

**AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF THE PRIVATE PRESS ENVIRONMENT IN ETHIOPIA
SINCE 2005**

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Tamirat Mechale , entitled: audience perception of the private press environment in Ethiopia since 2005 and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Abstract

This study surveys audience perception of the private press environment in Ethiopia since 2005. With an objective of outlining its major features and addressing the problems in the private press sector of the country, the study tries to answer two research questions that deal with audience perception of the roles and responsibilities of journalists of the private press and the press institutions and their views on the practical roles and challenges of the private press in Ethiopia since 2005. The study has used quantitative and qualitative methods. To that end, questionnaires were distributed among 100 respondents and in depth interviews were made with six informants. In addition to that different documents have been used as important sources of data. The findings have shown that among the largest number of respondents journalists of the private press and the press institutions are perceived as having multiple key roles to play and a higher degree of responsibility to shoulder as compared to other parts of a society. The largest number of respondents and informants believe that the private press in Ethiopia played a bigger role before the 2005 national elections compared with their role in the period since then. The study has also identified : the failure to provide accurate information, lack of professional competence, lack of professional ethics and a professional analytic approach and limited financial and institutional capacity as the major internal challenges and restrictive laws (increasing pressure from the government), low development of democratic culture, problems related to market and publishing and the absence of many institutions for journalism education and training as the major external challenges of the private press in Ethiopia particularly since 2005. The study concludes that the media situation that prevailed since the 2005 national elections has made it increasingly difficult for the private press in Ethiopia to play a meaningful role as vital sources of information, as instruments for exercising freedom of expression and democracy and as a watch-dog.

CHAPTER ONE

I. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Even though it was declared as one of the universal rights of human beings later through Article 19 of the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights, it had been long since the quest for and debates over freedom of expression began. The authoritarian and naturalistic or liberal views are among the major arguments made in this regard. Particularly since the 17th century, different scholars and philosophers brought arguments that tried to explain the need for exercising freedom of expression as a reaction to the authoritarian systems and views held mainly by governments. Among the notable proponents of the naturalistic view, for example, the English philosopher John Locke argued that exercising the right to freedom of expression was necessary because the right to have liberty like that of the right to life and estate was rooted in natural law. In further explaining his argument Locke said, "In essence, men owned themselves, and by extension their labour and their thoughts, and had the right to do with them what they will." (Sterling ed. 2009, p.635).

Similar arguments that underlined the need for exercising freedom of expression were also made by philosophers and scholars like John Stuart Mill, Thomas Paine, and Alexis de Tocqueville. They argued that freedom of expression was necessary not only because people would naturally seek truth and engage in debate but also because exercising it would bring at least two positive practical effects for a society. One, free discussion helps to ensure progress since it is a means through which truth comes out, which they believed, would prevail over falsehood in any fair contest. Two, freedom of expression was necessary to maintain the vitality of beliefs especially when there is a tendency to uphold unreasonable conformity. (Little John & Foss 2009, p.576)

The quest for freedom of expression got a new momentum following the invention of the press. (pudephatt, 2011,p.7). In emphasizing the key role that the free press would play by assisting the activities of a state besides serving as a means to exercise freedom of expression, Thomas Jefferson one of the proponents of the liberal theory of media, said "Were it left to me to decide

where we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."(American Newspaper Association Foundation, 2005, p.4)

Then in the early 20th century in the United States, a theory that belongs to the liberalistic school called "the market place of ideas" was introduced. According to Sterling (2009) -this theory suggested that " ideas free of the burdens of government regulation should be able to compete with each other like products in a free consumer marketplace with the notion that the ' best' ideas will win out 'naturally'." (p.635)

The other major aspect highlighted by those liberal theorists was the powerful role that the free press could play in the activities of governments which led them call it "the fourth estate." According to their view, the press as "the fourth estate" plays a powerful role in assisting a process of democratization by serving as a means to exercise the right to freedom of expression, thought and conscience and also by strengthening the responsiveness and accountability of governments to all citizens. (Coronel ,2001,p.1)

However, this liberal view about the key role of the free press which emphasized the idea of the free activity of the press without any kind of government intervention or control was later opposed by another media theory called the social responsibility theory which was presented following the Hutchins Commission Report in 1947. In contrast to the liberal theory, the social responsibility theory stressed the idea that journalists and the press institutions do not only have roles and rights but also responsibilities and obligations to their profession, society, employers and the market. The theory proposed a media system that struck a compromise between extreme liberalism and extreme government paternalism as the best media system to ensure the presence of such a powerful but responsible media. The theory also suggested the idea of applying some form of government regulation as an option to avoid the possible dangers of extreme libertarianism. (Little John &Foss , 2009, pp.576-577)

Underlining on this idea of media responsibility, Baker (2004) also maintains "media can, of course, mislead as well as inform, can present venal as well as wise argument, can encourage bad as well as good values, and can dampen as well as incite political participation."(p.45)

The general ideas of exercising freedom of expression and the roles and responsibilities of the press seem analogous to the light of the sun and the light of an electric bulb respectively. The right to freedom of expression is a natural right of human beings through which a mental and physical or material development is attained since it is the source of not only light but also energy. The press, which is a modern invention like that of an electric bulb, serves a similar purpose of bringing what was once hidden and unknown into light. It is also a source of energy since it allows the free exchange of ideas which in turn serves as an input for any activity towards creating a properly functioning state or society. Equally important is the way energy is used because any inappropriate or irresponsible act may bring negative results.

In relation to this one should not also overlook the controversial nature of the question of freedom of expression and the importance of considering some specific aspects while dealing with the practical media situation in a country. In this respect Baker (2004) outlines that one should ask :

What type of free press does democracy need and why does democracy need it? Answers to these questions would allow the necessary follow-up questions. Are existing media adequate? Do they provide for the informational or communication needs of democracy? And if not, in what way do they fail, and what can be done? If there are inadequacies, do they reflect bad decisions made by media professionals, such that the prime need is for better, smarter, tougher editors and reporters or better training in journalism schools? Or inadequacies reflect, at least in part, deeper structural problems? And if governmental policy correctives are necessary to make matters better, what interventions would promote a more “democratic press” – that is, a press that properly serves a society committed to democracy? (p.125)

As has been outlined by Baker above, the proper identification of the problem areas and the consideration of the media context in a country is necessary because the level of social, economic, cultural and political development differs from one country to another which is

directly or indirectly reflected in the institutions of democracy like the media sector. However this does not mean that some common features at global level be completely ignored.

In this vein, Allan (2010, p. 44) says that one who deals with the questions of democracy and press freedom and the role of the press needs to consider three major aspects of the current status of the journalism profession. According to Allan, a huge decline in the status and reputation of the journalism profession and the free press mainly due to a growing sensationalism, tabloidization and public relations, an increasing role of the electronic media and all the technological changes that one way or the other influence the activities of the press and an ever increasing number of challenges faced by journalists are those three major features of the journalism profession shared at global level currently.

Still the intensity of those features varies across continents or countries. In this respect one finds a highly challenging media situation in most countries of Africa where even exercising the right to freedom of expression is endangered. (Mututa, 2006,p.9)

Being a part of the new wave of democracy that touched many countries of Africa in the early 1990s, freedom of expression was declared in Ethiopia after the down fall of the Dergue in 1991. Following the introduction of a new press bill in 1992, private newspapers and magazines flourished in the country.(Haleluya, 2008,p.12;Aadland&Fackler 2001,para.21).The introduction of the press bill also created the opportunity for the Ethiopian public to exercise democracy and freedom of expression. (Tesfu, 2008, p.40)

The activity of the private press in Ethiopia since then has been characterized by both success and failure. Here, it is worth recognizing that despite its short history, the private press in Ethiopia played considerable role in providing the public with information and addressing big national issues(Shimelis,2000,p.68)while it also lacked the necessary professional capacity and ethics. (Parmelee, 1999,p.8). However, following the 2005 national election the private press environment came to be characterized by diminished role of the private press, more media blackout, tighter government regulation and a more tense relation between the private press and the government of Ethiopia .

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As has been said previously, the period since the 2005 national election has been characterized by a dwindling number of private newspapers and magazines and increased challenge on journalists working for the private press. The government's regulation became tighter which was accompanied by the introduction of a new press law in 2008 and more number of detentions and accusations of journalists. (Ross, 2010, p. 1053). Similarly Smith (2007) describes the challenging situation since 2005 as :

Finally, the promising democratic openness with respect to the media witnessed in the pre-election period has been entirely reversed in the post election phase. Immediately following the election, there was a near complete media blackout, with the exception of the state-owned media and a couple of the more reputable private newspapers like Addis Fortune and The Reporter. However, in general, Ethiopian citizens have to rely on the powerful but often highly inaccurate rumour mill. In this the EPRDF does more damage to its own efforts, perhaps without fully realizing it. By tightening its grip on the private press and disregarding calls for continued negotiations over media access for all participants in the post-election fraud investigations in particular, the government has precluded the opportunity for transparency and the undermining of the potent Ethiopian rumour network. This situation has only been made worse by the arrest of several prominent private newspaper editors over the last year. (p. 64)

As has been described by Smith above the increasing pressures on the private press affected not only the activities of the private press but also the public's right to exercise freedom of expression. Considering the negative impacts of such a media situation and the fact that little has been achieved in changing it for the better, it appears very important that the root causes of the problem be identified and solutions be provided.

In this regard the researcher strongly believes that the perception and view of the audience about the activities, roles and challenges of the private press could greatly help towards effectively addressing the issue. However to the knowledge of the researcher, the studies that

have been conducted about the performances, roles and challenges of the private press addressed the issue mostly based on the data they collected from media personnel, scholars and the government bodies while giving little emphasis to the opinion of the audience.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess the major features of the private press environment in Ethiopia and the roles and challenges of the private press since 2005 by using the opinion of the audience, journalists and other stake holders as important sources of data. The study also recommends some points as a way forward.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

- To find out how the audience perceives the roles and responsibilities of journalists of the private press and the press institutions
- To investigate how the audience views the practical roles and challenges of the private press in Ethiopia since 2005

1.4 Research Questions

This research paper tries to address the following questions:

- How are the roles and responsibilities of journalists of the private press and the press institutions perceived among the audience?
- How does the audience view the practical roles and challenges of the private press in Ethiopia since 2005?

1.5 Rationale of the Study

Even though a number of discussions have been made so far between the private press and the government about the media situation in the country, no meaningful result has been achieved.

Hence a more detailed and genuine approach should be used to identify the key problems of the media situation in the country and bring solutions. (Solomon, 2015,p.6)

What is more, there are a number of social, political and economic problems that the society is facing currently. The private press as key sources of information and instruments of change would have played an important role, had there been a powerful private press in the country. Hence necessary actions should be taken towards solving the problems in the private press environment.

According to the researcher's observation one source of the problems seen in appropriately defining the role of the private press is related to public interest. Quite a considerable number of journalists working for the private press have tried to justify the extremist position they have taken as something based on the interest of the public.

When we see the experiences in the media environment for the last twenty four years in this light, we will find that the readership and market dominance of the private press has fluctuated in line with the changes in the content and presentation of private newspapers and magazines. For example in the 1990s private newspapers and magazines that focused on serious political reporting(Toby for example) had more number of sales. (Parmelee, 1999,p.18)Then in 2000 came Addis Admas, an infotainment newspaper which in fact faced a big challenge at first but gradually began to dominate the market.

However, this dominance was later taken by Addis Neger, which appeared in 2007 and won acceptance among the readership mainly for its in-depth reports and feature articles. Regarding the influence of the audience interest and the market on the journalism practise in the country, Skejerdal and Haleluya (2009)also note that "Some explain the developments in Ethiopian journalism in the 1990s by means of market theory. Tafari Mekonnen maintains that the shift to more serious publicizing in the late 1990s was a result of the readers' call for responsible journalism" (p.52)The researcher believes that this scenario is somewhat indicative of the limitations the private press in Ethiopia have had in appropriately identifying public interest and satisfying it.

Though incorporating the perceptions and opinions of the audience opinion could greatly help in investigating to what extent the public interest or the market features have influenced the content and presentation of the private press and also in addressing other problems in the sector, this has been given little or no emphasis in the studies conducted so far. Among those studies conducted on the activities of the private press in Ethiopia, For example, Skejerdal and Haleluya(2009) using only a limited number of 15 informants (almost all of them media personnel and politicians) without including the opinions of the public concluded that with the exception of few newspapers the private press in Ethiopia have neither played a watch dog role nor assisted the development of democracy.

The researcher believes that it would be too hasty to reach at such conclusions about the performance of the private press missing the views of the audience who have had their own influence in the press sector as mentioned above. Hence without including audience view, it will be difficult to get a complete picture of the sector and also correctly identify the strengths and weaknesses of the private press.

What is more, the data collected through surveying audience opinion could also serve as a major input for any attempt aimed at changing the existing media environment in Ethiopia for the better, as Tsehay(2006) also underlines:

There is huge gap in our understanding of audiences and their relationship with media content. In the East African context, theoretical frameworks are relevant and need to be interpreted and applied by media practitioners in in-house policies and in day-to- day media practice. We need to conduct media surveys, audience monitoring and content analysis. A few research organizations are involved in this activity but mainly from an advertising angle. Audience research would help the media identify gaps and weaknesses in content provision and format. (p.10)

In general it can be said that surveying the views or perceptions of the audience about the roles of journalists and the journalism profession and the practical roles and challenges of the private press in Ethiopia would help a lot if the issue is to be addressed more effectively.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The researcher strongly hopes that this research will be considered significant in that it tries to address a timely problem which needs due attention. It is hoped that the findings of the study would help the private press, the government and any other stake holder in the area in indicating directions on how to approach the problems in the media industry and create a better media environment in the country.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The time frame of this study has been set to be since the year 2005 because it is since then the challenges of the private press became intensified which is one of the major questions that this study tries to answer. The study has focused on the residents of Addis Ababa and particularly those who frequently appear around Arat Kilo, Amistkilo, Paisa, Kasanchis, Legehar, National Theatre, Saris usually for the purpose of reading press outlets. However people who reside in other parts of the city have also been included in the sample population and the respondents are all Ethiopians.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The fact that any discussion about press freedom and democracy has become increasingly sensitive, the researcher has found it sometimes difficult to get the real view(true feeling) of those journalists and the people who were interviewed and filled the questionnaire. This somehow will limit the depth of the study. Since most of the private press have been banned and the journalists displaced, it was also difficult to involve more journalists in the study. Yet to fill the gap documents particularly newspaper and magazines articles written about the issue under discussion have been used as additional sources of data.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The content of this study is presented in five chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction or background of the study which deals with a brief historical discussion of the major ideas and arguments made in relation to the topic under discussion. This chapter also presents statement of the problem, the objectives, rationale, significance, scope and limitations of the study and the ethical considerations. Chapter two presents a review of related literature on the topic by following a classified treatment of the global, continental and national contexts. The research methodology applied to collect the data and analyze the findings is presented in chapter three. Chapter four and chapter five deal with the quantitative and qualitative data presentation and analysis and the conclusion and recommendation respectively.

1.10. Ethical Considerations

As has been mentioned previously the issue under discussion became increasingly sensitive. Considering this the researcher asked the informants whether they were willing to have their identity mentioned. Three informants said they had no problem if their identity was mentioned while the remaining three wanted their identity to be anonymous. Although the researcher mentioned the identity of those three informants in the appendix section, for the sake of consistency codes have been used in the data presentation and analysis section.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 A Brief History of the Press in Ethiopia

2.1.1 The Press before 1931

Before dealing with the history of modern mass communication in Ethiopia it is worth mentioning that there had been an indirect way of communication between the public and the government which continued well into the military regime. (Parmelee, 1999 , P. 6). In applying this indirect form of communication, emperors or governors used to collect information mainly about the political situation i.e whether there was any dissatisfaction among the public or reactions to certain new measures taken often saying “ eregnaminale, azmaryminale?” to mean “what have shepherds said?, what have traditional singers said?”. And, it could be said that these two parts of the society had served as the first media or press outlets for a long time in the history of Ethiopia asParmelee (1999) also notes :

And yet because the physical center dominated Ethiopian intellectual life, this indirect method of communication – perhaps most strikingly exemplified by the “Wax and Gold”(Semena Work)technique deployed in poetry and prose – became the dominant motif in public expression. The traditional asmaris, or roving bards, were virtually the only outlets for public criticism of the ruling class and its practices – at least through the end of the Mengisturegime; and yet, while they were often clever and got their pointed messages across, they were also careful to encode these messages so as to avoid punishment. (p.9)

Even though the form of communication and public criticism had been made in such a traditional and indirect manner, the actions of traditional singers and the governors' interest to collect information using it as a major source indicates that there had been an awareness about the need to have a channel of public expression and public criticism.

