. To eradicate this poverty these policy documents assumes an interventionist role of the media; calls for public participation, and emphasizes success stories more than critical reporting.¹³⁰ Throughout analysis of above documents the watch dog role of state media has got little attention, almost none.

In conclusion, one can note from a closer reading of the aforementioned documents and their lack of empathy for a neo-liberal inspired media reporting styles that at least state media journalism in Ethiopia across all mediums of communication has fundamentally subscribed to the underlying philosophies of development reporting styles depicted earlier. While the ambiguity of development journalism narrated above makes it difficult to hold with certainty what it stands for, it is quite evident that Ethiopia's state media operates on the basis of the recognition of certain principles such as participation, being people centered, balanced information, two-way information channeling, national consensus, analytical reporting, etc. principles most of which are regarded as hallmarks of the dominant discourse on development journalism. Whether in fact this model of organization and working ethic has facilitated or impeded the human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens could only be answered through empirical investigation of the institution's programs, a task which the next chapters set out to undertake.

Given the clear mandates which the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation has been vested with under the establishment proclamation,¹³¹ one can safely submit that this media's work are basically inspired by the underpinning principles of development journalism. Hence, the Corporation's operations and the roles of such institution in the protection of human rights are examined in this context, mainly in light of its mandates but also with due consideration of the fundamental philosophical doctrines that inform its works on the ground.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 14.

¹³¹ See article 16 (2) of Broadcasting Service Proclamation No. 533/2007.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Overview of Programs of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation is directly accountable to the House of People's Representatives.¹³² But, there are obvious signs that it also operates under the strong influence and auspices of Ethiopia's executive functionary – the Government Communication Affairs Office; this is largely because of the close traditional organizational association that had been featured in the past between the two institutions. The EBC is organized as a public media institution transmitting different programs aimed at performing its core roles in informing, entertaining and educating the public.¹³³

Program-wise, the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation airs the EBC 1, EBC 2, and EBC 3, the National Ethiopian Radio, and FM Addis 97.1. Currently, the EBC1 and FM Addis 97.1 are rendering a 24 hour service to their viewers and audience all over the world. The EBC1 airs several programs in Amharic, English, Al-Arabiya and French. Additionally the EBC-1 allocates a maximum of one hour air time for various regional languages produced with full authorization of the regional states.

In terms of core missions, the Corporation's newly reconstituted motto, "the voice of diversity and renaissance" would seem to be self-explanatory as far as its anticipated role is concerned, depicting itself as a media institution that fosters different ideas of the nations and nationalities and serving as an agency of change and transformation.¹³⁴

As narrated in the previous chapters, the role of the press as a watchdog includes reporting on the happenings of the government: reporting on the day to day programs and activities of the three branches of the state.¹³⁵ In this line, one can note that the EBC has routinely discharged its obligation to inform the public about the daily activities of the State's organs especially through its news coverage and but mostly through the transmission of specialized programs focusing on

¹³² Article 16 of Ethiopian Broadcasting Service Proclamation No. 533/2007.

¹³³ The Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation Proclamation No. 858/2014.

¹³⁴ See preamble of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation Proclamation No. 858/2014.

¹³⁵ Limpitlaw, *Media Law Handbook for Southern Africa*, 13.

core activities of these institutions. The media outlet also covers different seasonal issues by preparing select programs.¹³⁶

However, there is no denying that most such programs are highly charged by positive information, while of course enabling the EBC to incidentally fulfill its mission of informing the people. A good example in this regard could be the spatial program which was named as “water is so the life” which was transmitted by EBC-1 on 03 March 2015. The program stated the positive efforts of government to solve the water supply problems of Addis Ababa. The program never stated the problems behind water supply problems of the city. The other program was about the small and micro enterprises (transmitted on 05 February 2015) sectors. Even though there are many problems in this sector,¹³⁷ the program explained the positive activities of the sector.

Likewise, the EBC’s effort of giving spatial attention to vulnerable sections of the society such as children, the disabled and women is acknowledgeable. For instance, the organization has the daily 30 minute (7:30 to 8:00 local time) news program for the deaf and a series of weekly programs exclusively focusing on women, children and youth issues where matters particularly focusing on these groups of the society are played to the fore.¹³⁸ Most importantly in the women’s weekly program the abuse of women’s rights is covered.

Within the framework of image-building, creating national consensus on several issues and identity formation, the EBC also airs a program it called ‘tourism for development’ where many tourist attraction places and the cultural makeup of nations, nationalities and people from across the country are identified and introduced. In the list of its programs is also included entertainment which involves transmitting entertaining and educative dramas, music and sport lives.¹³⁹

The broad diversity and content of these programs may not explain everything there is about public-centered programming or human rights championing, but it is quite evident that many of

¹³⁶ EBC-1 was prepared the program (transmitted on 21 February 2015) which was named as “election and the usage of media” which assessed the election laws and the media usage around the world and justified that the election laws and the usage of media in Ethiopia is fair.

¹³⁷ During the conference held in March, 2015 by Ministry of Urban Development, Construction and Housing, Minister Mekuria Haile stated that the sector has experiencing rent seeking and other related problems which preclude the sector to develop as expected.

¹³⁸ EBC-1 has weekly programs of children, youth and women.

¹³⁹ ‘*Chilot*’ weekly drama which can educate the public about different laws of the country, previous *Saw Le Saw* Drama, *Dana Drama*, and now *Wazema Drama*, *Meleket Drama*, etc. weekly Dramas are dramas in EBC-1 which can teach the public through entertaining. There is also daily, in the morning 12:00 – 12:30, sport program (holistic body movement which is important for physical endurance).

the programs are substantially informed by the basic motto of serving the people, at least in the specific contexts of the program themes depicted above.

On a more focused discourse, the following sections will discuss if the same also holds true with regard to the issue of its watch-dogging roles in the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, a question which can be answered only after a careful assessment of select programs aired by the EBC.

4.2. The EBC-1 in Terms of Content Fitting Its Watch-dogging Role of Fundamental Rights

The initial hypothesis drawn in this research submits that the conventional role of the public media as vigilant watchdog of fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens of Ethiopia is not clearly and frequently demonstrated in the program contents and activities of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. This is particularly evident in relation to investigative reporting; yet, it must also be borne in mind at the outset that the media's role in the protection of human rights is not necessarily limited to this method alone, and hence that the EBC's select programs such as those which educate on human rights, good governance and government accountability deserve a great deal of appreciation.

The EBC, as stated above, is guided by a development journalism reporting style. The development journalism as applied in Ethiopia has greatly focused on a positive promotion of development efforts rather than critical investigation.¹⁴⁰ What is more, the watch-dogging role of the media, a natural mandate of such institutions under normal circumstances, has not been clearly expressed in the Government's policy document issued in 2008. Accordingly, most of news as well as programs produced by the EBC have greatly inclined to reporting on positive developments.

On a few occasions, of course, the EBC has started critical programs which are critical and investigative in the nature of their content. Typical example in this regard would be the former *Aynechin* (literally meaning Our Eyes) program which is interrupted before one year. The nature

¹⁴⁰See the Ethiopian government policy document on Development Journalism, "Our Media's Developmental and Democratic Working Philosophy: Basis and Directions" (2008). And also see Skjerdal, "Development Journalism Revived," 7.

of this program was investigating wrong doings like, lack of good governance, corruption and related things and aired to the public.

But, such programs had been interrupted on a number of occasions and perhaps shelved on purpose under the guise of different reasons. The fact that there are no too many programs today that resemble such investigative programs poses difficulty on the researcher's efforts to get programs which really fit into the public media's role as watch-dog of fundamental rights and freedoms.

