

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Promoting Development Journalism in State Media: The Case of Addis Zemen Newspaper

By Dejene Tesemma

Thesis Submitted to School of Journalism & Communication

In partial fulfillment for Master of Arts Degree
in Journalism and Communication



June 2010

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Acronyms

DJ-Development Journalism

ENA -Ethiopian News Agency

EPA-Ethiopian Press Agency

NWICO- New World Information Communication Order

WIC -Walta Information Center

Abstract

Development journalism is a philosophy adopted by the state media in Ethiopia on a ground that this philosophy would enable the media support development endeavors of the country.

Proponents of development journalism believe that it would play a vital role in fighting poverty and invigorating the endeavors of social transformation. Addis Zemen newspaper, Ethiopia's most aged daily is following this philosophy line.

Documents that reflect the stance of the government and the editorial policy of the Ethiopian Press Agency alike stipulate the need to adhere to established professional and ethical principles in the undertaking of development journalism. In reporting development issues, the media are expected to be critical, investigative, analytical and interpretive to promote development. Development wouldn't be measured only in material, statistical and econometric terms it should also consider human needs, empowerment, participation and self-reliance.

The present study, which touched up on relevant literature and deployed qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, reviewing of documents and personal observations revealed that development reporting in Addis Zemen is commonly government centered, uncritical and excessively soft option oriented. The major challenges in covering development issues, according to the findings of this study, boil down to various factors which include limitations of individual journalists, inconvenience of institutional atmosphere as well bureaucratic difficulties in accessing information. Key impeding factors as journalists are concerned include but not limited to lack of commitment, inadequate training, self-censorship and adherence to the legacy of safe reporting. Institutional factors are inattention for rural and grassroots coverage, inability to ensure editorial independence, poor planning, lack of facilities and incentives.

Organization of the study

Chapter one of this study attempts to introduce the line up of customary procedures which include study background, statement of the problem and other justifications expected in the framing of the research.

Chapter two discusses review of literature. Chapter three describes method employed and theoretical framework in determining informants, collecting, transcribing, organizing and interpreting data obtained. Chapter four of the study deals with data presentation and interpretation. Chapter five looks back to discussions and analysis made in the previous chapters and presents summary of the research as well as its findings.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Some scholars view development journalism as advocacy or propaganda journalism manipulated by the governments because they believe journalists mostly depend on government handouts (Muniruddin, 2005: 218).

Ogan (1980:3) explains that there is huge fear and suspicion concerning the motives involved in the use of development journalism and that the discussion of the topic often disintegrates into an exchange of inflammatory rhetoric.

However, there are counter arguments that development journalism should not be taken for granted as government tool that pours down information from above to the public. According to this view development journalism is a new form of reporting that critically examines, evaluates and reports the relevance of development projects to national and local needs, the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation, and the difference between its impact on people as claimed by government officials and as it actually is. (Aggarwala cited in Ogan, 1980: 6)

Sharma (2005) states that roughly a development reporter has three tasks to perform-inform, interpret and promote. If properly executed, a development reporter's job is more exacting than that of mere news reporters, according to this scholar. A development reporter must be associated with a noble motive of supporting, crusading or promoting a cause. A sincere development writer's role in the overall progress of a country is so vital. A development journalist will have to develop a sixth sense to smell the rot before it envelops him. A development journalist avoids a mouthpiece writing at any cost and is honest to highlight the achievement and laurels won by the people executing schemes. (Sharma, 2005: 119)

As development is at the center of the incumbent's agenda, the Ethiopian state media are grossly considered to be development promoters. Despite the arguments and counter

arguments around development journalism, the Ethiopian government believes that pursuing development journalism would support nation's development endeavors if implemented effectively. Some documents produced by the government (the ruling party) declare that public media should do development reporting as per the established principles of the genre.

One of such documents is a public media practitioners' training manual which was published in April 2008, loosely translated (IPI, 2009) "Our Media's Developmental and Democratic Working Philosophy: Basis and Directions". The manual plainly prescribes (P. 32) that the philosophy of the state media should be development journalism so that they would be able to support development endeavors of the government.

The document spells out that the public media that would sufficiently create consensus on national policies and strategies and support the public needs for change had not been in place. It states that as a result of lack of definite working philosophy that can support the process of national transformation the media was in a state of crisis. The document further argues that contents of public media sometimes contradicted with the democratic and developmental progress and it underlines the need for formulating a working philosophy for the media that it labels "engulfed in various problems". (Ibid: 4)

1.2 Statement of the problem

In line with the philosophy of development journalism, which is being promoted by the government of Ethiopia, all state owned news media are supposed to play a significant role in the efforts being exerted to transform the country. Addis Zemen is no exception. Addis Zemen, Ethiopia's most aged newspaper has been serving the nation for nearly 70 years, both as a weekly tabloid in the early days of its formation and later after it grew to a daily broadsheet. However, it didn't have codified philosophical guideline to direct its journalistic performance both in the monarchy and the Derge periods. Development journalism is now clearly specified in the editorial policy of the Ethiopian Press Agency, publisher of Addis Zemen as a mainstream.

However, development journalism which the Ethiopian state media, in general and Addis Zemen in particular, claim to undertake is not about reporting government handouts and amplifying top down information flow beyond limits. As mentioned earlier, it is rather a new form of reporting that critically examines, evaluates and reports the relevance of development.

The present study explores how Addis Zemen reports development issues in light of these rationales and the principles reflected in the editorial policy of the Ethiopian Press Agency as well as other governmental guidelines such as the document discussed in the preceding section.

1.3 General objective of the study

This study intends to examine how development reporting is practiced in Addis Zemen in light of the claims of contemporary development journalism theories and the role media should play in development

1.4 Specific objectives

Specific objectives of this study are: to

- a. Explore how development reporting is practiced in Addis Zemen
- b. Find out the level of efforts exerted by individual journalists in Addis Zemen in reporting development
- c. Examine factors that limit Addis Zemen journalists in doing development reporting

1.5 Significance of the study

To date, no serious research has been conducted to examine how development reporting is being undertaken in Addis Zemen newspaper. Abdi Ali (2001) attempted to survey Addis Zemen's 60 years developmental issues coverage. However, it is only a bird eye view survey. The current research will examine the scenario of development reporting through qualitative approach and reveal the gaps in Addis Zemen newsroom in development reporting. State owned media practitioners who are expected to perform development journalism and the government as a promoter of the philosophy of developmental journalism would be the first beneficiaries of this study. It will also benefit researchers who wish to study the Ethiopian public media situation in terms of development reporting. Moreover, it will be an add-up to the domain of knowledge in development reporting.

1.6 Method

The approach used in this research is entirely a qualitative one. In-depth interview is the major data collection method deployed. Focus group discussion was also used as a second option. For the in-depth interviews key informants (reporters, editors and newsroom coordinators of Addis Zemen) have been approached. The aim of the focus group discussion was to cross check information obtained through individual interviews with collective reflections. Informal conversations and personal observations have also been exploited.

1.7 Scope of the study

This study will focus only on Addis Zemen. It doesn't include private papers because private papers are not governed by the philosophy and editorial policy set for state owned media, even though they may do development reporting. Other federal state owned papers are not also treated here. There are adequate reasons to exclude other state owned newspapers. The Ethiopian Herald, which is almost on equal footing with Addis Zemen is headed by this researcher and that would put him in conflict of interest while making judgments of any sort. Moreover, the editorial policy of the Ethiopian Press Agency stipulates that Herald and Al-alem are image builders than development reporters, though practically the policy statements are not mutually exclusive. It is only the intensity of content selection that differentiates Addis Zemen and the Ethiopian Herald. Barissa the Oromo weekly is not also as dominant as Addis Zemen in amount of content it carries, distribution and target audience.

1.8 Operational definition of terms

There are some familiar terms interchangeably used in the discussions about development journalism. These are terms like development communication, developmental journalism and development journalism. However, there are conceptual lines to be drawn in the use of these terms, though they appear fairly similar. David O. Edeani (1993) makes conceptual distinctions among these terms.

Development communication-a broader and relatively older term which denotes the employment of all forms of communication and not only the mass media in promotion of national development efforts.

Developmental journalism- a derivation of development communication described by some communication scholars as a government controlled form of communication.

Development journalism-the kin of journalism which pays sustained attention to the coverage of ideas, policies, programs, activities and events dealing with the improvement of the life of people. The concept adopted through out this study assumes evaluation, interpretation, analyses and commentaries while presenting development contents in media coverage

‘ Development journalism’ may be interchangeably used with ‘development reporting’ notwithstanding the fact that debates over terms could inevitably surface as that is phenomenonal in academic exercises.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

In order to build the study on well recognized theoretical basis this chapter is devoted to presenting the highlights of some scholarly perspectives on development and development reporting. It starts with the concept of development and extends the discussion to the role of media in development and other essential debates in development reporting

2.1 Development defined

“Development is a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and economic advancement, including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities, for the majority of the people through their gaining control over their environment” (Rogers & Shukla, 2001: 1)

Development is a planned, organized, future-oriented, ecologically sound dynamic and sustainable process aimed at actualizing the human potential and the material capacities of society efficiently so that people will be able to achieve high standard of quality of life, have control over themselves, over their destiny and over their social, political and material environment (Kazan cited by Zekarias in Economic Focus Vol.9 No.1, 2005:12)

Amatiya Sen discusses development from the economic and social point of view noting that it is a difficult concept to determine even by established measures of economics for the measures sometimes leave out elements that wouldn't fall in the domain of the measures, and yet, could contribute to the improvement of life standards.

“The concept of development is by no means unproblematic. The different problems underlying the concept have become clearer over the years on the basis of conceptual discussions as well as from insights emerging from empirical work.” (Sen, in Chenery and Srinivasan (ed), 1988:23)

He further argues that as long as many of the debates around the concept relate to matters of life and death, well-being and illness, happiness and misery, freedom and vulnerability, the underlying objectives are perspicacious enough to command broad agreement. (Ibid: 23)

Though it is a loaded concept subject to various interpretations, development is often times paralleled with access to facilities, income growth and employment rate. It may be also

justified by the presence or absence of sufficient social, psychological and spiritual well-being instead of material values. Therefore, even the established measures and variables sometimes fail to exactly define what development means to all of us. That is why some identify it with quantitative growth (gross national product) while some calculate it in terms of expanding the supply of food, clothing, housing, medical services, educational facilities etc. and transformation of infrastructures.

And yet, some scholars push the concept beyond such material facilities and technological advancement. They try to include institutional capacities in a given society to refer to development.

Apart from technological progress and economic growth, development of a society also includes advanced democratic institutions by replacing pre-modern and feudal setups. It can only be done by making the poor, the marginalized sections of the society participate in the decision making processes. Development includes the values of human dignity, equality, social justice and security. Any development that does not bring these values in its orbit; that doesn't provide all people equal opportunities is invalid. (<http://www.concurrent.org> accessed on 6/2/10)

2.2 The three paradigms of development

Before proceeding to discuss about development journalism it is necessary to look into some development theories that not only dominated intellectual and political thoughts in the second half of 20th century but also paved the way for development journalism to emerge as one of the normative media theories (MacQuail, 1984). These development theories are commonly known as modernization, dependency and another/multiplicity paradigms.

2.2.1 Modernization paradigm

The years after World War II witnessed the emancipation of most of the Third World countries from colonization. Economic growth that resembled the Western model was prioritized. The model was to be manifested through adopting a capitalist economic system, building up formal economic structure and acquiring technologies from the West.

These enormous post World War II social, cultural and economic consequences were highly supported by the modernization paradigm, one of the most powerful of development theories. This theory is based on liberal political theory and is, therefore, grounded in the project of

“Enlightenment” viz. reasoning, rationality, objectivity and other philosophical principles of Western science (Melkote & Steeves, 2001: 271).

Development, therefore, involved not simply the transfer of technology but also communication of ideas and skills to realize the successful adoption of innovations. (Ibid: 265)

Servaes (2002:269-71) summarizes the three development theories by pointing out their fundamental premises and differences. He describes the modernization paradigm as a view that understands development as inevitable and inherent process in every single society. It understands development as primarily uni-linear process from the developed 'source' to the underdeveloped receiver. It believes that progress is attained through discernible, predetermined stages. It is a theory based on assessments made by industrial economic criteria.

Development of this genre implies structural differentiation and functional specialization-capital centered modes of production. In a word, development is the state of being or becoming 'westernized.'

“The model is characterized by three mechanisms for ‘modernizing’ the ‘traditional society’: psycho-sociological, institutional and technological. The ‘psycho-sociological’ mechanism entails the capacity to see oneself in the other fellow’s situation, which is an indispensable skill for people moving out of traditional settings.” (Banda, 2006:2)

2.2.2 Dependency paradigm

This is a view originated in reaction to the modernization paradigm. Its base is chiefly in Latin America and the most basic reason for its emergence was that the former did not work because there was no adequate preexisting base of expertise or infrastructure in the Third World countries to adopt and cope with Western capital and technology transfer.

According to dependency paradigm underdevelopment, being rather than a stage on the road to development, is the two sides of the same coin: an underdeveloped Periphery (third world) is prerequisite for the existence of the developed Center (first world). Due to the fact that the Periphery is deprived of its surplus, development in the Center implies underdevelopment in the Periphery. Thus, this view analyzes the process of development in terms of relations between regions- central and peripheral. (Servaes, 2002:271)

It asserts that the causes of underdevelopment are external to the underdeveloped nations. Since it is a result of global economic structures, therefore, the cure could be in the nation itself, chiefly through economic and cultural dissociation from world markets and through self-reliance. (Melekote & Steeves, 2001:170)

The dependency paradigm, both in theory and policy, focused almost exclusively on analysis at the international level; by passed analogous relations of exploitation and inequality intranationally, serving to enhance the positions of the many Third World bourgeoisie handsomely, as well as failing to prescribe any concrete solution.