Modern mass media was introduced to Ethiopia late in the reign of emperor Menelik II through (La Se-Maine d'Ethiopie, 1890), a news paper published in French and "Aemiro "(conscience) an Amharic newspaper issued in 1895) (Aadland&Fackler, 2001, para.15)

The development of the press had been so low until some new changes began to take place later in Emperor Haile Sellasie I period. Still it is worth acknowledging that Emperor Menelik II's period is a period in which Ethiopian journalism was initiated especially in terms of press ownership and issues covered following the rise of a 'modernized' empire state which contributed a great deal to the expansion of the printing enterprise. (Shimelis, 2000, p. 7)

2.1.2 The Press from 1931- 1974

This period saw some significant developments with regard to the content of the press outlets and the availability of media infrastructure. Mocriaetal (2003), cited in Haleluya 2008,p. 20)say that the establishment of a printing press called Berhanena Selam and the publication of a new news paper entitled Berhanena Selam which served as a forum for the few young educated Ethiopians of that period are among the notable developments that took place in this period.

The publication of two national weekly news papers called Addis Zemen (New Era) published in Amharic(1941)and its English counterpart(the Ethiopian Herald) in (1943) was the other development seen in the post liberation period. Though this was a positive move by itself these news papers did not play any meaningful role since they served as the mouth pieces of the instead of entertaining varied ideas (Aadland & fackler , 2001,para 16).

According toKaplan(1971: 326-327)cited in Haleluya, 2008 p. 21) the introduction of a number of decrees recognizing freedom of speech i.e the decrees of 1942 and 1944, the Revised Constitution of 1955 (1948 E.C.), the penal code of 1957 the draft constitution which was presented to the country's highest constitutional assembly in July 1974 (Hamle 30, 1966 E.C.) are also among the notable developments that occurred in the post liberation period from 1941-1974. Following the introduction of those decrees a number of private newspapers and other periodicals dealing with political, economic, social and religious issues came to life although it is difficult to correctly identify which ones were privately owned and independent in their operation.

2.1.3 The Press from 1974 – 1992

According to Aadland&Fackler,(2001 para.17) in the Dergue regime, following the overthrowing of Emperor Haile sellassie I, government-and party-owned publications *Meskerem*("September"), *SertoAder*("Worker"), and the pre-DergYezareyitu Ethiopia ("Ethiopia Today") were published in addition to *Addis Zemen*and the *Ethiopian Herald*.

This period was mainly characterized by the application of an official censorship law and the tight control of the media by the government. There was violent suppression of opposition or independent opinion(Amnesty International, 1998,p.2)and the newspapers served as official propaganda organs of the government.

2.1.4 The Private Press From 1992- 2005

This period saw a significant development in the history of the private press in Ethiopia. It is in recognizing the fact that this period witnessed the introduction of quite a large number of private newspapers and magazines that had most of the features of private press in the stricter sense of the word private(which began enjoying more freedom and serving as alternative sources of information for the first time in the history of the private press) that the researcher has used the terms " the press" in the previous sections while he used the term "the private press " when dealing with any activity of the press after 1992.

As has previously been said following the introduction of a new press bill in 1992, private news papers and magazines appeared in large numbers and with varied content. According to the government, 385 publications were registered between October 1992 and July 1997, of which 265 were newspapers and 120 magazines. However because of limited resources and lack of additional sources of income like advertising more than half of the total number of papers were closed down during the same five-year period. (Aadland&Fackler, 2001, para 21)

Even though there was a problem of sustainability and limitation of resources among the private press during this period as has been described by Aadland and Fackler above, the fact that private newspapers and magazines were available in such a large number was by itself a positive development since such a situation had not existed in the previous periods. Where as views differ regarding the activities and roles of the private press during this period. Some heavily criticise

the private press that came following the press bill. For example, Girma Beshah was quoted in Skejerdal & Haleluya (2009) as saying "the private press that came immediately after the press bill lacked ethical and professional qualities which went even to the extent of violating the conventional ethical standards like pre checking." (p.49)

Even though there was such an ethical problem among some of the private press as said above, it should also be noted that the period also saw a number of private newspapers and magazines that were able to survive for two decades and played a significant role. But after 24 years the quality of the press has lowered and private newspapers and magazines that with all their problems addressed big political economic, social and cultural issues and inspired readers no more exist now. (Esmealem, 2007, p.28)

In general it could be said this period had been characterized by a relatively better performance of private newspapers and magazines which was affected by their internal and external challenges.

2.1.5 The Private Press After 2005

The period after the national election that took place in 2005 has been characterized by more number of media blackout, a diminished role of the private press and increased level of challenge for journalists of the private press and the press institutions as a result of a tighter government control and a more hostile relationship between the private press and the government as Freedom House Report (2012) also maintains:

Media practitioners were also targeted throughout the year for reasons unrelated to allegations of terrorism. In February 2011, roughly 130 charges were filed against Feteah editor in chief Temesgan Dessalegn, 35 of which were criminal charges that included defaming the government and inciting public violence and protests to boost newspaper sales. A number of journalists fled into exile for fear of arrest. As a result, popular newspapers had to close and resort to online versions managed by editors in exile.

The fact that imprisonment and accusations of journalists increased and more journalists fled the country and the introduction of The Mass Media and Freedom of Information Proclamation by

the Ethiopian House of Peoples Representatives on July 1,2008 which has highly restrictive provisions on defamation, registration and fines(Ross ,2010:1058 -1064) indicate the prevalence of a very challenging situation for the private press since 2005.

Yet this period saw the introduction of some private press outlets that showed better level of professionalism like Addis Neger an Amharic weekly launched in late 2007 which had a better professional quality in its content and presentation became one of the two Amharic weeklies with the largest circulations in 2009.(Skejerdal & Haleluya, 2009,p. 55).Unfortunately this newspaper too became the victim of the challenges that the private press faced in the period since 2005. It was within this period that Addis Guday and Fact magazines private press outlets that had had large circulations but finally closed were introduced. In general the period has been characterized by a more challenging situation than any other period in the history of the private press in Ethiopia..

2.2 Democracy, Freedom of Expression and Press Freedom - Meanings and Debates

2.2.1 Democracy and Freedom of Expression

Any discussion about the activities of the private or the free press directly or indirectly touches upon the concepts of democracy and freedom of expression since they are highly interrelated. In this vein, it is worth noting that the way these two concepts are perceived, understood and applied positively or negatively impacts democratic processes in a country. Hence this section has been allotted for the discussion of the meanings of each and the debates that have been held so far .

It is a widely accepted belief that freedom of expression plays a very important role in any process of democratization. As has been said above there is a strong interrelationship between them. Freedom of expression has a big role in any process of democratization since it is one guarantee for citizens' effective participation. Likewise democracy is not viable if citizens do not have the rights to freedom of expression or lack the opportunity to exercise it. (Sun, 2014 ,p. 44).

Highlighting this interrelationship and also the role of media as one key means of exercising freedom of expression Sen(1999) also maintains:

Democracy must not be identified with majority rule since it has complex demands. In addition to voting and respect for election democracy requires the protection of liberties and freedoms. The guaranteeing of free discussion and uncensored distribution of news and fair comment are its elements. Even elections can be deeply defective if they occur without the different sides getting an adequate opportunity to present their respective cases, or without the electorate enjoying the freedom to obtain news and to consider the views of the competing protagonists. Democracy is a demanding system, and not just a mechanical condition (like majority rule) taken in isolation. (p. 9-10)

As discussed by Sen above free expression is a key element of exercising democracy and the true application of it is witnessed in a situation where people have the means to get adequately informed and make decisions based on that.

2.2.2 The Debates on Democracy

It has been long since the quest for and the debates over democracy began. Though it later became an issue of concern among a number of countries, it was in ancient Greece that the idea of democracy first originated took shape and was seriously put into practice (Sen, 1999, p. 4)

Plato was among the earliest philosophers to raise a strong debate on the idea of democracy. As quoted in Durant (1954,p 19) Plato (Republic) argues :

even democracy ruins itself by excess- Of democracy its basic principle is the equal right of all to hold office and determine public policy. This is at first glance a delightful arrangement; it becomes disastrous because the people are not properly equipped by education to select the best rulers and the wisest courses. (p.588)

When we see Plato's argument in light of the general idea of practising democracy, it appears sound because poor consciousness level of the public will hugely limit their capacity to make wise decisions which is an important thing if a democratic process is to be fruitful. However the idea of rejecting democracy for the sake of avoiding some negative outcomes will be a mistake for two reasons especially when time factor and the role of freedom of expression are included in

the equation. One, the world has changed a lot with regard to education and the development of consciousness currently when compared with the situation in Plato's time. Two, allowing people to exercise democracy and freedom of expression would mean avoiding those disastrous results which come as a result of lack of education or low level of consciousness because if handled wisely and effectively democracy greatly helps in creating an informed and educated public.

But this is not the only reason why people should be allowed to exercise democracy or its other major aspects including freedom of expression. Here it is worth considering the arguments of liberal theorists who mention the relationship between democracy and freedom of expression and that of human nature as one major justification.

Human life is not fully realized unless people are allowed to exercise free expression and communication which are aspects of "humanness." And in order that individuals find the public forum to express their views, their interests and state concerns, the freedom and independence of media is necessary which in turn makes informing entertaining and enriching the public possible. (Monroe, Beata & Verhulst, 2002,p.13)

Similarly Puddephatt (2011, p 9) maintains that exercising freedom of expression is important for at least three reasons. Firstly, expressing ourselves in different forms is central to the realization of our humanity. Secondly, freedom of expression is a foundation for other rights in that in the absence of freedom of expression the acts of organizing, mobilizing and informing people towards defending human rights will be impossible. Thirdly, as has been persuasively argued by Amartya Sen freedom of expression is a precondition to social and economic development.

But this idea of the universal nature of democratic value among human beings have been opposed by others who believe that factors like the economic condition of people influence the way democracy is valued. According to their view, among people living in parts of the world where there are economic and social problems like poverty and illiteracy what is valued is not democracy but winning a daily bread which in their eyes is a justifiable belief. (Sen, 1999,p.13)

Highlighting on the influence of economic factors in valuing democracy Ng'weno as cited in (Odhiambo, 1991, p.24) also argues that among a large number of Asians, Africans and Latin

Americans who live under difficult conditions of poverty illiteracy and disease it is meaningless to talk about press freedom and democracy because freedom loses meaning when survival is the major question. Ng'weno adds that in countries faced by such social and economic problems the role of the media should be geared towards ensuring national unity.

An instance that witnesses the prevalence of such a belief that democracy is a luxury among the poor is an interview that the famous Ethiopian athlete Haile Gebresellasié had with the BBC in which he said "As an African citizen democracy is a luxury... the most important thing is a good governor," he says. "If we have that, Africa has the potential to change." (Interview with BBC 11 February 2016)

Yet, what both Ng'weno and Haile miss is the role democracy and freedom of expression particularly the press play as a key instrument towards addressing such social economic, political problems. The press serves as a key instrument of change by enabling the free exchange of ideas which in turn helps to solve those problems as Sen (1999) also says :

the protective role of democracy may be particularly important for the poor. This obviously applies to potential famine victims who face starvation. It also applies to the destitute thrown off the economic ladder in a financial crisis. People in economic need also need a political voice. Democracy is not a luxury that can await the arrival of general prosperity. (p 13)

As has been explained by Sen above though the question of survival is an important issue to consider it will be unreasonable to conclude that democracy loses its value among the poor. Findings from recently conducted studies have also shown that the once dominant view that 'poor people are less democratic ' is no longer true and also that the faith in democracy among poor people is as high as (and sometimes higher than) other citizens' and they participate in democratic activities no less (and sometimes more) than other citizens. (Krishna, 2008, p. 9)

Similarly opposing the arguments made particularly by most of the African governments that economic development should be attained first because economic development and ensuring human rights cannot be achieved simultaneously and it is necessary to restrict civil and political rights in order to accelerate economic development Ansah(1998) citing Rogers(1976) argues :

This view appears to be based on an outmoded and mechanistic view of development which does not take the human factor into consideration. An enlightened view of development defines it as 'a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment 'This enlightened concept of development recognizes the need for material advancement, but it also puts the emphasis on human dignity and the active involvement and participation of the people in the development process. (p. 6)

As has been explained above it is unreasonable to detach democracy and freedom of expression from development for at least two reasons. One, development as a concept includes mental and humanitarian aspects in addition to the physical or material one. Two, it happens that the more people are free the better their capacity to be productive and creative. But this does not mean that the positive outcomes of democracy and freedom of expression be taken for granted especially in relation to the activities of the press because it will be difficult to get the best out of democracy and freedom of expression if some key elements like consciousness, responsibility and ethics are missing.

2.2.3 Press Freedom- what is it ?

The concept of press freedom has also been a highly debated issue like that of democracy and freedom of expression. In fact there is considerable semantic confusion about the terms 'freedom of the press', 'free press', and 'press freedom' however some major indicators like : the amount or level of freedom, the way this freedom is balanced by various forms of accountability and responsibility, the extent of public interest and the existing regulatory framework can be taken in concluding whether there is press freedom or not. (Tambini, 2012,p.3).

In this vein the Hutchins Commission Report, (1947) further explains the concept of press freedom as :

Freedom of the press means freedom from and freedom for. The press must be free from the menace of external compulsions from whatever source. To demand that it be free from pressures which might warp its utterance would be to demand that society should be empty of contending forces and beliefs. But persisting and distorting pressures financial, popular, clerical, institutional must be known and counterbalanced. The press must, if it is to be wholly free, know and overcome any biases incident to its own economic position, its concentration, and its pyramidal organization. (p.18)

As has been stated above press freedom does not mean complete freedom of the press while it is also important that conditions that hinder its activity must be counterbalanced. This means press freedom cannot be realized with out the involvement of both the internal and external parties.

Apart from this the question of press freedom has also entertained arguments that emphasized the idea that necessary care should be taken as to the handling of the matter though in principle press freedom is believed to bring a number of positive outcomes.

For example Krinsky (para.6)holds that it will be wrong to take for granted that the truth always serves the public that at times the truth can rather harm if for example the truthful report of a small conflict leads to more civil unrest.

Though it is important to ensure that the right to freedom of expression and press freedom be exercised in such a manner that puts into consideration the context of a certain society as argued above, still the possibility of facing such dangers should not be equated with the positive values of freedom of expression and press freedom. Besides one needs to make sure whether this is said out of genuine concern because it has also happened that some authoritarian governments in the developing world deny their people the right to exercise press freedom in the name of ensuring national security and avoiding such huge risks as the one mentioned above.

In general it can be said that press freedom is an essential element of both the health of democracy and the proper functioning of a society because the information it provides ensures that people make responsible and informed choices and also serve as a watch dog to the people. (A Strategic Approach Center for Democracy and Governance ,1999 , p.3)

2.2.4 The Need for More Press Freedom in Ethiopia

Any discussion about democracy in Ethiopia cannot leave out the question of the role of the private press and that of freedom of expression. In any move towards enabling and supporting democracy in Ethiopia the development of media as a viable source of information is key since the media plays an important role in the promotion of human rights. And this is realized only when the government respects human rights and freedom and if there is cultivation of media through professional and independent journalism. (Aadland&Fackler, 2001,para 5)

Parmelee (1999) also emphasizes the need for creating such a condition and the role that the news media can play in Ethiopia as :

Ignoring the media's promise as a key player in civil society will ultimately undermine more general efforts to build civil institutions, to broaden the scope of popular opinion and debate and, ultimately, to open up a society that has been repressed and isolated for most of its recent history. On the other hand, supporting the growth of professional news media will contribute visibly - and audibly - to the process of political liberalization. In sum, free and independent, vigorous and professional news media remain among Ethiopia's last best hopes for establishing a genuine culture of democracy.
(p.2)

As pointed out above the creation of a powerful news media which is equipped with professionalism is key to building civil institutions and realize societal development which appears even more important in Ethiopia's context.