In so far as critical programs are concerned, one program that continues to be produced today by the EBC1, often featuring content which appears to fit into the public media's role as watch dog of fundamental rights and freedoms is *anid le anid / fit le fit*. In this part, in examining the EBC's role as protector of fundamental rights and freedoms, the researcher has decided to concentrate on sampling three program categories that he deems are broadly representative of all program contents aired by the Corporation: i.e. news category, the one to one (*/ fit le fit*) weekly program, and the documentary series program. The whole analysis is solely based on content of these programs as such aired within a certain timeframe and frequency; in consequence, the conclusions apply only in relation to the identified programs, and do not necessarily reflect the EBC's status in relation to the protection and promotion of human rights.

With regard to the first category, it is evident that in today's global media operations that news have been identified as important programs in which human rights issues are covered. Activities which take place within the seconds, minutes, hours and days from different parts of the world are reported by the news media. Generally, one notes that the news program is among the most ideally suited categories through which public media play key roles in the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms.

As discussed earlier, news is one of the most important pillar programs of the EBC-1, produced almost within each hour. Important routines across governments sectors, civil society and within the community are given coverage each day through news presentations in the morning, in the afternoon, and the evening. The empirical investigation of this study has assessed news produced by the EBC-1 during these three time intervals in a period of three months: January, February and March 2015. Some 1562 news articles were analyzed for content on human rights implications by this study, excluding business and sport news aired as appendages of core news programs.

In like tone, *Anid Le Anid*, formerly known as *Fit Le Fit* (meaning face to face) has been identified as the most critical program of the EBC1 and hence analyzed for content on human rights implications. Often, the program displays a series of hard-talk styled questions on various themes presented by EBC's journalist to public officials or persons wielding significant powers and responsibility. The presentation may also take the form of a dialog (asking and answering) between the designated journalist and the interviewee. The most critical and perhaps famous version of the program was previously introduced by the ERTA under the label of *Aynechen* (literally meaning Our Eyes); it was interrupted about one year ago. After the ERTA was transformed into the EBC in July 2014, it was reintroduced as *Anid Le Anid* and remains today as the most critical regular program introduced by the EBC1. While this program was scheduled to be aired on a basis, it was interrupted many times. Only seven productions were presented between July 2014 and March 2015. The researcher couldn't find one weekly production either in the archives of the EBC or from internet sources.

In relation to the third category of the sampling focus of this study, i.e., documentary series, the investigation covered all productions under this label aired since July 2014. There are 25 documentaries since produced between July 2014 and March 2015.

The EBC1 being a huge media organization, it was stated in the preceding sections that it would be impractical to assess each of the programs produced by it. It functions for full 24 hours every day and reaches almost all parts of the country. In its different programs, it is quite obvious that the issue of human rights will be touched upon in one way or another, with varied scales of intensity. For instance, there are weekly programs like children's, youth's and women's in which the rights of children, youth and women are covered.

The following table shows the number and duration of three programs of the EBC-1 in which their content has been evaluated by researcher in detail.

Table 4.1. EBC-1 News content analysis

No. of news articles	Months of transmission	Coverage of domestic issues (86.5%) 1351 news articles		Coverage of foreign issues (13.5%)
1562	January - March	Human Rights related issues 1.4%, (19 news articles)	Other issues 98.6% (1332 news articles)	211 news articles

Table 4.2. List of EBC1 *anid le anid / fit le fit* program productions, July 2014 - March 2015.

Issue Under Discussion	Invited Individual(s)	Interviewing Journalist	Transmission Date	Time Allocated
1. About seasonal election activities of <i>Medrek</i> opposition political party.	Prof. Beyene Petros (the chairman of <i>Medrek</i> political party)	Moges Mekonnen	Sturdy, March 07, 2015	00:34:18
2. About the preparation of Ethiopian National Election Board for 5 th Ethiopian national election.	Prf. Merga Bekena (the chairman of Ethiopian National Election Board)	Moges Mekonnen	Saturday, December 13, 2014	00: 40:10
3. The discussion related with the 20 th year anniversary of FDRE constitution.	Ato Kassa T/Birhan (the speaker of House of Federation (HF))	Moges Mekonnen	Saturday, December 06, 2014	00:42:45
4. The discussion related with the “ Cities’ Day ”	Ato Mekuria Haile (The Minister of Urban Development, Construction and Housing)	Moges Mekonnen	Saturday, November 22, 2014	00:38:33
5. About the activities of House of Peoples’ Representative (HPR) and the implementation of Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)	Ato Abadula Gammada (Speaker of House of Peoples’ Representatives (HPR))	Moges Mekonnen	Saturday October 25, 2014	00:33:44
6. About the existing problems in Addis Ababa Private schools and the administrative gaps	Ato Niguse Beyene (Addis Ababa City Education Bureau Deputy Officer) and Ato Selemon Gessess (Addis Ababa City private schools owners Association Secretary)	Demis Mekuria	Saturday September 13, 2014	00:37:47
7. About the existing problems related with education quality in private Higher Education Institutions	Dr. Tesfaye Teshome (General Director of Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency)	Demis Mekuria	Saturday September 06, 2014	00:39:48

Table 4.3. List and Description of documentary series produced by EBC1, July 2014- March 2015

Topic of Documentary	Description	Date Transmitted	Total Time Taken
1. <i>Maezen</i> (the pillar)	Documentary about foreign trade of Ethiopia. The documentary states that the exporting capacity of the country is now at fast growing pace.	July 22, 2014	00:56:00
2. <i>Yereje Lijnet</i> (lost childhood)	Documentary about child labor abuses in Ethiopia	July 25, 2014	00:51:29
3. <i>Medersha</i> (the final destination)	Documentary about the development of industry. The documentary asked about where the Ethiopian development process is going to reach? Ethiopian development projects to build an industrialized nation.	August 04, 2014	00:50:55
4. <i>Menta Menged</i> (Cross Road)	Documentary about Ethiopian press rights and responsibilities. The discussion about the role of the private press in building democracy in the country. Very critical documentary on private press.	August 11, 2014	00:48:14
5. <i>Ke Ras Belay</i> (Altruism)	Documentary on the biography of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.	August 21, 2014	00:40:27
6. <i>Yeltegeru Bi'eroch</i> (the unruly press)	Documentary on Ethiopian press rights and responsibilities part two. Un ethical writings of private presses was assessed. Very, very critical discussion on private press	August 25, 2014	00:54:58
7. <i>Ye Hizib Endaresewoch</i> (Representatives of the people)	The documentary about the political activities of peoples' representatives	September 07, 2014	00:46:44
8. <i>Ye Hibir Mehtem</i> (the diversities' seal)	Documentary about the Tekeze and Renaissance Dams construction. The documentary highlighted that those developments represent ground level and active participation of the entire nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.	October 02, 2014	00:49:02
9. <i>Yene Dinknesh Ijoch</i> (The Children of Lucy)	Documentary highlighting the work of the Ethiopian fossil hunter Alemayehu Asfaw	October 8, 2014	00:28:30