Both the modernization and dependency paradigms employ overwhelmingly economic, technological framework of analysis, ignoring cultural, aesthetic, and environmental or other more holistic considerations. (Ibid)

2.2.3 Multiplicity (another development) paradigm

Nations in one way or another are dependent on each other. Consequently, internal as well as external factors inevitably influence the development process. Development has to be studied in a global context, in which Center and Periphery, as well as their interrelated subdivisions, have to be taken into consideration. (Servaes, 2002: 271)

In Multiplicity Paradigm more attention is paid to the content of development, which implies a more normative approach. This paradigm questions whether 'developed' countries are in fact developed and whether this genre of progress is sustainable or desirable. It favors a multiplicity of approaches on the context, the basic, felt needs, and the empowerment of the most oppressed sectors of various societies at different levels. A main thesis, here, is that change must be structural and occur at multiple levels in order to achieve these ends. There is no universal model for development. Each society must develop its own development strategy. (Ibid)

2.3 Media in development-Information diffusion vs. Balanced Information

2.3.1 Information diffusion

With the political, social and economic realities that followed World War II, the modernization school of thought wanted to urge the world to replicate in the developing countries development patterns that had taken place in the Western societies. Towards that end, the dominant paradigm saw mass communication as a powerful and direct force in diffusing information and innovations about development issues to the masses. Communication scholars thought growth of the mass media was essential because communication which was linear and one way model would reach the wider audience. The indicators of national development, such as per capita income, literacy, urbanization and industrialization were also correlated with indicators of a well developed media infrastructure. UNESCO also held similar position when its study suggested a minimum standard for mass media availability in the Third World: ten copies of daily newspapers, five radio receivers, two television receivers, and two cinema seats for every 100 of its inhabitants. (Muniruddin, 2005: 216)

Therefore, communication scholars following the Dominant Paradigm in the 1950s constructed a top-down approach to development and communication as a one-way flow of information. (Banjade, 2001:3)

Mass media was supposed to create awareness of, and interest in, the innovations espoused by change agents. It is clear that this mechanism was influenced to a large extent by the two-step flow model of media influence, with the notion of 'opinion leaders' playing a key role in bringing about modernizing practices among their fellow citizens. Moreover, the diffusion approach also looked to the mass media as an 'institutional' nexus of modernizing practices and institutions in society, functioning as 'watchdogs' and 'teachers' for change and 'modernization'. This approach further held that traditional societies would have to go through a five-stage model of transition from a traditional economy to a modern industrial complex: the traditional society, preconditions for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity, and the age of high mass consumption (Banda, 2006: 2).

However, the dominant paradigm of development was critiqued for the Third World countries felt they didn't derive any benefit from imitating the western economic

development model. Thus, communication models and media utilization approaches that complemented the dominant paradigm faced serious criticism.

2.3.2 Balanced information

The Third World countries couldn't readily take on the Western model, indeed, mainly for problems in these countries were quite multifaceted and extensive. They included traditionalism, widespread poverty, illiteracy, growing population, lack of adequate institutional mechanisms to pass on the fruits of economic growth to the general population, especially to the disadvantaged groups. Added to these problems, red-tapism, inefficiency and corruption acted as contributing factors.

On top of these, industrialization in the Third World countries caused other problems such as reduction of labor, increased unemployment and large scale migration from villages to cities. These social changes occurred in the Third World countries where they were unprepared to face the consequences. The failure of the model paved the way for evolvement of a new development paradigm and communication approach. (Muniruddin 2005: 216)

Consequently, approaches designed in communication theories along side the influence of dominant paradigm had to be revisited from a different dimension. Scholars of the dependency paradigm in 1960s pointed out a need for developing countries to separate themselves from Western countries in order to attain an advanced level of development. They turned to be busy with the promotion of a balanced flow of information in and out of developing countries and articulated the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). (Banjade, 2001:4)

Despite its criticism against the strategy of the modernization school as to how media should be used to support development, the dependency paradigm did not, in fact, undermine the role of media for development. The departure was on the balance of information flow and the creation of self-reliant media system instead of relying on Western media outlets to support development.

The participatory school (alternative paradigm), which rejects the two extremes (imitation and dissociation) also recognizes the importance of media for national development. But it differs from the two schools on the strategy to be deployed. It advocates a two way communication through creating a media landscape that could relate to the grassroots specific realities and needs. Scholars of the alternative paradigm, in fact, reject the top-down, one-

way and centralized approach and would like to focus on two-way, interactive and participatory communication (Ibid).

It was against such contentious backdrop that development journalism came into the realm of mass media debate particularly advanced by the desire of developing nations to deviate from the Western free press ideology, which they felt hegemonic and ill-disposed towards them.

2.4 Development Journalism

2.4.1. Diverse definitions

Like development itself, development journalism/reporting is not free of conceptual and pragmatic problems. “One factor which complicates any discussion of development journalism is the wide range of alternative interpretations of it, resulting in part from variations in understandings of development and from differing socio-political situations” (Romano 1998: 66).

Development journalism/reporting had different definitions in different contexts. In some places it meant the communication process being used as a tool to serve development plans and goals of governments. Ogan (1980: 3) uses development journalism and development communication alternatively as coinages denoting same concept but doubts the clarity of the concept among both the proponents and critics of development journalism. “It appears that both the proponents and the critics of the establishment of this ‘new’ kind of journalism are not always clear about the concept’s meaning or method of application in any particular setting.”

Tsedu states that development journalism “is about highlighting what people are doing to help transform their lives. Whether they do this alongside the government or on their own is immaterial. The premise that development journalism is necessarily government oriented is faulty” (<http://www.thehoot.org> accessed on 15/3/2010)

According to Aman Namra development journalism should focus the needs of the poor, the deprived, the marginalized and should emphasize their effective participation in development planning. “The kind of journalism that motivates the active participation of the affected people and advocating for their interests, in place of the views of policy makers and planners” (Ibid)

Development journalism according to this view focuses on the needs of the poor, the deprived, the marginalized and it emphasizes their effective participation in development planning. Or to say it slightly elaborately, this kind of journalism motivates the active participation of the affected people and advocating for their interests, in place of the views of the policy makers and the planners i.e. the government. (<http://www.concurrent.org> accessed on 20/12/09)

This view is somewhat similar to the democratic participatory normative theory of mass media.

(Loo, 2009:32) observes that development journalism is often wedded to concepts like community dialogue, re-connection with the grassroots, empowerment, public advocacy, catalyst for positive change and immersion reporting. Here it seems that development journalism is a kind of ecclesiastic genre that takes different elements various journalistic theories.

Others identify development journalism with investigative journalism-a journalism type that wishes to make a legitimate report on development issues with a critical view to examine them. In this case, journalists had a task to observe critically and report on the whole government development process, which include planning, implementation, impact and shortcomings as they are; not to support the state development goals without question; instead to make sure that the development process is accountable and transparent. (*Media and Development in the Pacific*: 243)

Sharma (2005: 117) contrasts development reporting with routine journalism in terms of focus. He distinguishes development reporting from routine reporting (court, legislature, crime, science and technology or sports) emphasizing that the former involves writing about programs and policies resulting in economic change, social transformation and community feelings and reactions to programs and changes.

Vilanilam (1975 quoted in Muniruddin, 2005) defines it as 'journalism that deals with the process of developing nations'. Muniruddin also quotes Aggarwala (1978a) further elaborating on the same view while he defined it as a journalism that basically reports the development process rather than events.

“ Thus, development journalism covers the entire gamut of socio-economic and cultural development and does not differ drastically from regular news coverage. Rather its emphasis

is more on development aspects keeping in view the context of development; and it examines critically and reports the relevance, enactment and impact of development programmes.” (Ibid)

Basically, it is assumed that this type of journalism is able to influence the development process by reporting on development programs and activities. Accordingly, it is the journalists’ duty to ‘critically examine and evaluate the relevance of a development project to national and local needs, the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation, and the difference between its impact on people as claimed by government officials and as it actually is’ (Aggarwala 1979: 181, quoted in Wimmer & Wolf, 2005:2)

2.4.2 Genesis

When the term ‘development journalism’ was born a few decades ago, the world was moving on a different path from today. Then, there were clear and distinct zones into which countries and regions were divided. Economically, countries were classed as ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’. The former existed in the West, the latter in other parts of the globe. Communist and non-communist nations were clearly presented, giving a clear distinction between the two camps in world politics. (Daorueng, in *Media and Development in the Pacific*: 243)

McQuail (1984: 94) identifying development journalism as a full-fledged media theory explains that some common conditions of developing countries limit the application of other theories or their potential benefits.

One circumstance is the absence of some of the conditions necessary for a developed mass communication system: the communication infrastructure; the professional skills; the production and cultural resources; the available audience. Another correlative factor is the dependence on the developed world for what is missing in the way of technology, skills and cultural products. Thirdly, there is the (variable) devotion of these societies to economic, political and social development as a primary national task, to which other institutions should submit. Fourthly, it is increasingly the case that developing countries are aware of their similar identity and interests in international politics. Out of these conditions have come a set of expectations and normative principles about mass media which deviate from those that seem to apply in either the capitalist or communist world.

When the information flow phenomenon caught the attention of the non-aligned nations in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, Asia-based scholars and practitioners started paying attention to the role of news coverage in developing countries. Alan Chalkley (1968) and others associated with the Press Foundation of Asia in Manila, as well as several Philippine communication scholars, began to use the catchy phrase 'developmental journalism'. They organized courses on developmental journalism in various capitals (Manila, Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and other cities). For sometime developmental journalism became a popular phrase associated with news reporting. (Gunaratine, in *The Public* Vol.3, 1996: 97)

In fact, those who conceived development journalism in the beginning believed that national development depended heavily on economic development and felt that journalists trained in economics could report competently about problems pertaining to a developing country. With this view, development journalism came to be called 'commitment journalism' during the 1970s, as some third world nations realized that journalism could be an effective means to promote the states' ideologies and their campaigns (Muniruddin, 2005 :211-12)

Bowd explains that development journalism is seen as a product of the Third World by citing different scholars to substantiate this stand. She also traces its growth, in part, to the frustrations and anger of many Third World nations over issues such as the growing gap between rich industrialized democracies and poorer nations because of Western dominance of global news flows. These concerns were tabled in the UNESCO New World Information and Communication Order in the late 1970s. The Western media were criticized as too monopolistic and powerful, as imposing an alien viewpoint on nations trying to build their own identities and as weapons of domination (Bowd, in *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, No. 14, 2003:125)

Scholars of the dependency paradigm in 1960s pointed out a need for developing countries to separate themselves from western countries in order to attain an advanced level of development. They promoted a balanced flow of information in and out of developing countries and articulated the New World Information and Communication. Such debates largely contributed to the promotion and recognition of a new theory of journalism known as development journalism.

2.4.3 Viewpoints against DJ

“Western scholars like Stevenson viewed development journalism as advocacy journalism or propaganda journalism by the government because journalists mostly depended on government handouts.” (Muniruddin, 2005: 218)

As Ogan (1980:3) clearly puts it:

There is so much fear and suspicion concerning the motives involved in the use of development journalism, the discussion of the topic often disintegrates into an exchange of inflammatory rhetoric. The Second and the Third World countries claim that the Western journalists are only protecting their own capitalistic interest in the news markets of the world when they attack development journalism as ‘government-say-so journalism’

Representatives of major Western newspapers, wire services and organizations of journalists fear that the establishment of the principles of development communication will mean an end to the freedom to collect first hand information in the foreign countries of the world and that journalists will have to be content with taking a view of the world consistent with that of the authoritarian government in power. To this effect, as the NWICO debate in the late '70s and early '80s progressed in UNESCO, Anglo-Americans, deliberately or otherwise, succeeded in dissociating developmental journalism, which they branded as “government-say-so journalism”, from developmental communication, whose origin they traced to US agricultural extension service projects. (Gunaratine and Hasim in *The Public* Vol.3, 1996: 97-98)

From the stand point of Western media practices there are also concerns with regard to different interpretations of development journalism that those who can appropriate them would locate the media as anything from “instruments to bring about a growth of democratic institutions” to “weapons to further a thirst for personal power” (Altschull 1995: 230, 231).

2.4.4 Viewpoints in favor of DJ

More liberal interpretations utilize the press as a medium of news, an instrument of education, a “multiplier” in the communication process, a social and cultural influence and a channel for the flow of ideas between people and government (Sommerlad 1966, cited in Bowd, 2003).

(Loo 2009) Sees development journalism as a type of journalism incompatible with either the 'libertarian concept', which defines the function of the mass media as providing

information and entertainment; or the 'authoritarian concept', which stifles criticism of political machinery and the officials in power, and imposes a top-down approach to problem solving.

Following the participatory approach to development communication, Kunczik (cited by Wimmer and Wolf, 2005: 2-3) represents development journalism as an intellectual enterprise in which the journalist 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 constraints. Accordingly, development journalism has the following tasks: (i) to motivate the audience to actively cooperate in development; and (ii) to defend the interests of those concerned. The credibility of journalism is crucial for the success of development journalism. It, thus, needs to be decentralized and participatory in structure to counteract the metropolis-trend in the various social processes.