2.3 Principles of Journalism Ethics

2.3.1 Journalism (Media)Ethics- what is it ?

Different scholars have provided explanations about the meaning of journalism or media ethics. For example, according to Baker & Perkins (2003,p. 553) Media ethics " is concerned with the obligations of professional communicators for social and individual responsibility. It considers the impact on individuals and on societies of mediated messages (media content), corporate media business practisesand the actions of individual media practitioners.

For Berry (2008, p.111) the major concern of media ethics is the meaning and purpose of news in society (where the process is given more value than consumption) and the role and effectiveness of the journalism profession and its capability for assisting the creation of democracy.

Whereas Baker and Perkins (2003, p. 553) categorize the issue of media ethics under two key elements. They are media content and privacy. According to them, journalists should maintain truthfulness in media content which is exhibited through factual accuracy, balance and fairness. In order that their media have those elements of truthfulness journalists need to do adequate verification of facts and sufficient identification of sources. The other major ethical issue is privacy in which journalists are expected to maintain an appropriate balance between providing the public with information and respecting the legitimate privacy interests of news subjects and sources.

Here it is worth considering truth and objectivity which are often mentioned as key elements of the journalism profession. According to Berry (2008, p. 111) objectivity and truth are strongly related to one another in that doing objective reporting serves as a means to achieve truth. This interrelationship is also seen in relation to the validity of news and journalism because the lack of objectivity in the news gathering process will impact as to whether an event is going to be justified as news or rather a mere gossip or opinion.

As has been explained above the principles of objectivity and truth are attached to the very purpose of doing the job of journalism. It is also important to note that the manner in which they are applied in the process of news gathering affects the realization of the intended objective.

It is true journalists and the press institutions cannot play a meaningful role that they are expected to if they do not maintain high ethical standards. Yet discussions about the idea of media ethics should not miss the influence of some other factors which directly or indirectly affect both the performances of journalists and the press institutions as Gans (2003) underlines below:

However, journalists are employed professionals working for mainly commercial news media that try to supply what the news audience will accept and what advertisers will pay for. Much of the audience is interested

in keeping up with the news rather than being politically involved citizens. These and other facts of everyday journalism complicate the profession's pursuit of its ideals. In addition, journalists have their own troubles, and are confronting their own disempowerment. (p.21)

As has been argued above, one should at least recognize the complex nature of this issue of ethics and the impact of some factors like market influence. Still it is worth noting that maintaining high ethical standard is not something to compromise since it affects the overall effectiveness of the job of journalists because a press outlet's credibility is partly dependent on the ethical and professional quality of journalists.(Gicheru,2014,p.24).

In general the question of ethics remains a key element of the principles of journalism particularly in dealing with the roles and challenges of the private or free press in a country since the lack of it might bring dangerous outcomes.

2.4 Roles of The Free Press

It has been repeatedly mentioned that the free press play quite an important role in informing the public, providing a channel for communication, check government activities for accountability and responsibility, assist the democratization process etc. Yet a brief conceptual discussion of the major roles of the free press and the practical experience of the free press at continental and national levels was found to be important because there have been some misconceptions as far as the activities of the private press in Ethiopia is concerned.

2.4.1 The "Fourth Estate" (The "Watch Dog") Role of the Free Press

The labels " fourth estate" and "watch dog" are often used interchangeably to refer to the key role that the free press plays in a democracy. The former was given by proponents of the liberal view to signify the key role that the free press was believed to play by serving as the fourth branch of the US government after the executive, legislative and judicial branches. The latter was assigned by liberals to refer to the major role that the press was expected to play by maintaining an eye on the activities of the government and societal institutions and providing any information about their effectiveness. According to these notions the press can serve as an advocate for the people by maintaining an eye on the government or the existing system to keep leaders honest and also

by warning citizens in case of political or other corruption so that citizens are empowered and able to protect themselves. (Littlejohn& Foss , 2009, p. 577)

On the other hand media scholars define the fourth estate or watch dog role of the press by incorporating additional elements as Färdigh(2013) too mentions:

The watchdog function of the media has to do with media processing information about misbehaviour but also and not least important, people's ability to obtain the information (accessibility), the possibility for the government and public administration to know what the people want (responsiveness), and people's right to hold those in power accountable for their actions (accountability)– i.e. the ability for citizens in a democratic society to vote for or against a corrupt candidate whose misbehaviour is uncovered by the free media. Without these three conditions being fulfilled, the media is likely to have no or very little role. (p. 7)

As has been said above ensuring the presence of an interactive line of communication among the press, the people and the government with regard to accessibility, responsiveness and accountability strengthens the power of the press towards playing a more powerful role.

Besides scrutinizing the actions of those in power, the free press also play a significant political role especially in terms of enabling the public make informed decisions in political processes like elections.This is one of the major reasons for taking freedom of the press as a necessary safeguard in a democratic society. However the free press's increased importance in political processes has at the same time brought ambiguities. (Lichtenberg,1990,p.1)

Yet the availability of a political media is important towards building a better democratic system as McNair (2000)emphasizes below:

The political media are important because, as Anthony Sampson puts it, 'a mature democracy depends on having an educated electorate, informed and connected through parliament' (1996, p. 47), and it is principally through the media that such an electorate can be formed. That the actions of government and the state, and the efforts of competing parties and interests to exercise

political power, should be underpinned and legitimized by critical scrutiny and informed debate facilitated by the institutions of the media is a normative assumption uniting the political spectrum from left to right. (p.1-2)

As has been argued above a political media play a key role in creating an educated electorate, informing the public about political issues and also assisting the creation of better administrations through entertaining debates among parties or contestants.

2.4.2 The Social and Other Roles of the Free Press

Laswell, cited in Williams (2003,p.47) states that the media has three major social functions. They are the surveillance, correlation and transmission functions. The surveillance function deals with the media's role in enabling individuals and society to monitor changes that are happening around them and identify threats and opportunities. The second one, the correlation function, refers to the media's role in bringing individuals and different parts of society together to respond to opportunities and threats by providing explanation and interpreting events. The third one the transmission function deals with the passing of cultural and social heritage from one generation to another through the media.

Apart from the roles mentioned so far, the free press also play a role in entertaining citizens since there are people who primarily use the media in order to satisfy their desire for enjoyment and companionship. The contents of media can also serve in terms of igniting every day talk and communication among people which is also a source of enjoyment for some parts of the audience. (Turrow, 2009,p. 22)

2.4.3 The Role of the Free Press in the African Context

There have been different arguments about the way the roles of journalists and the free press are perceived among journalists, the press institutions and other parties like government bodies in Africa. Among the notable media scholars, Kasoma (2000, p. 298) for example argues that there has been similarity among most of the African countries with regard to the perception about the role of the free press. He says that the role of the free/independent press has been ill conceived among journalists of the free press who often took their role to be acting as a political opposition.

Kasoma adds that African governments who have been unaccustomed to such an opposition often react against the press and they apply every mechanism to muzzle this institution.

However there is a contrasting argument which holds that although there has been such a misconception among journalists and governments about the role of the independent press, still it is justifiable that the free press in Africa persist in playing their watch dog role which is often taken negatively by most African states or governments as an act of opposition. Regarding this Ansah(1998) argues:

In this context, it is legitimate for the press to fulfill the role of an opposition in the sense of presenting another point of view where necessary; that is to say, criticizing government decisions which are not in the best interests of the people, denouncing abuses of power in society and defending human rights. A press or media system that decides to do less than this reneges on its responsibility and fails to contribute adequately to the democratic process or to national development based on democratic participation and decision-making. The press should not see its role simply as that of a deflecting mechanism, allowing people to let off steam as a kind of safety valve while the weakness criticized still go on. It should be substantial vehicle for reflecting the various shades of public opinion and articulating the people's feelings. The press in its watch-dog role should, as a matter not only of right but also of duty, expose and criticize bureaucratic incompetence, corruption, abuse of power and the violation of human rights. (p.13)

As has been argued by Ansah above journalists have a moral obligation and also a professional duty to accomplish by serving as a watch dog since the low level of the condition of human rights and the different social economic and political problems necessitate it.

2.4.4 The Role of the Private Press in the Ethiopian Context

There is a similar scenario in Ethiopia as far as the conception about the roles of the free press is concerned. It can be said that there is a wrong perception among most of the private press and also the government about the roles of the free press or the private press. In witnessing the

prevalence of such a conception Skejerdal&Haleluya(2009) say "The government would not grant the media work freely because it does not trust them that they might use the freedom irresponsibly and the private press cannot be said independent because they identify too much with the political opposition." (p.53)

When one sees the way the journalism profession is practisedhe/she will find that Some journalists of the private press (media) and also the government (media) play both the roles of journalism and activism. Some politicians have misled the public by wearing the shirts of activism and journalism interchangeably and by doing the job respecting the ethical principles of the profession. (Tesfu, 2008, p. 7)

In this vein, Mesfin(2000,p.67) was quoted in Skejerdal and Haleluya (2012) as saying "... I don't think it is a matter of choice for journalists to be taken as activists in Ethiopia where they play, by design or convenience, the role of teaching, monitoring, exposing and defending those basic elements of democracy. " (p.3)

With regard to the question of the practical roles of the private press in Ethiopia one finds contrasting views held among scholars, media personnel, the government etc. For some the role of the private press in Ethiopia especially in serving as a watch dog and as key element in the process of democratization has been insignificant except for few private press outlets. Among those who held such a view, Skejerdal & Haleluya, (2009) concluded "except for few newspapers like Addis Neger the private press in Ethiopia have neither been a vital information channel for the general public nor has it had a pivotal function as a watchdog of government performance."(p.53)

Similar criticism was made by the government of Ethiopia against the private press in that it focused too much on crisis i.e lacking a balanced reporting which would appreciate and recognize positive changes. In the assessment of the Ethiopian government the private press in Ethiopia had been press that played based on the political temperature.(Skejerdal&Haleluya, 2009,p.52)

It is true the private press in Ethiopia have had a number of limitations particularly in terms of exhibiting higher level of professional approach and ethical discipline. Yet it will be wrong to

deny any recognition to the role they have played so far in informing the public and addressing different social, economic, political problems in the country. Still with their limitations the private press played quite a considerable role as Shimelis (2000)also notes:

The independent press in Ethiopia has, despite its infancy, been revealing, daring and remarkably out spoken. Since its inception the private press has vigorously and audaciously reported on topics of national concern and absorbing interest to readers, such as political marginalization, power abuse, ethnic conflicts, corruption, economic mismanagement, and advocated political liberalization, press freedom, human rights and national unity. (p.68)

What is more, any discussion about the practical role of the private press in Ethiopia should also take into consideration the external conditions in which they have been working like the prevalence of extreme poverty, overall degeneration of education, seemingly unending cycles of socio-economic upheaval, conflict and the legacy of totalitarian systems. (Parmelee, 1999,p. 8)

2.5 Challenges of the Free Press

2.5.1 Challenges of the Free Press at Global and Continental Levels

Though the level varies across different continents and countries, it could be said that currently the journalism profession is facing an increasingly challenge globally. In fact there have been recent developments with regard to access to information and methods of content delivery. Paradoxically however, more and more places are becoming inaccessible mainly as a result of the passage of restrictive laws often on grounds of national security. (Dunham, Nelson & Aghekyan, 2015,p.1)

The challenges of the journalism profession is more intense in Africa which in addition to the inaccessibility problem is affected by unethical practises, the growth of the gutter press and an intentional marginalization of diverse views.(Mututa, 2006,p.9)

As has been stated above both internal and external challenges are hugely affecting the activities of journalists of the free press and the press institutions as a result of which a huge decline in terms of journalistic role has occurred at global and continental levels.

2.5.2 Challenges of the Private Press in the Ethiopian Context

The private press in Ethiopia have had a number of internal and external challenges that significantly affected their activities particularly since the introduction of the press bill in 1992. The internal challenges are those related to the knowledge, professional skill, ethics, finance and institutional capacity while the external challenges are the ones related to freedom, the market, the development of democratic culture, access to government information and media infrastructure. The following two subsections discuss the internal and external challenges of the private press in Ethiopia respectively.

2.5.2.1 Internal Challenges

2.5.2.1.1 Lack of Professional Ethics

The failure to exhibit professional ethical journalism is one of the frequently mentioned challenges of most of the private press in Ethiopia. For example, Aadland and Fackler(2001) contend that private media institutions in Ethiopia have always lacked the necessary professional values or qualities of journalism. They add that the sector has not been really developed as an independent, critical, theoretically objective enterprise.

The private press have also been victims of sensationalism and also susceptible to market forces as Shimelis(2000) describes it in detail:

There are in fact numerous reports where wholesale distributors-publishers force fabrication of news and the inclusion in the front pages of news and photographs which they thought would be of absorbing interest to readers. Such an unethical practice was used in response to the volatile newspaper market and at the expense of quality, fairness and professionalism; hence a serious debasing of many newspapers where sensationalism of libel was

rampant and the boundary between objectivity and subjectivity, fact and hyperbole became tenuous. (p.65)

In addition to the ethical problems mentioned above limited capacity in professional knowledge and skill has been the other major internal challenge among most of the private press in Ethiopia.

2.5.2.1.2 Lack of Professional Approach

As has been said previously most of the private press in Ethiopia have lacked professional approach in content and presentation. The Ethiopian media in general have had a lower level of quality when compared to other countries on the continent. The quality of lay out, printing management and editorial decisions, reporting and ethics, public relations and advertising has been so low among Ethiopian media(Parmelee, 1999,p.8)

2.5.2.2 External challenges

2.5.2.2.1 Restrictive Environment

Particularly since 2005 the media environment became increasingly challenging for journalists working for the private press following the introduction of a highly restrictive media law. For example, The Mass Media and Freedom of Information Proclamation enacted in 2008 has continued to hugely affect the creation of a more open media atmosphere in Ethiopia by allowing the government to criminally prosecute journalists and members of the media for expressing their views. (Ross, 2010,p.1066)

Like wise publishers of private newspapers and magazines have mentioned the imprisonment of journalists for every minor offense as one of the major external challenges that affected a sustainable development of the media sector and increased market share of the press in Ethiopia (FDRE, Communications Affairs Office, 2007 p. 78)

However the government of Ethiopia has argued that still with its limitations the new media law expands freedoms of expression and information and it also helps ensure national security. (Ross, 2010,p.1059) The government of Ethiopia also states that it has rather been tolerant towards the private press.(Ross, 2010,p.1066)"had the government strictly applied the law, most

of those newspapers and magazines would not have published their second issue." (Redwan 2015,p. 14)

Contrary to the counter claims of the government of Ethiopia it is evident that the new media law has practically affected the activities of journalists of the private press by denying them the chance to play their democratic roles (Dagim, 2013 p.90)and by significantly limiting the free exchange of information through its restrictive provisions.

2.5.2.2.2 Lack of Support from the Government

The other major external challenge of the private press has been lack of support from the Ethiopian government in recognizing the democratic role of the media. (Dagim, 2013,p.113;Amare , 2007, pp26-29)

Lack of such support from the government has also been seen with regard to taxation. The fact that The Ethiopian government does not see the private media business as an investment and that it does not give incentives has affected the development of the private press sector in Ethiopia. (Amare, 2007,pp. 26-29)

2.5.2.2.3 Challenges Related to Finance, Publication and Distribution

Lack of access to advertisement opportunity, an ever increasing printing cost, the sabotages of some distributors and publishers, limited distribution and consumption of press products are among the other major external challenges mentioned by the private press in Ethiopia. (FDRE CAO, 2007,pp. 70-71)

Since most of the private press in Ethiopia have lacked strong financial capacity and the consumption of press outlets have been so limited in the country it is obvious that the presence of such challenges hugely affect their performance which has also been one of the major factors behind the short lived existence of many private press in Ethiopia.

2.5.2.2.4 Cultural and Historical factors

Equally influential to that of a difficult political environment some historical, sociological, intellectual and cultural trends and patterns have been other major external challenges which negatively impacted the day to day activities of journalists. The presence of those factors also

limited the possibility of creating a truly professional and open media in Ethiopia. And without the knowledge of this background it will be effectively address the challenges of media training in Ethiopia. (Parmele, 1999,p. 5)

2.6 The Role of the Public in Relation to Press freedom and Democracy in Ethiopia

Since this research paper deals with the audience opinion on the private press environment since 2005 was found to be necessary to discuss some points about the role of the public.