10. <i>Addisn enda Addis</i> (Addis Ababa Renovated)	Documentary about Addis Ababa city development in housing, road, water and related infrastructure	November 10, 2014	00:33:47
11. <i>Ye Hizib Lidet</i> (the Birth of People)	Documentary about the 20 th year anniversary of FDRE constitution. The documentary stated that the proclamation of the constitution gave the equal rights for all nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia and it can be considered as the birth day of such nations, nationalities and peoples.	December 06, 2014	00:42:10
12. <i>Ye Bezahanet Tamsalet</i> (The Home of Diversity)	Documentary about the diversified people with in Benishangul Gumuz Regional State, Ethiopia. The documentary was prepared in connection with nations, nationalities and peoples' day.	December 09, 2014	00:30:18
13. <i>Ye Siket Mengedoch</i> (The Road of Success)	Documentary about the development of saving culture in Ethiopia.	December 15, 2014	00:41:13
14. <i>Eyefeku Yalut Abeboch</i> (The Blossoming Flowers)	Documentary about development in the towns of Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia: Bahir Dar, Debre Berehan, Debre Merkos, Debre Tabor, Dessie, Gonder, Weldiya ...	January 06, 2015	00:29:21
15. <i>Yezer Midir</i> (The Land of Seed)	Documentary about bio-diversity. It was a study about the Teff.	January 10, 2015	00:39:35
16. <i>Tarik Be Balemuyewoch eyeta</i> (History in the Eyes of the Versed)	Documentary about the writings of history in Ethiopia.	January 14, 2015	00:40:20
17. ' <i>Nayiro</i> '	Documentary about the Pastoralists. It was prepared in related with "the Day of Pastoralists" in Ethiopia	January 24, 2015	00:46:12
18. <i>Ye Tesfa menged</i> (The Road of Hope)	Documentary about the election in Ethiopia.	January 29, 2015	00:50:09
19. <i>Weyane</i> part one and part two	The documentary about the history of Tigrayan Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF).	February 03 and 04, 2015	00:44:43
20. <i>Mekelekeye</i> (The Defense)	Documentary about the Ethiopian defense activities and achievements. The program	February 14, 2015	00:48:08

	was produced in relation with the Ethiopian Defense Forces day.		
21. <i>Ye Taleknet Mistir</i> (the secret of success)	Documentary about the historical success of TPLF. Prepared in relation with the 40th year anniversary of the TPLF.	February 09, 2015	00:55:00
22. <i>Yene Dimits</i> (My Vote)	Documentary about the Ethiopian election. About a couple who attended election on the day of their wedding.	February 15, 2015	00:34:39
23. <i>Dilu yemayker new</i> (Victory is Inevitable)	Documentary about the TPLF's success during their gorilla fighting with the Derg. Produced in connection with the 40 th year anniversary of the TPLF.	February 17, 2015	00:40:53
24. <i>Ye Kelem Abiyot</i> (Color Revolution)	Documentary about a forcible overthrow of a governments or social orders, in favor of a new system through the means of the press.	February 20, 2015	00:39:30
25. <i>Tikur ena Nech Dem</i> (Black and White Blood)	Documentary about Terrorism	February 22, 2015	00:42:00

4.3. Empirical Data Gathered Through Interviews

In order to show the effect of the practice of development journalism in Ethiopia on the quality of EBC-1's presentation of human rights issues, the researcher had the opportunity to gather empirical data through interviews and analyze same. The interviews have focused on the same select programs as in above.

Accordingly, the researcher interviewed two individuals from government Agencies (one from Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority and one from FDRE Government Communication Affairs Office), three professional journalists who work in EBC-1 (one news reporter, one the documentary producer, and one *anid le anid* program producer), two from opposition political parties (one from *MEDREK* opposition political party, and one from *Sameyaw* (Blue) opposition political party), one from media expertise (Graduate study of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University), and one from Civil Society organization (Human Rights Council). Therefore, the total number of nine individuals were interviewed.

The researcher selected those individuals purposively. It was important to select individuals who have closer connection to and knowledge of the issue. Accordingly, this is the reason why the researcher used purposive sampling to select interviewees. The researcher also cared about getting balanced information from interviewees and hence he carefully select those individuals. The data gathered from interviewees and content analysis of above three programs of EBC were analyzed under the criteria of coverage of human rights issues, coverage of diverse opinion, balanced coverage of development issues versus other issues and approach of reporting.

4.3.1. Coverage of Human Rights Issues: Methodological Challenges and Working Premises

When one talks about the coverage of human rights content in media, it would often be very difficult to identify with certainty which presentation constitutes a human rights issue and which other is not. This problem is attributed to two important factors.¹⁴¹ The first is the considerable degree of overlap of subject matters between human rights issues and other issues of concern for the media. Many reporting are related to matters that directly or indirectly have human rights content. The second factor is that freedom of the media is itself a human rights agenda. Conventionally, the media are regarded as one of the mechanisms through which citizens hold their governments to account.

Obviously, reporting on the successful accomplishment of governments in infrastructure buildings like roads, bridges or in social service facilities such as hospitals or schools, has a human rights dimension. The media have covered plenty of such stories, and hence their role in educational and informative contexts could be labeled as positive development as far as the protection and promotion of human rights is concerned.

Yet, in this study the coverage of human right issues is rather understood to apply only to the coverage of clear actions of abuse of human rights, a role which normally fits into the portfolio of investigative journalism. Abuses may be perpetuated by government agencies, by non-governmental organizations, by certain sections of the society, or by individuals. The research enterprise only endeavors to show how many of such violations are reported by the EBC accurately

¹⁴¹See International Council on Human Rights Policy, *Journalism, Media and the Challenge of Human Rights Reporting*, (Atar Roto Presse SA, Geneva, Switzerland, 2002), 27.

and persistently and where this state of facts situates the Corporation in terms of its roles of protecting human rights.

Analyses of Data Procured Through Interviews: human rights content

In this concept nine interviewees were asked about the coverage of human rights content by EBC. As the researcher stated above the selection of individuals for interview was representative. Two from government agencies and two from opposition political parties, expertise who are connection with the issue under discussion, and there was also from civil society organization. Here, the researcher tried to conduct interview with key individuals from Ethiopian Human Rights commission and Ethiopian Ombudsman Commission but because of bureaucratic and related problems the researcher didn't get those key individuals with in the time frame. But, the researcher think that the conducted interviews are appropriate to achieve the objective of the study since the individuals that the researcher interviewed were more connection with the issue under investigation than any other individuals from above institutions.

One key informant, from Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, stated that the EBC's presentation of human rights issues is not based on sensational presentation as private press do.... it cares for the effect of presenting such sensational issues (human rights issues) on the building of the country, accommodation of diversity and also for development.... When I am saying this it does not mean EBC do not cover human rights issues. It really do. There was Fit le fit program which was very critical and covers human rights issues. Through documentaries EBC also cover human rights issues.... I remember the documentary about child labor abuses which was named "Yereje Lijinet"..... As public media EBC trying to cover the major issues of the country by its programs of news, *aind le aind* and documentary series..... As to me EBC is doing well even though it didn't do on the investigative areas as expected..."¹⁴²

The other key informant, from FRDE Government Communication Affairs, stated that "...we are on the process of building public media which presents balanced information to the people. EBC may have some problems in presenting human rights issues through those mentioned programs....but you have to understand that we are on the process of building the country..."¹⁴³

¹⁴² Interview with key informant five on 06 April 2015

¹⁴³ Interview with key informant six on 07 April 2015

Among the target groups of the interviewing process, opposition political parties (one from *Medrek* and one from *Samayewi* (Blue) opposition political parties) were asked how the EBC-1 covered violations of fundamental rights through its above listed programs. Both of them stated that the EBC-1's coverage of such issues is very weak, almost none. On key informant (from *Medrek* opposition political party) stated that in relation to the 2015 elections, for example, our members were beaten and our properties (car) burned down in different parts of country, and yet, the EBC never labored to prepare news related to our grievances, a task it was supposed to undertake as a public media.¹⁴⁴

Another key informant told the researcher that human rights issues are among politically sensitive issues. To cover such issues the principle of media as 'the fourth estate' of the government should be recognized. But, this principle of media is not as such recognized in development journalism media policy of the government in Ethiopia. The media is understood as instrument to achieve development; its watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms is understood negatively. Actually reporting on violent issues in developing countries like us, in which illiteracy is high, is very dangerous. Anyways, criticizing the government is considered as standing against government or putting the government on odds. Accordingly, coverage of critical stories are extremely limited.¹⁴⁵

Two key informants (the news room reporter and the producer of documentaries in EBC-1) expressed that EBC has been covering human rights issues but not follow sensational presentation as western media do. EBC as public media follows balanced coverage of events through above listed programs. One informant (reporter in news room of EBC-1) said, the public do not want to hear bad news. We are developing country having many illiterate people. Hearing human rights violation and accommodating to each other needs democratic society. Our reality is that we are in the process of building democratic society. Accordingly, presenting bad news as such cannot build the country at this situation. In general EBC now is initiating the people to do best in the development process of the country rather than discouraging their hope by presenting 'bad news.'¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Interview with key informant seven, on 04 May, 2015.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with key informant one, on 15 May, 2015.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with key informant three, on 21 March 2015.