2.4.5 Two broad classifications of DJ

(Xiaoge, 2009: 4) referring to (Kunczik, 1988, and Aggarwala, 1978) identifies two major categories of development journalism with their distinguishing characteristics. The two variants are named as **investigative and authoritarian-benevolent**. The investigative type focuses on “critical questioning and evaluation of the usefulness of development projects”. In covering the development newsbeat, journalists are expected to critically examine, evaluate and report:

- (a) The relevance of a development project to national, and most importantly, local needs; (b) The difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation; and
- (c) The difference between its impact on people as claimed by government officials and as it was actually experienced by the people.

The authoritarian-benevolent style of development journalism was strongly advocated by authoritarian governments who believed that journalism should cooperate with governments in nation-building and overall social, economic and political development.

There are also other classifications which are referred to as socio-technological development journalism and Chinese version development journalism (intellectual development journalism). The former focuses on narrating and explaining how communities are

participating in development projects while the latter is considered as a substitute of the former Soviet Communist press theory with more subtle use of the media for mobilization. (Getachew: 2007:12)

2.4.6 Development news classified

Muniruddin (2005:224) notes that development journalism suffers from conceptual and methodological problems in understanding the news itself. He observes that experts in the field differ on the concept of development news. However, there are a number of attempts to define development news on various grounds. The following description by John V. Vilanilam (1976a) is one of such definitions.

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 fulfillment 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. (Cited in Banjade, 2001: 11)

Vir Bala on the other hand points out that development reporting deals with a wide variety of situations. According to him it covers individual projects, the entire planning process and its implementation, difficulties faced by people and efforts made to remove them; economic and social change in rural and urban areas, impact of development efforts in backward and tribal areas and various aspects of development and its socio-economic impact (Bala, 2006: 23).

Other researchers also attempt to classify development news almost in the same fashion- on the basis of thematic categories.

(Xiaoge, 2009:3) discusses at length the classification of development news on the basis of topics and that such classifications fail to indicate the demarcation between development news from other types of news and that the topics cannot be limited only to the domain of development. He summarizes, for instance, that Vilanilam (1975), used 14 topical categories to distinguish development news from other types of journalism news.

They are: administrative reforms, agricultural development and food production, economic activity (planning, foreign aid, etc.), education and literacy, employment and labor welfare, family planning, health, hygiene and medicine, housing, industrial, scientific and

technological development, mass media, national integration, rural and urban development, social change, and telecommunication, tourism and transport development. Xiaoge, however, underlines that these topics can also be covered by other practices of journalism. In other words, they are not exclusive to development journalism. He notes that they can hardly serve as good indicators of development journalism. He also mentions that McKay (1993) came up with another list of 12 topics related to development: agriculture/food, consumerism, culture/religion, rural/urban development, education, energy, environment, health, population, science/technology, tourism, women/children/youth. (Ibid)

According to Xiaoge McKay's coding design cannot effectively measure development news either.

Xiaoge believes topics constitute the weakest indicators of development journalism and he argues that sources, actors and story-orientation can distinctively differentiate development news from other news types. By sources he emphasizes news initiated from ordinary people, grass roots or communities.

By actors it is meant ordinary people, especially the minorities, the poor, women, farmers, children, and the elderly. The third major indicator is story orientation. In terms of story orientation, development news tends to emphasize solutions to problems instead of mere exposure, process instead of events, participation of the ordinary people instead of the elite, empowerment of the ordinary people instead of the elite people, stability instead of conflict, harmony instead of chaos, collectivism instead of individualism, consensus instead of differences, partnership instead of adversary, impact on the ordinary people instead of the elite people. These indicators (source, actor, and orientation) constitute a new three-prong approach to effectively measuring the extent to which development journalism is being practiced. (Ibid: 4)

2.4.7 Purpose of development reporting

An Indian Institute of Mass Communication in a Manual for New Agency Reporters defines the purpose of development reporting as follows:

The purpose of development reporting is to create a sense of involvement, to spread the realization that the future comes out of present efforts, that development can be no body's gift, least of all of the aid given by affluent countries but is the result of one's own labor. Destiny does not descend from above; it grows out of one's hands.

Development reporting must concern itself with the people. It must show them how to improve their bargaining power with society. It must make them realize that their future is in their hands. It must describe the process of backbone building. Development reporting must describe the people must actually at work in new projects and processes. It must describe the processes of change and modification, the new discoveries and the products. It must describe terms and concepts of development...Development reporting, to be effective requires considerable investigative and research skill on the part of the journalist, apart from grasp of trends in economic thought, planning and development. (Kamath, 1983: 106)

Development journalism does not involve so much a change in techniques or style of reporting as an attitudinal and cultural change in the journalist's judgment of news, selection of news sources, and interpretation of newsworthy issues. The development journalist often goes beyond the paradigm of objectivity to actively instigate public discussion of possible resolutions to prevailing issues. He or she provides sources and information relevant to the clarification of core values. In the process, they generate constructive community discussions to seek workable resolutions. The development journalist's aim is, therefore, not merely to persuade readers that a problem exists. It is to engage them in a search for pragmatic solutions to ongoing issues inherent in areas ranging from race and religion to public health, environment, education and human rights. (Loo, 2009: 5)

2.4.8 Development journalism versus conventional journalism

Loo (2009: 20-21) passionately identifies the theoretical and practical dimensions of conventional and developmental journalism. He tries to put demarcations between the conventional journalism, which he calls "Mainstream" and his version of development journalism explaining their differences in a tabular chart. One of the points he lists to distinguish the two is that the main stream reports on random events while development journalism reports on causes and processes leading to the events. He also claims that the mainstream journalist weighs news against criteria of objectivity while the development journalist weighs news against criteria of development (community, access, equity, participation, self- reliance). In the parallel lines Loo draws, there are a number of debatable and elusive points. It is not practically that simple to throw points under either side comfortably in isolation from one another, as they are not mutually exclusive. For instance, Loo describes the mainstream journalist as a dispassionate observer, while he describes the DJ one as a participant observer. It is difficult, however, to reach a straightaway conclusion that conventional journalists are mere dispassionate observers in reporting events. Moreover,

Loo tries to portray the mainstream as a discipline that mainly deals with crime, law & order, disasters, deviant dramatic events and values. He contrasts describes DJ as a subject that deals with social and economic development, which includes basic needs for food shelter and security. One may feel from the parallel Loo draws that the DJ journalist is a propagandist or a revolutionary machine than a journalist in the strict sense . Though one cannot rule out the tendency of development journalism towards thematic areas of transformation, one cannot easily draw discrete lines between the conventional and development genres of journalism. It may be only an issue of focus than distinct criteria, that puts the two apart.

As Loo himself, notes “development journalism methods...should not be seen as necessarily replacing conventional market-oriented journalistic practice. Arguably, development journalism highlights what conventional reporting has overlooked”. (Ibid)

Ogan (2003) on the other hand, identifies three key points that distinguish development journalism from Western type of journalism. According to her, the Western media model is concerned with journalistic rights and freedoms while development journalism places greater weight on journalistic responsibilities.

Second, the objectivity often considered central to Western journalism is de-emphasized, replaced with ‘a concern for the consequences of news reports’. Third, the Western emphasis on adversarial journalism is seen as an ‘unaffordable luxury’ (Ogan, 2003:126)

A number justifications have been presented to place development journalism in the realm professional media exercise. From the illustrations, one can conclude that development journalism is a type of reporting and writing on topics related to the processes of economic and social transformation. It highlights news of development projects providing critical insight to the balance between plans and accomplishments. Although such an explanation of the concept sounds quite simple at a face value, it has been highly politicized since it is abused by regimes to promote political agendas. Much of the debate over development journalism has focused on the issue of press freedom and whether or not a commitment to covering economic development from a positive and even “emancipatory” perspective is fundamentally at odds with freedom of the press.

Despite the controversies, it is still in the market. Its proponents believe that it allows journalists to play active role in promoting change for the good of the poor. It emphasizes on bottom up flow of communication and calls for news that gives voice to ordinary citizens.

Development journalism's supporters contend that this style of news reporting and writing is keeping with one of the most fundamental goals of journalism: to provide citizens with the information they need in order to take control of their lives.

2.4.9 What DJ risks and what it takes

As development journalism is essentially about social transformation it overlooks sensational and dramatic topics which otherwise catch the attention of a broader audience. It doesn't appeal to emotions and feelings nor is it provides a shocking account of issues to spark instant debates. As Sue George of the Guardian precisely puts it, development journalism deviates in orientation from the Western journalism, which he describes it, as disaster journalism- keen on a quick search for dramatic events.

"What foreign reporting has often meant is disaster journalism-people being 'parachuted in'-reporting, leaving and possibly returning to do a follow-up piece...It has meant a quick search for the most tragic story, the most dramatic images, shown without context, scant explanation of why the disaster happened and with no background information on how that country or community became so troubled in the first place". (<http://www.guardian.co.uk>. accessed on 20/2/10)

A development journalist focuses on process of development with a particular emphasis on the grassroots and the unnoticed sections of the society. As Loo (2009) noted that orientation, in fact, is not risk free as it contributes to a low level of audience interest compared with fact (conventional) journalism which is primarily interested in a presentation of exciting news.

Since development is influenced by the interplay of political, economic, social and cultural factors to deal with such a complex matter is not an easy task. It needs a consideration of all role players and envisaging of the consequences of media product. Moreover, development reporting is expensive in terms of time, finance and expertise. A reporter needs to have adequate knowledge of all the actors involved, go out to fields where development projects take place in order to make sense of the reality on the ground.

Kunczik notes that a journalist should form a kind of free intelligence; 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 constraints (Kunczik 1986: 270)

2.4.10 Best practices in Asia

2.4.10 Best practices in Asia

Eric Loo (2009) assessed best practices of journalism in Asia by interviewing reputable journalists in person and via different means. His survey shows that best development oriented media pieces are those works that throw light on plights of humanity for improvement, those which exposed malpractices and corruption and those which served as catalyst to transform grass root lives. Loo (p. xvi) explains that exploration of best journalism practices presented in his research does not differ to the Pulitzer-type criterion as the exclusive benchmark of journalistic excellence. He describes best practice in journalism in Asia as culturally interpreted and best understood from within the realities that define the socially transformative work of Asian journalists.

The works he presented as examples and the journalists he interviewed are renowned award winners at different international forums. It is difficult to present all examples discussed in Loo's research. Here is just one example.

According to Loo (2009: 16) *Our Village Chhatera* represents the long history of development journalism in India. Chhatera is a village 25 northwest of Delhi. It had a population of 1,500 made up of land owing Jats and Brahmins and landless *Harijans*. Chhatera was the focus of the fortnightly column published in 1968 in *The Hindustan Times*, which showcased life in an Indian village. The purpose of the column was to change the orientation of the paper to include broader coverage of the rural areas. The *Hindustan Times* first coverage of *Chhatera*, initiated by its editor BG Verghese was in the form of a cover story for its Sunday magazine. Initially the villagers, except the children, were shy. But the newspaper won the confidence of the people. The farmers and elders began to tell the writers their problems, which were subsequently reported. "*Our Village Chhetra*" which continuously appeared in the paper for about seven years became a channel for grass roots input on how development could take place in the community. The column found itself playing the role of a catalyst by planting new ideas in the minds of the villagers and providing the needed linkage system between the people and the authorities. When the column started, several problems were brought to the attention of the government. The *Hindustan Times* publicized the villagers' problems with photographs. After its publication the authorities reacted. As a result a new bridge was constructed for the villagers. Soon after, development officers started visiting the village regularly. The village also became a social laboratory. Improved agriculture was introduced in the village, farmers television program

was also launched in an open space with 80 TV sets in different locations. A major impact of television was that social taboos broke down. Men of all castes gathered together. The segregation of sexes broke down as women joined the audience seated on one side. A bank opened branch in *Chhatera* an old habit of saving money gave way to the modern banking services. Loans were sought for the purchase of buffaloes or bullocks, for drilling tube wells and for buying tractors. Through the mediation of the *Hindustan Times* five new tractors were acquired for the village. Other firms provided other needs. For example, fertilizer companies conducted demonstrations and pesticide firms gave trial demonstrations.

According to Loo for the journalists of *Hindustan Times*, the experience gave them a true understanding of social functions of their profession. The journalists role was not only to inform, entertain or analyze events, but also motivate people to change. For the villagers of *Chhatera* the *Hindustan Times* was the purveyor and catalyst for development. The paper provided the necessary feedback channel for the people to air their problems, grievances and suggestions to government officials.

Loo further notes that implicit in the media work on Project *Chhatera* is the ‘immersion’ and ‘involvement’ of journalists in experiencing the problems faced by the villagers. He stresses “Herein lays the common application development-oriented reporting methods across the community. The point is not that journalists should declare themselves on partisan issues. It does mean that they actively encourage public discussion, providing the public space where shared information is translated into action”. (Loo, 2009: 18)

2.5 Relevance of development journalism today

Xiaoge (2009: 7) sees currently the relevance of media, particularly that of development journalism, from the point of view of supporting the efforts of developing countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals MDGs).

He points out that a worldwide battle has already started to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger around the world by 2015, guided by the UN Millennium Development Goals. He remarks that in such a global fight, the press can play a major role by informing, educating, engaging and empowering the ordinary people from the perspective of development journalism. However, questions whether the press inherited the tradition of development journalism to play an effective role in the anti-poverty war accordingly. (Ibid)

The World Bank on the other hand identifies media's contribution to development in terms of four story lines which it describes as plurality and transparency, infrastructure and platform, behavioral, economic and trade. Plurality and transparency according to the World Bank is a participatory (sometimes two way) process and the availability of a range of media providers across an array of content subjects, to enhance increased access to information and wider diffusion of knowledge within a country. Plural media would support informed decision making, increased accountability, responsiveness in addition to contributing to anti-corruption efforts...Plurality and transparency provide a critical "return path"-that "voice" and commentary on events and outcomes whereby the "governed" respond to the "governors"

Media also play a crucial role in development by bringing about beneficial changes in the behavior of individuals, groups and organizations, of course depending on its content, the target audience it is tailoring and its interactivity.