In this regard Moehler& Singh (2011, p.278) argue that citizen attitudes towards private versus public news sources has been one of the neglected areas of media research. According to their view media research should give attention to this aspect since the attitudes of citizens on media credibility will help one understand the likely influence of different media sources and the future sustainability of private media businesses.

What is more, it will be difficult to create a better media environment and realize a more powerful role of the free press in a country without the active participation of the public as Coleman and Ross (2010) also stress:

Without a two-way flow between participants in the process, without the existence of multiple information sources permitting wider selection, without more opportunity for each individual to reach decisions based on a broad awareness of divergent facts and viewpoints, without increased participation by readers, viewers and listeners in the decision- making and programming activities of the media – true democratization will not become a reality.(p 41)

However when we see the see the current situation in the Ethiopian media context we will find a relatively lower participation of the public in consuming media products and also exercising freedom of expression particularly since 2005. If there have been any efforts to express views they were either done with close friends or workmates in an informal manner. Whereas those hot debates on political issues seen before and during the 2005 election no more exist now which was instead replaced by intolerance towards opposition and the resurfacing of the culture of fear which was broken in that same year. (The African Media Barometer (2010,p.11)

2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 The Social Responsibility Theory of Media

The social responsibility theory of media is a theory that was offered by the Hutchins Commission in 1947 as an improvement on libertarianism. (Sterling 2009,p. 339). The Hutchins commission report which was named after the chairman of the committee Robert M Hutchins produced a number of documents that refreshed the ethics rhetoric in the media industry. The commission proposed a social responsibility approach as the best for the post war world. Besides the commission emphasized the strengthening of journalism education in order to create free but responsible journalism professionals. (Baker & Perkins, 2003,p. 680)

According to Jensen(2002) the introduction of the social responsibility theory paralleled a "shift in emphasis, from liberal ideals toward an understanding of the press and other media as trustees or representatives of the public. " (p.276)

In this vein, it is important to note that the commission while recognizing the values of democracy and free expression and also the powerful role that mass media can play in this regard, was also critical of the danger that any irresponsible action by the free press would result in. The Hutchins Commission Report (1947) further explains its argument as:

Civilized society is a working system of ideas. It lives and changes by the consumption of ideas. Therefore, it must make sure that as many as possible of the ideas which its members have are available for its examination. The Commission knows that one dreadful curse of contemporary life is the terrifying flood of words with which the agencies of mass communication threaten to inundate the citizen. (Vii)

As has been argued in the statements of the commission above doing journalism in a more responsible manner and establishing some form of mechanism to control the activities of the free press was necessary because the developments in the area of mass communication not only created better options but also an increased possibility of facing dangers. And, in order to get the best out of the journalism profession the commission in its social responsibility theory outlined a list of the professional responsibilities of journalists.

Sterling (2009,p339) provides this list of the key responsibilities of journalism professionals assigned by the social responsibility theory of media that they should:

- provide “a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day’s events in a context which gives them meaning
- be “a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism
- project a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society
- Provide full access to the day’s intelligence, thereby serving the public’s right to be informed.
- present and clarify the goals and values of the society” and in relation to its political role the press has the obligation to
- provide information
- enlighten the public so that it is capable of self-government and
- serve as a watchdog on government.

The other major aspect in relation to the social responsibility theory was how to apply the principle in the practical day to day activities of journalists. In this respect the commission stated that while getting protections journalists were also responsible to carry out certain essential functions like testing for stories and giving formal attention to background context analysis, interpretation relevance and thoroughness. (Baker & Perkins, 2003,p. 680)

In relation to the application of a social responsibility approach to the day to day activities of journalists the theory also states that journalists and press institutions have to set high professional standards of truth and balance, reflect views of different parts of a society fairly and avoid publication of material that would lead to crime or result in any other danger to society.

However like any other media theory there have been arguments and criticisms against the notions of the social responsibility theory. “It is in one sense difficult to criticise the social responsibility because the goal put by the theory was something positive that no one could

oppose and also by using such a name its authors left the negative inference that any other theory was socially irresponsible". (J, 1995,p 95)

The complicated nature of building a theory of freedom and its being a multi-levelled enterprise was the other point raised among media scholars who dealt with the notions of social responsibility theory like accountability. By sharing the idea that building a theory of freedom was never that simple and the need for an analysis for man's being Tillich (1954,p.73) as cited in (J, 1995,p 89) concluded that still the foundation for proposing the strongest possible notion of accountability under the social responsibility theory was the nature of human being itself.

It sounds reasonable that journalism professionals and the press institutions have a big responsibility in order that they play a powerful positive role. However it is also important to make sure that journalists are not denied their right to exercising freedom of expression out of a mere reason to control freedom of speech. In this regard while assigning a high degree of professional responsibility to avoid ethical violations and the possible intervention of the government when offences and ethical violations are committed by journalists, The Hutchins Commission (1947) also underlined that applying such a mechanism does not mean the right to exercise freedom of expression be compromised :

Government ownership, government control, or government action to break up the greater agencies of mass communication might cure the ills of freedom of the press, but only at the risk of killing the freedom in the process. Although, as we shall see later, government has an important part to play in communications, we look principally to the press and the people to remedy the ills which have chiefly concerned us.(pp 2-3)

It is true, the application of this theory in the practical media situation will not be that simple because of the complex nature of democracy and freedom of expression, yet considering the professional and institutional limitations of the private press in Ethiopia and the social, cultural, political context of the country it can be said that a social responsibility perspective is most appropriate as far as private press environment in Ethiopia is concerned.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research paper has tried to survey the private press environment in Ethiopia since 2005 by particularly focusing on the audience perception about the roles of the journalism profession and also their views on the practical roles and challenges of the private press in Ethiopia. To that end, the research has used the opinions of the audience and those stake holders in the media sector which comprises a journalist, publisher, news paper vendor and an expert from the responsible government body as major sources of data. The study has also used various written documents as additional sources of data.

To the knowledge of the researcher, the studies that have been conducted about the performances, roles and challenges of the private press for example (Skejerdal and Haleluya, 2009;Dagim, 2013) addressed the matter based only on the data they collected mostly from media personnel, scholars and the government bodies while giving little attention to the views of the audience or the public. In an effort to fill the gap, the researcher by has tried to find out more valuable information which would help in better addressing the issue under discussion by using the data collected from the audience through questionnaires and also in depth interviews conducted with a sample population of the stake holders in the media sector,.

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

The research has used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. A quantitative method (questionnaire) has been used to collect data from a total number of 100 respondents residing in Addis Ababa while a qualitative method (in-depth interview) has been used to collect data from six informants.

Since this study has aimed to not only explore the major features of the private press environment in Ethiopia but also understand the phenomenon in detail, a mixed approach has been used, a method which has a number of advantages as Creswel (2003) more explicitly states

A mixed methods design is useful to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. For example, a researcher may want to both generalize the findings to a population and develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon or concept for individuals. In this research, the inquirer first explores generally to learn about what variables to study and then studies those variables with a large sample of individuals. Alternatively, researchers may first survey a large number of individuals, then follow up with a few of them to obtain their specific language and voices about the topic. In these situations, the advantages of collecting both closed ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data prove advantageous to best understand a research problem. (p.22)

As has been stated above using both quantitative and qualitative research approach helps a researcher understand a research problem better since this mixed method lets one include the specific or individual voice of the informants which in turn increases the validity of the study conducted.

3.2.1 Quantitative Method

As mentioned in the introduction section earlier the major objective of this study is to conduct an audience perception/ opinion survey. For this reason the quantitative method was found to be one of the appropriate methods to be used in conducting this study.

The survey method has a number of advantages. Firstly, surveys can be used to investigate problems in realistic settings. Secondly, a large amount of data can be collected from a variety of people without being constrained by geographic boundaries. Thirdly, the cost of surveys is reasonable when compared with the amount of information collected. However, the survey method has also some disadvantages like the inability to manipulate independent variables the way they are in laboratory experiments, the bias that would come if there was inappropriate wording or placement of questions. (Wimmer & Dominik 2011, pp.185- 186)

For the purpose of collecting the quantitative data, 105 questionnaires were distributed among the residents of Addis Ababa. The sample universe includes people whose age ranges from 25-

70 with different educational, economic and social backgrounds. Although the study surveys audience perception /opinion on the private press environment in the country the distribution of questionnaires has been limited to the capital Addis Ababa for two reasons. Firstly the production , distribution and readership of media products i. e news papers and magazines have been concentrated in Addis Ababa. (FDRE CAO , 2007, 2015,p 103) Secondly, due to resource and time limitations it was found to be difficult to conduct a study at national level. .

The questionnaires have 20 questions (15 close ended and five open ended) which were prepared using simple and clear wording in order to avoid possible confusions and misunderstanding. The close ended questions were presented in Likert scale and multiple choice formats. And, to avoid bias all the possible options of answers were included in the multiple choice list. What is more, respondents were allowed to choose more than one item in order not to limit their choice because some of the questions have the possibility of yielding more than one answer. Before distributing the questionnaires, the researcher had done a pre-testing with ten respondents which helped him identify some gaps. Based on the results of the pretesting the researcher made some improvements on the content and presentation of the questions. All the questionnaires have been self administered by the researcher who was physically present in the distribution and collection phases.

3.2.2 Qualitative Method

With the intention of collecting detailed information and explanation on key aspects in-depth personal interviews prepared in structured format have been used as another method of data collection.

As Khotari(2004,p. 97)states personal interviews have a number of strengths. They help the researcher : obtain more information in greater depth, adapt language to the ability or educational level of the interviewee, get the opportunity to use his/her personal skill to overcome any resistance that could come from respondents, collect more personal information in an easier manner than other methods, have the ability to control samples more effectively.

However personal interviews have some weaknesses. The possibility of the biasedness of interviewer as well as that of the respondent, the difficulty in approaching Certain types of

respondents such as important officials or executives or people in high income groups, the over stimulation of the informant especially when the interviewer is present on the spot and as a result the possibility of getting imaginary information just to make the interview interesting are some of the weaknesses of the personal interview method. (Khotari, 2004,p. 97)

The researcher made face to face personal interviews with all of the informants conducted using the Amharic language. He later translated the interview data into English. On average the researcher stayed for two hours with each informant. A digital recorder was used in addition to note taking with two informants after checking for their willingness while only note taking was used to with other informants because they said they were not willing to have their voices recorded for security reasons. For this reason the researcher collected the data by using note taking. A total number of 15 questions prepared in structured format were presented to all those five informants.

3.2.3 Documents

Documents are the other important sources of data used in this research for two reasons. One documents often serve as useful additional sources of data as Grix (2004) also says " Print media especially newspaper articles and reports are a popular source in students projects. They can be a useful complement to interview and statistics."(p.14).Two, the researcher used documents in an effort to fill the gap created in terms of including more number of journalists and other responsible government officials.

For these reasons, interview documents published on three media outlets (The Reporter Amharic news paper Addis Admas Amharic newspaper and Addis Guday Amharic magazine) and official reports, research papers, journals, books and also news reports and articles published so far have been used while conducting the study.

3.3 Sampling

The research used non probability sampling method in selecting sample universe. Among a total number of 105 respondents used as a sample population for collecting the quantitative data half of them were selected from parts of the capital with relatively high rate of readership like Arat kilo, Amist kilo ,Paisa, Kasanchis, Legehar, National Theatre, Saris using area sampling as an

additional sampling method. However in trying to minimize subjectivity (bias) and increase the validity of the research, the remaining half number of the sample population included people living in other parts of Addis Ababa.

The same sampling method has been applied while selecting the sample population for collecting the qualitative data. Six informants who are believed to be a representative sample of the stakeholders in the media sector have been selected as the sample population. This includes : two journalists of the private press (one of them is a journalist and a publisher), a chief officer (director) of a media monitoring directorate in the responsible government body (The Ethiopian Broadcast Authority), a news paper vendor, a post graduate student of journalism and communication who worked as a media monitoring expert and one other informant from the audience.

3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

The raw data collected through the questionnaires was first transferred to a spread sheet paper then classified, tallied and finally presented using tables figures and textual descriptions. As to the qualitative data, the interview replies were first coded and tabulated. By including the data collected from the different documents finally an interpretation and analysis of the qualitative data was done.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data presentation and Analysis

4.1 Quantitative Data Presentation and Analysis

As has been mentioned in chapter three the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. In order to collect the quantitative data, 105 questionnaires were distributed out of which 100 were filled and returned while five questionnaires were neither filled nor returned. Those 100 questionnaires have been used for description and analysis.

The qualitative data was collected through in depth interviews made with six informants. Fifteen questions prepared in structured format were presented to the informants. The respondents have answered all the questions. Out of those fifteen questions, seven key questions have been selected and used in the presentation and analysis of the qualitative data. This subsection section presents the findings of the quantitative data and the analysis.

4.1.1 Demographic data of Respondents

As table 1 shows most of the respondents 63(63%) fall in the age-range of 25-35 while 22 respondents (22%) and 11 respondents (11%) fall in the ranges 36-44 and 45-54 respectively. Only 1 respondent (1%) is above the age of 54 while 3 respondents (3%) did not mention their ages (missing).

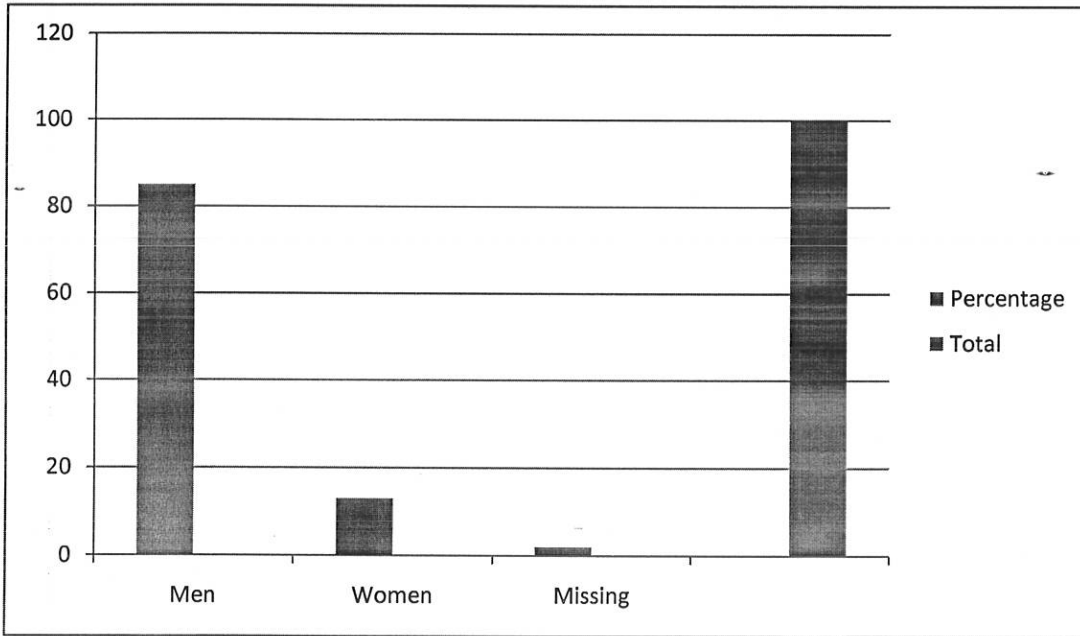
Table 1: Age Level of the Respondents

Age Ranges	Frequency	Percentage
25-35	63	63
36-44	22	22
45-54	11	11
above 54	1	1
Missing	3	3
Total	100	100

4.1.2 Demographic data of Respondents

As figure 1 shows, most of the respondents 85 (85%) are men, 13(13%) are women while two respondents did not fill in their sex.

Figure 1: Demographic data of Respondents



4.1.3 Educational Level of the Respondents

As the table below shows the respondents have different educational backgrounds. There is 1 respondent (1%) who is a PhD holder, 7(7%) are MA holders, 31(31%) are first Degree holders 12 (12%)are Diploma holders, 3(3%) are college students, 8 (8%) of the respondents have an educational level of 12+2 and 12+3, 16 (16%) have completed 12th grade, 3(3%) have an educational level of 10 +3, 2(2%) have an educational level of 10 +2, 7(7%) are below 12 grade (the minimum level in this range is 8 grade) while 9 respondents (9%) did not answer this question.