During interview with civil society organization (from Human Rights Council) the informant is, most of the time, skeptical in answering interview questions but indicates that *anid le anid* program and limited documentary programs of EBC, like *Yereje lijinet* are the good starting. This key informant also stated that EBC as public media is weak in presenting critics on the government.¹⁴⁷

As to informants it is possible to conclude that EBC-1 has limitation in covering human rights issues in its programs, especially in news coverage. Even though the informants have different in what activities EBC should focus, from their above expressions, it is possible to understand that the EBC has weak in covering human rights issues.

Analyses of News Coverage for Human Rights Content

After a careful examination of the contents of news aired over a period of three months, the researcher holds that human rights issues are hardly covered, and reports directly relating to human rights violations are almost none existent. Only 1.4 percent of the news dealt with human rights issues per se. For instance, there were news presentation about the violation of the right to association of workers by different private organizations, the right to self-governing of *kimant* community (in Gonder, Ethiopia), the arbitrary detention of different opposition political party candidates, the mal administration in Tikur Anbesa Specialized Hospital, etc.

Even those instances of media coverage were very soft in the nature of reporting. For instance, one news article narrated about the workers right to association in trade unions.¹⁴⁸ It reported that there are a few leaders of workers in private organizations who have denied workers their fundamental right to association, the fear being that if they are organized, they may ask full implementation of their rights. The news article openly proclaimed that the basic rights of workers have not been protected, concluding eventually that the Ethiopian Workers' Associations Confederation was forced to intervene and hence ameliorate the working conditions of workers in Addis Ababa.

Another important news article narrated by the EBC-1 on human rights violation was related to a report on petitions from opposition political parties that their candidates have been arrested arbitrarily. The source of the news was the opposition political parties. It was simply reporting what opposition political parties said about an episode, so to speak.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with key informant one, May 10, 2015.

¹⁴⁸ EBC Evening News in Amharic, on March 04, 2015.

Content analyses of the *Anid Le Anid*

There were seven productions of *anid le anid* program produced by the EBC-1 over a period running from July 2014 through March 2015. The productions included very focused discussions on an array of issues including for example existing problems related to educational quality in private higher education institutions, administrative problems affecting the effective operation of private schools in Addis Ababa, reportage on the activities of the House of Peoples' Representative (HPR) and the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), a program on 20th year anniversary of FDRE Constitution, program on the preparation of Ethiopian National Election Board for the 5th National Election, and program in relation to the election activities of the *Medrek* Political Party.

From the above six productions, the part that directly appeals to the issue under consideration, i.e., the interventionist role of the media in the protection of human rights, is the discussion on the existing problems of private schools in Addis Ababa and a second on issues related to educational quality in private higher education institutions in Ethiopia.

The discussions during the sessions really touched upon a range of human rights of citizens violated by different actors in the industry. With the exception of the two programs, one could fairly conclude that the other productions were extremely smooth in disclosing existing problems of rights violations. The programs had merely focused on narrating the activities of the institutions and future plans they have, without systematically correlating this to the broader agenda of failures and achievements of the interviewed organizations or their roles in the promotion of human rights or in rectifying shortfalls of the system in so far as it related to the same issues of concern.

Content Analyses of Documentaries

Out of the 25 documentary series produced by EBC1 between July 2014 and February 2015, there is only one documentary which really fits to a display of watchdogging role of the EBC in relation to fundamental rights and freedoms. Other two documentaries too contained the idea of what may resembles the media's role in the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.

One documentary "*Yereje Lijnet*" (The Lost Childhood) depicts a typical example of how the media could actually propagate on pro-child causes and in fact intervene with a view to abating

multifarious challenges faced by this group of the society. This documentary featured on the abuses of child labor. It was prepared through a collaboration between the World Vision Ethiopia, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the EBC. Objectivity is also maintained; the sources of information for the documentary were the victim children themselves, government offices (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Regional Offices of Women, Children and Youth Offices), experts from university, the Human Rights Commission, and a judge from a zonal court.

The documentary presented that even though illegal trafficking of children and the abuse of child labor are key issues on which the Ethiopian government is working on, the problem has nevertheless persisted. Despite the legal regulations against child trafficking and child labor abuse, problems of implementation largely remained the orders of the day. The documentary called upon all citizens and the State to discharge their respective responsibilities in eradicating poverty and participating in the development endeavors of the country – and hence stamp out the root causes of the problems.

Since the production of the documentary, the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (where incidences of child labor abuse and illegal child trafficking remained serious,) has started to strictly follow on the issue by enacting especial rules and regulations. In this limited context, one can conclude that the EBC has been able to discharge its natural and mandated role as in terms of the promotion and protection of human rights, among others by producing interventionist programs and by covering their violations.

Informants were asked about the relevance of such documentaries in protecting and promoting human rights. They generally stated that producing of such documentary has its own positive impact on the promotion and protection of human rights by exposing the issue to the public.

The second documentary of the EBC-1 directly related to a core human rights issue was named '*Menta Menged*' (The Cross Road); it was about the contribution of the private press in building democracy in Ethiopia. The ERTA had previously produced a very controversial critical documentary on private press.

The documentary is constituted of the suggestions and ideas of experts, journalists, editors, government officials, private magazines and newspaper producers. The documentary assessed the historical development of the private press, the role of the private press and the reality on the

ground, the basic problems and challenges of the private press, and issues associated with the newly adopted Ethiopian Anti-terrorism Proclamation.

The documentary argued along the line that the press, since its inception, has been overwhelmed by unethical practices. After freedom of the press in Ethiopia was guaranteed by a proclamation adopted in 1992, most of the private press have been critical of the new government. It argued that most of such critics leveled against the government were ethically unsound and unbalanced.

Likewise, important issues such as the unwillingness of government organizations to provide appropriate information, the problem in sharing advertisements, the delaying of press in printing houses, the absence of help from government to build the capacity of private press, and the existing huge gap between government and private press have been included in the documentary as challenges facing the private press in the country.

The documentary is certainly a very good product in looking at the defects of private press and to the extent that it tried to criticize the government for not improving its relations with the private press. The documentary was also successful in presenting balanced information from different stakeholders. In conclusion, the researcher gathered from this documentary that while most of the presentations had considered the private media in Ethiopia as unethical and unbalanced in its critics of the government, and actually that not so few had subscribed to political agendas than serving the people, the forum presented an opportunity for engagement between different stakeholders and for hammering out outstanding differences which may well lead to a constructive involvement that enhances the protection of rights and freedoms. .