The infrastructure and platform story line is described in terms of presenting sufficient volume of compelling investment content in media. Platform, here is meant, digital, increasingly converged and broadband media that have a transformational impact on economic development. The economic story line is perceived as the simple business of producing content to generate income flows and job opportunities. In that manner the media directly contribute to development and poverty reduction.

The last perspective, the trade storyline, is viewed in terms of accelerating global connectivity, integration and interdependence, a difficult task than other storylines. (World Bank Working Paper No. 158. 2009:14)

2.6 Development journalism in Africa: The revolutionary press

After World War II, many nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America became independent and started formulating their own policies of development. The view that mass media could play vital role in national development influenced these policies. (Muniruddin , 2005: 211)

This orientation was further enhanced by a broader political agenda of the 'Non-alignment' espoused by the new states in Africa and Asia. These nations shared the idea of independence from the superpowers and formed the Non-Aligned Nations. The movement, whose philosophy was to keep out of the Cold War between the West and the then Soviet Union,

played an important role in the debate on a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) (Servaes 2002).

Consequently, virtues of development journalism were extolled by many African leaders with the assumptions that this genre of journalism would serve African interest not only in counterbalancing information flow between the developed nations and Africa but also in supporting their urgent desire for nation building.

Banda (2006:1-2) elaborates the concept of development journalism in Africa in terms of the historical evolution of the theory of development communication, which he postulates in three historical moments, each with its own basic assumptions. As discussed earlier (in part 2.2 of this study) the first such moment was the 'modernization' paradigm (the 'dominant paradigm') that influenced development thinking in the period from about 1945 to 1965 focusing on the transfer of the technology and socio-political culture of modernity from the developed North to the Third World.

The second historical moment, in Banda's (2006:2) analysis, is the dependency-dissociation paradigm period. This approach to development communication (and therefore development journalism) 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 (Servaes 2002).

The third historical period according to Banda is the moment of the emergence of 'multiplicity' paradigm. Located within it is the notion of 'participatory communication' or 'another communication'.

Of the three historical moments the second one grabbed most the interest of some post-colonial African figures. The debate about the role of African media systems in the flow of information between and among nations also assumed an upsurge in the promulgation of a New Information and Communication Order (NWICO) by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). As Africans had long been dissatisfied with what they saw as a negative image of Africa projected in the major news agencies of the world, this was behind their cry for a NWICO in the late 1970s. (Servaes 2002)

Within the heated political context of the time, the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) was created by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1979. PANA's aims were 'to rectify

the distorted image of Africa created by the international news agencies and to let the voice of Africa be heard on the international news scene'. (Ibid)

Banda further details how, within the tradition of dependency-dissociation, Nkrumah of Ghana, Nyerere of Tanzania and Kaunda of Zambia espoused the 'revolutionary theory' of the press.

The expectations of African development journalism were articulated by Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah, a leading Pan-Africanist, who saw the media as a revolutionary tool of African liberation from the fetters of colonialism and imperialism. The media were an extension- a significant extension-of the government and its policies, of social, economic and cultural development. In Nkrumah's view, the struggle between the weak and underdeveloped African countries and the advanced industrialized states gave a revolutionary mission to the African mass media. (Komia and Hall, in *International Communication Gazette* 31, 1983: 9)

Nkrumah articulated this theory in 1963 during the Second Conference of African Journalists. He told them that 'the truly African revolutionary Press' existed in order to 'present and carry forward our revolutionary purpose' and 'establish a progressive political and economic system upon our continent that will free men from want and every form of injustice'.

our revolutionary African Press must carry our Revolutionary purpose. This is to establish a progressive political and economic system up on our continent that will free men from want and every form of social injustice and enable them to work out their social and cultural destinies in peace and at ease. (in this respect)...the true African newspaper is a collective educator- a weapon, first and foremost, to overthrow colonialism and imperialism, and to assist total African independence and unity (Ibid)

Banda notes that this 'theory' entailed greater state control of the media, a departure from the private ownership of media evident in the colonial period. Some nationalist leaders went so far as to articulate 'philosophies' to justify state ownership of media.

Odhiambo (1991) expounds at length how Nkrumah believed in activist journalism. Nkrumah stipulated that journalistic practice involves choice of topics and arrangements of facts in a way that fits in with the preferences of the owners. Odhiambo illustrates that Nkrumah believed that a journalist should have high ideals, be a political activist and party member, and 'his newspaper a collective organizer, a collective instrument of mobilization and a collective educator, a weapon first and foremost for the overthrow of colonialism and imperialism and to assist total African independence and unity.

The true African journalist, according to Nkrumah, often works for the organ of the political party to which he himself belongs and in whose purpose he believes. He works to serve a society moving in the direction of his aspirations. (Odhiambo, 1991, in *Africa Media Review* Vol. 5, No. 2:24)

Within the context of the 'revolutionary press' ideology, journalists and politicians alike saw the media as forging national and continental unity, encouraging economic development, and serving formal and social education, including adult literacy, if certain amount of limitation was imposed on press freedoms. The case in point is a proposal of Kenyan editor and publisher Hilary Ng'weno (1969) who suggested that the media should impose limitations up on themselves given the level of poverty and the urge for transformation in post colonial Africa.

The Challenge to the press in young countries is the challenge of laying down the foundations up on which future freedoms will thrive ...Under some of the conditions (of poverty, illiteracy and disease) in which vast numbers of Asians, Africans and Latin Americans live, it would be sacrilegious to talk about press freedom, for freedom loses meaning when human survival is the operative principle up on which a people live...In such countries, the first duty of the press, as indeed of any other institutions or individual, is to encourage greater national unity. (Quoted in Odhiambo, 1991, *Africa Media Review* Vo. 5, No.2: 24)

Development journalism to the leaders of black African states means more than any thing else, "nation building". i.e. the creation of national consciousness and unity, the encouragement of cooperation and peaceful co-existence between diverse and sometimes hostile communities. The late Kenyatta of Kenya exhorted the press to:

positively promote national development and growing self-respect since in Africa it can have a tremendous influence on nation-building. It may constantly inspire or could set out to frustrate the spirit of Harambee or national unity which every young country needs as the fundamental of its progress. (Komia and Hall, in *International Communication Gazette* 31, 1983: 9)

It is believed that 'Ng'weno and Nkrumah's arguments remained to be the two most powerful inspirations and justifications for African's mass media policy. They also provide the utilitarian underpinnings of development journalism as an occupational self-perception and a theory of the press.

Having analyzed the normative and intellectual bases of the ideology of development journalism in Africa, Odhiambo argues that the ideology ceased to be historically organic,

that it became arbitrary, non rationalistic and willed. In other words, he argues that the ideology became perverted; that, for instance, ‘national development’ turned to be an excuse for suspending individual liberties, the expansion and entrenchment of state capitalism and for the growth of unwieldy bureaucracies fraught with corruption, nepotism and every variety of patronage. (Odhiambo, 1991, in *Africa Media Review* Vo. 5, No.2: 22)

2.7 Development journalism as a philosophy in Ethiopian state media

In the previous systems, both monarchial and communism, there was no explicit guideline as to what type of journalistic philosophy befitted the country even though it is not difficult to understand from their very natures how media behaved and operated in those systems.

It is only after coming to power of the incumbent that development journalism was identified as a philosophy that state media should follow in their journalistic undertakings.

2.7.1 General premises for pursuing development journalism

The Ethiopian government has produced various documents that require the state owned media to pursue the philosophy of development reporting in doing journalism. Just few examples of such documents are: *Revolutionary Democracy: Strategy, Tactic and Question of Leadership* (2007), “Our Media’s Developmental and Democratic Working Philosophy: Basis and Directions” (2008) and *Media Content Presentation Method and Working Manual* (2008).

One of these documents “Our Media’s Developmental and Democratic Working Philosophy: Basis and Directions” (2008:32) plainly prescribes that the philosophy of the Ethiopian media (state media) should be development journalism so that they would be able to support development endeavors of the government.

This document argues that a working philosophy that can serve and strengthen the democratic and developmental political economy of the country is the philosophy of development journalism. The document provides a number of justifications for adopting this philosophy.

It further indicates that a media that could sufficiently create national consensus on government policies and strategies and that could also support the need of the public for change, had not yet been realized. It also asserts that the media had been in a state of crisis for it was not able to establish a working philosophy which could push forward the process of

national transformation. It also notes that contents presented by media sometimes contradicted with the democratic and developmental progress the country had embarked on. Moreover, it underlines the need for formulating a working philosophy for the media that was engulfed in various problems as a way out mechanism. (Ibid: 4)

Development journalism is described in this document as a type of journalism that would enable the people understand proper developmental ideas and liberate them from poverty and backwardness. Development journalism according to this argument would enable the people foster positive development and democratic values, believe in them and participate actively in their implementation. It is a journalism that plays great transformational role in social justice and life improvement.

It also states that the developmental role of media has to do with development endeavors of government and the people, thereby maintaining values to be passed onto the youth with the objective of informing, educating and entertaining. According to the document development journalism encourages the public to participate in the efforts of development and national growth to forge developmental outlook and bring about consensus on issues like agriculture, health, education and innovative works. Moreover, it helps to pull efforts collectively towards progress and achieving national goals. (Ibid: 21)

The same document specifies six missions of development journalism in Ethiopia

1. Promoting developmental thinking of the public
2. Presenting people centered activities with a view to participating and benefiting the public
3. Publicizing change role models (individuals and communities)
4. Popularizing success stories (technological innovations, new approaches)
5. Building balanced thinking pattern /building wisdom of cost-benefit evaluation before presenting media content/
6. Building sustainable institutional and professional capacity (Ibid: 22-3)

The document recognizes two inherent limitations in development journalism

These are that:

1. Ability of developmental journalism to bring about change is determined by the conduciveness of a given political economy (it would be able to become change agent provided there is developmental and change oriented government)
2. It would be exposed to the danger of being a mouthpiece of government and its propaganda tool under the guise of developmental journalism. “This is the strong criticism against this type of journalism. The proponents of liberal journalism magnify this shortfall of developmental journalism to undermine its developmental role. However, it is possible to overcome the inherent drawback through consideration of the fact and devising a mechanism which can fill the gap. This limitation can be overcome through adopting suitable liberal media techniques and strengthening of investigative journalism which is one aspect of developmental journalism. (Ibid: 23-4)

Purpose development journalism in Ethiopian is also detailed as follows

1. Supporting rapid and sustainable development
2. Ensuring peoples’ benefit from the development endeavors
3. Encouraging the building of a democratic system
4. Fostering the struggle for good governance
5. Ensuring national security and sustainable peace
6. Exposing shortcut ways to wealth accumulation tendencies and contributing to efforts of tapering off the tendencies
7. Building national image at the international arena
8. Promoting African developmental and progressive ideas (Ibid: 32-6)

“The working philosophy of our media must be able to serve and strengthen at best the democratic political economy we are pursuing”. (Ibid.5)

2.7.2 Editorial policy of the Ethiopian Press Agency as a guideline for developmental journalism

The editorial policy of the Ethiopian Press Agency stipulates the editorial objectives of the Agency publications as follows:

1. Explaining laws up on which the government of the country is founded and decrees and policies issued by the government and activities undertaken by the same
2. Strengthening relations between government and the public with the aim of serving the people
3. Ensuring fair participation of political forces

The policy also specifies general editorial mission of the publications. These are to:

1. be a reliable knowledge and information source capable of winning public trust
2. be an efficient and autonomous media institution
3. help create conscious, free and productive citizens through mediating free view points in the society
4. serve legal political parties, individuals and the people equally and providing accurate picture of all round activities of Ethiopia and its people
5. play positive role to foster democracy and good governance

These being overall mission and objectives of all the Agency's publications, it also provides specific missions for publications of local languages and foreign languages separately.

Accordingly two newspapers (Addis Zemen and Barissa) which are printed in local languages should focus on reporting development endeavors while those printed in foreign languages (The Ethiopian Herald and Al-alem) should focus on image building activities. The editorial policy puts the mission of its publications categorically as follows.

2.7.2.1 Local language publications

“Our publications in local languages (*Addis Zemen, Barissa and Zemen Magazine*) are development media. By development is meant not only economic activity but also political social, cultural, spiritual and material issues which demonstrate the efforts of the Ethiopian public towards achieving a better life.” (EPA Editorial Policy, 2003: 27)

2.7.2.2 Foreign language publications

“The Ethiopian Press Agency publications of foreign languages (*Al-Alem and The Ethiopian Herald*) are information media with an objective of image building in addition to providing the outside world with Ethiopia's and its people's general activities in order to support the country to attain a rightful position and earn proper benefits at an international forum” (Ibid)

Practically, however, these objectives are not mutually exclusive for foreign and local medium publications. The difference in content selection is manifested only in the intensity of focus on local news for the local language publications and more national issues for foreign language media.

2.7.3 Emergence of print media in Ethiopia and Addis Zemen yesterday and today

2.7.3.1 Emergence of print media in Ethiopia

The birth of modern print media in Ethiopia goes back to the beginning of the 20th century. The first 'newspaper' known to be printed in Ethiopia was *Le Semeur d'Ethiopie* (Hadush and Semeneh, 2004, Daniel, 2003, Semeneh 2004, Sheferaw, 2005)

Le Semeur d'Ethiopie was a French and Amharic handwritten 'paper'. Until it was printed by machine in 1902 (Semeneh, 2004) the paper came out for two years in a script form and copies per edition were 24. With regard to the date of its launch there is difference among these researchers. While many agree that it was launched in 1900, Daniel takes it forth to 1905.