Table 2 Educational Level of the Respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage
PhD holder	1	1
MA holder	7	7
First Degree holders	31	31
Diploma holders	12	12
College students	3	3
12 +2 and 12+3	8	8
12 complete	16	16
10 +3	3	3
10+2	2	2
Below 12 grade	7	7
Missing	10	10
Total	100	100

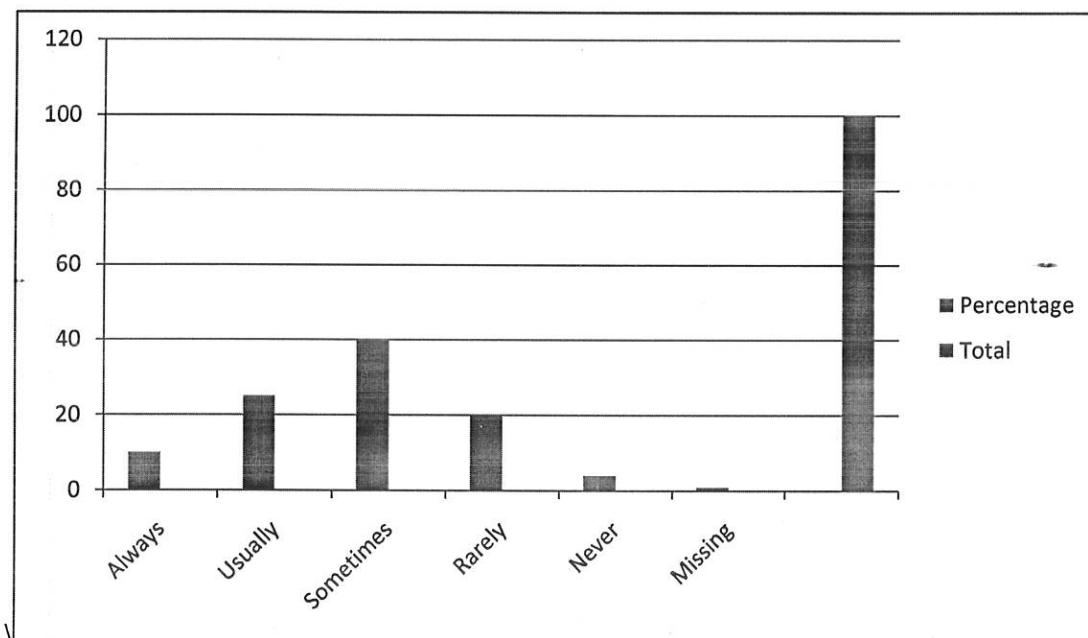
4.1.4 Low Consumption Rate of Private Press Outlets

Respondents were asked how frequently they read private newspapers and magazines published and distributed in Addis Ababa. Here the item "sometimes" is used to mean at least once in a week and "rarely" is used to mean once in months. Out of the total number of respondents, those who always read are 10 (10%), those who usually read are 25 (25%), those who sometimes read are 40 (40%) those who rarely read are 20(20%), those who never read are 4(4%) while 1 (1%)respondent left this question unanswered.

As has been mentioned earlier, the respondents are all from Addis Ababa where the publication and distribution of private press outlets is concentrated. Besides, half of them are people who frequently come to those parts of the city where there is a relatively higher rate of readership. When we see the educational level of the respondents, most of them (87)are above 12 grade which means that they can read well and understand at least the themes of the issues discussed in the newspapers and magazines. Similarly, FDRE, C A O (2015,p 24) states that even though the number of people who can read and write has increased at national level, only a limited number of them can access and consume print media outlets.

In general based on the finding that only 35 respondents said they have the habit of frequently consuming private press outlets, while the largest number of respondents (40) said they read those press products sometimes, it is possible to conclude that there is low consumption rate of private press outlets.

Figure 2: Respondents' Frequency of Reading the Private Press outlets Currently on Circulation



4.1.5 High Demand for Informative Content and Presentation

Respondents were asked to mention on what aspect of content and presentation they focus when they read private newspapers and magazines. Out of the total number of respondents, the largest i.e 38 respondents (38%) said they focus on contents that have in depth reporting and analysis, 16 respondents (16%) said they focus on news and reports or discussions on timely burning issues, 18 respondents (18%) said they focus on contents that deal with entertainment and general knowledge, 4 respondents said they focus on content that address different personal problems (for example health problems), 3 respondents have chosen the item "other", 3 did not answer (missing) while 20 respondents (20%) have chosen more than one item as answers to this question.

The fact that the largest number of respondents said they focus on in depth reports and analysis indicates that the audience expects the private press to provide it with not only news but also to inform and educate it. In depth reports and analyses require a greater degree of professionalism and also the ability to show a phenomenon from different angles based on concrete information. It is worth mentioning here the case of two private press outlets namely Addis Neger Amharic newspaper and Addis Guday Amharic Magazine which managed to break the market with in a short period of time (FDRE, CAO, 2015,p 60), Skejerdal and Haleluya, 2009 p 55). Considering the fact that these two press outlets which focused on in-depth reporting and analyses could dominate the market it is possible to conclude that there have been a big demand for informative content and presentation among the audience.

On the other hand the fact that the second largest number of respondents (20) said they have more than one issues of focus indicates that there is also a high demand for a content that discusses a variety of issues which shows that the private press are perceived as having multiple rôles among a considerable share of the audience.

Table 3 Respondents' Issues of Focus Out of the Contents of Private Press Outlets

Items	Frequency	Percentage
a. News and reports on burning issues	16	16
b. Entertainment and general knowledge	18	18
c. In depth analyses on social, economic and political issues	38	38
d. Coverage on different personal problems (health problems)	4	4
e. Other	3	3
A &b	2	2
A &c	7	7
A b &c	3	3
C and d	3	3
A b c &d	3	3
Missing	3	3
Total	100	100

4.1.6 Big Role of the Private Press Until 2005

Respondents were asked to answer how they view the role of the private press in Ethiopia until 2005 in terms of providing information to the public, creating a forum for the exchange of ideas and other related roles of media. As table 4 shows, the largest number of respondents 53(53%)believe that the private press had a big role,19 respondents (19%) believe that they had a medium role,12 respondents believe that the role of the private press had been small and 1 (1%) respondent said they had no role.13 respondents chose the item undecided while 2 respondents did not answer this question.

Even though there are also respondents who believe that the private press played a small role (12) and respondents who chose the item undecided (13),the fact that the largest number of respondents (53) believe that the press had a big role indicative of the contributions of the private press contrary to the conclusions of some studies for example Skejerdal & Haleluya(2009,p.44) that except for Addis Neger newspaper the role of the private press especially as a "watch dog" has been insignificant.

Similar to the views of the audience some argue that the increasing government pressure on the private press after the 2005 election indirectly shows the big role of the private press as IPI (2008) cited in Aalen &Tronvoll (2009) maintain "The power of the media – particularly in the 2005 pre-election phase – appeared to have come as a surprise to EPRDF. "(p.200).

Based on the findings of the study it is possible to conclude that in the eyes of the audience the private press played a significant role until the 2005 national election.

Table 4 Respondents' Views on the Role of the Private Press in Ethiopia before 2005

Items	Frequency	Percentage
They had a big role	53	53
They had a medium role	19	19
They had a small role	12	12
They had no role	1	1
Undecided	13	13
Missing	2	2
Total	100	100

4.1.7 The Strengths of the Private Press in Ethiopia

Respondents were asked to mention the strength or strengths of the private press in Ethiopia. As table 6 indicates below the largest number of the respondents 38(38%)said that they appreciate the contribution of the private press in playing a role as important sources of information and as a watch dog. 20 respondents (20%)mentioned the other aspects of the watch dog role of the press i.e giving the necessary attention and addressing issues that have an impact at national level. 9 respondents (9%) mentioned the private presses' ability to persist in the challenging media environment as a strong quality while an equal number of respondents said the private press deserve appreciation for their boldness and courageousness. One respondent (1%) chose the item "other" and believes that the private press have had no strong side, 16 respondents (16%) mentioned more than one item as strengths while 7 respondents (7%) left the question un answered.

The press environment since 2005 has been characterized by the application of more restrictive media laws and an increasingly hostile relationship between the private press and the government. On top of that, most of the private press have lacked strong professional financial and institutional capacity and faced big challenges related to access to information and tax. Yet the private press managed to survive and continued to provide the audience with the necessary information and address major problems and this deserves recognition and appreciation. (Elias, 2011,p.11)

Table 5 Respondents' Views about the Strengths of the Private Press in Ethiopia

Items	Frequency	Percentage
a. Providing information on timely burning issues and playing a watch dog role	38	38
b. The ability to perform their duties within a challenging situation (legal, economic & other challenges	9	9
c. Boldness and courageousness	9	9
d. addressing critical national issues by giving considerable attention and recommending solutions for the problems	20	20
e. Other	1	1
a &b	5	5
a &c	1	1
a &d	2	2
a b&d	1	1
b&d	1	1
A b c &d	6	6
Missing	7	7
Total	100	100

4.1.8 The Major Internal Challenges of the Private Press in Ethiopia

As has been shown in the table below 26 respondents (26%) believe that the failure to provide an accurate and balanced information and report is the major internal challenge of the private press in Ethiopia. For 22 respondents(22%) the major internal challenge of the private press is lack of professional competence and problems with regard to content and presentation of press outlets, 19 respondents (19%) mentioned poor financial and institutional capacity as the major internal challenge, 12 respondents (12%) said the private press have a major internal challenge with regard to exhibiting professional ethics and responsibility, 11 respondents (11%) chose the item

" other", 7 (7%) chose more than one item as major internal challenges while 3 respondents (7%) did not answer the question.

The findings show that the ability to provide an accurate and balanced information and lack of professional competence are the major internal challenges of the private press in the eyes of the audience.

The private press's failure in providing an accurate and balanced information can partly be explained by the conception the private press have had about the roles of the journalism profession or that of the private press and also because there has been a big challenge in getting access to government information.

Table 6 Respondents' Views on the Major Internal Challenges of the Private Press in Ethiopia

Items	Frequency	Percentage
a. Lack of professional competence among journalists and the problems with regard to content and presentation	22	22
b. Failure to provide an accurate and balanced information and report	26	26
c. Lack of professional ethics and responsibility	12	12
d. Problems with regard to institutional and financial capacity	19	19
e. Other	11	11
A &c	1	1
A b &c	1	1
A b c &d	5	5
Missing	3	3
Total	100	100

4.1.9 The Major External Challenges of the Private Press in Ethiopia

As shown in table 8 below the largest number of respondents 43(43%)believe that the private press have been working in an environment characterized by intense pressure from the government, 34 respondents (34%)believe that the low level of development in the country with regard to democratic culture is the major external challenge, 5 respondents(5%)mentioned problems related to market and publishing as the major challenge while an equal number of 5 respondents (5%)mentioned the absence of more institutions for journalism education and training as the major challenge. 3 respondents(3%)said low level of audience participation is the major external challenge, 8 respondents (8%) chose more than one item among which 7 respondents took all the items listed as major external challenges while 2 respondents (2%) left the question unanswered.

The fact that the largest number of respondents (43) mentioned intense pressure from the government as a major external challenge is indicative of the prevalence of the problem as Addis Guday Amharic magazine (2014) also argues:

Now the situation has reached to the level where working as a journalist has become like a crime. We journalists working for Addis Guday have done no crime except doing our jobs. We share the belief that the continuous pressure on our magazine and also on other private press outlets are intended towards wiping out the press before the national election of 2015. (p.9)

However there is a contrasting view that the private press have been rather tolerated by the Ethiopian government while they repeatedly committed offence against the media laws. (Deresa, personal interview August 2016).

Yet based on the findings of the study it is possible to conclude that the presence of a highly restrictive media environment and the low level of development with regard to democratic culture have been the major external challenges of the private press in Ethiopia.

Table 7 Respondents Views on the Major External Challenges of the Private Press in Ethiopia

Items	Frequency	Percentage
a. The low level of development with regard to democratic culture	34	34
b. The low level of audience participation and support	3	3
c. The bad pressure from the government	43	43
d. Problems with regard to market and publishing	5	5
e. the absence of many institutions for journalism education and training	5	5
a b &c	1	1
a b c &d	7	7
Missing	2	2
Total	100	100

4.1.10 The Question of Bias and Lack of Balance in the Reports of the Private Press

Respondents were asked to share their views on the criticism often made on the private press in Ethiopia that they are highly biased and lack balance in their reports. As table 9 below shows most of the respondents 43 (43%) partially agree with the description about the private press as having a serious problem of lacking balance in their reports. Still quite a considerable number of 30 respondents (30%) strongly agree that the private press do not write a balanced report, while 13 respondents (13%) said they disagree with the description about the private press and 3 respondents (3%) said they strongly disagree. 9 respondents (9%) chose the item "undecided" while 2 respondents (2%) did not answer the question.

It is an undeniable fact that lack of balance in reporting is one of the major problems of the private press and also the government press for that matter. Yet the fact that the largest number of respondents (43) partially agree with the description and 9 respondents chose the item "undecided" indicates that there are other issues to be taken in to consideration while dealing with the question of balance. The private press argue that any criticism about the biasedness and lack of balance among the private press should take into consideration the challenge the private press

have been facing in getting access to government information as the following response of Addis Guday Amharic magazine (2014) also shows :

Addis Guday magazine has been criticized by the Ethiopian Press Enterprise and Addis Zemen Newspaper for being biased and lacking balance in its reports. If lack of balance was used to mean that the magazine does not report the stands of the government it is partially true. But what can we do if we were denied access to information from the responsible government officials except for few number of them that are willing to give us information ? Addis Guday magazine has always tried its best to include the stands of the government on each issue we covered but we have never received any positive response for the requests we had made for information.
(p 29)

Still the fact that 30 respondents strongly agreed with the description that the private press in Ethiopia are biased and lack balance is indicative of the intensity of the problem. And, if the private press in Ethiopia are to play a meaningful role as media institutions, it is important that they become more impartial and balanced in their reporting since as the social responsibility theory also states the media "should provide a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events and provide a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society.(Sterling, 2009,p. 339)

Table 8 Respondents Views on the Criticism on the Private Press in Ethiopia for being Biased and not Balanced

Items	Frequency	Percentage
a. strongly agree	30	30
b. neutral(partially agree)	43	43
c. disagree	13	13
d. strongly disagree	3	3
e. undecided	9	9
Missing	2	2
Total	100	100

4.1.11 The Perception Among the Audience about the Roles of the Private Press

Respondents were asked to mention what they perceive to be the key role or roles of the private press. As shown in the table below most of the respondents 76 (76%) believe that the private press play all the kind of roles listed in the items. Some respondents on the other hand chose a single item as the key role of the press. 12(12%) respondents mentioned the democratic role of the private press as a key role, 3 respondents (3%) said it has a key role towards a multifaceted development of a country, an equal number of respondents emphasized the press's role in addressing the different kinds of problems in a country, 5 respondents (5%) mentioned the private press's role of providing the necessary information as a key one, while 1 respondent (1%) did not answer the question. This indicates that there is awareness among the audience about the key role that the private press play as a media institution.

Table 9 Respondents Views about the Roles of the Private Press in a Country

Items	Frequency	Percentage
a. It plays a key role for the development of freedom of expression and democracy	12	12
b. It plays a key role for the realization of multifaceted development of a country	3	3
c. It plays a key role in solving problems in a society	3	3
d. It plays a key role in terms of providing the necessary information and knowledge	5	5
e. All of the above	76	76
Missing	1	1
Total	100	100

4.1.12 The Perception Among the Audience about the Professional Responsibilities of

Journalists

Respondents were asked to tell what they perceive about the degree of responsibility journalists have as compared to other parts of the society. As the data in table 18 below shows the largest number of respondents 61(61%)believe that journalists have bigger responsibility,12(12%) respondents said that the responsibility that journalists have is equal to other citizens, 9 respondents (9%)said journalists' role is smaller than other parts of the society, 6 respondents (6%) said the journalist have a medium level of responsibility, 7 respondents (7%) chose the item" undecided" while 5 respondents (5%) did not answer the question.