The third documentary was named '*Yaltegeru Bieroch*'; it was about the rights and responsibilities of the private press in Ethiopia. It was aired following a series of action that lead to the closure of many private press outlets. The documentary concluded that while the country's socio-economic and political setting creates a favorable condition for reporting on diverse issues, the crux of the ideas and activities presented by the private press are pretty much the same and extremely hostile to government approaches. The documentary accused the private press on counts of violation of privacy rights, the provision of false information, unbalanced and unethical criticism of government etc. In the documentary, only a few private press outlets were stated as press products who work by following journalistic ethics.

Throughout the presentation of this documentary, the EBC1 had obviously taken a stand, and was politically biased in favor of the government both in terms of content and the list of stakeholders involved in producing the program. Four key informants interviewed with regard to the program concurred. They argued that most of the time the EBC-1 prepares such documentaries not only on the private press but also in relation to other areas to justify any action which the government has embarked upon or has intended to undertake in the future.¹⁴⁹

On the other hand, an assessment of the rest of the documentaries leads to the conclusion that at least in this particular context, the EBC has not been as robust and fully committed as it should have been as a public media institution established to report the truth and stand as vanguard of the rights and freedoms of citizens. While the few programs its aired have touched upon real human rights issues, this hits too little to constitute a meaningful intervention given its resources, mandate and the number of programs it featured in the past.

4.3.2. Analyses of Content Based on Criterion of ‘Coverage of Diverse Opinion’

By performing its watchdog, agenda-setting and gate-keeping functions, the press, and by extension, the media promotes criticism, deliberation and diversity of opinion.¹⁵⁰ In line with this, the research has tried to evaluate the EBC’s watchdogging role of fundamental rights by assessing its ability in entertaining diverse opinions. Diverse opinion includes both criticism and support of government plans and deeds.

The data from the different sources reveals that the practice of development journalism in the EBC1 lacks the entertainment of diverse opinion. At the very least, this contradicts its own motto which states that the EBC is the “Voice of Diversity and Renaissance”. The following presentation shows what information this conclusion has been based upon in each of the three identified category of programs namely news, *anid le anid* and documentary series.

Data Obtained From the Interview of Key Informants

Of the total nine number of interviewees selected for the purpose, one key informant submitted that the concept of development journalism which, at least conceptually, would seem to allow

¹⁴⁹Interview with key informants three, four, seven and eight on (March 21, March 24, May 04, May 18) 2015 respectively.

¹⁵⁰ Waisbord, *Watchdog Journalism in South America*, 2.

entertainment of diversity of opinion, and give voice to the voiceless, has been misunderstood, giving the impression that the reporting style at the EBC-1 seems more like a PR of the government.¹⁵¹ Other three key informants, representing 33 percent of the total interviewees, told the researcher that EBC-1 tries to include diverse opinion, especially in recent times in relation with the national electoral activities.¹⁵² Yet, the informants also stated that the organization has not done as much of a public media as it is expected.

The information obtained from two key informants of opposition political parties, representing 22 percent of the total number interviewees also showed that EBC-1 has serious limitations in entertaining diverse opinion. They argued that the broadcaster does not accept and transmit alternative ideas particularly from opposition political parties. They furthermore submitted that it censured the message they sent to the EBC for transmission without any legal ground ¹⁵³

Content Analyses of News Programs

Through the three months news content analyses, the researcher was unable to get any news program that hosted diversity of ideas or possible complaints and opposition towards the government or government projects. The news programs gave huge coverage to success stories than presenting critical stories or at least stories that provide a different perspective than those held by the government. The equilibrium between success and critical stories is hardly maintained. While sometimes the EBC-1 solicits opinions from the public, most such opinions are pro-government in their nature, and hence less relevant to the discourse on bringing diverse opinion.

Coming to the statics, critical story news category constituted only 6 percent of the news coverage whereas 79 percent and 15 percent accounted for success stories and other (indifferent) news respectively.

There were little news articles which openly criticized the government on its records of maladministration even when the government itself has admitted quite routinely its shortcomings in ensuring good governance across all sectors. It is quite obvious that good governance and human rights are mutually reinforcing, and that the former is an absolute precondition for the

¹⁵¹ Interview with key informant one, on May 15, 2015.

¹⁵² Interview with key informants two, five and six on April 05/2015, 06/2015 and 07/2015 respectively.

¹⁵³ Interview with key informant seven on May 04, 2015.

realization of the latter.¹⁵⁴ Yes, the statistics would show of the little effort the EBC has exerted in this regard.

Even the critical stories covered during the designated period were mainly soft- type critics. From the 6 percent critical stories presented, half of them are from the opposition political parties on issues of arbitrary arrest of candidates in the different parts of the country. Surprisingly, in presenting the critical news the EBC did not employ its own investigations, but simply chose to relay concerns raised by the opposition parties themselves.

In this context, perhaps it would be necessary to narrate the contents of three news articles. One was concerned with the grossly offending problems of *Tikur Anbesa* Specialized Hospital in delivering its service to the public (from news on March 1, 2015). The second, albeit less critical, was concerned with the chronic organizational challenges of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in attracting tourists (from news on March 12, 2015). And the third news article concentrated on the problems and inefficiencies that existed in the Hotel and Tourism sector (from news on February 14, 2015).

While it is good that the EBC¹ has occasionally resorted to softly critical reporting programs in relation to lingering problems, this is hardly enough when viewed in light of its mission of entertaining critical voices and dissenting opinions. Often also, the fact that it broadcasts on the problems after they are solved, instead of investigating beforehand, gives little room for public participation and hosting of different views alleging grievances. What is evident in the news was the reporting of activities of government officials to the people without feedback from the people. The relevance of media as a critical interface between the government and the people in democracy is almost gone while media reports are mostly, uni-polar, from the government to the people without feedback.¹⁵⁵ This kind of reporting is not good for the protection and promotion of human rights.

Part of this problem lies in the fact that the EBC-1 editorial policy is strongly inspired by government policies, making it difficult to be critical to the government.¹⁵⁶ Not surprising therefore

¹⁵⁴Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Good Governance Practices for the Protection of Human Rights*, (United Nations Publication: New-York and Geneva, 2007), 2.

¹⁵⁵Falobi (2010), Cited in Felix Olajide Talabi, 'The Challenges of Development Journalism in Nigeria,' *Journal of Social Sciences*, COES & RJ-JSS, Centre of Excellence for Scientific & Research Journalism (2013): 1.

¹⁵⁶See 2004 editorial policy of Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency.

if its news are often consistent with government policies and ideology; these have had serious impact on the possibilities of objective and critical reporting by the EBC.

Content Analyses of the *Anid Le Anid* Program

On the basis of the analyses conducted on six *Anid Le Anid* program productions, the research could be concluded that the EBC has again failed in entertaining diverse opinions of different segments of the society, community sections aligned both ideologically and politically along different paths. Only one of the six programs was held with an opposition political party overly critical of the government. The rest of the programs may be interesting in terms of the depth of the thematic discussions and issues framed, but most are only remotely related to the subject under consideration in this research, that is the media's conventional role of hosting and disseminating opinions that are varied in content and representative of all walks of life in society. This conclusion is predicated on the following empirical investigation.

Content Analyses of Documentaries

In this category, one can note from the program descriptions presented above that all the 25 documentary productions clearly supported the government's positions or served as mouthpieces thereof on a range of issues. While some of the productions had reported on existing societal problems in the different parts of the country, none had endeavored to solicit diverse public opinion on the subjects, nor have they ever presented the government as the institution to blame. Rather, the programs are presented in a positive setting depicting that the government has been doing its best to solve the problems. This, for instance, is particularly evident in the documentary prepared on child labor abuse.¹⁵⁷ But the same also goes with regard to the other series which were in any event government's presentation of state of affairs in the country – which by default are one way traffic of information and ideas.