And yet Hadush and Semeneh mention that the first newspaper in Ethiopia was “Goh”, though they don't indicate the date and its publisher. (Hadush and Semeneh, 2004:1). Daniel (2003) also mentions that a hand written newspaper prepared by a certain Blaata GebreEgezia'beher, which he didn't mention its name, preceded *Le Semeur d'Ethiopie*.

Le Semeur d'Ethiopie, was launched by Father Bernand, a member of Franciscan Mission who lived in Harar and who was a dermatologist.

Aimero is mentioned by many researchers as the first modern Amharic newspaper. It was published weekly with four pages and 200 copies (Semeneh, 2004). Next to *Aimero* was *Le Courier*, a French weekly (1913-1920) and *Yetor Ware* (War News) which was issued from 1916-1918 to alert the public to the Italian provocation. *Berhanena Selam* (Light and Peace) was founded in 1925 but folded in 1936 with the Italian invasion. (Daniel, 2003).

Until the 1936 occupation of Italy some newspapers like *Gohtsebah* (Dawn), *Kesate Berhan* (Spark) were in print mainly focusing attention on the Italian aggression. (Gebremedhin, 2001). During the Italian occupation also there was a weekly newspaper called *Sendeqalamachin* (Our Flag) which was published in Sudan dedicated to encouraging patriots' resistance and exposing occupants evil deeds.

These newspapers which were published in Ethiopia couldn't continue during the occupation period. After the evacuation of the Italian forces, *Addis Zemen* (New Era, (1941), *The Ethiopian Herald* 1943, *Yezareyitu Ethiopia* (Ethiopia Today, 1945) were established by the government following one another. It is to be noted that the early newspapers in Ethiopia were established by the private sector.

2.7.3.2 Addis Zemen yesterday and today

As mentioned earlier Addis Zemen was established in 1941. It has now been in publication over the last 69 years. The paper has been serving the nation in various aspects. It has, indeed, contributed to the development of journalistic profession, enhanced knowledge about the importance of information, and it created a public readership in the country, among other things (Gebremedihin, in *Print Media Journal*, 2001: 4).

At the initial period it was a tabloid paper. Seven years later it became a broadsheet paper. According to Gebremedihin (2000) it had no formal editorial page, news page and permanent columns during the initial period. It used to print opinions that focused on various topics. However, it changed some of its features after 1947 when it became a broadsheet paper. After 18 years of existence as a weekly paper, Addis Zemen became a daily publication except Mondays. It started to be published on daily basis including Monday in 2001.

It is noteworthy that Addis Zemen played positive role in the development of journalism in its seven decades life time. It also played prominent role in shaping opinion, fostering literary dialogue and encouraging reading among other things. It is also to be noted that notable writers such as Negash Gebremariam, Bealu Girma and Berhanu Zerihu who led the paper as chief editors used to be role models in the literature sphere.

As regards content orientation Addis Zemen has been government affiliated through out its history. Needless to state, it was established by government; budget is always allocated for the paper by government like any other public agencies in the country. Staff employment, contract termination and promotion of employees (both support staff and journalists) are processed as per the civil service regulation. This rule applies to any state owned media for that matter. It has also been disseminating information about government policies, plans and activities till today.

Though the paper survived, under three regimes uninterruptedly, it remained without change of ownership and significant change of perspective in editorial position. It has always been used as a government mouthpiece despite the changes in political orientations. However, it had neither codified editorial policy nor a documented working philosophy under the monarchical and dictatorial regimes.

As Gebremedhin (2000) observed, during the reign of Haileselessie I, Addis Zemen's news stories and other content elements praised the emperor. The paper supported political, economic and social system of the day. This doesn't mean it had no useful contents. In the same fashion, it served the junta regime after the overthrow of the emperor. It has still continued to serve the current government with no fundamental change; irrespective of the change with regard to censorship. Article 29 sub Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia clearly provide for the elimination of censorship. Therefore, there is no official censorship now in the country as a whole and Addis Zemen also enjoys this guarantee.

Currently Addis Zemen has 63 staff members according to information obtained from the chief editor. These are 39 journalists, 13 proof readers and 11 typists.

2.7.4 Addis Zemen in Media ownership patterns

Banda (2006: 9-10) classifies non private media ownership patterns in the broadcasting sector in to four categories. These are state broadcasting, government broadcasting, public broadcasting and public service broadcasting.

State broadcasting is controlled by the state and represents state interests. It is funded (at least in part) out of public money.

Government broadcasting is controlled by the government of the day and represents the viewpoint of the executive. It too is at least partly funded out of public money.

Public broadcasting is owned by the public and is accountable to it. It is also funded, at least partly, out of public money.

Public service broadcasting has a specific remit to broadcast material in the public interest. A public service broadcaster need not be publicly owned – privately owned broadcasters may have such a role – but a public broadcaster should *always* have a public service remit

Logically one can also place non private print media in one of these patterns. Addis Zemen can be safely put in the category of state ownership for it has operated under different regimes irrespective of consistent affiliation to any regime in power.

It is evident that ownership pattern would influence content of a given media.

Silverblatt (2004: 40-41) notes that owners of media organizations can also regulate content of the media.

He mentions that power of the media as a social institution is recognized in countries such as Vietnam and China where the media are owned by a state. Governments of these countries according Silverblatt use the media to support their political agendas. Therefore, “official” state media content is very prescriptive, telling its audience what to think and how to act. In addition, in many of these countries, regulations prohibit content in media presentations that undermines the countries’ religious and moral beliefs. In Iran, for instance, censors require that filmmakers make changes in dialogue and action that meet the moral standards of the country.

However, Silverblatt indicates, that in Western countries, that operate on the private ownership model (most notably the United States), the media systems were never *intended* to serve as a social institution. Instead, the primary objective of a privately owned media organization is to make a profit for the company. As a result, many films, television programs, and Web sites contain sexual and violent content designed to attract the largest imaginable audience. The messages contained in these programs can be confusing or

disruptive to individuals looking to the media for direction, purpose, and meaning. The other major difference between Western media and traditional social institutions is that these media have no means of controlling deviant behavior. Audiences are encouraged to consume the media wherever and whenever possible.

Indeed, many media presentations depict a world without consequences, which serves to promote aberrant behavior.

CHAPTER THREE

Method of the study

3.1 Subject of the study

Fundamentally, under the incumbent, Addis Zemen and other state owned media came to have definitive editorial policies and a working philosophy. This philosophy is what they call it developmental journalism.

To the knowledge of this researcher, there is no serious study on the implementation of this philosophy on the ground. The present study tries to examine Addis Zemen as a case in point how it is translating the philosophy into practical action.

The focus of the research with regard to this pragmatic issue is on news stories, particularly news features and news analysis which are planned by the journalists or Addis Zemen newspaper as a media concerned with development reporting. In fact, as a daily broadsheet, Addis Zemen neither depends entirely on planned news stories nor does it plan all news produced by staff reporters. It highly depends on ENA as a news source. It also uses WIC and international wires as alternative sources. Press releases are also entertained. Most of the daily stories which are produced by the staff members are event news accessed through media advisory received from ENA. Therefore, the focus of this discussion is limited to only projected stories which are planned either by working journalists or by the management body of the newspaper.

Planning feature news and news analysis is relatively a new approach in Addis Zemen. This researcher remembers that once it was introduced to the newsroom with the launch of Monday edition of Addis Zemen. However, it was shortly abandoned. According to information obtained from the Chief Editor, the paper launched news feature and news analysis once again in March 2009, with two stores each on Mondays and Thursdays. That means four planned stores in a week and 16 in a month. Now Addis Zemen comes out with one feature or news analysis in its front page every day since the launch of a pilot BPR implementation in March 2010, unless some top urgent issues like response of the Prime Minister to issues raised by the parliamentarians or some other international issues hosted by Ethiopia shift the attention to interrupt the plans.

The reason for choosing these types of stories is that a number of factors can be considered to undertake them. In the first place, they allow the journalist to gather different data, involve different views and actors and construct facts from various perspectives. Second there is adequate time for story organization. In terms of space also news features and news analysis would provide better opportunity for the journalist to present detailed information. Moreover, the journalist would have relative room to direct attention of readers toward critical and analytical understanding of facts than the straight stories.

3.2 Rationalizing selection of Addis Zemen

This researcher works for the Ethiopian Herald, a newspaper published under the auspices of the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) which also publishes Addis Zemen. That means the researcher is partially an insider to the research subject. EPA also owns other three publications viz. Barissa (Afan Oromo weekly), Alalem (Arabic weekly) and Zemen a bimonthly magazine. As these publications all belong to the same agency they are guided by one editorial policy and other in-house regulations. In addition, they share various resources.

At the same time, it must be noted that all EPA publications enjoy relative autonomy. For instance, they plan projects, prepare reports, dispatch journalists and conduct in-house (departmental trainings) and provide orientations independently. They sometimes undertake these activities together as they deem necessary. They also employ journalists and terminate contracts separately.

Moreover, they are free to choose any issues for coverage, except when they move together for logistical reasons. Further, when they receive same media alerts they decide independently to cover the issue or decline unless the events are graced by top government officials or international figures.

With such a relative autonomy, the Ethiopian Herald and Addis Zemen do not always operate alike. Therefore, a great deal of information is not within the reach of the researcher and he believes it is valid to undertake the study both as partial insider who has certain degree of acquaintance with the operational reality of Addis Zemen and who is not at the same time aware of the inner deep affairs of the paper.

This fact is supported by the editorial policy of the Ethiopian Press agency that gives the Herald and Addis Zemen the liberty of focusing on issues pertinent to their audiences'

interests. As such Addis Zemen, Barissa and Zemen magazine which are printed in local languages are more inclined to local issues while the Ethiopian Herald and Alalem which are printed in foreign languages tend to focus on issues of international interests. This tendency is reflected in the Ethiopian Herald usually on its front page news. In fact, there is no such clear line as to whether a given issue is of local or international interest in practical operation.

3.3 Study methods

This research uses a qualitative method of data collection, presentation and interpretation. The study primarily focuses on first hand information obtained from reporters, editors and editorial team of Addis Zemen. The research tools include those broadly used qualitative data collection such as close private conversations, in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussion, observations and personal experience of having the advantage of being an editor-in-chief of the Ethiopian Herald, which belongs to the publisher of Addis Zemen.

Qualitative research method is chosen to grasp and interpret the underlying, personnel, institutional-social reality in Addis Zemen than the quantitative ones, which depend on statistics. The researcher believes that this approach would reveal differences between formal claims at the structural levels in development reporting and the practical shortfalls that challenge ideal expectations to be met. Inherent limitations which are inevitable in qualitative research of this kind (that informants may not hold the same stand on issues always, even in a day interval, that emotions could guide their views on matters etc) are unavoidable though efforts have been exerted to minimize them by triangulating the techniques.

3.4 Informants

In this study deliberate informants were carefully selected using purposeful sampling. During the interviews thorough discussions were made with Addis Zemen journalists on how they conceptualize development and development journalism, the training they have undergone at formal levels and as on job process, how they plan and execute reporting of development issues, what practical challenges they face and what they would suggest on way forward among other things.

3.5 Sample selection and size

As mentioned earlier, the researcher chose a deliberate sampling technique. That is made to mix three important categories in the hierarchical groups of Addis Zemen namely management members, editors and reporters. Therefore, informants participated in this study are 15 in number: 4 management (editorial members), 5 editors (3 senior editors and 2 editors) and 6 reporters. Among the interviewees 7 are female and the rest 8 are male. The management members are selected because they are the ones who decide on content, plan content and manage different columns of the paper. Editors are chosen because they produce stories and at the same time involve in editing the contents. Reporters are chosen as they are engaged in producing stories on development issues as a routine task. Most of the editors and reporters are selected from the news section, even though one is not necessarily confined to producing news or column articles. Cab reporters are normally assigned to covering daily events and planned projects while the experienced ones are tasked with both writing column articles and news items. Journalists in Addis Zemen are expected to produce news articles and column materials depending on their ability and experience.

To conduct focus group discussion, the same people who were interviewed separately were approached. They were categorized in two 3 sets on the basis of their positions. One set is the management group which comprises the chief editor and his three deputies. The other set includes three senior editors and two editors. The last set is a team of six reporters in the news section. The reason for conducting focus group discussion with same people was to cross check the information they had provided earlier individually and to have more reliable understanding of the newsroom operational affairs. Moreover, it was chosen enable the participants remind each other issues they hadn't noticed earlier.

3.6 Setting of interviews and group discussions

The interviewees were met separately through May 3-7, 2010. The interviews with all journalists were made in researcher's office except the interview he made with the chief editor of Addis Zemen, as all journalists share offices with many colleagues except the chief editor. Thus, privacy was guaranteed and confidence was established. All the interviewees were guaranteed anonymity to draw them out and at least not to mention them by name though not by position in the study. Therefore, the discussions were also free and open. The focus group discussions were through May 17-19, 2010 and they were held in the office of the researcher

for convenience. The discussions were moderated by the researcher posing the same questions to the three groups. The questions were open-ended and focused on five broad issues. The intimacy of the researcher as a colleague was also an advantage in building full confidence in the participants not to refrain from reflecting their perspectives.

3.7 Data recording

Since narration is the main method of collecting data generated by informants, all the verbal messages, statements, opinions and arguments in the conversations were carefully recorded for later use. Note taking was also used to remember important points during the in-depth interviews and the group discussions. The informants were aware that they were on record and the interactions were free and comfortable. The interviews were made in Amharic to draw the informants express their views as freely as possible without any language strain.

3.8 Data documentation

The recorded narratives were fully transcribed and shorthand textual notes were put into complete statements immediately after the interviews. In other words all the interviews, discussions and observations were carefully documented and transcribed in English to maintain originality and flavor of messages.

3.9 Theoretical frameworks

In the part of review of literature in chapter two, a number of defining characteristics of development journalism have been dealt with at length. However, it is practically inconvenient to examine data in light of all the theoretical assumptions discussed in that part of the study. Notwithstanding the relevance and significance of the scholarly insights presented earlier, the researcher found suitable to adopt only few prominent points to narrow down fragmentation of focus and scrutinize data against certain boundaries. Here, therefore, how Addis Zemen is doing development reporting is assessed in line with certain checklist selected from Daorugng (2008), Galtung and Vincent (1996), Banda (2006), Xiaoge (2009) and Loo (2009)

Gunaratne and Hasim present details of Galtung and Vincent's 10-point outline for doing development journalism. In the ten points they emphasize the need to humanize the story (presenting human beings as subjects not as objects or victims); focus not only on economic data but also military, political and cultural aspects. They also call on the development

journalist to include dispersion data in economic development reporting; to focus on relations and differences within and between countries and to see the totality of life situations. They further urge development oriented journalists not to forget a dimension of democracy for democracy can only function when there is a free flow of information between people, the system and the media. Moreover, they stress the importance of making people talk and run more of the society; go one-step further, and let the people to some extent run the media. This means, giving people some media control. The scholars also underline that a development journalist must do investigative reporting more subtly, where such reporting may antagonize government sources to contrast government statements with development reality without necessarily implying that there is a link between the two. (Gunaratne and Hasim 1996: 99-101),

“While no definition of development journalism may satisfy everyone, it is hard to disagree that Galtung and Vincent’s 10 proposals provide a reasonable framework to understand the essentials of the concept. The framework will enable us to compare developmental journalism with its new-born cousin that calls itself broadly as public journalism.” (Ibid: 101)

Daorueng (2008) while underling the relevance of development journalism even in today's world where globalization knows no boundary and where development of a nation is not determined only by a given state policy, pinpoints how development journalism could become a bad journalism if not properly managed.

“Development journalism is called ‘bad journalism’ when it fails to articulate people’s needs and how a development process is carried out and affects society. When the media merely promotes government projects, or praises the political elite for their role in the so-called national development without trying to look deeper into its process and impacts, it is called propaganda”.

Her argument is underpinned by important points that a development reporter should bear in mind while covering development issues. In her article titled “Is Development Journalism Relevant? (2008)” she details issues to be taken into account by journalists while covering development.

These are people, people’s needs, people's agendas, people's potentials, sincerity of development projects, multiple sources among other things. By people it is meant that journalists, often time, are confused and overwhelmed with details about projects, process,

budget and implementation ignoring the most important element of development-people. She also emphasises people's needs- as needs that exceed basic material wellbeing such as food, shelter, healthcare or education and may include a need for their identity to be accepted or for freedom to live the way they choose; sincerity of development projects refers to whether they are sustainable or undertaken to satisfy certain motives. Daorueng also believes that a development journalist should be able to identify people's agendas. According to her, in some situations economic well-being is not the only answer to people's agenda despite a high level of poverty they encounter. Good development journalism must be able to extract people's inner agenda and put it in context. She also raises, among others, that a journalist should find out the truth behind economic growth data-whether statistics tell the truth about the majority, or if it lies because while economic growth data says the country has reached a certain level of well-being, it is important to uncover what people in the village really think about it.

She has still other points to raise such as consideration of people's potentials and aspirations instead of seeking opinions only from government officials and presenting the ordinary people as victims and passive actors; use of various sources and verification of what they say- experts, politicians, civil servants, villagers etc; investigation of whether the money allotted for projects has really benefited the targeted groups or ended up mired in corruption scandals. (http://kauri.aut.ac.nz:8080/dspace/bitstream/123456789/1472/1/MediaDevCH19_develop_rel_prangt_ip_p243-250.pdf accessed 18/3/2010)

Loo (2009:3) underlines that the development journalists reflect on the question of how the series of stories written over a period could in time make a difference to prevailing realities rather than reporting disparate information in a digestible capsules. He argues that this approach puts development journalism in contrast to the conventional fragmented reporting of issues at the structural, the corporate, institutional and governmental levels.

Banda (2006:11) on the other hand points out the 'what' of DJ in terms of holistic view as appealing to all, focus on rural (remotest areas), inclusion of hitherto unheard voices, cultural identity and community, free will, distance from the market and the state, 'quality' content, infusion of grassroots voices, independent and democratic participation.

Aggarwala's influential argument (Cited in Ogan, 1980: 6) also underlines critical investigation, evaluation and relevance of development projects to national as well as local needs; the importance of examining differences between plans and implementation, claims

and real impact are also of great importance to assess how DJ is being undertaken in a news media devoted to promoting development.

These points are in fact ideal grounds to paint a clear picture of how development journalism is being undertaken in Addis Zemen. However, to weigh Addis Zemen against all the points would lead to lack of focus. In other words, they would be too many and scattered references to frame a sound discussion. Moreover, some of the points identified by these scholars and many others as to how DJ should be done overlap or supplement each other instead of standing as discrete self-contained points. Therefore, only some of the points that can be practically within the reach of Addis Zemen are singled out to assess its DJ undertaking.

As it is always the case in a qualitative study, perspectives reflected in this research can't be precisely replicable and testable. But they can serve as an entry point to understand personnel, institutional and social realities pertaining to Addis Zemen. With a view to focusing attention on certain points, the following few 'hows' that include: How, investigative and critical, how independent, how people centered, how grassroots considerate are singled out. Moreover follow-up reporting (continuity) to know the impact and progress of development projects and how reporting of success stories are balanced with failure stories or how the other side of success is reported is explored in Addis Zemen's DJ performance. In fact, it is difficult to draw a line between these points. However, they are separately treated only for the sake of facilitating discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation and Discussion

4.1 Investigation and critical examination of issues

The issue of how investigative Addis Zemen is in development reporting was seriously discussed both in separate and group conversations with the informants. They all have an idea, at least preliminary understanding of the concept, that DJ shares some features with investigative journalism and that they are expected to reveal facts behind the surface while reporting development issues. An editor who has worked for Addis Zemen over the last 12 years said:

I think the quality and degree of our DJ is questionable. For instance, we report housing problem and how the government is trying to tackle it. We report infrastructural activities-electrification, road expansion and services like education, clean water and health. However, we hardly report issues like corruption, bad governance which impede development.

Once we had a column named “Balaguday” (Roughly means “He who has a point to raise”). It has ceased now. That page used to attempt to expose corruption and malpractices in some government agencies. We usually start to do such expose’ and drop it soon. It lacks continuity.

Editor-in-chief of Addis Zemen also shares this view.

I believe that development journalism should be planned and should include some elements of investigation. For instance, the cost that a development project required, the time it took and the acceptance it obtained from the community must be investigated. But to do such investigation it takes time. That would kill freshness of the issue. There is a big problem in accessing information in our country. Sources shy away to give information. Simple information that could be handled by a PR officer may be referred to a minister. To access a minister it takes you long way. Therefore, I can say we are not doing development journalism in the true sense of investigative manner.

Another senior journalist who is in a deputy editor-in-chief position expresses the inadequacy of investigative reporting in Addis Zemen as follows:

Most of our news stories are event stories. These events are usually organized by government agencies. We report what we are told by the organizers during the occasions. It is difficult to verify the reports from a third party. Even we rarely have the chance of investigating activities we are told have really been undertaken. To see what is actually going on needs to go to where the

development projects are taking place. While this is one side of our limitation, we don't do investigation even in our story projects.

An editor who told this researcher one of the stories he produced alerted the Addis Ababa education Bureau to reconsider medium of instruction in Addis Ababa preschool education said the following when he reflected on how Addis Zemen could have made a difference if reported seriously and how it fails to dig out facts beneath official reports.

In my view we are not doing DJ properly. Our reports are one sided. We report what ever government officials tell us. We don't aggressively dig out the issues and see the other side of facts. Even success stories which we are obsessed with are incomplete because we don't report why those who didn't succeed failed to be successful. Second, we report only from the government side.

Generally speaking, none of the journalists boldly claimed Addis Zemen is doing serious investigative reporting, though some of them believe the paper is steadily attempting to establish the tradition of looking into issues beyond a face value.

As critical reporting is concerned the researcher meticulously discussed with journalists so as to probe their perspectives. Actually, they are aware of the level of seriousness in their stories while doing development journalism. There are two categories of views on this particular point. Some of the journalists believe they are critical in most of their project reports. They mentioned some examples from the stories their colleagues or they themselves produced since March 2009. March 2009 was a moment when Addis Zemen introduced the practice of feature and news analysis. They said they were critical of government agencies, in particular, such as Ethiopian Electric Corporation, Addis Ababa Housing Agency, Ethiopian Roads Authority, Addis Ababa Transport Authority etc. One of the senior editors elaborated on condo houses and others as follows.

Recently we have embarked on producing news features and news analysis. As a result of the commencement of this trend we have produced a number of development stories. The ones I remember are the story we produced on condos in Addis. The condos were constructed and the beneficiaries were told they won lotteries; they settled the first round of down payment. But they had no idea which houses belonged to whom and where their houses were located. We hammered this issue and received a lot of feed backs.

We produced stories on shortage of sugar supply and quality of electric materials. We got a lot of feed back too because these issues were really where public uproar was noticed.

In a group discussion, all the editorial team members pronounced that Addis Zemen and all other state media are not allowed to criticize government policies. The reason is that the journalists consider themselves as part of the government and as implementers of policies like any government agencies. This view was expressed by one deputy editor-in-chief as follows.

We don't touch policy issues for we are one of the implementing agents of government policies. We are government media. We are policy implementers. We don't criticize policy. We can criticize individual representatives of government, agency heads etc. I remember one case where we exposed inefficiency of Addis Ababa Transport Authority head. Last year the authority announced that it would introduce zoning of taxi service in the metropolis. But it has not yet been realized. We asked the head about this matter. She was so rude to us defending her office that taxi service is not a problem in Addis Ababa and that only the media fans the problem to put government in conflict with the public.

Editor-in-chief of Addis Zemen holds the same opinion on criticizing policy of government.

As a rule we are aware that we can criticize policies when they are tabled for discussion. After they are approved by the House of Peoples' Representatives and become laws, we can't criticize them. We are part and parcel of the executive. How can we criticize the policy we are supposed to implement? It would put us in contradiction of ourselves.

However, most of the journalists do not share the claim of being critical of government. They said they shy away from criticizing government agencies for fear that their stories would be rejected by editors or they face some sort of problem. They said they censor themselves and prefer safe reporting. This is what one of the senior editors said.

I think EPA considers that the government trusts ENA than other media. When we write something critical of government, editors prefer to compare it with ENA news as we often cover events together. We believe on sensitive issues, ENA usually twists the issue in favor of government. We, therefore, censor ourselves not to be critical of government. If Addis Zemen wants us to do good journalism, it should avoid choosing something that is reproduced by ENA and create confidence in us.

It can be concluded from the responses of Addis Zemen journalists what they practice as development journalism is what Edani (1993:126) defines as developmental journalism.

According to this scholar a developmental journalist is:

that journalist who sees/his/her main responsibility as that of publicizing government policies, projects, statements, and activities, and who usually avoids communicating the views of the

people back to the government, especially when those views are critical of the government, as they very often are. The developmental journalist engages in development journalistic work on an *ad hoc* basis, that is, when ever there is a particular government development policy or project to publicize. When there is none, he or she does ordinary routine information officer of the ministry of information or public affairs officer in any other government establishment or parastatal.

Loo (2009:24) on the other hand notes that self-censor negatively affects good journalism when it is exercised for personal safety.

Self-censorship is embedded in the news process regardless of where the media operates. Good reporters, however, self-censor for good reasons-to steer clear of defamation, to avoid misrepresenting actualities, to be fair, meticulous with details and solidly accurate. It becomes a worry if self-censorship is habitual and unthinking, and when it is committed more for personal preservation than for ethical principles. Self-censorship committed out of learned fear, in many cases unjustifiably, only leads to uninvestigated legitimate issues, a compromised bigger picture and concealed truth.

The journalists were asked why they practically experience such fear and if any of their stories ever put them in trouble because they were critical of government. Three of them told the researcher their experiences. One editor said her story which some years back exposed inefficiency of the administration of Afar sate machinery was rejected and caused her to be in conflict with not only her editors but also with EPA management. She said it was a lesson not to write any challenging stories. Another editor mentioned a piece that was produced by the employees of Merchandise Whole sale and Import Trade Enterprise (MWITE) exposing malpractices in their organization under the guise of Business Process Reengineering (BPR). The report was according to this editor a counter response to a story that was published in Addis Zemen containing claims of the Enterprise management that BPR resulted in improving efficiency. He said it was evidenced piece but rejected for fear that it would affect image of the incumbent during the election season. One editor also extensively narrated his experience of writing a critical story on Ministry of Education.

Recently I produced a story on Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance Agency (HERQA) with the ministry of Education. I know the incumbent government sometimes admits flaws in implementing its policies. This has been clearly seen after election 2005.