Though there are also respondents (12) who believe that the responsibilities of journalists is equal to other citizens in a country and other respondents (9)who believe that journalists' responsibility is smaller than other parts of the society, the fact that the largest number of respondents(61) believe that journalists have a bigger responsibility indicates that the audience expects high level of professional responsibility and ethics from journalists.

Table 10 Respondents' Views on the level of Professional Responsibility Journalists have in a Country

Items	Frequenc y	Percentag e
a. Journalists have a bigger responsibility than other parts of the society	61	61
b. The level of responsibility Journalist have is equal to that of other parts of the society	12	12
c. Journalists have smaller responsibility than the other parts of the society	9	9
d. The responsibility of journalists is of a medium level	6	6
e. Undecided	7	7
Missing	5	5
Total	100	100

4.1.13 A Challenging Media Environment Since 2005

As table 12 shows for the largest number of respondents i.e the sum of those 28 respondents (28%) who believe that there is a difficult environment and those 32 respondents (32%) who believe that there is a very difficult environment, the media environment since 2005 has been difficult and challenging. Still a considerable number of 33 respondents (33%) said that they view the media environment in the country as partially favourable and partially challenging which indicates that the private press if they work more responsibly and ethically will have some room to exploit.

Based on the findings it is possible to conclude that the private press environment in Ethiopia since 2005 has been challenging for the private press.

Table 11 Respondents' Views on the Level of Challenge in the Private Press Environment in Ethiopia Since 2005

Items	Frequency	Percentage
a. There is a favorable environment	4	4
b. There is a partially challenging and partially favorable environment	33	33
c. There is a highly favorable environment	0	0
d. There is a difficult environment	28	28
e. There is a very difficult environment	32	32
Missing	3	3
Total	100	100

4.1.14 Audience View on the Relationship between Poverty and Democratic Participation

As shown in table 13 below, out of the total number of respondents 73(73%) strongly believe that one should give value to democracy and the right to freedom of expression even if he/she is poor. Similarly 15 respondents (15%) said they agree with the given statement, 5

respondents (5%) said they partially agree, an equal number of respondents said they strongly disagree with the statement while 2 respondents did not answer the question.

This indicates that as opposed to the view held by some that the quest for democracy and freedom of expression is a luxury in Ethiopia where poverty and low level of economic development prevail there is a dominant view among the audience that poverty does not necessarily affect democratic participation which recent studies have also shown.

The view held for long time among researchers in the area that the level of income and democratic participation has been proved to be not explanatory of the current situation in developing countries. The findings have shown that Education and information matter more importantly than wealth which had been mentioned as the major factor that determines the level of democratic participation. (Khrishna, 2009,p. 9)

What is more, the findings of the study indicates that if the media situation changes for the better there will be a better degree of audience participation in any process of democratization process in Ethiopia.

Table 12 Respondents' Views on the Relationship between Poverty and Democratic Participation

Items	Frequency	Percentage
a. Strongly agree	73	73
b. Agree	15	15
c. Neutral (partially agree)	5	5
d. Disagree	0	0
e. Strongly disagree	5	5
Missing	2	2
Total	100	100

4.1.15 The Consumption Level of Press Outlets that have Contents on Sensitive Political Issues

As shown in table 14, 50 respondents (50%) said that they feel free to read any private newspaper or magazine that have contents on sensitive political issues. 28 respondents (28%) said that they feel in secured to read reports and articles having such contents. 9 respondents(9%) said they do not read private press outlets that have contents on sensitive political issues while 10 respondents (10%) said they do not have the habit of reading newspapers and magazines in work places and audience spots. 2 respondents chose the item "other" while 1 respondent left this question un answered. The fact that half of the respondents have the habit of reading contents with freedom is indicative of the concern that the people have on political issues and also the relatively more freedom the audience have in consuming press outlets however sensitive their content be. However it should also be noted here that quite a considerable number of the respondents i.e those who read with the feeling of insecurity and those who do not read press outlets with such a content together make up 37(37%) indicates that the audience to some extent is facing a challenge in exercising freedom of expression and democracy.

Table 13 Respondents' Experience of Reading Private Press Outlets that have Sensitive Political Contents

Items	Frequenc y	Percentage
I read with freedom	50	50
I read with a feeling of insecurity	28	28
I do not read newspapers and magazines that have such content	9	9
I do not read newspapers on those kinds of places	10	10
Other	2	2
Missing	1	1
Total	100	100

4.1.16 Audience View on What is Expected From the Private Press to Change the Private Press Environment for the Better

Respondents mentioned a number of points that they believe the private press should do towards changing the media situation for the better. Among the different ideas recommended the major ones are : Providing an accurate truthful and balanced information which was mentioned by 39 respondents (39%) and exhibiting professional ethics which was mentioned by 15 respondents (15%). However 21 respondents did not answer this question.

The fact that the largest number of respondents (39) believe the private press should work hard to provide an accurate and balanced information and the second largest number (15)believe that the private press should exhibit more professional ethics indicative of the big gap the private press in Ethiopia have in this regard.

Table 14 Respondents' Views on What They Believe the Private Press should to change the private press environment for the better

Items	Frequency	Percentage
They should provide an accurate, truthful and balanced report/coverage	39	39
They should exhibit professional ethics	15	15
They should persist and be bold	4	4
They should decrease the price of newspapers and magazines	2	2
They should upgrade their institutional capacity	7	7
They should accommodate the interest of the readers	3	3
They should handle national issues carefully	2	2
They should do their job according to the media law	1	1
They should have their own professional association	2	2
They should not be extremist	3	3
They have done their best	1	1
Missing	21	21
Total	100	100

4.1.17 Audience View on What is Expected From Them to Change the Private Press

Environment for the Better

As shown in table 17 below respondents recommended different ideas which they believe are expected from the audience. 27 respondents (27%) believe that the audience should examine the information given on the private press outlets for their truthfulness accuracy and impact, 16 respondents(16%)believe that the audience should develop a reading culture, 11 respondents (11%) believe that the audience should support the private press by purchasing their media products,10 respondents (10%)recommended that the audience should give feed back, comments and suggestions,7 respondents (7%)believe that the audience should serve as an information in put for the private press, while 10 respondents (10%) left the question un answered.

The fact that the largest number of respondents i.e 27 mentioned the idea of examining the information provided in the private press outlets is indicative of the belief among the audience about the negative impact of any information that lacks truthfulness and accuracy. It also indicates that credibility of information is one of the areas that should be given necessary attention as far as the activities of the private press in Ethiopia is concerned. The fact that developing a reading culture and assisting the private press by purchasing their media products were also recommended by significant number of respondents is indicative of the negative impact the absence of such a strong participation has had on the development of the private press sector in Ethiopia.

Table 15 Respondents' Views on What They Believe the Audience Should to Change the Private Press Environment for the Better

Items	Frequency	Percentage
The audience should examine the truthfulness, accuracy and Impact of the information provided in the private press before Using it	27	27
The audience should develop the reading culture	16	16
The audience should serve as an information input	7	7
The audience should give its own judgment after reading the content	6	6
The audience should give feedback, comments and suggestions	10	10
The audience should support the media by developing the habit of purchasing press outlets	11	11
The audience should support and stand with them when they face difficulties such as imprisonment	2	2
The audience should use the information it gets	6	6
The audience should give its own true judgment without being partial either to the private press or the government	3	3
Understand the value of freedom of expression	2	2
Missing	10	10
Total	100	100

4.1.18 Audience View on What is Expected From the Government to Change the Private Press Environment for the Better

As shown in table 18 below respondents mentioned a number of ideas which they believe are expected from the government. Out of the total number of respondents, 46 respondents (46%) believe that the government should let the private press have more freedom to do their jobs, 12 respondents (12%) believe the government should provide technical and financial support, 9 respondents believe that the government should change the way it sees or treats the

private press and should take them not as enemies but as partners while 9 respondents (9%) left the question un answered. The fact that the largest number of 46 respondents said that the government should let the private press enjoy more freedom is indicative of the big challenge the private press are facing in this regard.

Table 16 Respondents' Views on What They Believe the Government Should to Change the Private Press Environment for the Better

Items	Frequency	Percentage
The government should let the private press write freely	46	46
The government should provide technical and financial support	12	12
The government should see the private press not as enemies but as partners	9	9
The government should solve the problem with regard to the printing and paper cost	4	4
The government should closely monitor and regulate the activities of the private press	3	3
The government should create a favourable press environment	4	4
The government should respect the right to freedom of expression at national level	9	9
The government should open its door in order that the private press access information	2	2
Amend the current press law	2	2
Missing	9	9
Total	100	100

4.2 Qualitative Data Presentation and Analysis

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of the qualitative data collected through in depth interview made with six informants.

In order to address the research questions of this study informants were asked questions related to the major features of the private press environment in Ethiopia since 2005, the impacts of the

private press environment the perception about the roles of journalists and the practical roles and challenges of the private press.

Totally 15 questions formulated in structured manner were presented to six informants. The informants answered all the questions. The findings of the interview questions have been classified and presented under 7 key questions selected for analysis. This section deals with the presentation and analysis of the qualitative data.

4.2.1 Big Role of the Private Press Until 2005

Informants were asked to share their views on the role of the private press in Ethiopia by making comparisons between the situations before and after the 2005 national election. Four informants said that the private press had a big role until 2005, one informant gave similar answer but with a reservation while one other informant said that except for a few private press outlets the role of the private press until 2005 had been rather insignificant.

Regarding the role of the private press in the years between the proclamation of the press bill in 1992 and the 2005 national election, informant number 1 believes that although the private press had quite a number of limitations, they played a significant role in the above mentioned period in providing information on issues that were not covered by the government press and also in contributing for the development of reading culture in the country. As for the role of the private press in Ethiopia since 2005, informant number 1 says that although the private press institutions that were introduced after the 2005 election and also the ones that have stayed in the business continued to play some role, overall the role of the private press is so low currently.

Informant number 2 agrees with what informant number 1 has said. For him the fact that the audience at large is trying to get additional information from the social media and other international channels indirectly shows the significant role that the private press played as compared to the situation after 2005. He says that the role of the private press and also their level of activity has dwindled to a large degree that in his opinion it is possible to say that the private press is currently almost non-existent in the country.

Informant number 3 holds the same view about the role of the private press. To support his view he mentions the comments and criticisms often made by his customers. He says that with the

exception of some newspapers namely (Addis Neger, Awramba Times, Fitih, Fact and Addis Guday) readers criticize the newspapers and magazines that were introduced after 2005 and even the ones that were established earlier and still exist that they have failed to address the multiple problems in the country in the manner that they were expected to:

I have heard my customers complaining several times about the lack of a powerful private press currently by saying that they would rather revise the private newspapers and magazines that were published before and during the national election in 2005 than the ones on circulation at present. In my opinion currently the role of the private press have significantly decreased to the extent that the informal discussions that people make with their friends about different current issues appear much better.(Informant number 3 Personal Interview December 2015)

Informant number 4 also agrees with what the above three informants have said but she criticizes the private press for their failure to wisely exploit the limited opportunity. In her view the private press could have played more role even though there have been many challenges in the press environment since the 2005 national election.

Whereas informant number 5 and informant number 6 hold a different view. Informant number 5 believes that though the private press played a considerable role and their absence has created a gap, their role before the 2005 national elections should not be that much exaggerated because there occasions that an irresponsible and highly egoistic (market oriented) way of reporting on sensitive political issues caused problems in different parts of the country.

In contrast to what has been said by the first four informants, Informant number 6, believes that except for a few private press outlets, most of the private press played rather negative role being highly sensational and irresponsible though the period during and before the 2005 election was a period in which the largest number of private press outlets in the media history of the country were registered and circulated:

Most of the private press wrote highly sensational reports that could lead the country to chaos and instability and some of them even served as instruments

for political parties. In my opinion the private press did not play the role that they should have played as a responsible media institutions. This is one of the major reasons why most of them could not stay in the business. As the findings of our surveys show it was rather in the period after the 2005 national election that the private press showed some improvements in their reporting and level of professionalism. For example in the period before and during the election the amount of sensational and extremist reporting among the private press was 60% which decreased to 30-40% in 2010. This means that the private press were in a better position to play a meaningful role in the period after 2005. (Informant number 6, Personal Interview August 2016).

Still one can say that the press's role is viewed to be a significant one which is expressed in similar arguments made by other media personnel who believe that the increasing level of pressure on the private press since 2005 is directly related to the big role that they played before in influencing the views and decisions of people. For example, Befikadu,(2016,pp 12 &19) says:

there has been such a trend where the pressure on the private press intensifies as election time approaches and newspapers that make serious reports are often forced to close on the eve of national elections. During such periods the number of accusations on journalists increase and many others are forced to flee. We have seen this in the 2007 election. Then after election time, when the private press cannot make any meaningful influence, the pressure again decreases. This is the harsh truth as far as the private press environment in Ethiopia is concerned.

In general based on the view of the largest number of informants (which was also shared by the largest number of the informants who filled the questionnaire) it is possible to conclude that the private press in Ethiopia played a significant role in their performances until 2005.

4.2.2 Low Audience Participation in Consuming Press Outlets and Assisting the Press

Informants were asked to share their views on the participation of the audience in consuming press outlets by comparing the situation in the two periods mentioned previously. Regarding this, informant number 1 says that the amount of audience participation in consuming private press outlets decreased after 2005 which in his view had been stronger in the period before and during the national election.

He says that the major factors that led to limited audience participation should be identified and a better situation should be created in this regard because it has highly affected the activities and even the survival of many private press outlets which almost wholly depended on sells for lack of other sources of income like advertisement. Informant number 1 adds that the audience should appreciate and support those who perform well and do their jobs ethically and responsibly and also correct those who have gone in a wrong direction and help them come to the right track.

Informant number 2 sharing the view of informant number 1 about the low level of audience participation in practically consuming press outlets currently on circulation holds that still the audience shows an interest to exercise freedom of expression and democracy by using other means of information:

In my observation the fact that an increasing number of people began using the social media and channels on satellite TV partly as a result of the information gap created following the limited activity of the private press after 2005; an action which is indicative of the high interest among the audience to be informed about current issues and also to exercise freedom of expression. In fact considering the highly limited activity of the private press it is difficult to expect high level of audience participation in consuming press outlets. (Informant number 2 Personal Interview November 2015).

Informant number 2 also mentions some points as additional factors for lack of strong audience participation. In his view: the interest among some audience for mere sensational reports, their expectation towards journalists to completely shoulder the responsibility of fighting for political and economic changes, their mere categorization of journalists as government affiliated when they try to be balanced and critical of opposition parties and their abstinence from supporting journalists on difficult times lessened the amount of participation that could have been gained from the audience. Informant number 2 adds that the audience also negatively contributed for the poor level of professionalism and development in the private sector in Ethiopia by demanding the private press to write sensational reports and by influencing the market.

Informant number 3 agrees with what informant number 2 has said particularly about the interest among the audience (especially the young generation) to get access to different sources of information including the private press. But he differs in what he believes to be the major factor that resulted in the low level of audience participation. He says that the audience should in no way be blamed because it was a result of the failure among many of private press's to play a meaningful role which the audience expected them to. This failure among the private press also caused a lack of trust among the audience which eventually resulted in the low level of audience participation currently.

Informant number 4 agrees with the description that the consumption rate of press outlets and the overall participation of the audience has significantly decreased after 2005. She holds a similar view with informant number 3 that in her view it is the job of private press to attract the audience to itself and guide the way. She believes that the consumption of private press outlets and the participation of the audience has decreased because the private press have not been able to win the hearts and minds of the audience.

Informant number 5 believes that journalists of the private press and the press institutions are mainly responsible for the relatively lower amount of audience participation after the 2005 national election. For him the wrong perception among some journalists of the private press about the extent to which they could be tolerated and to what extent they could use their right to freedom of expression resulted in a lack of respect and trust among the public.

Informant number 6 says that the consumption of press outlets and level of participation seems to have decreased currently mainly as a result of the highly market oriented and sensational approach followed by most of the private press that were introduced both before and after 2005. In his view the audience decreased its participation after realizing the impacts of lack of professional ethics and responsibility and also because the private press have not been able to satisfy the interest of the audience.