¹⁵⁷*Yereje Lijnet* (The Lost Childhood), the EBC-1 Documentary about the Child Labor Abuse in Ethiopia, transmitted on July 25, 2014.

4.3.3. Analyses of Data Based on Criterion of ‘Balanced Coverage of Developmental V. Other Issues’

This part presents the researcher’s investigation of the data available to analyze EBC’s compliance with the criterion of the media’s role to report in balanced fashion on developmental and non-developmental programs.

News Category

In this regard, in identifying whether a program is a developmental news or not, the content analyses of news in this part has employed the definition of ‘development news’ as provided by Vilanilam (1979).¹⁵⁸ In his work, the author scathingly defined development news as:

*News relating to the primary, secondary, and tertiary needs of a developing country. Primary needs are food, clothing, and shelter. Secondary needs are development of agriculture, industry and all economic activity, which lead to the fulfilment of the primary needs, plus development of education, literacy, health environment, medical research, family planning, employment, labor welfare, social reforms, national integration and rural and urban development. Tertiary needs are development of mass media, transport, tourism, telecommunication, arts and cultural activities.*¹⁵⁹

Based on this definition, developmental-oriented news were constituted in about 703 news articles, which is 45 percent of all the news articles in three months coverage of the EBC1; other news categories were constituted in 859 news articles which accounts for 55 percent. This in particular includes news not related with the above definition as such, like for example news about the anniversaries on regional party organizations (40th year anniversary of Tigray Peoples’ Liberation Front (TPLF) and 25th year anniversary of Oromo Peoples’ Democratic Organization (OPDO)), meeting news, election news and news from the outside world.

The coverage of developmental news includes inaugural news of hospitals, schools, roads, water supply constructions (especially in Addis Ababa), condominium housings, model farmers and pastorals success news in agricultural and livestock production, small and micro business

¹⁵⁸ Vilanilam (1979), Cited in ThulaniTshabangu, “Development Journalism in Zimbabwe: Practice,” Problems, and Prospects” *Journal of Development and Communication Studies* Vol. 2. Nos. 2/3 (2013): 314, (Available at <http://www.devcomsjournalmw.org>.)

¹⁵⁹ Vilanilam (1979:11), Cited in Thulani Tshabangu, “Development Journalism in Zimbabwe,” 314.

enterprise organizations activity news, investment news, and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam diplomatic and construction-related news. .

This statistics amply proves that EBC's has been able to air a balanced proportion of developmental news and non-development news categories. At least this is the impression that would be created on reading the figures.

However, the problem lies in the obvious fact that the concept of development journalism is far broader than what is depicted above, and unfortunately also, it has been conceived by the EBC-1 news coverage programs in a very narrower context. There is a clear tendency on the part of the EBC to equate development merely to construction of projects, infrastructures, buildings and economic growth. One informant stated that "...Ethiopia is a poor nation and it is important to report on economic growth. If and when it becomes economically powerful, human rights would be given emphasis and be protected step by step. Since the root cause of human rights violations is mostly related to poverty, news coverage on economic plans, projections and success stories should be given more attention to mobilize resources and the working spirit of the society..."¹⁶⁰

This view is congruent with the operational expectation of the public media in Ethiopia. The Government's policy document "Our Media's Developmental and Democratic Working Philosophy: Basis and Directions" has already declared development journalism reporting style which highlights that the key concern that frames the Ethiopian development journalism policy is economic poverty and the goal of the government is to level Ethiopia among middle income countries within 20-30 years, with all societal forces, including the media, expected to take part in the process.¹⁶¹ This obviously explains why the EBC has so far focused on the reporting of positive and success stories. In the views of one key informant, asked about and stated that "... public does not want and is not ready to hear negative news, and hence that it would be important to report good (positive) news and initiate the people to do the best under the circumstance..."¹⁶²

But even by its own accounts, developmental journalism is not merely about reporting success stories. The watch-dogging role of the media encompasses reports on limitations and wrongdoings of the government, other organizations and individuals, which is generally negative news.

¹⁶⁰Interview with key informant three, on March 21, 2015.

¹⁶¹It is also stated in Skjerdal, "Development Journalism Revived," 64.

¹⁶² Interview with key informant two, on March 24, 2015.

Ignoring negative news is against this noble function of the media. From this, it becomes clear that the EBC's practice of development journalism in its news programs has utterly fallen short of the expectations, and hence the media's role on the quality of presentation of human rights issues through critical reporting has been seriously affected.

The *Anid Le Anid* Program

In analyzing this program category, the research identified one program production (representing 14 percent of all the programs) which focused on the implementation of the Growth and Transformation Plan by Speaker of House of Peoples Representative (HPR).¹⁶³ As in all other narratives, this too had concentrated on success stories of the program with little effects, if any, in addressing the key human rights issue of balanced reporting that fosters their meaningful protection and implementation.

Documentary Series

Of the 25 documentaries analyzed, seven documentaries representing 28 percent of all the documentaries aired between July 2014 and March 2015 were directly related with development issues defined in the narrower context. Of course, the issue of development was also touched in the middle of the narrations in other documentaries as well. While the challenge, and hence the effects of narrowly conceiving development journalism still stands out, the proportion in absolute terms, of the coverage could still be regarded as a significant step.

4.3.4. Analyses of Data Based on Criterion of 'Reporting Approach'

The interview series shows that the reporting approach of the EBC-1 is significantly biased by the top-down approach. The sources of most of its information were government authorities. Non-governmental organizations and people were rarely used as sources of news except when their views were needed in the context of programs which feature peoples' support of government positions on any subject.

From the three months news analyses, 64 percent of the news sources were from government authorities, while 21 percent were procured from non-governmental organizations, including the

¹⁶³One to one discussion with Ato Abadula Gammada (the speaker of House of Peoples' Representatives (HPR), transmitted by EBC-1 on October 25, 2014.

people. About 15 percent of the news were related to election. Nearly all the sources of election related news were the Ethiopian National Election Board, opposition political parties and government organizations. The opinion of the public was little accounted in the news programs. This demonstrates that people were little involved and given less attention as sources of news. The fact that information in the government-owned media predominantly comes from government authorities and government news agencies than directly from the public who were supposed to be the major sources of information¹⁶⁴ has serious implications on the quality and purposes of the report eventually produced, and its effects on genuine protection of human rights. What is more, the fact that the reporting approach of the EBC1 follows a top-down approach negates one of the fundamental tenets of the development journalism principle which is participatory or two-way of communication.

¹⁶⁴ Lencho, “Communicating for Development and Democratization in Ethiopia,” 128.

CHAPTER FIVE

EBC'S CHALLENGES IN ITS PRACTICE OF WATCH-DOGGING ROLE OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS: OVERARCHING OBSERVATIONS

5.1. The Problem of Editorial Independence

For the media to perform its watchdogging role effectively, it should entertain its independence from any political influence. The most sophisticated and fearless watch-dogging is often done by independent, nonprofit entities devoted to investigative reporting.¹⁶⁵ While the EBC too is a nonprofit entity, in practice, it operates under a great deal of political influence. There is no question that the proclamation which established the EBC has granted the institution an editorial independence;¹⁶⁶ yet, seven participants in this study (78 percent), submitted that the media in Ethiopia, and especially the EBC function without editorial autonomy, with clear prescription of works by the ruling party. Two participants from government agency (22 percent) replied otherwise.

A similar finding has also been stated in other study which held that the government's dominance of media ownership, its monopoly on important sources of information, and manipulation of media management by appointing managers and editors who are members of the ruling party,¹⁶⁷ eventually reflects in the quality of the programs and independent functioning of the institution.

Two key informants submitted that a core member of the ruling EPRDF office told them in meetings of political parties that he is among editors of the EBC.¹⁶⁸ They furthermore added that most of the messages which show limitations of the ruling government and are sent by the opposition political parties to the EBC for transmission had been censored by the EBC without legal grounds to that effect. In their views, the gate keepers are "political appointees; it at the beginning of their job journalists take a training and a distinct way of reporting. If they do not accept such reporting style they will lost their job..."¹⁶⁹ Such political influence leads journalists who work at the EBC to focus on presenting government success stories than critics. In relation to human right violations, the magnitude of political influence makes practitioners basically silent

¹⁶⁵Cornel, "Corruption and the Watchdog Role of the News Media," 119.

¹⁶⁶Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation establishment Proclamation No 858/2014

¹⁶⁷ Lencho, "Communicating for Development and Democratization in Ethiopia," 131.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with key informant seven and eight, on May 04 and 18, 2015 respectively.

¹⁶⁹Interview with key informant one, on May 15, 2015.

or indifferent to the cause. The reporting of such violations or the criticizing of government offices and officials often leads to unfavorable consequences. In this regard, one key informant stated that “often the authorities which will be subjected to serious critics in EBC programs are persons which the government itself wants to remove from their positions or attack their reputation beforehand; in such cases, the EBC would seem to work for and on behalf of the interests of the ruling government. A typical example of this would be the devastating documentary series produced by the EBC against the private press after the government closed many of the private press outlets in August 2014...”¹⁷⁰

Naturally, the Ethiopian ‘Development Journalism’ policy which urges the media to collaborate with the government has paved the way for the government to intervene even in routine media activities. The approach has created an opportunity for government to interfere as it pleases within the framework of a national agenda of ‘bringing overall development’. As one scholar argued, this policy makes the media free to support the government than to be free from government influence.¹⁷¹ In this regard therefore, one notes that the most serious challenge posed against the EBC’s watch-dogging role and hence playing its role in leveling critics against government misconduct emanates from the media policy of the country itself which takes away its autonomy in the first place.

The research also identified a great deal of politicized contents throughout the analyses of contents of news, documentaries and *Anid Le Anid* programs. Throughout, it was found that no hard critics was leveled against the government. In conclusion, it was noted that political influence stands out as the most serious challenge against the EBC’s operational independence and hence against its performance in playing its watch-dogging role in respect of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens in Ethiopia.

5.2. Financial Predicaments

A part of development journalism, investigative reporting needs more time and budget than any other event based reporting. It is expensive, time-consuming, and requires investment in staff

¹⁷⁰Interview with key informant eight, on May 18, 2015.

¹⁷¹ Sean Kelly, “Access Denied: The Politics of Press Censorship,” *The Washington Paper*, (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1978), 27.

and resources.¹⁷² But of course, the political and prestige rewards can offset the financial costs, as is the case in Latin America and Southern Europe, where news organizations conducted exposes in order to promote pragmatic political or economic interests of various groups.¹⁷³

This concern and challenge was particularly highlighted by all informants interviewed in this study; they agreed that economic problems like insufficient budget for investigative reporting, poor media infrastructure and insufficient salary for professional journalists are key obstacles for practicing investigative journalism in particular and development journalism in general. One informant reflected “... as Ethiopia is a developing country, still the digital system (which could reach millions of viewers all of the world) has not been applied in the public media it is still working to digitalize the public media and hence make it accessible, but the task becomes very challenging because of many economic reasons.”¹⁷⁴

5.3. Professional Problems

Investigative reporting, especially in the area of human rights issues, also needs a professional journalist. While there are professional journalists who work for the institution, the organization also hosts a huge number of personnel with little qualifications.¹⁷⁵ Some of the personnel studied language and literature, while others studied different disciplines from the social sciences - which have little affinity to the professional knowledge required in journalism.¹⁷⁶

The researcher also found that a few individuals who studied natural science disciplines work in the media house. A key informant from the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation told the researcher that the EBC suffers from a serious lack of professionally equipped journalists.¹⁷⁷ Another key informant also stated that while the progress has been observed in recent years, many of the workers in the institution discharge their journalistic obligations solely on the basis of experience¹⁷⁸ with negative ramifications on the role of the EBC in safeguarding fundamental rights.

¹⁷² Coronel, “Corruption and the Watchdog Role of the News Media,” 120.

¹⁷³ Waisbord, *Watchdog Journalism in South America*, 6.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with key five on April 06, 2015.

¹⁷⁵ Skjerdal, “Competing loyalties: Journalism culture in the Ethiopian State Media,” 183.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid

¹⁷⁷ The interview with key informant two on April 05, 2015.

¹⁷⁸ The interview with key informant one, on May 15, 2015

5.4. Self-Censorship

Reporting on human rights issues is politically sensitive; it is not therefore surprising that many journalists abstain from producing their programs on this subject. Three informants stated that there is a great use of self-censorship within the EBC where journalists would instead choose to conform to policies of the government.¹⁷⁹ Many agreed that reporting on the human rights violations is a politically sensitive issue and may cause harsh consequences. Because of fear of unwarranted consequences, EBC journalists often refrain from undertaking investigative reporting.

¹⁷⁹Interview with key informants two, three, four, on (April 05, March 21, and March 24), 2015

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusion

Media can play important role in promoting and protecting human rights through exposing human rights violations and offer an arena for different voices to be heard in public discourse. Among the others, watchdogging role of such media is important role in promoting and protecting human rights. The watchdogging role of such media is directly or indirectly subjected to the underlying philosophies of each political economy and theories of the press (media) which states may wish to implement in any given setting. Accordingly, in Ethiopia development journalism has been applying as official reporting style in state media since 2008. Throughout the practice of development journalism in state media in Ethiopia, the watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms has been getting less attention.

The objective of this study was to examine whether and how the media's watchdog role of fundamental rights and freedoms has been practiced within the framework of the development journalism theory of communication through a case study of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation in Ethiopia. In examining EBC's watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens through the practice of development journalism, in depth interview and content analysis was used as the methods of data collection. The media policy of the country was also the subject of analysis since the study was assessed the EBC's watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms within framework of developmental journalism policy approach of the country.

In this study the concepts and major roles of public media in general and the roles of media in promoting human rights in particular were discussed. To catch up the concept of development journalism, historical evolution and some important facets of it were discussed. In relations between development journalism and human rights, development journalism strives to contribute important inputs to the achievement of overall development - which itself is a key instrument in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Most importantly through its

investigative reporting development journalism can contribute paramount input for the promotion and protection of human rights. However, development journalism is in fact susceptible to shortcomings that have their basis in its philosophical underpinning, its exposure to multiple definitions or its actual operation in society. Accordingly, its experiment in developing countries, especially in Africa, remains the mouthpiece of governments.

Throughout the analysis of three important media policy document of Ethiopia the study found that the watchdogging role of the media has got less attention. The function of media as ‘fourth estate’ (watchdogging role) in which media serves as fourth wing of the government to check three branches of government is not recognized in development journalism media policy of government in Ethiopia. Media understood as instrument to achieve development. Watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms is understood negatively. Development journalism model initiated in Ethiopia makes the media to support government policies and activities. Accordingly, most programs of EBC were pro-government. People-centered, accommodation, emphasis on content than presentation, non-partisan, nurtures local cultural values, etc. are some values that the Ethiopian media policy want to practice in state media in the country.

The findings of study also indicated that the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation effort of giving spatial attention to vulnerable sections of the society such as children, the disabled and women is acknowledgeable. Most importantly in the women’s weekly program the abuse of women’s rights is covered. It is also encouraging that the EBC’s effort within the framework of image-building, creating national consensus on several issues and identity formation. On line this issue the EBC airs a program it called ‘tourism for development’ where many tourist attraction places and the cultural makeup of nations, nationalities and people from across the country are identified and introduced.

After conducting in-depth interview with nine key informant and after analyzing contents of EBC1’s three month (January- March) 1562 news articles, six month (July- January) productions of *Anid Anid* program and six month production of documentary series, the conclusion of the research findings was presented. The study was assessed information gained from above sources through the criteria of coverage of human rights issues, coverage of diverse opinion, balanced Coverage of developmental V. other issues, and the reporting approach.

The study found out that EBC-1 has limitation in covering human rights issues in its programs, especially in news coverage. The news content analysis shows that very limited coverage was given for human rights issue. Only 1.4 percent of three month news content analysis was deal with human rights issues. Even those instances of media coverage were very soft in the nature of reporting. With the exception of the two programs, the other productions *aind le aind* were extremely smooth in disclosing existing problems of rights violations. On the documentary side, there was one documentary (from 25 documentaries aired between July 2014- February 2015), named “*Yereje Lijnet*” (The Lost Childhood), depicts a typical example of how the media could actually propagate human rights issues.

The data from the different sources revealed that the practice of development journalism in the EBC1 lacks the entertainment of diverse opinion. The EBC has been able to air a balanced proportion of developmental news and non-development news categories, however, there is a clear tendency on the part of the EBC to equate development merely to construction of projects, infrastructures, buildings and generally with economic growth. The reporting approach of EBC is significantly biased by the top-down approach.

Under this circumstance the problem in editorial independence, financial predicaments, lack of professional journalists, and using of self-censorship by journalists are among the challenges to EBC to perform its watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms.

6.2. Recommendations

The watchdog role of the media is crucial in promoting and protecting human rights. It brings out human right violations to the public and assists in creating a culture of civic discourse, transparency, and government accountability. It also help the government to improve good governance, fight against corruption, and other related things which are, most of the time, the sources for violation of human rights.

By inspiring such considerations the study comprehended the status of EBC’s watchdog role of fundamental rights and freedoms in Ethiopia through the practice of development journalism police approach. The findings shows that the watchdogging role of EBC through its practice of development journalism policy is negatively understood and little attention is given to it. Accordingly, as the study implies, the government shall revisit the media policy of the country and

give due emphasis for watchdogging role of media. It is possible to being both watchdog and development journalism.

The important principle of media to play its watchdogging role of fundamental rights and freedoms is being independent from any external influence. Intervention by government in the activities of media adversely affects its watchdogging role. Even though the editorial policy of EBC claims that the organization has editorial independence, the findings shows that get keepers there are partisan to government. Hence, the government shall respect the EBC to enjoy its editorial independence in practice. Though EBC is subsidized by government fund, it should be run independently of government.

To raise professional and ethical standards of journalist the effort has been made in the country but most of the time the training is delivered by government heads. The training must be delivered by professional experts than politicians and must aimed at improving the level of skills in various areas of journalism. Providing adequate salary and better protection for watchdog journalists is other measurement which shall be undertake by concerned body.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide Questions

Part I: Questions for Professional Journalists (Editor, Reporters)

1. Different individuals still understand development journalism differently. What is development journalism mean to you?
2. How do you assess the relevance or any effect of development journalism reporting style on the coverage of human rights issues?
3. Does the practice of development journalism philosophy discouraging the practice of critical reporting in the country?
4. How do you assess the EBC's application of editorial independence and the capacity in entertaining diverse opinion?
5. How do you see the place of watchdog role of public media in Ethiopia?
6. What do you think that the problem behind which may preclude EBC from doing its role of Watching fundamental rights and freedoms?

Part II: Questions for Media Expertise

1. Different individuals still understand development journalism differently. What is development journalism mean in general?
2. How do you assess the relevance or any effect of development journalism reporting style on the coverage of human rights issues?
3. Does the practice development journalism philosophy discouraging the practice of critical reporting in the country?
4. How do you see the place of watchdog role of public media in Ethiopia?
5. Through its watchdog role public media can expose human rights violations to the public. Accordingly, does development journalism make watchdog role?
6. Some argues that development journalism is the way of alternative reporting for liberal way of journalism and it is related with ideological difference of East and West. How do you see this? Does development journalism really born from eastern thinking?
7. Most of EBC reporting is focused on government success stories and little coverage is given to human rights issues. What do you think that the problem behind this?

Part III: Questions for interviewee from the Government Agencies

1. Some individuals argue that development journalism is the tool that the government (EPRDF) used to suppress freedom of journalists not to report what they see and to intervene in to the independent reporting of the public media for the sack of reporting the government success stories only by ignoring critical/ watchdog reporting by the name of development. What do you say for this opinion?
2. Many studies reveals that in Ethiopia Critical/watchdog reporting is not as such way of reporting style in public media. Does the practice of development journalism contribute to this?
3. Many individuals and experts claim that the public media in Ethiopia is not operationally independent from ruling party (EPRDF) and hence, the public media has no power to expose systematic violations of human rights which appear because of corruption, rent seeking, maladministration and likes in the country. What do you think for this opinion?
4. How do you see the capacity of public media in Ethiopia in entertaining diverse opinion and disseminating the information of public interest?
5. How do you see the practice of watchdog role by public media in Ethiopia?
6. What do you think about the challenges for EBC to doing its function in the country?

Part IV: Questions for Opposition Members

1. As you are from the opposition political parties and EBC is public media which expected to include the opinions of opposition (as diverse opinion). How do you assess the EBC's capacity in entertaining diverse opinion?
2. How do you see about the coverage of human rights issues by EBC?
3. How do you assess the editorial independence of EBC?
4. Is there any effect of the practice 'development journalism' by EBC on its critics of government?

Part V: Civil Society Organization

1. How do you see the coverage of human rights issue by public media (EBC) in Ethiopia?
2. How do you assess the contribution of EBC for protection and promotion of human rights in the country?
3. Is there any relations between your organization and EBC to discuss about human rights issues?

Appendix B: List of key informants

No.	Informant's No.	Institution	Position	Date and Place of interview
1.	Key Informant One	Addis Ababa University	Dean in Graduate Study of Journalism and Communication	15 May 2015, Dean office of Graduate Study of Journalism and Communication, AAU.
2.	Key informant Two	EBC	Editor	05 April 2015, the compound of EBC, Addis Ababa (local name, Mexico).
3.	Key informant Three	EBC	Reporter	21 March 2015, selected place by informant, Addis Ababa.
4.	Key informant Four	EBC	Reporter	24 March 2015, in the compound of EBC Addis Ababa (local name, Mexico).
5.	Key informant Five	Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA)	Head, Public Relations Coordinator	06 April 2015, in EBA office.
6.	Key informant Six	FDRE Government Communication Affairs Office	Head, Public Relations Coordinator	07 April 2015, in Government Communication Affairs Office.
7.	Key informant Seven	Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (MEDREK) political party	Deputy chairperson of MEDREK	04 May 2015 in MEDREK head Office, Addis Ababa (Amist killo)
8.	Key informant Eight	Sameyewi party,(Blue party Ethiopia)	Head, Public Relation Officer	18 May 2015, in Sameyewi Party Office, Addis Ababa (Kezanchis)
9.	Key informant Nine	Human Rights Council	Coordinator of Media realize office	10 May 2015 in office of HRC, Addis Ababa (Legahar)