I produced the piece on the achievement of health training centers. I analyzed the procedures of quality assurance exam and results obtained. As the first ever quality assurance exam was given for Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) graduates in the private health care training institutions, it was reported that only 7 % were able to pass the exam. Now it reached

gradually 20%. I wanted to find out that some thing was wrong somewhere either with the training of the graduates or the exam or the assessment.

I interviewed some students, both who failed and passed in the exam; some instructors, supervisors, Addis Ababa Education Bureau and Quality Assurance Agency with the Ministry of Education. As immediately the piece was printed, the HERQA head came with a written protest that tried to dismiss my report. The complaint staged by HERQA accused the newspaper and me as if we failed to do proper journalism. The refutation was prepared simply to avoid blame. They said the story wouldn't represent them. They had no justification for disapproval. It was printed the next day in Addis Zemen. Actually my report was accurate and genuine. It was supported by evidences. There was no factual error, defamation or misinformation in my report. I had mentioned sources from concerned bodies including HERQA. My next article didn't come out. I was instructed to drop it. My friends who were assigned to report on other training institutions were told to stop the job. The editors even didn't consult with me or asked me how I did the report. They simply printed what ever came to them from the aggrieved. The truth was that I didn't even make any party accountable. I just revealed the facts that thus far only 20 per cent students passed in the exam in some rounds and that a problem lies somewhere. Following HERQA's accusation some institutions also presented similar complaint and it was also published.

Another editor also recalls that a report she wrote sourcing a non government institution that refuted government's claim of economic growth was rejected because it depicted some flaws in the claim. Below is her perspective.

When the government announced economic growth in the country, there were other voices that the economy didn't grow as the government claimed. The case in point is report of the Ethiopian Economic Association. That report was not considered because it was contrary to government's claim. Don't forget that we are instructed by the government to pursue development journalism and that we are in government owned media. Even, some of our actions contradict with the editorial policy of EPA.

They were asked if there are any directives written or verbal that restrict the journalist not to report critically. A senior reporter said the following.

Neither a restriction is stipulated in the editorial policy of EPA nor is there such binding and formal directive. Our fear simply emanates from a long held fear in the government media operation. For instance, I kill some stories we receive from ENA that have the tone of promoting government officials than reporting the facts. Some of my colleagues come to me and express their worries that the officials would be angry and call me to publish the story. Often the time I don't receive any call.

Some of the journalists attribute the reason why they don't be critical of government activities to lack of knowledge and inattention while others attach it to a holdover of the previous tradition in the preceding systems. The most veteran journalist who has been working in Addis Zemen over the last 26 years has the following to say on this matter

I think our major problem is lack of knowledge on development reporting. We are not fully aware of what development reporting is about and we don't try to write comprehensive stories on development. We print frequently reports of government executives and rarely include different voices. A given development project involves a number of actors like experts, engineers, beneficiaries and government agencies. It needs to involve in a story all the actors. They may have opposite views to what officials claim. But we don't do that. The reason in my opinion is lack commitment.

Commitment is a very essential value in development journalism. Edeani (1993: 132) strongly emphasizes that a 'development journalist' is:

The real professional whose body and soul strongly committed to the ideals of development journalism in all its facets and the interests of the generality of the people whose own initiatives and ideas on development are given full reign in news stories and commentaries. He or she uses all opportunities at his/her disposal to cover development news on a regular basis and with devotion and a high sense of professional responsibility. He or she has a knack for seeing good solid development news stories where some other journalists are incapable of seeing any. No wonder that the development journalist is now and then one of the best known investigative journalists around. In other words, he or she is adept in investigative journalism.

With regard to the holdover of the past tradition a young journalist in a position of senior editor said there is a gap of generation. The young ones boldly embark on exposing malpractices in government or private sector while the old journalists are shying away from being critical. He claims he has produced many critical reports on bad practices of some institutions in implementing government policies⁴⁵ but faced no trouble.

There are people who have been here for quite a long time. These journalists don't want to touch something critical. There is a holdover in their mind and they always try to take the safe side. On the contrary there is a new blood who boldly wants to be critical of wrongdoings. Some people are now telling us that the newspaper has started to improve because it is attempting to do away with the old tradition of self censorship and safe reporting. The old way is not useful either for government or the public.

4.2 Journalistic independence

By journalistic independence here it is meant freedom from external influences such as government and market. Obviously state media is run by public fund. It is not a property of government in power, though the perception by the journalists in Addis Zemen is that the government owns media and they are part and parcel of government themselves. They also call themselves government journalists. Moreover, some of them consider the newspaper as one of government policy implementers. This notion seems to have been grounded in the editorial policy of EPA when it states “explaining laws up on which the government of the country is founded, decrees and policies issued by the government and activities it undertakes” as one of the objectives of the Agency publications. (EPA Editorial Policy, 2003: 7) It may be from this background that the editor-in-chief of Addis Zemen said: “We are part and parcel of the executive”. The intimacy of media to government is so strong not only in terms of reporting government activities but also in terms of deriving media plan from government plans. This is described in the words of one of the deputy editors-in-chief of Addis Zemen.

Basically our plan is derived from government’s plans. For instance, the head of the nation (the president) announces every year on the resumption of the two Houses annual joint session major plans of the government in the year. That plan is one springboard which hierarchically comes down to us. We try to report government plan and performances underway

The worse scenario is direct interference of government agencies in the editorial matter of the newspaper. Another senior journalist in the position of deputy editor-in-chief said that direct instructions come to the newsroom from government bodies and the newspaper is not independent to act freely.

I am in charge of the news section. I don’t have the authority to decide on front page stories. Someone calls me from the Prime Minister Office and instructs me to wait for a story that comes from that office. Some one calls me from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and instructs me to wait for a story that comes from that ministry. Some one also calls me from the Office of Government Communication Affairs and I wait for a story to come to me. I personally protested against such orders and I was finally told that the chief editor determines which story to carry in the front page and which to leave out. I was told to obey the rule. Other columns have relative freedom compared with the news section.

We have to have editorial independence. We should stick to professional standards. Even you don’t need an editorial policy once you decided to act professionally. Our basis must be

professional principles. If we are determined to realize the principles we will serve the nation and the government in office.

Another editor also reflected that Addis Zemen is not enjoying editorial freedom as it follows government foot steps in all its activities.

I think, the bad side of development journalism is when a government owns a media. Addis Zemen is a government media. We follow foot steps of the government to report development activities. Priorities are given to government agendas. Therefore, the government maneuvers the paper like any government owned media.

The challenge with respect to independence in Addis Zemen is not only the issue of prioritizing government in the planning and reporting. There are also influences from some organizations that need publicity. They may be government agencies or NGOs or private enterprises according to informants. In the interviews and group discussions the researcher made with the journalists all of them told him that they usually go to fields sponsored by organizations who want media coverage. As a member of EPA the researcher is also aware of this fact. All the journalists agree that accepting any incentive from the subjects they cover risks their independence and ethics. One of the deputy editors-in-chief explains this reality as follows.

Actually organizations that take us to regions are smart enough. They sponsor your expense of some days and want you to focus only on their good sides. Logistics and per dime is covered by the organizations and they take you only to their operation areas. You don't have the chance to look around and see some gaps in the development projects. You may write some travel stories for your paper. That is an asset. Otherwise, you work for the organization who sponsored your travel. It comprises your independence.

4.3 Striking a balance between reports of success and failure

Essentially the distinguishing feature of development journalism is its promotional function. As a pro development genre of journalism it encourages good practices and innovations for replication and further progress of a society. Success stories can be used as source of inspiration. Achievements can be emulated and lessons can be learned from challenges encountered the achievers on their way to success. One will not, however, lose sight of inadequacies and inefficiencies while reporting success. It is expected that a reasonable balance should be made between the success-failure stories. There is no always a leveled path in every success. Some journalists in Addis Zemen

feel that they report success stories as a rule not because they are restricted to expose shortcomings but simply because of negligence. They say they do not dare it.

“We usually report success stories. We don’t dig out the potential gaps in the success and behind. Even we don’t attempt to see the success from another dimension, not because we are restricted to do so. It is simply laziness and negligence of journalists in my opinion”.

However another journalist who is a senior editor doesn’t accept this position that they don’t report failures because journalists are negligent.

We focus on success stories. We do what we are instructed to do. For instance, during election times like this, we are instructed to focus on success stories. We don’t look for issues ourselves. For instance we don’t look into problems and corruptions behind fertilizer supply; we don’t try to find out why some farmers remained poor while others succeeded to win awards at national level. We don’t investigate facts behind the screen. We know from experience, the government wants melody of success; not failure. Therefore, I don’t think we are lazy. It is not because we are inefficient; it is because we are told to focus on success by our editors.

Editor-in-chief of Addis Zemen, also admits that his paper focuses on success stories. However, he speaks that failure stories are also covered

We mostly focus on success stories and extensively cover them. The success may be success of policies in place or individual efforts in making a difference or a combination of individual efforts and policy environment. We have covered a number of individuals who have improved their lives as a result of the efforts they had exerted to change their situations. We recognize them to motivate others to follow suit. The limitation we have here is that we don’t plan these success activities ahead of time. We do them causally. The issue of reporting success story is written in our editorial policy. But it does not limit us to notice failures.

As you know as there is a success story there is also a failure story. As identifying failures would help to lead to success we are not confined to reporting successes. We also report failures in a constructive way. But we don’t magnify failures.

All the informants similarly agree that they focus on reporting success stories. Some of them are of the opinion that since they are government journalists and prioritize government activities in their stories; it is of no use to report limitations of government. The rationale is that the government encourages only success issues, according to these informants. Moreover, they complain that there is no enabling institutional environment to encourage serious expose’. Yet, while others agree that conducive institutional environment is lacking,

they don't accept the view that the government wants only success stories. They believe rather that journalists are guided by the philosophy of safe reporting they developed overtime.

4.4 People at the center

As discussed earlier many scholars stress that development reporting should have people at the center. In other words, development journalism is not retelling official accounts and making news out of government handouts. It needs to verify such reports and include reflections of the people and independent voices. However, all informants of this study commonly agree on one point-that their reporting is government centered than people. They attribute the reason to their use of government agencies as main sources of information. They provide different justifications for their habit of government prioritization in sourcing. The main reason they mentioned is that government is the owner of the media and that they have to serve the owner first. "So long as government administers the media, the media operates in the interest of the owner", they argued. Some of them reasoned out that they cover daily events and as long as the events are dominantly organized by government sources, inevitably government voice is also dominant in the stories. Others said because Addis Zemen is a daily paper there is no time to gather information from different sources to include other voices. Still others related the reason of government dominance in their stories to the concentration of their story ideas on current issues. According to one of the reporters:

The basis for story ideas is current issues. Hot issues in political, social and economic areas are given due attention by the incumbent are our focus areas. We also focus on government institutions. We don't as such extensively cover private institutions. The management considers extensive coverage of private institutions as promotional job or advertizing.

Despite the fact that the government encourages private investment, if one plans on certain private firm, the management considers it as an arrangement made between the firm and the journalist to get some benefit out of the reporting.

A reporter who has joined Addis Zemen recently said she is usually assigned to cover government organizations and feel her stories are mostly about government activities. But she said there are some improvements now.

In fact I frequently cover government activities, institutional activities. Yes, by default government is magnified while your main source of story becomes government agencies. Recently we have made a shift particularly in the stories we plan as a project assignment. We have

started to magnify public voices in our stories. We are trying to include beneficiaries and other stakeholders after the implementation of BPR.

However, a deputy editor-in-chief in charge of news section said BPR has not changed the tradition of government dominance in the stories.

“Government sources are very dominant even now after BPR was launched. They are not only major sources of information but also they are always in the leads and headlines”.

Another journalist who holds the same title as the one commented on BPR said that the newspaper’s activities are strongly tied with government and that the journalists need to understand the obligation of serving the public.

We take as a basis government’s development directions to report development issues. The journalists are working along side the policy of the government to speedup development activities. With regard to involving the society sections in our reports, I think we are not doing enough. We need to improve in this respect with the change of attitude of the journalists that the newspaper is a public media which is meant to serve the public. We can do this by upgrading our capacity in development journalism. Journalists should also understand that the paper we are working for is a public paper. There are activities that attempt to make our reporting participatory, yet, they have to be developed further.

4.5 Rural-grassroots coverage

One of the characteristics of development journalism according to Banda (2006) is its focus on the rural or the remotest areas. Journalism educator Shelton Gunaratine also describes development journalism as an integral part of:

A new journalism that involves analytical interpretation, subtle investigation, constrictive criticism and sincere association with the grassroots, rather than, by journalistic conventions, with the elites...Development journalism is not compatible with either the ‘libertarian concept’ which defines the function of mass media as providing information and entertainment; or the ‘authoritarian concept’ which stifles criticism of political machinery and the officials in power, and imposes a top-down approach to problem solving” (cited in Loo, 2009: 5)

The Ethiopian government also pursues a policy of Agriculture Led Industrialization that puts much emphasis on rural development as that is meant the engine which ultimately gears to industrialization. With this in mind Addis Zemen journalists were asked how often they plan to go to fields to cover rural areas with the aim of involving

the grassroots. All responded that they don't plan to go to fields. The reason they provide is that the media organization (EPA) is currently in budget deficit and wouldn't allow them to go to regions. They were also asked if they ever presented a proposal to cover some areas in the regions and their proposal was rejected. None of them said they had attempted so recently.

Actually DJ doesn't focus on the elite and the advantaged metropolitans. It strives to spark light on the marginalized, the poor and the disenfranchised. DJ according to Loo (2009) needs immersive reporting from experiencing the life of the people. As P. Saintah, Rural Affairs editor of *The Hindu* puts it 'If you have not been in the hut that has no electric power, not a single bulb, how will you understand why the children in that home can never do well in studies? It's not merely important to "see" the hut, but to be there when there is no power. I think it is a bit fraudulent to write knowingly about their lives if you have never done so.' (Loo, 2009:28).

"Development journalism comprises the reporting on ideas, programmes, activities and events, which are related to an improvement of the living standard, mainly in the rural regions." (Ibid)

Though Addis Zemen journalists don't attempt to plan to cover regions they all believe that they should have covered regions as a national daily. A representative view was expressed by one editor as follows:

Basically, I believe Addis Zemen is a national paper. It is not Addis Ababa newspaper. Hence, it should cover all parts of Ethiopia. Practically, however, it is Addis centered paper. Actually, we cover regions through news we receive from ENA. The news stories are of course informational, they are development information but they are one sided reports which reflect what different government agents said. Whether these news stories represent development journalism is a question. I can say we don't cover regions purposely, with the goal of bringing about certain impacts.

4.6 Continuity

It has been repeatedly noted in the preceding sections that development journalism is concerned with social transformation. Consequently, it is not satisfied with a one moment reporting. In other words, it is not an event oriented undertaking; instead it is a process oriented journalism that engages in follow-up reporting to ascertain the impact and progress of development activities. The emphasis in developmental journalism is not on what happens at a particular moment or on a given day but on what is happening over time. (Muniruddin 2005: 218)

Addis Zemen journalists were asked how often they produce follow-up stories once they covered a development project. All answered alike that they don't produce follow-up stories. They have a number of reasons for not doing so. The following is what one of the deputy editors-in-chief answered.

Here we are weak in doing follow up reports. There are tow reasons for this. One is the challenge from information sources. People who are supposed to give information to media don't like to give you information. There is a big problem in our country to access information. A source which we had covered sometime ago denies us information when we try to write a follow-up story the second time. Let me tell you a typical example. Recently we wrote a story on drug smugglers who try to make Ethiopia a transitory point. We interviewed Bole Customs, Federal Police and Addis Ababa Police about the issue. After sometime we wanted to see the progress in that particular area and called an officer within the Federal Police Commission. The officer impatiently told me how I was trying to make the newspaper so boring writing now and again about one issue. I told him that the problem I was talking about was something encountered daily and that I wanted to see some progress. He finally turned furious and tried to threaten me; asked me my phone number as if I had a hidden agenda on the issue. He warned me not to make any call again unless the police wanted me to give a press statement.

The second problem is lack of commitment from our side to do follow-up jobs. We always run after new projects and incidents. We don't try to relate issues we had covered with current scenario and see new developments achieved.

Another deputy reporter said the following concerning the same issue.

We know that we exert some impact when we report critically. We believe we would urge concerned bodies to take some measures and correct the mistakes we identified via our reports. But to my knowledge we haven't done follow up works. I think it is inattention from our side. We are looking after new projects instead of hammering on one issue. I understand it is one of our limitations in doing development journalism

A reporter who said she feels editors don't like to revisit a story covered in the recent past said "Sometimes when you present a story idea; unit coordinators reject it on the ground that it was covered sometime in the past. We look for new areas. Even the journalist refrains from proposing areas he knows has been covered recently for fear that it would be rejected".

4.7 Factors affecting developmental reporting in Addis Zemen in the eyes of journalists

Journalists were asked to reflect on factors affecting the undertaking of development reporting in the news room. They have identified a number of issues among which the following are the major ones.

4.7.1 Internal factors

Internal factors are divided into two types. One is relating to institutional incapability to create enabling environment for journalistic undertaking. The other factor relates journalists' habit, fear and lack of inspiration and zeal for their profession.

4.7.1.1 Institutional

Institutional factors that the journalists raised as significant concerns are the following.

4.7.1.1.1 Exclusive planning

The journalists have great concern over the planning procedure. They said they rarely plan their stores and are consulted to have inputs in the plan. The plan is prepared either by the editorial team together or by the news section coordinator and distributed to them. Some of them even complained that proposals they presented for approval would be given to some body and they take another in return and that it leads them to lose interest in the project they are assigned to. The underlying reason according to the reporters is the attempt of bosses to avoid any preplanned attachment with sources of information

4.7.1. 1. 2 Lack of incentive

Lack of incentive for the efforts the journalists exert is another cause of poor performance according to the informants. There is no institutional mechanism to reward journalists who demonstrate excellence in the reporting. By incentive they don't mean only finance but also education, certificate or short training that would boost moral of those who perform well. As a result the journalists are not encouraged to do excellent job. They consider the job as a daily routine and discharge it with less enthusiasm.

4.7.1.1. 3 Lack of facilities

Many of the journalists complained that basic office equipment and IT facilities are lacking in Addis Zemen. Line telephones, computers, recorders are limited and cell phones are not provided for them at all. They noted that often the time they use their personal cell phones to contact sources and that it is unaffordable for them given the unrewarding salary they earn.

4.7.1.1.4 Insufficient training

On job training is another subject of concern for journalists not to do development reporting adequately. However, the editor-in-chief of Addis Zemen said the journalists are given training occasionally on DJ in a package of training prepared on government policies. He also admits that journalists need intensive training and updating on the subject. Even though many of the journalists told the researcher they had taken DJ some years back as a course, they said they didn't receive any formal training ever since.

4.7.2. Individual limitations

Major factors considered as individuals' deficiency in practicing development journalism in Addis Zemen are the following.

4.7. 2.1 Self-censorship

As discussed earlier, self-censoring is very rampant in Addis Zemen. Some young editors view that this habit is retained invariably by old journalists as a legacy of the past systems—that issues relating to government are sacred or taboo. Those who maintain this view claimed they dare to critically write on shortcomings of government. The only limitation according to the young journalists who joined Addis Zemen in the recent years is lack of experience and inadequate knowledge about development reporting. However, the senior journalists spoke

from experience that they faced pressure when they wrote something critical. The pressure is both internal and external. Some of the cab journalists who joined the newsroom just recently, however, consider self-censorship as a house tradition and would like to follow the suit of veteran journalists.

4.7.2.2 Lack of commitment

“Commitment goes with purpose. Why do you labor if you don’t have something to achieve?” said one of the reporters in Addis Zemen. He said he wouldn’t expect any change in life being a member of the newsroom. According to this reporter there must be inspirational atmosphere to evoke commitment. “The working environment is always dull; no progress at all. I am underpaid and impoverished. Why should I bother about critical reporting when it has nothing to contribute to my career or my salary?” he said. In the discussions made with the journalists, most of them explained that commitment of journalists is below expectation due to the fact that rewarding or demoting mechanisms are not yet in place. As the media is guided by the civil service regulation of the country there is no motivational mechanism for journalists who would like to commit themselves. “Journalism is not passion nor is it a virtue in this country. You come to it by chance and live in it by chance. If the chance leaves you for ever in it you will remain impoverished all your life. Commitment must result in change of your soul or life” said one senior journalist.

4.7.2 External factors

External factors that discourage journalists in development reporting according to data obtained are those factors related to access to information and unavailability database.

4.7.2.1 Access to information

One of the issues identified by Addis Zemen journalists as a big impediment to their journalistic activities is the unwillingness of sources to release information. This is very serious in government organizations according to the journalists. The organizations want to give out information only when they want publicity through their PR departments. Instead of providing information causally or regularly they want to talk much when they are well prepared on issues that interest them; not necessarily in the interest of the media, according to informants. Experts are not also comfortable with media for fear that their bosses reprimand them or take some action against them, the journalists comment. Experts usually shy away from giving information or talk to journalists because they believe that only PR officers are

entitled to providing information. They relate this problem to proclamation No. 590/2008 of Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information that empowers PR officers to give public information than anybody else in the public sector. However, the PR officers have neither deep knowledge of issues nor do they provide organized data about the issues.

4.7.2.2 Access to data

Many journalists note the difficulty of finding well organized data in both government and non-government organizations. The problem is not only unavailability of data, according to the journalists. The difficulty is that the data are scattered in different offices and that they are referred to different persons to find out minor facts about the institutions they cover. They also noted that tracing documents and databases take time even when the appropriate persons and offices are identified.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Conclusion

5.1 Summary

The main objectives of this study were to examine how development journalism is practiced, what degree of efforts journalists are exerting and what factors are affecting their endeavors in undertaking development journalism in Addis Zemen newspaper. The study also touched up on relevant literature and highlighted some documents that provide for the philosophy of development journalism in Ethiopia.

The techniques deployed in the exploration is entirely qualitative an in-depth interview with key informants, focus group discussion, observation and personal experience.

The researcher feels responses obtained in in-depth interviews are sincere because the informants talked from the bottom of their hearts, their inner feelings, and perceptions. Intimacy of the researcher as a colleague with most of the informants was an advantage. The research revealed inadequacies in reporting development issues despite some promising attempts. Most of the journalists refer to themselves as government journalists and see themselves as part of the executive that implement government policies. One can imagine how this thinking impacts their professional independence. Even though there is no stated restriction in the editorial policy of EPA and other documents that issued by the incumbent, journalists don't dare to critically write on defects of development undertakings. They also don't assess impacts seriously. In general, development reporting is not being undertaken as the editorial policy stipulates and the government, the promoter of the development philosophy, desires.

5.2 Conclusion

The principal findings of the research are:

- Generally most journalists have conceptual understanding of development journalism but they don't exercise it courageously
- Government is a dominant source, major handout provider and most heard in development reporting

- Many journalists consider themselves as government journalists
- Journalists are highly self-censoring
- Critical and investigative reporting is minimal
- Most stories of DJ are Addis Ababa centered and rural grass roots and remote areas are neglected
- Follow-up stories are negligible or nil to assess impact of development projects
- Access to information sources is difficult
- Institutional environmental is not enabling

5.3 Way forward

Nine years back Geberemedihin Simon observed (*Print Media Journal* No. 1, 2001:23-24) that Addis Zemen should have in place methods of news selection, story development and necessary equipment to receive news. In terms of editorial opinion also he suggested that the paper needs to revisit its practices. He noted that the newspaper was obsessed with the promotion of non critical, sometimes flattery opinions.

“It is not uncommon that state owned media report about government’s plan, performance and other activities. But it is unfair to down play common place realities and praise government. It is not possible for the paper to ensure opinion leadership in this manner. It is possible to make analysis on government plans and performances based on the policy. Such an approach would involve the public and enable the government draw lessons from public participation and makes improvements. It seems that Addis Zemen is living in the past system of centralized top-down information flow may be due to limitation of capacity or some unknown factor”.

This observation was made almost a decade ago. The present study shows that the reality of nine years ago remained intact. Addis Zemen used to praise each and every deed of the governments in power since its establishment. It continued with the same tradition hitherto.

However, there are at least legal, philosophical, and institutional grounds to break away from the old legacy.

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Appendices

1. Demographics of Informants

No	Title	Sex	Experience in years			Education	Field	Remarks
			Addis Ze-men	Journalistic	Non-journalistic			
1	Editor-in-chief	M	12	12	5	BA	Amharic lan-guage & Lit-erature	
2	Deputy Editor-in-chief	F	3	9	-	MA	Amharic lan-guage & Lit-erature	
3	Deputy Editor-in-chief	M	3	9	-	Diploma	Journalism & Communica-tion	Prospective graduate in Education with BA
4	Deputy Editor-in-chief	M	3	15	-	BA	Journalism & Communica-tion	
5	Senior editor	F	15	15	-	BA	English Lan-guage & Lit-erature	
6	Senior editor	F	2 and 1/2	2 and 1/2	-	BA	English Lan-guage & Lit-erature	
7	Senior editor	M	26	26	-	Diploma	Amharic lan-guage & Lit-erature	
8	Editor	F	12	12	-	BA	Amharic lan-guage & Lit-erature	
9	Editor	M	7	3	-	BA	Amharic lan-guage & Lit-erature	
10	Senior reporter	M	3	3	-	BA	Amharic lan-guage & Lit-erature	
11	Reporter	F	5 months	5 months	12	BA	Amharic lan-guage & Lit-erature	
12	Reporter	F	5 months	3 and 1/2	-	BA	Journalism & Communi-cation	
13	Reporter	F	5 months	2	9	BA	Amharic lan-guage & Lit-erature	
14	Reporter	M	2	2	1	BA	English Lan-guage & Lit-erature	
15	Reporter	F	1	2	3	BA	Amharic lan-guage & Lit-erature	

2. Key interview questions for individual journalists

1. How long have you been in Addis Zemen newspaper?
2. Have you ever received any formal or on job journalism training?
3. Have you undergone training in development journalism?
4. Are you aware of the working philosophy of Addis Zemen?
5. How do you understand development?
6. How do you understand development journalism?
7. How do you report development issues currently?
8. How do you plan your stories on development issues?
9. Where do you get story ideas for development issues?
10. How do you choose sources for your development stories?
11. How serious you are in writing critically on shortcomings of development projects?
12. How often do you go to fields outside Addis Ababa?
13. Could you tell me any development stories that impressed you for arousing public discussion?
14. Could you tell me any expose' you or your colleagues have done recently?
15. How often do you include grassroots level of the community in your stories?
16. How often do you write investigative reporting?
17. How much journalistic independence do you enjoy?
18. Could you tell me external pressure (if any) in journalistic exercise?
19. Do you perceive yourself as a development reporter?
20. Who are your common sources in writing development stories?

3. Discussion topics focus group discussion

1. Is development journalism relevant for us? Why?
2. What is development for you?
3. What are the factors impeding you to report development issues critically?

4. What improvements do you suggest to undertake development reporting effectively?
5. What should be done to minimize self-censorship?