But what the findings of the study on audience view regarding the activities of the private press revealed is contrary to what informant number 6 has said above. According to the findings of the study the largest number of respondents believe that although most of the private press in Ethiopia lacked such professionalism, the private press played a considerable role particularly in the period before 2005. For this reason it will be a mistake to take the problem of sensationalism as the main factor that resulted in low audience participation.

The findings from the qualitative data have shown that though all the informants basically agreed about the low consumption rate of private press outlets and audience participation currently, they differed on what they believe to have caused it. There is a dominant view among largest number of informants that the private press should take the larger share of responsibility. However one informant said that the major factor or factors should be investigated while one other informant believes that the audience too played a negative role in this regard.

In this vein it is possible to say that even though the criticism made on the private press is partially acceptable, other factors should also be considered in dealing with the question of low audience participation like challenges related to access to government information and a the absence of a suitable media environment. In addition to the factors mentioned previously these two also have directly or indirectly affected the performance of the private press.

But in general, it is possible to conclude that in the eyes of the largest number of the audience i.e both the respondents for the quantitative data and informants for the qualitative data there is lower consumption rate of press outlets and audience participation when compared with the period before 2005.

4.2.3 The Perception about the Role of the Private Press and the Question of Balance

Informants were asked as to tell how they perceive the role of journalism and particularly that of the private press and also share their views on the question of a balanced report which is among the major problems the private press in Ethiopia have been criticized for. The findings revealed that the informants have divergent perceptions and views about the role (especially the watch dog role) journalists of the private press and the press institutions are expected to play.

Regarding this informant number 1 believes that there has been miss- perceptions about the roles of journalists and journalism. In further explaining his idea he says that even though basically similar journalistic principles apply for journalists both working for the private and the government or public press, it has mostly been perceived as if journalists of the private press have a different role to that of the government press as far as the Ethiopian media situation is concerned:

It is true, journalists of the private press and the press institutions have a big role to play especially in a developing country like Ethiopia where there are different social, economic and political problems. Yet as a journalist one is expected to play the role of informing citizens being fair and balanced in his or her reports whether he is working for the private press or the government press. Because of the misperception I have mentioned previously, most of the private press in Ethiopia rarely report positive stories about the accomplishments of the government. In the same manner the government press always talks about success stories while there are problems to report on. (Informant number 1 Personal Interview November 2015)

Informant number 2 has a different view about the role that the private press should play. He believes that the private press are not supposed to repeat what has been accomplished by the government for example. Instead their role is to find out some hidden fact or a problem that needs solution. Informant number 2 expressed his view by mentioning the criticism often made by the government of Ethiopia against the private press in Ethiopia that it lacked balance and the quality of developmental journalism. He believes that it will be wrong to criticise the private press for lacking balance without including the question of truth and journalists' professional

ethics and responsibility to serve the truth and the people into the equation. He says that the question of lack of balance in the reports of the private press in Ethiopia should be addressed from various angles because the basic principle of journalists' role to be loyal to the truth and the people should not be compromised in the name of writing a balanced report or exercising developmental journalism.

Informant number 2 adds while it is true that many of the private press lacked balance especially in their reports about serious political issues and also have perceived the role of the private press as that of always opposing the government, yet they should not be criticized for being biased only because they are not willing to leave aside burning issues and grievances of the public.

Informant number 3 and 4 agree with what informant number 2 has said about the roles of the private press. In contrast informant number 5 says that though journalists of the private press should address problems or gaps in a system or a country, most of the private press in Ethiopia have been extremist and unbalanced even on issues that have big negative impacts at national level.

Informant number 6 holds a different view to what informant number 2 has said on how to deal with the question of balance. In his view most of the private press in Ethiopia have wrongly practised their job not only out of miss-perception but also out of intentional moves.

True journalists working for the private press have a professional responsibility of investigating the truth. However the problem with most of journalists of the private press or the press institutions in Ethiopia is that they report out of mere opposition without doing the necessary investigation process which the task of journalism requires. Some of them even join the sector with a political motive behind. (Informant number 6 Personal Interview ,August 2016)

Apart from the divergent views of informants discussed above, it is worth mentioning here some additional points particularly on the question of balance. When we see this issue in light of the practical media situation in Ethiopia it is undeniable that there has been misperception among journalists of the private press in that they have mostly taken the role of an opposition as

Shimelis (2000) also notes "like the first-born of the modern media, the private press in Ethiopia began life not as an instrument of government but as a rebel. Accordingly, the story it presents interlocks at every point with the political and social changes in the country. "(p.68)

Here it is also important to note the negative role of the low level of democratic culture in resulting such a highly polarized view among journalists of the private press and that of the government press and a hostile relationship between them.

However as also argued by informant number 2 while dealing with the lack of balance in the reports of the private press one should not jump into conclusions without taking into consideration the challenges the private press have been facing for example in getting access to government information. This is because in a situation where government officials do not invite the private press to attend on media events it will be wrong to criticize the private press for lacking balance. (Mairegu, 2014,p13)

Here it is also important to see this issue of balance in the media situation in Ethiopia in light of the watch dog role of journalists which at the same time is among their professional responsibilities as Teshome (2015) also underlines:

While criticizing the private press in Ethiopia for lacking balance and always reporting on problems, one should not also forget that they have a professional responsibility to address the different problems in the country. For example the government of Ethiopia often criticizes the private press for lacking the quality of development journalism. However practising development journalism does not mean that the private press should talk about success stories while leaving aside the grievances and problems of the public. The role of development journalism is rather to struggle in order that the society's problems are solved. (p 28)

Even though informant number 6 believes that the private press have lacked balance and have practised journalism wrongly, he partly shares the views of informant number 2 and Teshome (2015,p 28) particularly in relation to the question of truth and the miss perception about the roles of journalists:

The miss perception is also there among some government officials and bodies in that they think the press should not expose their faults and often take the private press and their journalists as enemies only because they reported the truth. The government of Ethiopia having admitted about the presence of such a problem among some government bodies and high government officials took corrective measures. (Informant number 6 Personal Interview, August 2016)

In general based on the findings of the study it is possible to conclude that informants hold equally divergent perceptions about the roles of journalists of the private press.

4.2.4 Major Internal Challenges of the Private Press

4.2.4.1 Lack of Professional Ethics

Lack of professional journalistic ethics is one of the frequently mentioned issues in discussions about the activities of journalists working for the private press and the private press institutions in Ethiopia. (Skejerdal & Haleluya, 2009,p.55;Parmele 1999,p8) Respondents were asked to share their views on this. Even though they do not accept any generalized description, there is almost a consensus among all those six informants that some journalists of the private press have shown highly unethical characteristics both before 2005 and after.

Informant number 1 agrees that lack of professional ethics has been a major problem among some journalists of the private press. Regarding this informant number 1 says that there have been numerous instances where some journalists of the private press abused the right to freedom of expression and tried to satisfy their own personal interests and ambitions. He mentions the act of intentionally publishing sensitive information or reports by some journalists of the private press as one example for the lack of professional ethics. Informant number 1 adds that, yet there have also been many ethical and responsible journalists of the private press. Informant number 2 shares the view of informant number 1:

Compromising the ethical principles of the journalism profession has continued among a number of private press journalists and press institutions since the1992 press bill. I know some cases where individuals tried to

unfairly benefit from the sensitive and challenging situations in the private press sector. There have been instances that the names of people who have never contributed an article were mentioned as writers of the articles just for the purpose of applying for visas. The other kind of ethical problem is the act of some private press journalists and press institutions that tried to survive financially by writing reports about individuals or companies while those reports did not have any editorial significance than serving as unofficial advertisements. I also know cases where journalists of the private press who write news reports using secondary or tertiary sources without physically going to the place or trying to verify it. Violating the professional ethics of the profession some journalists even ask for money as a perquisite for doing interview. (Informant number 2 Personal Interview, November 2015)

In witnessing the prevalence of such ethical problem among journalists of the private press, Teshome (2016) also says:

some of the private press journalists after participating in a meeting or conference have made false reports about individuals and government officials by fabricating stories just to appease their readers which is a very unethical and irresponsible action as far as the principles of journalism are concerned. (p 26)

Informant number 3 sees the issue of lack of ethics in a different manner. In his view the ethical problems of journalists of the private press have been displayed in changing allegiances between acting as an activist and acting as an affiliated supporter of the government. He says that the highly opportunistic actions of some journalists who had previously won the hearts of the audience but eventually proved to have affiliations with the government caused disappointment among their colleagues. This, in the view of informant number 3 has also lowered the level of trust the public had towards journalists of the private press. Informant number 4 and 5 also agree that lack of professional ethics has been one of the major internal challenges of the private press but they also believe that recognition should be

given to those journalists of the private press who have exhibited professional ethics and responsibility.

Informant number 6 shares the view that lack of ethics has been one of the major challenges of the private press in Ethiopia. He says that those lacking this quality have written reports filled with harsh criticisms and insults instead of being constructive, truthful and balanced.

Based on the above data it can be concluded that in the eyes of media professionals and other stake holders in the sector including the audience, lack of professional ethics has been one of the major problems of the private press in Ethiopia.

4.2.4.2 Lack of Professional and Analytic Approach

Informants were asked to share their views on the content and presentation of the private press outlets in Ethiopia.

Except for informant number 5 who slightly differs in what he believes are the major internal challenges of the private press in Ethiopia, all the remaining five informants said that the content and presentation of the reports in many of the private press have lacked a professional and analytic quality which in their view is a major internal challenge. Regarding this informant number 1 says:

It is true that such a professional and scientific way of performing the task of journalism has been very limited among the private press. Although there should also be a space for commentaries and opinions in the contents of magazines most of the private press have followed an approach that have been characterized by a highly opinionated style and content that gave little space for a fact and research based in depth analyses which is in fact partly a result of some external factors. Producing content just for the sake of its commercial value has also been another form of lack of professionalism seen among the private press. But this does not mean that there have not been any private newspapers and magazines that have qualities of professional journalism. Addis Neger Amharic newspaper for example

managed to attract a large number of readers within a short period of time for its knowledge based, professional and skilled reporting and presentation. It had also dealt with different issues in a very analytic and predictive manner. (Informant number 1, Personal Interview November 2015,)

Informant number 2 also holds a similar view. For him: lack of variety and timeliness in the news reports of many of the private newspapers and magazines, the production of content not based on the interests of readers but just to sell newspapers are some of the features of lack of professionalism among most of the private press in Ethiopia. Informant number 3 and 4 also share the same view. Informant number 4 particularly referring to the activities of the private press after the 2005 national election says:

The private press in their activities since the 1992 press bill have been challenged by lack of professional approach especially the informative and analytic qualities. Except for a few private newspapers and magazines like Addis Neger Amharic newspaper and Addis Guday Amharic magazine the problem continued among most of the private press in the period after the 2005 election too. Amidst the restrictive media environment since 2005, some private press outlets produced contents that have a highly gladiatorial or revolutionary tone rather than a logical, insightful and informative one. I believe that this has limited the capacity of the private press to convince people and play a more watch dog role even within the challenging press environment particularly since 2005. (Informant number 4 Personal Interview January 2016)

Informant number 5 agrees that most of the private press lack this quality but he differs in taking it as a major internal challenge. For him biasedness and lack of truthfulness in reporting has been a major internal challenge of the private press rather than lack of professional and analytic quality which is often mentioned as a big gap in this regard.

Similar to the view held by the other informants, informant number 6 also believes that lack of a professional and analytic quality has been one of the major internal challenges of the private press in Ethiopia.

Yet it is worth mentioning another aspect of the lack of a professional analytic quality in the practical media context of Ethiopia as to whether having such a quality is a curse rather than a blessing.

When we see the issue in this light we will find that while a private press outlet with such a content is taken as a blessing by the audience (which should have also been the case in the eyes of the government of Ethiopia) it will soon become a curse for that very private press outlet in that it begins to face more pressure than other private newspapers and magazines that are considered to be less powerful in influencing the views of the audience.

Even though some do not agree with the above argument for example informant number 6 who holds that following a professional and analytic approach has never been the cause of the short lived existence of private press outlets, the practical experience in the private press environment has shown that private newspapers and magazines which entertained contrasting ideas and produced serious analytic reporting did not stay long. (Engidawork, 2016,p. 12)

Yet based on the views of the informants it is possible to conclude that in the views of the audience lack of a professional analytic quality is among the major external challenges of the private press in Ethiopia.

4.2.5 The Major External Challenges of the Private Press

4.2.5.1 Highly Restrictive Press Laws

Informants were asked to express their views on what they believe as the major external challenges of the private press since 2005. Except for informant number 5 who holds a slightly different view and informant number 6 who completely disagrees the introduction of highly restrictive press laws was mentioned as one of the major external challenges of the private press in Ethiopia particularly since 2005.

Regarding the press environment particularly since 2005 informant number 1 says that the political space became increasingly limited for the private press following the application of two highly restrictive media laws namely the new Press Law and the Anti-Terrorism Law. Informant number 2 shares what informant number 1 said about the very limited political space within the press environment. He says that those two press laws especially the anti- terrorism law whose

articles leave no space for tolerating journalists of the private press has been a major external challenge. In his view, the pressure on journalists of the private press increased since the 2005 national election which in turn resulted in more self-censorship among journalists of the private press and among some media owners who censored their journalists in trying to avoid or minimize risk.

Informant number 3, who has worked for many years as a newspaper vendor says that the media environment since 2005 became increasingly difficult for the private press to freely practise their job. Similarly informant number 4 says that the government of Ethiopia became so intolerant that it does not want anything to be written about it. She asks "how can the journalist play a watch dog role while it is not allowed by the government to watch?" (Informant number 4, personal interview, January 2016)

Informant number 5 partly sharing the view held by those four informants above, still maintains that the private press should try their best to use the limited space by doing their job wisely and more carefully.

Whereas informant number 6 disagrees about the highly restrictive nature of the private press environment especially the impact of the two press laws introduced after 2005.

I do not think the introduction of the two press laws has been a major challenge for the private press. The government of Ethiopia has rather shown toleration while the private press continued to commit offences against the constitution and the provisions of the press laws. The new press law for example does not put any limit on the activities of the private press. It just requires any private press institution to perform its job according to the law. The same is true with the anti-terrorism law. In fact some parties sometimes abuse the law and they try to put pressure on the private press by using this law as an instrument; an act which partly results from a rent collecting attitude among some parties. (Informant number 6, Personal Interview August 2016)

Yet the situation on the ground has been different contrary to what informant number 6 has said and the claim of the government of Ethiopia against the description that the two press laws have significantly increased the restrictive nature of the press environment since 2005. Ross(2010) about the impacts of the new press law argues:

Although the Ethiopian MFA claimed that this provision (Article (43(7)) would provide a more responsible media, it seems more likely to provide a media atmosphere of oppression. Members of the private media and even the public will likely be intimidated by the possibility of prosecution for any comments they make about government business or officers. Without the freedom to comment on any and all news, whether regarding the government or not, the media cannot fulfill its responsibility to provide complete and accurate information to the public. Additionally, the public's right to receive the information is clearly violated. (p.1060)

As has been argued by Ross above the provisions of the press law being highly restrictive have posed a big challenge for the private press by limiting the space and the amount of freedom they need if they are to play any significant role as media institutions. The findings of both the quantitative and the quantitative data also revealed that in the eyes of the largest number of the audience increased pressure on journalists of the private press and the press institutions particularly the introduction of two highly restrictive press laws has been one of the major external challenges of the private press since the 2005 national election.

4.2.5.2 Lack of Access to Infrastructure and More Financial Opportunities

The other question presented for the informants was about other external challenges of the private press. Although their point of emphasis differed all the informants agreed that the private press have been facing different external challenges related to lack of access to government information and media infrastructure, lack of support from the government, lack of access to advertisement, heavy printing cost and taxation and low development of democratic culture in the country.

Informant number 1 who has stayed in the business of publishing a magazine for many years believes that an increasing printing cost and annual tax posed a big challenges on the activity of the private press. In his view the presence of such factors has made the survival of most of the private press in Ethiopia a difficult one whose financial capacity has been so limited. Informant number 1 adds that the above mentioned challenges heavily affected the performance of the private press in Ethiopia.

For Informant number 2 lack of access to media infrastructure and financial opportunities have significantly affected the activities of the private press. He says that particularly since 2005 it became increasingly difficult for the private press to publish their press outlets both in the government owned and privately owned printing presses who often say that they do not want to put themselves at risk by printing newspapers and magazines that have reports on serious political issues:

I remember what happened when I was working in one privately owned newspaper. We published a news report on a serious political issue after doing the necessary verification and based on a concrete information. But when we went to that private printing press that printed the above mentioned news report they told us that they would no more print our newspaper. When we asked them why, instead of directly answering our question, they advised us that we had better publish a sport newspaper which is a safer zone free from any possible pressure. It has also been very difficult for most of the private press to get advertisements from government organizations. The challenge to survive financially was also intensified by the lack of strong consumption habit among the audience in that many people read press outlets by borrowing from others instead of buying the press products. This in turn made the survival of private newspapers and magazines very difficult because they cannot sustain if they cannot at least sell their published copies.(Informant number 2, Personal Interview November 2015).

Informant number 3 and number 4 mentioned the increasing printing cost and lack of access to government information and media infrastructure as major external challenges. But informant

number 4 adds that the private press could have at least prolonged their existence by selling more copies to readers. In her view, the very limited rate of readership which the private press often mentioned as another external challenge was partly caused by their lack of quality in content and presentation. Informant number 5 holds a different view as to the major external challenges of the private press. For him the major external challenge has been lack of support from the audience in recognizing the roles and contributions of the private press and in consuming their media products. In his view the low level of democratic culture and consciousness among the audience resulted in low level of audience participation.

Informant number 6 also agrees that there have been external challenges that affected the performance of the private press:

An increasing printing cost and lack of access to advertisement opportunities have affected the activity of the private press. In fact the amount of support given by the government of Ethiopia to the private press especially with regard to training and capacity building has been limited. But it has recently been agreed that the government should provide more support to the private press in those aspects mentioned above. (Informant number 6 personal interview August 2016)

Based on the findings from the qualitative data it is possible to conclude that in the eyes of the audience the private press in Ethiopia have been facing major external challenges related to finance and access to media infrastructure particularly since 2005.

4.3 Summary of Findings

Quantitative data on audience perception was collected about the general features of the private press environment like the consumption rate of private press outlets, audience's issues of focus out of the contents of the private press outlets, audience view about the strengths of the private press in Ethiopia and the relationship between poverty and democratic participation. Similar data was also collected about audience perception regarding the roles and responsibilities of journalists of the private press and the press institutions and the practical roles and challenges of the private press since 2005.

The study has found out that there is low consumption rate of private press outlets and a high demand for informative content and presentation among the audience. Regarding audience perception about the roles and responsibilities of journalists of the private press and the press institutions, the findings have shown that among the largest number of respondents private press institutions are perceived as having multiple key roles to play and a higher degree of responsibility when compared with other parts of a society. This finding revealed quite a different result to the perception among a considerable number of journalists of the private press that the audience wants information on serious political issues instead of varied and informative content.

Respondents were also asked to share their views on the relationship between poverty and level of democratic participation. According to the findings of the study the largest number of respondents believe that poverty and one's level of democratic participation are not necessarily related that one should give value for democracy and participate in a democratic process even if he or she is poor. This finding also revealed a different result to the argument that democracy is a luxury for people living under difficult economic conditions. Though consumption of press outlets and participation in a democratic process also depends on other factors like the availability of varied information sources and a favourable media environment the study also found contradictory results between such a good awareness about democratic participation and the audience's low consumption rate of the press outlets and low democratic participation in practical terms. The other finding of the study is on what the audience believe are the strengths of the private press in Ethiopia. The audience at large mentioned the contribution of the private press in serving as important sources of information, in giving the necessary attention and addressing issues that have an impact at national level and in being able to persist in such a challenging media environment as strong qualities of the private press. Quantitative data was also collected towards investigating audience perception about the practical roles and challenges of the private press in Ethiopia before and after the 2005 national election. Regarding the practical roles of the private press, the study has found out that the largest number of the audience believe that the private press played a bigger role before the above mentioned period which decreased to a large extent since then.

As for the second question the findings have shown that among the largest number of the audience the failure to provide an accurate information, lack of professional competence, lack of professional ethics and a professional analytic approach and limited financial and institutional capacity have been the major internal challenges while highly restrictive press laws, increasing pressure from the government, low development of democratic culture, problems related to market and publishing and the absence of many institutions for journalism education and training have been the major external challenges of the private press in Ethiopia particularly since 2005.

The findings of the qualitative data have shown similar results with that of the quantitative data about the practical role of the private press before and after 2005 and the consumption level of private press outlets. In the eyes of the largest number of informants, the private press played a bigger role in the period before 2005 which significantly declined in the period after 2005. The consumption level of press outlets and the level of audience participation has been low in the view of the largest number of informants.

Regarding the practical challenges of the private press particularly since 2005 the largest number of informants mentioned lack of professional ethics and a professional analytic approach as major internal challenges and restrictive laws, lack of access to government information and media infrastructure, lack of strong support from the government, lack of access to advertisement, heavy printing cost and taxation and low development of democratic culture in the country as major external challenges of the private press.

The findings of the qualitative data on the roles and responsibilities of journalists of the private press and the press institutions have shown that two equally dominant views were held among the informants on the question about the lack of balance in the reports of the private press and their watch dog role.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5. 1. Conclusion

By using audience opinion as a major source of data this study has tried to investigate the major features of the press environment and particularly audience perception about the roles and responsibilities of journalists of the private press and the press institutions and its view on the practical roles and challenges of the private press since 2005. Towards answering those questions quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were applied with 100 respondents and six informants respectively.

The quantitative data has shown that there is low reading rate of private press outlets and limited participation among the audience. The audience perception about the roles and responsibilities of journalists of the private press and the press institutions was the other question the study has tried to address. The findings have shown that the audience expects multiple key roles to be played by journalists of the private press and the press institutions that it expects the private press to do a balanced reporting and show a higher degree of professional responsibility. In this vein it appears important that journalists of the private press need to reconsider the misconception they have had in this respect.

The findings of the quantitative and qualitative data have shown that contrary to what has been held by some media professionals and the government of Ethiopia, in the eyes of the largest number of the audience the private press played a considerable media role until the 2005 national election. And this role should be recognized in order that the current media situation be changed for the better and a meaningful role of the private press be realized.

The study has found out that the performance of the private press have been affected both by its internal challenges and external challenges. The private press have not been able to play a more significant watch dog role because of their failure to provide an accurate information, their lack of professional competence and ethics and lack of strong financial and institutional capacity. In addition to these, they have been facing external challenges like the introduction of highly

restrictive press laws, an increasing pressure from the government, and lack of access to government information and media infrastructure. Apart from those internal and external challenges the hostile relationship between the private press and the government which is partly a result of the low level of democratic culture in the country has also been factors that made it difficult to create better press environment in the country.

It is difficult to expect any meaningful role of the private press while the private press continue with the perception they have held for long about their role and if they continue with the problems they have with regard to professionalism, ethics and responsibility. It is also difficult to create the above mentioned type of press environment if the government of Ethiopia continues to deny recognition to the democratic roles of the private press by taking them as enemies rather than partners and if it does not take any practical action to ease the highly restrictive press laws and the challenges with regard to access to information and media infrastructure.

The private press environment particularly since 2005 has been characterized by a highly diminished role and increasing level of internal and external challenges, a situation that has had an impact on the right to exercising freedom of expression and democracy. All these await immediate solution which needs a more genuine and cooperative effort to be exerted by the private press, the government of Ethiopia, and the public.

5.2 Recommendation

As has been discussed so far the private press environment in Ethiopia since 2005 has been characterized by the highly diminished role of the private press when compared to period before that. The following points are recommended in order to change this press environment for the better and ensure that the private press play a more meaningful role.

- The private press in Ethiopia should work more responsibly and ethically. They should also reconsider their conception about their journalistic role and should do their best to harmonize the bad relationship they have had with the government. They should also make efforts to build their knowledge, skill and financial capacity in order to provide quality and professional content maintaining the basic ethical disciplines and principles of journalism.

- The private press can play a meaningful role only when they have freedom to do their jobs. However the private press in Ethiopia have been facing a serious challenge in freely discharging their roles as a result of increasing restrictions on their activities. Hence it is important that the government of Ethiopia should let the private press enjoy more freedom still closely watching their activities and taking reasonable regulatory measures when needed.
- The government of Ethiopia should also assist the activities of the private press by taking them not as enemies but as partners. It should provide more technical and financial support. At least the government should try to ease the tax burdens and challenges related to access to media infrastructure. The government should not also close its doors for the private press whenever they want information.
- Since audience participation has a big role to play in the development of the private press and also any democratization process, the Ethiopian audience should increase its participation through consuming press outlets and showing more concern for democracy

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Appendix One

Questionnaire For Survey Research

This questionnaire has been prepared for the purpose of conducting a study which aims to survey audience opinion on the roles and challenges of the private press in Ethiopia since 2005. The questionnaire will be used purely for an academic purpose in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of master of arts in journalism and communication. I kindly appreciate your cooperation in filling this questionnaire. Thank you!

Part 1 General Information - please give your answer by putting a mark or writing in the blank space

Age 25- 35----- 46-44----- 45-54----- 55 and above-----

Job-----

Sex -----

Educational level -----

Part 2- Questions- please give your answer by circling the item of your choice

(you can choose more than one item)

1. How frequently do You read local media outlets and particularly private newspapers and magazines ?
 - a. I always read b. I usually read c. I sometimes read d. I rarely read e. I never read
2. If you always or usually read private newspapers and magazines what is your major reason?
 - a. I read them because they provide me more truthful information than other sources for example the government media

- b. I mainly read because I want to exercise freedom of expression and the private press enable me do that
 - c. I mainly read the private press outlets to entertain myself or to pass time
 - d. I read the private press outlets because they are sources of timely information and additional knowledge
 - e. If Other, please mention-----
3. If you rarely or never read private newspapers and magazines what is your major reason?
- a. because the private press do not entertain issues widely and deeply in a manner that I want
 - b. because they do not provide a balanced and accurate information
 - c. because I do not have the habit of reading
 - d. because the private newspapers have problems with regard to content form and presentation
 - e. if Other please mention-----
4. What is your issue of focus out of the content of a private newspaper or magazine?
- a. News and reports on burning issues
 - b. Entertainment and general knowledge
 - c. In-depth analyses on social economic and political issues
 - d. Coverage on different personal problems (for example health problems)
 - e. If Other please mention-----

5. The number and distribution level of the private press is lower at present when compared with the situation during the 2005 national election. How do you see the gap that this situation has created on your information need as an individual?
- It has created a big gap
 - It has created a medium gap
 - It has created a small gap
 - It has created no gap
 - Undecided
6. The number and distribution level of the private press is lower when compared with the situation during the 2005 national election. How do you see the gap that this situation has created at national level ?
- It has created a big gap
 - It has created a medium gap
 - It has created a small gap
 - It has created no gap
 - Undecided
7. How do you evaluate the performance of the private press in Ethiopia from 1992 until 2005 in terms of satisfying the information need of the society, creating a channel for the free exchange of ideas and in terms of the role that press or media play in a country?
- They had a big role
 - They had a medium role
 - They had a small role

d. They had no role

e. Undecided

8. What do you think are the strengths of the private press in Ethiopia ?

a. The ability to provide information on timely burning issues and play heir watch dog role

b. The ability to perform their duties within a challenging situation (legal economic and other) challenges

c. The ability to do their jobs courageously

d. Addressing critical national issues by giving considerable attention and indicated solutions for the problems

e. If Other please mention-----

9. What do you think is /are the major internal challenge/challenges of the private press in Ethiopia ?

a. Lack of professional competence among journalists and problems with regard to content and presentation

b. Failing to provide an accurate and balanced information and report

c. Lack of professional ethics and responsibility

d. Problems with regard to institutional and financial capacity

e. If Other please mention-----

10. What do you think is /are the major external challenge or challenges of the

Private press in Ethiopia?

a. The low level of development with regard to democratic culture

b. The low level of audience participation and support

- c. The bad pressure from the government
- d. Problems with regard to market and publishing
- e. The absence of many institutions for journalism training and education

11. Most of the private press in Ethiopia have been criticized for lacking balance in the content and presentation of their reports that they do not report positive changes. What do say about this criticism ?

- a. I strongly agree
- b. Neutral (I partially agree)
- c. I disagree
- d. I strongly disagree
- e. Undecided

12. How do you see the role private press play in a country?

It plays a key role for the development of freedom of expression and democracy

- a. It plays a key role for the development of freedom of expression and democracy
- b. It plays a key role for the realization of multi faceted development of a country
- c. It plays a key role in solving the problems in the society
- d. It plays a key role in terms of providing the necessary information and knowledge
- E. All of the above

13. How do you see the media environment in the country in terms of enabling the private press do an effective job and play a meaningful role?

- a. There is a favorable environment
- b. There is a partially challenging and partially favorable environment

- c. There is a very favorable environment
 - d. There is a difficult environment
 - e. There is a very difficult environment
14. . How do you see the role that journalists have in a country?
- a. Journalists have a bigger responsibility than other parts of the society
 - b. The level of responsibility journalist have is equal to that of other parts of the society
 - c. Journalists have a smaller responsibility than the other parts of the society
 - d. The role of journalists is of a medium level
 - e. Undecided
15. A person who has a low income or one with low living standard should be concerned about the right to freedom of expression and democracy.
- a. I strongly agree
 - b. I agree
 - c. Neutral (I partially agree)
 - d. I disagree
 - e. I strongly disagree
16. How does your experience look like with regard to reading private newspapers and magazines that have contents on serious political issues for example in work place or recreation centers ?
- a. I read with freedom
 - b. I read with a feeling of insecurity

c. I do not read newspapers and magazines that have such content

d. I do not read newspapers on those kinds of places

e. other please specify

17. if your answer for question number 16 is a, b, c or d please mention the reason

18. other than the private newspapers and magazines do you read articles on current political social and economic issues posted on the social media? Please mention the reason.-----

19. what is/are your favourite private newspaper/s magazine or magazines? please mention your reason-----

20. what do you think the private press, the audience and the government should do in order that the private press be able to contribute something for the country and the people?

Private newspapers and magazines -----

The public-----

The government-----

Appendix Two

Interview Questions

1. How do you describe the current media situation in Ethiopia?
2. What do you understand about the role of journalists?
3. What do you think are the responsibilities of journalists?
4. How do you evaluate the performance of the private press in Ethiopia before 2005?
5. What is your view on the criticism often made on the private press in Ethiopia for lacking balance ? How do you understand the concept of balance in media reporting ?
6. What gaps do you think the current media situation has created on the public's information need?
7. What gaps do you think the current media situation has created on the public's information need?
8. What is your view on the criticism often made on journalists of the private press for lacking professional ethical discipline?
9. What do you think is / are the major internal challenge/s of the private press?
10. What do you think is / are the major external challenge/s of the private press?
11. How do you see the readership and level of audience participation in the media since 2005 ?
12. How do you describe the development of democratic culture in the country?
13. What do you say about the role of the social media ?

14. Most private newspapers and magazines in Ethiopia have been criticized for lacking a professional analytic quality in their content and presentation. What is your view on this criticism?
15. What do you think the private press the audience and the government should do in order that the private press contribute something for Ethiopia and its people ?

List of Informants

Informant 1- TamiratHailua Journalist and Owner of Kumneger Amharic Magazine

Informant 2- Abdulkadir Mohammed- Journalist Who has Worked in Different Private Press institutions

Informant 3- A Newspaper Vendor

Informant 4- A Post Graduate Student of Journalism and Communication and also worked as a media monitoring officer

Informant 5- An audience

Informant 6- Ato Deresa Terefe, Director of the Directorate for Media Monitoring and Capacity Building Ethiopian Broadcast Authority

The Interviews were Conducted on

with Informant number 1 November 2015,

with informant number 2 November 2015

with informant number 3 December 2015,

with informant number 4 January 2016

with informant number 5 January10 2016.

with informant number 6 August 2016.

Declaration

I the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all sources of materials used for this study have been appropriately acknowledged.

Name: Tamirat Mechale

Signature _____

Date of submission December, 2016

Place of submission: Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia