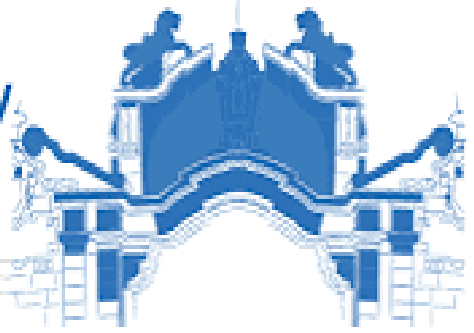




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***Analysis of Local Television Coverage of Religious Conflicts:  
The EOTC Case Infocus***

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**June, 2025**

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EOTC Case Infocus*

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Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in  
Journalism and Communication (Multi Media)**

**June, 2025**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

## **Declaration**

I, Biruk Askenaw Zeleke, hereby declare that this thesis which is entitled “*Analysis of local Television coverage of religious conflicts: the EOTC case Infocus*” is my original work, and has not been submitted for any degree in any other university or institution; and that all sources of material used for the thesis have duly been acknowledged.

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## ***Abstract***

*This thesis examines how Ethiopian mainstream media have reported religious conflicts, with a focus on the recent division within the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC). Specifically, it evaluates the reporting practices of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC), Asham Television, and Prime Television in terms of fairness, impartiality, factual accuracy, and professionalism. The study employed a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. A structured questionnaire was administered to 110 respondents across Addis Ababa, and in-depth interviews were conducted with 9 news room editors, media professionals and regulatory bodies. In addition, a content analysis news stories from the three media outlets was carried out. The findings indicate that a majority of the audience perceived the media coverage as inaccurate, biased, and lacking objectivity. Interviews and content analysis further revealed editorial limitations, insufficient access to information, political interference, and the sensitive nature of religious topics as key challenges to balanced reporting. The study concludes that the selected media outlets did not meet the expected journalistic standards in covering the EOTC incident, Ultimately, Ethiopian mainstream media have fallen short of their responsibility to inform the public fairly and professionally, and recommends systemic reforms to promote more inclusive, factual, and neutral reporting on religious matters. It recommends capacity-building for journalists, adherence to editorial guidelines, and greater transparency and inclusivity in reporting religious issues.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background**

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) is one of the oldest Christian institutions in the world and holds a unique position among Oriental Orthodox Churches due to its deep integration with Ethiopian history, identity, and culture. Scholars have long traced the origins of Christianity in Ethiopia to the apostolic age, with the earliest reference found in the Book of Acts, describing the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip (Ullendorff, 1960). This narrative is often cited as evidence of the early Christian presence in the region.

The formal establishment of Christianity in Ethiopia, however, is widely attributed to the 4th century, under King Ezana of the Aksumite Empire, who declared Christianity the state religion after being converted by Frumentius, a Syrian Christian missionary. Frumentius was later consecrated as the first bishop of Ethiopia, known as Abba Salama, by the Patriarch of Alexandria (Marcus, 1994). This event marked the beginning of the Ethiopian Church's historical dependence on the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, which appointed its bishops until the mid-20th century (Binns, 2016).

The introduction of Christianity as the state religion of Ethiopia came about not as the result of organized evangelical activity from outside the country, but because it was the desire of the king. The story of the conversion of the Axumites has come down to us in the work of the contemporary Church historian, Rufinus (d 410 A.D).

Since its foundation, the leadership of the EOTC was divided between two figures: a foreigner, the Egyptian Metropolitan bishop or Abun, and a priest king, the King of Kings (Stéphane Ancel and Éloi Ficquet, 2016). According to them neither could claim to exert full religious authority since, in the eyes of the kingdom's ecclesiastics, the King was always suspected of being involved with political interests and the bishop represented a distant hierarchy subject to Egypt's Islamic authorities. Local responses to this ambiguous situation generated a decentralized organization founded on monastic networks. In theory, the highest authority of the Ethiopian Church was the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria.

Since the consecration of Saint Frumentius as the first Metropolitan bishop of Ethiopia by Saint Athanasius around the beginning of the fourth century AD, the bishop of Ethiopia or Abun had to be selected from among Egyptian monks and consecrated by the patriarch. Thus, upon the death of each Metropolitan bishop, the Ethiopian kings had to send ambassadors to Egypt with valuable gifts to ensure not only that the patriarch elevated a monk to the episcopal see and sent him to Ethiopia, but also, from the seventh century, that the transaction was endorsed by the Egyptian Muslim authorities (Stéphane Ancel and Éloi Ficquet, 2016).

Ethiopia is a multi-religious country with a population of more than 100 million people where religion is a very sensitive topic for the nation. Christianity and Islam are the two dominant religions in the country. According to the national census conducted in 2007, over 32 million people or 43.5% were reported to be Ethiopian Orthodox Christians (Sileshie 2018).

In recent years, there have been a number of tensions and conflicts related to religious issues in the country. This has led to concerns about the role of the media in covering religious issue tensions or conflicts. There are many religious tensions that have arisen in the country over the recent years; This study will explore how the main stream media reported the religious tensions that occurred in Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church from January 22/2023 to February 18/2023. The “Ethiopian peace observatory” which is a non-profit organization specializing in disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping and serve as a dedicated platform for governments, media, civil society, and the public to access reliable information and analysis about political violence and unrest across the country describe the situation as follows.

According to the Ethiopian peace observatory (EPA) report, the tension begun, when Archbishop Abune Sawiros, along with two other archbishops, appointed 26 bishops in Haro Beale Wold Church in Woliso town in South West Shewa zone, Oromia region, and announced the establishment of the ‘Holy Synod of Oromia and Nations and Nationalities,’ without approval from the EOTC synod (EPA) . The new group stated that these appointments were necessary to resolve the long-lasting shortcomings of the church in serving believers in their native languages (EPA). The new synod also accused the EOTC synod of appointing its leadership from mostly “one group” and failing to be all-inclusive.

The EOTC synod, meanwhile, accused the new synod of not following the church's dogma, labeled the Holy Synod of Oromia and Nations and Nationalities "illegal," and excommunicated the three archbishops and 25 of the appointed bishops. The EOTC synods also outlawed negotiations with the group led by Abune Sawiros on the grounds of it "indirectly breaking the dogma of the church."

The researcher selected the issue because it is one of the biggest issue that the EOTC has faced in history that may split the church and also most of the followers of the faith; were involved in a wide range of activities on social media platforms that could lead the country to serious problems; and this thesis aims to assess how the main stream media cover the situation.

### **1.1.1. Ethiopian broadcasting corporation**

Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation is the leading public media in the country. It has served as the media institution since from 1927 in radio and television since from 1957 (EBC, 2019). During these long years, it has managed to organize historical events on a variety of political, economic, social, cultural, art, and cultural occasions, both nationally and internationally (EBC, 2019).

According to EBC's human resource data the channel has more than 2,200 permanent staff at the Head Office and its regional branches across the country. The corporation broadcast messages to the public through three channels; the ETV News Channel which host a 24-hour newscast, news program and documentary using its more than 74 terrestrial transmitters including satellite. At the same time, the ETV Entertainment Channel is a channel where only entertainment, children and sports are offered. The ETV languages channel is a channel that highlights news and programs in a variety of domestic and foreign languages. ETV languages offers a variety of programs including Oromifa, Tigrigna, Afarigna, Somaligna, English, French, Arabic and sign language news. ETV Sports TV is another sports channel that hosts a variety of international sports events in terrestrial coverage. There for it is still delivering information through three television channels and three radio channels with a total of 110 TV broadcasting stations and 9 medium wave and 17 FM radio stations in various parts of the country.

### **1.1.2. Asham Television**

As Asham Television news room manager mentioned the channel is a privately owned media company established in 2018 G.c, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Asham Television has been provides the country's political, economic, social and cultural issues as well as international events to the audience by its news, Analysis, information and other programs for the last six years basically in two languages Amharic and English. Asham television manager mentioned the channel has established to be institution for its content which enables to carry out its mission of informing, entertaining and educating, with the motto “Asham for voice lesses”. Asham has 70 permanent employees in different departments.

### **1.1.3. Prime Media Television**

Prime Media’s deputy director explain the station is a private Media Organization based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, establishes in 2020 that aims to educate, entertain, inspire & empower people according to the station’s data. According to the director’s explanation the main goal of this television is priming; an act of exposing the audience to accurate information to influence their behavior that they won’t be influenced by wrong information and its mission is to provide research-based accurate information & analysis that educate, entertain, inspire & empower the audience with the aspire to be the “Voice of Reason” in the East African region. This media organization disseminates its programs through five local and international languages, which are Amharic, Oromifa, Swahili, Arabic and English. Prime media has 32 permanent and 6 freelancer employees.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

According to Mulatu (2022) the number of broadcast medium in Ethiopia has grown considerably. The Ethiopian media have become ethnically polarized (Skjerdal and Mulatu, 2021). The researchers mentioned Journalists report conflict and political issues through their ethnic lens. They tend to either annihilate or report the stories through an ‘othering’ frame. They exercise what could be called ‘floating professionalism’ (Skjerdal and Mulatu, 2021).

An unbiased understanding of religion is especially important when covering religious tensions or conflicts. Skjerdal (2017), in his study on the profile of the Ethiopian journalist population, also points out that just over 90 percent of Ethiopian journalists belong to a religion. However, he argues that the religious composition of journalists does not reflect the beliefs of the general population. The way a journalist reports or cover a particular religious belief or practice may differ from the perspective of members of that particular religious group. This could be misleading. Journalists who are not theologians should leave the interpretation of religious texts, specific words, traditions, doctrines, practices, and belief systems to experts and religious authorities Lundby (2018). It is therefore a necessary element that journalists must consider when documenting the world and explaining it to their readers. In recent years, many media critics have argued that mainstream media virtually ignore evidence of religion. Several studies have investigated how newspapers report religious news.

However, little is known about how television news programs cover religious figures, events, issues, and activities. However, many media critics argue that mainstream media misses the mark by ignoring, avoiding, or dismissing the importance of religion. Garry Wills (1991), argues that journalists have not learned enough about the importance of religion's role in politics.

Although the mass media has a professional ethics and responsibility to report the happenings in the country, it is observed that some medias report in a way that deviates from the professional ethics, in unbalanced, biased way and some medias ignore the situation and they just pass it by in silence as if nothing happened at all (Powell,2018). Scholars such as Asogwa and Asemah (2012) argue that in times of such religious tensions and conflicts, all media outlets must take responsibility for balanced and fair reporting to demonstrate the professional ethics of journalists.

However, issues of balance and fairness in journalism have been questioned in many aspects, including religion (Alatas, 2005; Salim, 2010).This problem with balanced reporting can be seen in modern media messages, especially in the way they manipulate information. Powell (2018) argued that the important rule of fact-based, fair and balanced reporting has led to the exposure of prejudice, stereotypes, fear and hatred. This type of media portrayal of religion is worrying because it reproduces fear and tension rather than promoting peace and tolerance (Rupar, 2012).

Marshall (2009) argues that “journalism that ignores or dismisses the role of religion in our common life misses the greatest stories of our time”. According to Shah and Toft (2009), religion is now an important and growing element in major news stories about human issues around the world. Lundby (2018) argues that religious journalism is the reporting of religious issues in regular news outlets, and that journalists take a special approach to religion based on shared values such as democracy and human rights.

In a country like Ethiopia, where religion is a highly sensitive issue, mainstream media plays an important role in shaping public opinion on religious issues. However, there are concerns that the media is not always sensitive to the religious sensitivities of various groups; this can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts (Stout, 2012). Various master's graduates of Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communication have also treated religion and media as important aspects of their research (Gebru, 2012; Tamrat, 2008; Tsehay, 2014; Berhanu, 2013; Girmachew, 2013; Henok, 2013; Mohamedaman, 2012;). Berhanu (2013)'s focused analysis of the religious content of print media in selected national and international events shows that Protestant churches receive little attention compared to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church. A study by Tamrat (2008) investigated the history of a Christian radio station called Yemisirach Dimts. Girmachew (2013) study on public trust in mainstream media in Ethiopia found that 47.8 percent of Christians and 64.1 percent of Muslims do not trust mainstream media in Ethiopia. The mass media have a professional ethics and responsibility to report the happenings in the country and serving the people by providing fair, balanced and accurate stories in a responsible manner. Media laws, policies, and ethical standards play a crucial role in guiding journalists on how to report sensitive issues. This section of the study will examine pertinent legal frameworks and media policies related to religion and faith-based broadcasting.

As part of a broader reform agenda targeting repressive laws affecting democratic institutions, the judiciary, and the media, the new Ethiopian government established the Legal and Justice Affairs Advisory Council (LJAAC) in mid-2018. One of the council's key responsibilities was to recommend revisions to laws governing civil society, media operations, access to information, and anti-terrorism legislation. In line with these reform efforts, the Ethiopian Parliament enacted Media Proclamation No. 1238/2021, aiming to uphold the rights to freedom of expression and media, rights that had been severely restricted under the previous EPRDF administration.

This new proclamation has been commended for its progressive approach compared to earlier media laws. Notably, it decriminalizes defamation and establishes the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA), tasked with licensing, regulating, and overseeing the broadcasting sector.

The legislation also emphasizes the need for diverse and inclusive media content, encouraging the representation of multiple perspectives on political, ethnic, and religious matters. Broadcasters are expected to present a balanced range of views on potentially divisive issues like religion. Public service media, in particular, are required to reflect Ethiopia's religious and sociopolitical diversity in their programming. Above all, mainstream media are mandated to promote national unity by fostering shared constitutional values. Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation No. 1185/2020 can also be taken as part of the regulatory apparatus on media practice. Its preamble notes that the proclamation is necessary to prevent and counter deliberate dissemination of hate speech and disinformation. Hate speech and disinformation are genuine threats to social harmony in Ethiopia, hence the proclamation, in principle, is justified. However, in practice it suffers from an unclear distinction between hatred and a critical view, hence the proclamation is open for manipulation by the government and other key stakeholders to stifle critical views against for example politics and religion.

Focusing on the rift within the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, this study tries to address several intriguing research gap; according to Media Framing and Public Perception, How does the mainstream media frame the internal conflict within the Church? Does this framing influence public understanding and opinion on the issue? How do religious communities perceive the media's coverage? Accuracy and Balance: To what extent does the media coverage accurately and impartially represent the complexities of the conflict, presenting diverse perspectives and avoiding bias? Are there instances of sensationalism or misrepresentation?

Religious issues have increasingly become flashpoints for tension, with incidents including the burning of several churches and religion's institutions, so the research aims to explore current trends in journalistic practices as they pertain to religious issues.

Hence, by addressing the aforementioned research gaps, this study will contribute valuable insights into the media's role in shaping public understanding of religious issues in Ethiopia.

## **1.3. Research Objective**

### **1.3.1. General Objective**

This research intends to assess the main stream media's coverage of religious conflicts: by focusing on the recent EOTC case.

### **1.3.2 The Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this research paper are to:

- ✓ Find out if the selected media have reported the issue in a fair and impartial manner.
- ✓ Examine if journalists provide depth and interpretative stories about the issue.
- ✓ Examine the extent to which the selected media's reports were factual and evidence based.
- ✓ Assess the extent to which the media reports were sensitive to the needs of the nations.

## **1.4. Research Questions**

The following research questions will be addressed in this study:

1. Did the selected media have report the issue in a fair and impartial manner?
2. Were the selected media's reports factual and evidence based?
3. How sensitive were the media reports to the needs of the religion's followers and followers of other religion?

## **1.5. Significance of the Study**

Moreover, the findings of this study can inform policymakers, media regulators, and newsroom managers in developing more effective guidelines and training programs for conflict-sensitive reporting. It may also provide other researchers with ideas that are useful for their studies in the area and also adds to the academic discourse on media, religion, and conflict in pluralistic societies, offering empirical data and analysis that can support peace building efforts and promote responsible media practices.

By assessing the practices of mainstream media in covering religious conflicts, this research contributes to a better understanding of how journalistic norms, ethics, and professional standards are being applied in such sensitive contexts. It also sheds light on the challenges journalists face when reporting religious matters, including political pressure, lack of training, and audience polarization.

## **1.6. Scope of the Study**

The researcher selected the national media Ethiopian broadcasting corporation, and two private medias; Asham Television, and Prime Media Television. Accordingly, the researcher will purposefully sample and analyze news reports that will give sufficient comprehension of the news coverage and preferences of the selected media during the sample period.

In terms of time frame, the study covers occurrences of the situation from January 22/2023 up to February 22/ 2023.

## **1.7. Limitations of the study**

The study aimed to examine the national media and two privately owned Media in case of their framing approaches of the selected issue; Due to constraints, such as time, resources and research experience, the study was limited to the selected media outlets.

Access to media archives and complete data was another challenge, particularly in cases where sensitive or controversial content had been removed or censored. So the researcher used institutional partnerships between the university and the TV stations, by using formal letters that mention the data's were only for academic purpose, tries to get the necessary data and information.

In addition, the tense political and religious climate during the study period posed challenges for open dialogue. Some interviewees were cautious or reluctant to share sensitive opinions. The researcher addressed this by ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, building trust with participants, and choosing neutral, non-confrontational language in both interviews and the write-up. Interviews were conducted at times and locations preferred by participants to ensure their comfort and security.

While the study faced notable limitations, the researcher took careful steps to mitigate their effects and ensure that the findings remain credible, balanced, and valuable for future scholarly and policy discussions.

## **1.8. Theoretical frame work**

This study draws on three interrelated theories agenda-setting, framing, and social responsibility to examine how local television stations covered the conflict involving the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC). Together, these theories provide a conceptual foundation for understanding not only the media's role in conflict reporting but also how such coverage shapes public perception in a religiously and politically sensitive society.

Agenda-setting theory, introduced by McCombs and Shaw (1972), holds that media influence what the public thinks about by giving more visibility to selected issues. In the EOTC case, this theory helps analyze how certain themes such as ethnic tensions, government-church relations, or national unity were prioritized in the news. The prominence of these themes directly affects how audiences perceive the importance and urgency of the religious conflict.

Framing theory, articulated by Goffman (1974) and further developed by Entman (1993), explores how media not only tell people what to think about, but also how to think about it. The choice of frames whether portraying the church as a victim, a political actor, or a stabilizing force shapes the interpretive lens through which the public understands the conflict. These frames can activate certain cultural, emotional, or political responses among audiences, influencing their attitudes toward both the church and the government.

Social Responsibility Theory, stemming from the Hutchins Commission Report (1947), emphasizes the media's ethical duty to serve the public good, especially in diverse and conflict-prone societies. This theory is crucial in assessing whether the Ethiopian media acted responsibly by promoting peace, balanced reporting, and inter-religious understanding—or whether their coverage deepened polarization. Public trust in the media often depends on this perceived responsibility.

Importantly, all three theories are linked by their relevance to public perception. Agenda-setting shapes what issues are seen as salient; framing influences how those issues are interpreted; and social responsibility sets the standards by which the public judges the credibility and fairness of media coverage. In contexts of religious tension, such as the EOTC conflict, public perception becomes a decisive factor in whether media coverage contributes to resolution, misperception, or escalation.

### **1.9. Organization of the study**

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, scope of the study, limitation of the study and significance of the study. This chapter also summarizes the theoretical frame work of the study. The second chapter encompasses the review of related literature which deals with scholarly opinions supporting the study. Chapter three focuses on the research method, design, data collection instruments, and sampling and data analysis procedures employed in the study. Under Chapter four, data presentation and analysis and the findings of both qualitative and quantitative analysis are discussed to answer the major research questions in relation to the theoretical frame work of the study. The final chapter, which is chapter five, consists of summary, conclusions and recommendations

# CHAPTER TWO

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Framing Theory

Entman (1999) defines framing as selecting “some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text.” According to him, frames perform four key functions: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies. These functions demonstrate how media narratives are not neutral conveyors of information but active constructors of social reality.

Other scholars, such as Gitlin (2001), argue that media frames are both organizational tools for journalists and ideological instruments that reflect power dynamics in society. Frames not only influence how audiences think about issues (second-level agenda-setting or “framing effects”) but also determine which topics are given visibility in the first place (first-level agenda-setting).

**Research has identified various common media frames, including:**

- Conflict Frame emphasizing disagreement or tension between parties (Lee & Maslog, 2005).
- Human Interest Frame – focusing on personal stories and emotional angles (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).
- Responsibility Frame – attributing blame or credit to individuals, institutions, or society.
- Morality Frame – placing issues within a moral or religious context.
- Economic Frame – highlighting financial or economic implications.
- These frames can affect how the public perceives political events, social issues, and intergroup relations, including religious conflicts.

### 2.2 Framing and Religion in Media

When it comes to religion, media framing becomes even more consequential due to the sensitive and often polarizing nature of faith-based issues. According to Hoover (2006), religion in the media is often portrayed through simplified narratives that either sanctify or demonize religious actors. Studies show that religious groups are frequently framed through conflict or deviance frames, especially when they are involved in political or social unrest (Baker, 2009).

In contexts like Ethiopia, where religion and national identity are deeply intertwined, media framing of religious conflict can exacerbate tensions or promote peace, depending on the narrative choices made. The way the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) is portrayed in news coverage whether as a stabilizing institution or a source of division reflects broader framing decisions that can influence public opinion and policy responses.

While much research has explored framing in Western and conflict-prone contexts, limited studies focus specifically on how religious conflicts are framed in Ethiopian mainstream media. There is also a lack of audience-focused framing studies that examine how different communities interpret media narratives about religious institutions like the EOTC.

Framing remains a powerful analytical tool for understanding how media shape public perception and discourse. In the context of religious conflict, media framing can contribute to peace building or deepen division depending on the salience, tone, and angle of coverage. Given Ethiopia's religious diversity and history of inter-religious tension, examining media frames is essential for assessing the role of journalism in either mitigating or aggravating conflict.

### **2.3 Public Perception**

Public perception refers to the collective attitudes, beliefs, and interpretations that individuals or communities develop about a specific issue, event, or institution. In media studies, public perception is often studied to understand how media messages influence knowledge, emotions, and behavior. McCombs and Shaw's (1998) agenda-setting theory suggests that while media may not tell people what to think, they strongly influence what to think about. In contrast, framing theory suggests that media can shape how people think about it.

Studies on public perception of religious coverage often show a skeptical or critical view of media neutrality. For instance, Hoover (2006) notes that religious audiences often feel misrepresented or stereotyped by secular media. This is particularly evident in conflict-sensitive environments where religious identity is politicized.

In the Ethiopian context, religion is deeply tied to national identity and community cohesion. When media narratives appear to delegitimize or undermine major institutions like the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC), public backlash can be significant.

Anecdotal and preliminary studies indicate that many Ethiopians perceive the media as either politicized or under pressure from dominant political forces, especially when covering sensitive religious issues.

Public perception is also shaped by trust in media institutions. According to Tsfaty and Cappella (2003), perceived media bias can lead to "hostile media effect," where audiences believe coverage is unfair, even when it's balanced. In polarized societies, different groups may interpret the same news story in completely opposite ways based on their pre-existing views.

In Ethiopia, the erosion of trust in both government-owned and some private media has been observed in various studies and public surveys, especially during times of religious or political unrest. Religious communities particularly when they feel under attack may reject media narratives they perceive as hostile, even if those narratives are based on verified facts.

How the public perceives media coverage has direct consequences for social stability. When media are seen as fair, balanced, and inclusive, they can help mediate conflict. Conversely, if they are viewed as partial or inflammatory, media coverage can fuel grievances and social polarization. Therefore, understanding public perception is essential for evaluating the ethical and social role of journalism in religiously diverse societies like Ethiopia.

## **2.4 Media and Conflicts**

Conflict occurs when two or more parties (individuals or groups) believe that their interests, goals, or ambitions are incompatible, express hostile attitudes, or take action that damages other parties' ability to pursue their interests (Friedrich Naumann Stiftung für die Freiheit, 2017). Also different scholars agree Conflict is an inevitable and customary part of our daily lives, and everyone has to experience some kind of conflict, internal or external. Conflict could occur within families, communities, workplaces, nations, regions, and indeed, within individuals, as conflict mainly takes place within relationships and the nature of these relationships influences the way conflicts to play out (UNESCO, 2012 ).

Media regularly plays a key part in today's struggle. As the Council of Europe (2021) pointed out, at whatever point announcing on clashes or conflict is made, the plausibility of bettering or declining life for the individuals included is clear.

The part of the media can take two diverse and contradicting shapes. In that, either the media takes an dynamic portion within the strife and has duty for expanded viciousness, or remains autonomous and out of the strife, subsequently contributing to the determination of struggle and lightening of savagery (IMS, 2006).

When conflicts impact the environment, it become more difficult to resolve and can lead to violent crises and wars (Lamle, 2015). Security challenges are becoming more diverse and fragmented, posing a greater threat than ever to global peace and stability, and the causes of conflict and the relationship between security and conflict management from a global perspective are becoming increasingly important.

Mulatu (2017) notes that the mass media mostly plays a key part in today's strife or conflict. Mulatu sees the modern media is regularly the foremost critical channel of communication that exists between sides in strife. He states at some of the time one side broadcast threatening messages utilizing the media, and at other times, the parties talk to each other through the media or particular writers. Harris (2004) contends that media reports may deescalate or heighten the pressure playing both helpful and damaging parts amid clashes. Whereas media played a positive part within the Northern Ireland struggle, it activated and escalates the Rwanda genocide of 1994 and the Yugoslavia War of 1996-1999 (Ibid). Dependable and proficient media that gives precise and adjusted data seem play a positive part in making strategy, advancing peace, and building bridges between warring groups (Bratic and Schirch, 2007) cited in (Melkamu, 2017). Howard (2003) cited in (Mulatu, 2017) recognizes vital perspectives of the media that might play urgent part in strife determination.

## **2.5 Conflict Sensitive Reporting**

According to the UN (2022), conflict sensitivity is fundamentally about how all interventions operate in a context based on sound analysis, awareness of peace and conflict dynamics, and with attention to unintended consequences. The UNDP (2017) viewed conflict sensitivity as a way of working requiring the media and its actors to understand the context in which they operate, understand how their program interact with that context and adapt their program to minimize negative results from interaction and maximize positive results.

Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (2004) defines Conflict sensitivity as systematically taking into account both the positive and negative impacts of interventions, in terms of conflict or peace dynamics, on the contexts in which they are undertaken, and conversely, the implications of these contexts for the design and implementation of interventions. Conflict Sensitivity in its media setting can be viewed as the ability to understand the context, meaning all socio-economic and political tensions, root causes, cultural and historical backgrounds as well as structural factors, in which the media is operating, because they all have the potential to become violent; understand the interaction between your intervention and the context; act upon the understanding of this interaction, to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts (Conflict and Development Analysis, 2009). In that, media participants are assumed to be cognizant of the context they are working in, and clearly get it the interface between their intruding and the context whereas reliably adjusting engagements pointed at minimizing the negative and capitalizing on the helpful angles of their covering.

As summarized by Ross (2009), conflict-sensitive reporting is an indication of how the news media is modernizing its regional values. Its foundation is the idea that, in many societies, the news media may play a significant role in mitigating the core causes of conflict and empowering communities that are already under stress to seek conflict resolution more effectively. In order to better comprehend conflict and the media's involvement in it, the media should train its journalists. By avoiding stereotypes and constrained viewpoints regarding the origins and dynamics of conflict, a journalist might improve their reporting. Through enhanced reporting, the media can facilitate a more extensive conversation amongst various factions within the conflicting community. Simultaneously, it has the ability to investigate and offer details regarding potential solutions.

## **2.6 Media and Religion**

The intersection of media and religion has been widely studied as both domains significantly influence public consciousness and social dynamics. Scholars agree that the media play a crucial role in shaping how religion is perceived, practiced, and discussed in public life (Hoover, 2006). In contemporary society, religion is no longer confined to sacred spaces; rather, it is increasingly mediated and represented through various forms of mass communication, including television, radio, newspapers, and digital platforms (Lövheim, 2011).

Media coverage of religion can serve multiple functions: informing the public, fostering interfaith understanding, or, conversely, reinforcing stereotypes and deepening divisions (Mitchell & Marriage, 2003). The framing of religious events, figures, and conflicts often reflects the political, cultural, and ideological stance of the media outlet, which can influence how audiences interpret religious diversity and tensions (Hjarvard, 2008). In societies with multiple religious identities, such as Ethiopia, the media's role becomes even more sensitive and consequential.

Research also points to the potential for media to either escalate or de-escalate religious conflict. According to Skjerdal (2011), the Ethiopian media have sometimes exhibited ethnic and religious biases, which may contribute to polarization rather than peace building. In contexts where freedom of the press is limited or where journalists lack training in conflict-sensitive reporting, religious issues can be presented in ways that amplify division.

At the same time, some studies emphasize the positive potential of media in promoting dialogue and mutual respect among different faith communities. Peace journalism and ethical reporting frameworks encourage media professionals to move beyond sensationalism and provide balanced, context-aware coverage of religious issues (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

Despite the growing literature, there is still a gap in understanding how mainstream media in specific national contexts, such as Ethiopia, navigate the complexities of religious conflict reporting. This study contributes to that gap by assessing the trends, challenges, and professional practices involved in the media's coverage of religious issues in Ethiopia.

## **2.7. Religious Conflict and Media**

The role of media in religious conflict has gained increasing due to its power to influence public perception, shape narratives, and potentially escalate or de-escalate tensions. Media outlets, through their framing and coverage, often act as intermediaries between religious groups and the broader public, with significant implications for peace or polarization (Brinkerhoff, 2009).

Studies indicate that the way media report religious issues can either foster mutual understanding or fuel conflict. According to Hjarvard (2008), the media may secularize or reshape religious discourse by framing it within political, ethnic, or nationalistic agendas.

In societies where religion is closely tied to identity such as Ethiopia this can contribute to deeper divisions if coverage is biased or inflammatory.

Skjerdal and Mulatu (2021) argue that in the Ethiopian context, religious and ethnic issues are often intertwined in media reporting, leading to polarized narratives. Their findings suggest that some outlets, whether intentionally or not, align their coverage with specific religious or ethnic groups, further aggravating tensions. This aligns with global research showing that sensationalist or biased media reporting can increase the likelihood of conflict, especially when reporting is not balanced or lacks contextual understanding (Galtung, 2000).

However, the media also have the potential to contribute positively to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The concept of peace journalism, introduced by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), encourages journalists to report in ways that avoid stereotypes, reduce fear, and highlight peaceful alternatives. Applying such approaches to religious conflict reporting can help prevent escalation and support social cohesion.

Despite these perspectives, there remains a lack of in-depth research in the Global South, particularly in countries like Ethiopia, where the media landscape is rapidly evolving. The current study contributes to this gap by examining how mainstream Ethiopian media cover religious conflicts, the challenges they face, and the implications for social stability.

## **2.8. Peace Journalism**

Considered the “fourth pillar of democracy,” the media plays a vital role in promoting peace and peace building. The media can play a variety of roles in different ways to bring about peace and normalcy. The media can act as whistleblowers, help build trust, facilitate negotiations, and can also break diplomatic deadlocks (Bratic and Schirch, 2007).

Conflict arises when two or more parties (individuals or groups) believe that their interests, goals or ambitions are incompatible, display hostile attitudes or take actions that harm the ability of other parties to pursue their interests (Friedrich Naumann Stiftung für die Freiheit, 2017). Conflict can arise in families, communities, workplaces, countries, regions and even within individuals, because conflict occurs primarily in relationships and the nature of those relationships influences how conflict unfolds (UNESCO, 2012).

The media play a vital role in facilitating conflict or peace (Parischa 2015; Coronel 2003; Hamelink 2008). Media can play an extraordinary role in conflicts by inciting or escalating them, managing them through quality reporting, and finding solutions that lead to peaceful outcomes. In this regard, the media can work in both directions, either to fuel violence and conflict or to establish peace and stability. When conflict occurs, media coverage can empower people to make important decisions, promote greater understanding between adversaries, and allow communities to share concerns. But they can also fuel fear and hatred, reinforce misunderstandings, and damage the prospects for peace. Media can defuse social conflict and promote reconciliation (Coronel 2003; Hamelink 2008). The media also provide warring parties with mechanisms for reconciliation, representation, to be voice, and platforms for peaceful dispute resolution. In conflict prevention and management, they are information providers and interpreters, gatekeepers, policy makers and diplomats, peacemakers and bridge builders (Bratic and Schirch 2007).

As Puddephatt (2006) argues, the role of the media in a given conflict depends on a complex set of factors including their relationship with the conflicting actors and their independence from those in power in society. When used properly, the media can be a force for peace building, democratization, and development. But in the wrong hands, it can become a dangerous tool that can fuel hatred and lead to violent conflict (Admire Mare, 2019). The media can only be said to work towards conflict resolution and peace building when it reports news reliably, presents a balanced perspective in all its content, identifies the balanced interests of all participants and clearly presents the fundamental interests of the conflicting parties without bias, works in a healthy and free environment, and has a moral and ethical responsibility in resolving conflicts (IJESRR, 2014).

## **2.9. Normative Theory**

According to the Social Responsibility Theory, the media have an ethical duty to serve the public by providing accurate, fair, and balanced information. In this view, media should help promote tolerance, democracy, and peace especially when dealing with sensitive issues like religion. This makes normative theory highly relevant for analyzing how media should report religious conflict.

In contexts like Ethiopia, where religious and ethnic sensitivities are high, normative expectations often clash with political pressure, commercial interests, or lack of journalistic capacity. As Skjerdal (2012) notes, Ethiopian journalists may struggle to practice professional neutrality due to ideological or institutional constraints.

Thus, the normative theory framework provides a lens through which to assess whether media institutions fulfill their ethical roles, particularly in conflict-sensitive environments.

A normative media theory explains how a media system should operate in order to conform to or realize a set of ideal social values (Stanley J. Baran, 2010). As such, its ontology argues that what is known is situational (or, like interpretive theory, local). In other words, what is real or knowable about a media system is real or knowable only for the specific social system in which that system exists. Its epistemology, how knowledge is developed and advanced, is based in comparative analysis we can only judge (and therefore understand) the worth of a given media system in comparison to the ideal espoused by the particular social system in which it operates. Finally, normative theory's axiology is, by definition, value-laden. Study of a media system or parts of a media system is undertaken in the explicit belief that there is an ideal mode of operation based in the values of the social system. Theorists interested in the press's role in a democracy would most likely employ normative theory, as would those examining the operation of the media in an Islamic republic or an authoritarian state. Problems arise if media systems based on one normative theory are evaluated according to the norms or ideals of another normative theory (Stanley J. Baran, 2010).

## **2.10. Professionalization of Journalism**

### **2.10.1. Journalistic Ethics**

Many scholars, when defining ethics, often emphasize its connection to morality. They argue that ethics deals with moral principles and the evaluation of what is right or wrong. As Kruger (2004) points out, ethics is essentially concerned with distinguishing between right and wrong. Making moral decisions or judgments requires the consideration of various factors, with culture being a crucial one. Supporting this idea, Day (2003) explains that ethical choices are always made within specific contexts, including political, social, and cultural environments. Similarly, Ross (1968) describes ethics as establishing rules or standards for good or appropriate behavior.

Kasoma (1994) adds that journalism ethics focuses on making well-informed decisions in the practice of journalism, assuming a shared moral foundation within society. Morality, in this context, refers to actions shaped by widely accepted human values and responsibilities. Media ethics places strong emphasis on the journalist's duty to uphold both social and personal responsibility. This means that journalists are expected to report the news in a manner consistent with these commonly held values. One of the central ethical duties in journalism is to deliver truthful information to the public. Baker and Michael (2003) underline this by stating that truthfulness is among the core ethical concerns in news and information.

Kruger also links ethics to broader issues such as money, media, and power. From a political economy perspective, there is skepticism about the idea of a free, independent, and objective press. Instead, this approach views the media as serving ideological purposes that support the status quo and the interests of powerful elites. According to this view, dominant groups use the media to maintain their control and shape public discourse. Even when differing opinions are presented, they usually remain within the boundaries of dominant ideology. This perspective is echoed in Herman and Chomsky's (1988) book *Manufacturing Consent*, where they argue that media functions to promote and protect the interests of powerful groups in society.

Kruger (2004:8–10) also highlights Kasoma's argument that the dominant ethical standards in journalism are rooted in European moral frameworks, which may not fully reflect African values. Kasoma advocates for African journalists to draw from their own cultural and moral traditions. He suggests that journalism grounded in African values would be more compassionate, contrasting with what he describes as the "cold" and impersonal style of Euro-American reporting. He believes Africa has the potential to reintroduce a more human-centered approach to journalism.

### **2.10.2. Ethical News Values**

Ethical news values refer to the principles and standards that guide journalists in producing fair, accurate, and responsible news content (Kruger, 2004). These values form the foundation of professional journalism and are essential for maintaining public trust, fostering accountability, and upholding democratic processes.

## **1. Truth and Accuracy**

The most fundamental ethical value in journalism is truthfulness. Journalists are expected to verify facts before publication and avoid distortion, fabrication, or selective omission. According to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001), "journalism's first obligation is to the truth."

## **2. Independence**

Journalists must remain free from influence by political, commercial, or personal interests. Ethical independence ensures that news coverage is not shaped by sponsors, advertisers, or powerful stakeholders. The SPJ Code of Ethics (2014) emphasizes the need for journalists to "act independently."

## **3. Fairness and Impartiality**

Balanced reporting requires journalists to represent diverse perspectives and avoid bias. While complete objectivity may be unattainable, fairness means giving subjects a chance to respond and not misrepresenting their positions (Christians et al., 2009).

## **4. Humanity (Minimizing Harm)**

Journalists should respect human dignity and avoid causing unnecessary harm. This includes protecting the identities of vulnerable sources and handling sensitive topics (e.g., death, trauma, and violence) with care (Plaisance, 2009).

## **5. Accountability and Transparency**

Being accountable means admitting mistakes and correcting them promptly. Transparency in sourcing and editorial decisions helps maintain credibility and public confidence in the media (Ward, 2008).

## **6. Public Interest**

Ethical journalism serves the public by informing citizens, promoting democratic debate, and exposing wrongdoing. Journalists must balance public interest with the need to respect privacy and avoid sensationalism.

## **7. Inclusivity and Representation**

Modern journalism ethics also emphasize the importance of reflecting the diversity of society. Ethical reporting involves avoiding stereotypes and giving voice to underrepresented groups (Hanitzsch et al., 2019).

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3 RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1. Research Design

Available research designs can be broadly divided into two types: observational and interventional. Among the various observational research designs, descriptive designs are the simplest. This allows researchers to examine and explain the distribution of one or more variables without regard to causality or other hypotheses. Therefore, this study uses a descriptive research design to achieve the main objective because a descriptive study is an observational study that simply describes the distribution of characteristics. Descriptive research designs encompass a diverse range of methods, each tailored to capture unique aspects of the subject under investigation (Creswell, 2009). Descriptive research employs methods such as observations and surveys (Neuman, 2014). The strength of descriptive research lies in its ability to illuminate uncharted territories and provide valuable insights often overlooked by other research designs (Punch, 2005). Here are some of the key advantages offered by descriptive research:

**Gaining in-depth understanding:** Descriptive studies enable researchers to delve deeply into the complexities of a phenomenon, capturing its nuances and variations. This rich understanding forms the foundation for further research and intervention strategies (Neuman, 2014).

**Exploring new areas:** When venturing into uncharted territory, descriptive research serves as a pathfinder, providing essential information about the phenomenon before formulating specific hypotheses or testing relationships (Kothari, 2004).

**Identifying patterns and trends:** By examining a broad range of data, descriptive studies can reveal important patterns and trends that might not be apparent through other methods. This information can inform future research directions and policy decisions (Loeb, et al, 2017).

**Providing context for other research:** Descriptive studies often lay the groundwork for other research designs, such as experimental or correlational studies, by providing contextual understanding and identifying relevant variables for further investigation (Kothari, 2004).

## **3.2 Research Approach**

The study will use both qualitative and quantitative approach for data collecting. While the qualitative aspect involves content analysis of the selected media outlets and informant interviews with editors and reporters from the selected media outlets and academician from Addis Ababa University, the quantitative aspect involves questionnaire to get public perception from the people. This aspect is done by considering the coverage of three Ethiopian main stream media (Ethiopian broadcasting corporation, Asham Television, and Prime Television) Which is those media selected purposely to mix from governmental media and private media. Moreover, the researcher would involve in interviews of six experienced journalists from each media and one academia from Addis Ababa University and one media officer from Ethiopian Broadcast Authority.

## **3.3 Data Collection Instruments**

This study will use content analysis as a primary data collection instrument and informant interview and questionnaire as a secondary data collection instrument.

Data will collect using different techniques within such paradigm, namely content analysis, informant interviews and questionnaire. Because content analysis helps answer research questions and enhance researchers' deep understanding of a phenomenon (Shenkute, 2017). Informant interviews reveal how selected media outlets frame and report on issues also the questionnaire helps to know public perception from the people (Kvale, 1996). In the above context, this study attempts to utilize the three data collection tools to study the coverage of religious conflicts in EOTC by Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, Asham Television, and Prime Television.

### **3.3.1 Qualitative Content Analysis**

Methodological validity is important in answering research questions, and some media and communication studies lean toward content analysis, where researchers can examine the meaning of words, paragraphs, and text within the content. Content analysis is a widely used method for media reports based research because it is used to examine a wide range of data over a long period of time (Macnamara, 2006).

According to (Shenkute, 2017), content analysis techniques are well-suited to answering the whys and how's of human actions, opinions, and experiences that are difficult to quantitatively determine. Bold et al (2002) note that quantitative content analysis failed to capture the context in which media texts become meaningful. Due to this rationality, a qualitative content analysis method was found to be suitable for this study, which covered the internal dispute of EOTC over a period of one month. By using this tool, researchers describe and interpret selected media coverage trends and preferences regarding the issue.

### **3.3.2. Informant Interviews**

The qualitative interview provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail. Kvale (1996) defines qualitative research interviews as “attempts understand the world from the subject’s point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples” experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. The method enables the researcher to engage in dialogue, with the interviewee as the measuring instrument.” It is not easy to conduct good qualitative research interviews Hancock, Windridge and Ockleford (2007) note that a good interviewer needs to put an interviewee at ease, needs good listening skills and needs to be able to manage the interview situation so as to collect data that truly reflects the opinion and feeling of the interviewee concerning the chosen topic. The virtue of a qualitative interview is its openness. Apart from certain standard choices, this openness and the absence of a prescribed set of rules creates a variety of opportunities for the researcher. These opportunities demand more skills, knowledge and intuition from the interviewer compared to standardized social science methods (Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1998).

The qualitative interview is flexible, dynamic, non- directive, unstructured, non-standardized and open- ended. (Taylor and Bogadan (1984) see the qualitative interview as “repeated face- to face encounters between the researcher and informants perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations are expressed in their own words.”

Qualitative interviews are particularly suitable for studying individuals’ understanding of their world for describing their experiences and self- understanding and for clarifying and elaborating their perspective of their world (Seidman, 1998).

In light of this, the study's interviews will be conducted with six willing and long-serving journalists (Two journalists each from the selected 3 media) and one academia from Addis Ababa University and one media officer from Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (generally 8 participants) to substantiate the findings of the content analysis. Given that the common limitation of framing research relates to the neglect of the frame-building process and factors that affect this process, (Scheufele, 1999), informant interviews are given intensive knowledge about the selection criteria of specific frames, the placement of stories, and other important issues in the coverage of the issue.

### **3.3.3 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a type of survey where respondents write answers to questions posed by the researcher on a question form. A number of respondents are asked identical questions, in order to gain information that can be analyzed, patterns found and comparisons made. A questionnaire is used to meet the requirements of the respondents. The use of questionnaires is meaningful to determine the real situation and ensure the anonymity of the respondents. Kothari (2009) assumes that forms provide sufficient time for respondents to provide informed responses and uses complementary methods to detect inconsistencies in data collection that are not possible with one method. Surveys are very flexible and can be used to collect information on almost any topic from large or small groups of people (Kothari 2009). Then the researcher will prepare 120 questionnaires to get public perception from the people (the audience).

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique**

The national media EBC and the private-owned Asham Television, and Prime Television are selected for this study. The three are designated using a sampling technique called purposive sampling. In cases where the researcher is familiar with the problems, is dealing with or the purposes of the research, Purposive sampling which is based on experience is more appropriate than any other methods. Thus, the three selected media on the assumption that they are best fit to understand the impact on media content including framing of religious issues.

Moreover, the selected media outlet's had extensive coverage of the EOTC religious issue, language similarity, and accessibility for the researcher were also taken into consideration as selection criteria.

Accordingly, using purposive sampling technique six journalists from each three media and two media scholars will be selected which makes a total of 8 informants. The researcher believes that purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative studies where the researcher is interested in informants who have the best knowledge concerning the research topic.

With regard to content analysis of the media reports on the issues, 12 news reports will be selected for analysis using probability sampling technique. The researcher randomly selects four news reports from each media which are aired on the issue of the study in the time frame stated in this research. This will allow to make qualitative data analysis focusing on interpreting and understanding the situation. The researcher will categorize or “code” words, themes, and concepts within the texts and then analyze the results. It is believed that content analysis can be used to make qualitative inferences by analyzing the meaning and semantic relationship of words and concepts. Therefore, totally 12 news stories aired in the three media will be analyzed qualitatively for this study.

### **3.5 Method of Data Analysis**

As it was stated earlier, the study will follow mixed approach; mixed methods research combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a more nuanced understanding of complex phenomena. Scholars such as Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) emphasize that effective data analysis in such studies involves not only the separate treatment of numerical and textual data but also their integration during interpretation; accordingly, the data will be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

Quantitative data analysis typically involves the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive techniques such as means, frequencies, and percentages are used to summarize and describe the main features of the data (Bryman, 2012). Inferential methods, including t-tests, correlation, and regression analyses, are applied to test hypotheses and examine relationships among variables.

On the other hand, qualitative data often collected through interviews, focus groups, or open-ended survey questions is analyzed using interpretive methods such as thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step process is widely cited, involving familiarization with the data, coding, and identifying and refining themes. A key feature of mixed methods research is the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings.

Researchers may use techniques like triangulation, where data from different sources are compared to enhance credibility, or explanatory integration, where qualitative findings help interpret or elaborate on quantitative results (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This blending of methods enables a more holistic perspective, offering both measurable trends and contextual depth.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1. Quantitative Findings**

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and discussion of results. As it has been stated earlier, the study deals with main stream media coverage of religious conflicts using the recent case of EOTC.

In doing so, the study assessed the news coverage of three Ethiopian main stream media (Ethiopian broadcasting corporation, Asham Television, and Prime Television). The main objective of the study is to examine how the selected media have reported the issue in a fair and impartial manner as well as factual and evidence-based reporting.

To gather the required data for the study, questionnaire was designed to know about the demographic information and the perception of viewers. The questionnaire has two parts. The first part aimed at finding out demographic information of respondents, while the second part is designed to get information to help to know the perception of viewers from the three media news reporting.

The discussion of the study is preceded by demographic distribution results obtained from the data and then followed by questions related to perception of viewers. The discussion of demographic results was done by using percentages; whereas the rest of the discussion is done by using average and percentages. Tables are used, in both cases, to present the data.

##### **4.1.1. Demographic Distribution of Respondents**

Questions regarding demographic information were designed on the first part of the questionnaire in order to know about the composition of viewers. Verifying the demographic aspect of the respondents could make the research more understandable and comprehensive. The respondents' demographic distribution in terms of their age, gender, occupation, and level of educational are presented below in table.

**Table 1: Demographic distribution of respondents**

Demography	Number of Respondents N=110	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
less than 21 Years	23	20.9
From 22- 30 years	39	35.45
From 31- 40 years	32	29.09
From 41- 50 years	16	14.54
Above 51	-	
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	62	56.36
Female	48	43.63
<b>Level of education</b>		
High School	25	22.72
Diploma	23	20.90
First degree	51	46.36
Masters and above	11	10
<b>Occupation</b>		
Private	17	15.45
Governmental	18	16.36
Non-governmental	34	30.90
Student	26	23.63
Un employed	15	13.63

From the above table, it can be seen that majority of the respondents were in age range of 22-30. This is 35.45% of the total population. Adults between the ages of 31-40 were 29.09% which is the second considerable figure in this table. People less than 21 years of age counted about 20.9% while the people between 41 – 50 years of age were 14.54%. This shows that majority of the respondents are at their early and mid-youth ages.

Regarding gender distribution, 56.36% of the sample was male while the remaining 43.63% were females. Regarding level of education of the respondent's majority of them had first degree which consists 49.36% of the total population. According to the above table, those who were high school students were 22.72% whereas respondents with diploma were about 20.90%. Lastly, respondents who have Master's Degree were 10 % which is few in number. The above data indicates that most of the respondents are male and the majority of the respondents are joined university.

In relation to occupation of the respondents, majority of them were non-governmental which constitutes 30.90%. About 23.63% of the respondents happened to be students while government employee and private employee recorded 16.36% and 15.45% respectively. The rest 13.63% of respondents were unemployed once. Based on the findings it is possible to say that....

#### **4.1.2. Viewers' Perception from Watching News Reporting from the Three Media Outlets**

This part of the study contains 6 questions. These questions are divided in to three major categories and analyzed depending on the three research objectives of the study. The researcher preferred to arrange and categorize the questions in to three in order to ease the analyses.

The researcher classified the items in to three categories depending on the research questions. The first three items, as indicated in table 1 – 3 (questions from 1-3) are classified under Media Consumption Habits and Awareness. Secondly, two items (from 4-5), as indicated in table 2, are grouped and analyzed Perceptions of Media Coverage. Another one item (question 6), as shown in table 3, is classified under Nature of Reporting. All the items are arranged according to their category.

#### 4.1.2.1. Viewers' Media Consumption Habits and Awareness

**Table 2: Respondents Awareness about the EOTC Incident**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b> <b>N=110</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Q 2. Are you aware of the rift among the Archbishops of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church?</b>		
Yes	110	100%
No	0	0%

As indicated in above table 1, the respondents were asked to respond to the question whether they were aware of the rift among the Archbishops of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church and government or not and the result was that all of them were aware about it. The main aim of the question was to know the respondent's level of awareness about the incident. The results show that all of them or 100% of the respondents have the awareness about the incident which imply that they follow information from different sources. The next follow up question which elaborate this result was related to how often they consume news.

**Table 3: Respondents News Consumption**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b> <b>N=110</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Q 3. How often did you consume news and information related to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church?</b>		
Rarely	16	14.54
Sometimes	27	24.54
Often	31	28.18
Always	36	32.72

As indicated in the above table, majority of the respondents (about 32.72%) stated that they always consume news and information related to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church. In addition to this, 28.18% respondents said they often consume news and information related to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church while 24.54 have stated that they sometimes do.

On the other hand, 14.54% of them responded that they rarely consume news and information related to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church.

Here, one can conclude that even if the degree level differs majority of the respondents consume news and information related to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church. Following this question the respondents were asked about their preferences of media or their favorite media platform.

**Table 4: Respondents Favorite Media Platform**

<b>Q 4. Favorite Media Platforms</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	<b>N=110</b>	
Television	44	40
Social media platforms	39	35.45
Newspapers	8	7.27
Radio	25	22.72
Online news websites	16	14.54
Church publications	24	21.81

As the above table illustrates majority of respondents 40% has chosen Television as their favorite media platform followed by 35.45 respondents who have chosen social media platforms. In addition, 22.72% respondents stated that radio was their favorite media outlet and 21.81% respondents have chosen church publications as their favorite media platform. On the other hand, 14.54 respondents have chosen online websites as their primary media platform while 7.27% said they prefer newspapers.

The results imply that majority of respondents have chosen television as their primary media platform followed by digital media or social media platforms. Therefore, one can deduce that even if the media platforms differ almost all respondents have the habit of consuming news and information related to religious issues. Besides television was number one choice which suggests even if the competition of digital media closing up still people are watching television for news and information.

#### 4.1.2.2. Viewers' Perceptions of Media Coverage

**Table 5: Respondents Perception about Mainstream Media**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Q 5. In your opinion, how accurately and sensitively do mainstream media portray the Archbishop's rift?	Very inaccurate and insensitive	19	17.27
	Neutral	6	5.45
	Accurate and sensitive	28	25.45
	Very accurate and sensitive	6	5.45
	Inaccurate and insensitive	51	46.36

As indicated in the above table, majority of the respondents (about 46.36%) agreed that the religious issue portrayed by the media was inaccurate and insensitive while 17.27% also agreed that it was very inaccurate and insensitive.

Only 25.45% and 5.45% respondents commented that the media reporting has been accurate and sensitive, and very accurate and sensitive respectively. In addition to this, 5.45% chosen to be neutral with the idea that the mainstream media have covered the issue accurately and sensitively.

Hence, majority of the respondents which is about 63% have agreed that the news and information portrayed by the mainstream media was inaccurate and insensitive. Only 30% percent think it was accurate and sensitive while the 5% remained neutral.

Thus, most of the mainstream media seems not meeting the need of its audience with regard covering religious issues with accurate and sensitive reporting.

**Table 6: Respondents Perception about News Reporting Fairness**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Q, 6. Do you believe media coverage presents a balanced and fair representation of the various perspectives within the Church?	Strongly disagree	16	14.54
	Disagree	53	48.18
	Neutral	8	7.27
	Agree	22	20
	Strongly agree	11	10

In this case, the respondents were asked about whether the mainstream media coverage presented a balanced and fair representation of the various perspectives within the church or not. As it can be seen in the above table majority of respondents 48.18% disagree while 14.54% strongly disagree.

On the other hand, 20% agree and 10% strongly agree that the mainstream media coverage presented a balanced and fair representation of the various perspectives within the church only 7.27% respondents stayed neutral.

Thus, the results suggest that majority of respondents or 62.72% of them they don't believe the mainstream media coverage presented a balanced and fair representation of the various perspectives within the church. This indicates that most of the mainstream media failed to report the issue in a representative way to everyone.

#### 4.1.2.3. Viewers' Perceptions about the Nature of Media Reporting

In this section, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the nature of mainstream media which includes items such as factual and accurate reporting, balanced and unbiased reporting, and objectivity.

**Table 6: Respondents Perception about Nature of Reporting**

Q 6. Media reports	Viewers Response in Percentage						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Both SA + A	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Both DA + SDA	Neutral
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
They were factual and accurate	8.18	28.18	36.36	43.63	13.63	57.26	6.36
They were balanced	7.27	40	47.27	30.9	11.81	42.71	10
There were no biases in the reporting	13.63	25.45	39.08	45.45	11.81	57.26	3.63
The journalists were neutral in their reporting	5.45	30	35.45	8.18	10.9	59.08	5.45

#### a) Whether Media Reports were Factual

As indicated in the above table, majority of the respondents (about 43.63%) disagreed that media reporting's were factual. In addition to this, 13.63% strongly disagreed with the idea that media reports were factual. Thus, totally 57.26% of respondents do not believe with the idea that media

reports were factual while 36.36% agree and 6.36% chose to be neutral.

Hence, it seems that for most of the audiences the media reporting was not factual. Here, as the majority of the figure shows, one can conclude that the news reporting of the media were not factual which implies that the mainstream media has gaps that need to be improved. If audiences do not get what they intended to get from media, they tend to tune to another optional media. Audiences stay tuned to certain media only if their trust is met.

#### **b) Media Reports being balanced**

The perception of audiences about whether the media reports were balanced or not can vary as the above table shows that 40% of them were agreed while 7.27% of the respondents said they strongly agree that reports were balanced. This indicates that a total of 47.27% audiences were satisfied with media reports.

However, 30.9% of respondents disagreed about it; in addition, there were 11.81% of the respondents who were strongly disagreed with the media reports being balanced. Another 10% of the total population remained neutral on the issue. This considerable figure shows that the mainstream media should improve their reporting regarding satisfying the need of audiences by providing a balanced reporting that incorporates all sides thoughts.

#### **c) Media Reporting Unbiased News Stories**

Here, the main focus of the researcher is to see whether audiences are perceiving media reporting unbiased or not. According to table 6, majority of the respondents disagreed the idea that the media reporting's were unbiased. About 45.45% of them were disagreed while 11.81% of them said they are strongly disagreed. This indicates that media were not on a good move regarding reporting unbiased news stories. To the contrary, 25.45% of the respondents agreed that the media reporting's were unbiased and few number, 13.63%, said they were strongly agreed. On the other hand, 3.63% of the total population didn't identify whether they are agreed or disagreed with the reporting; they remained neutral.

Accordingly, 57.26% which is the majority of the total population disagree with the notion that media were reporting unbiased news stories. This suggests that the media were still needs some improvements with this regard for the future.

#### **d) Whether Journalists were Neutral in their Reporting or not**

Any media needs an objective reporting free from any personal judgment or thoughts of the media practitioners, and this question aimed at finding out this situation in our country. According to the above table, 48.18% of the respondents said they disagree with the idea that journalists were neutral in their reporting while 10.9% of them strongly disagree with the idea that journalists were objective in their reporting.

On the other hand, 30% of the respondents, which is not a small figure, said that journalists were neutral in their reporting. In addition to this, some 5.45% of the respondents strongly agreed that journalists were objective in their reporting. Some 5.45% of them remained neutral to the issue. Almost majority of the total population 59.08% disagreed with journalists being neutral in their reporting. News should be always timely, objective, complete content wise and diverse in its nature. News is a perishable commodity; it should be consumed on the right time and media should select in a way that is appealing to the ear and eye of audiences. Accordingly, objective reporting is very important in news broadcasting. In this case, our country media should improve the level of satisfaction of its audience by becoming stronger in elevating the capacity of their journalists so as to report objectively.

To conclude, with regard to the nature of mainstream media reporting four items were presented to the respondents which are factual and accurate reporting, balanced and unbiased reporting, and objectivity. The results from the majority of the respondents indicated that the media reporting lacks factual, accurate, balanced, and objective reporting. This suggests that the media in our country should start tangible reforms in order to improve the current situation and meet the maximum level of their audience's satisfaction.

#### **4.2. Qualitative Data Analyses**

This part of the study is designed to give additional responses to issues that were not efficiently addressed by the quantitative data. As it is pointed out in chapter three, semi-structured questions were prepared and an interview was conducted with editor in chiefs, media governor and news room leaders of the selected media.

Moreover, the second part of the analysis was concerned with content analysis of selected three media news stories. 9 news story was selected randomly and was analyzed based on the objectives of the study. The results were organized thematically and presented in words.

In the first part of the interview session two editors in chiefs, one media deputy director and one chief editor at news desk were interviewed in order to get additional information that strengthen and complement the result of quantitative data. In addition, similar interview was carried out with Ethiopian Broadcast Authority Private Media Monitoring Desk and CARD to deepen the findings of the study. These interviewees were selected purposely depending on their experience in the media house and their professionalism. Thus, in this session, the researcher discussed the analyses of the qualitative data. The analyses the data is composed with the responses of each interviewee to the same questions raised during the interview.

## **A) INTERVIEW ANALYSIS**

### **4.2.1. Issues and Problems that make it Difficult to Report on Religious Issues in Ethiopia**

The respondents of this study almost gave similar answers to this question. They raised different reasons for not covering the dispute between the Ethiopian Orthodox fathers. Editor in chief from EBC TV expressed that when we look at the media sector, the boundaries of the two institutions are violated and political interference is noticed. He added on that this has created a challenge for them to delve deeper into the issues of religious institutions. Moreover, he commented that when the dispute between the Ethiopian Orthodox fathers happened, they did not report the issue as it happened because their institution has chosen not get involved in the issue. Specifically, the interviewee said:

*I see it in two ways. If the matter comes to light as soon as it happens, it may cause many consequences and problems because the issue of faith is a sensitive ethnic issue, so they need to be careful. On the one hand, the public has the right to know what happened. So, let's look at how to combine the two. As the country has not recovered from the war in the north and there were other conflicts and instabilities, issuing this report may worsen the problem.*

Furthermore, he said as an institution, there was an order from the higher authorities not to report the matter, and because of this, the matter was not reported from the beginning, and until the end because it was said that the reconciliation was done without the conflict being reported. As a result, the interviewee said:

*“This led to criticism of the media (EBC). When you report the conflict, reporting the agreement is professionally reprehensible. However, I think it is better to report the deal than to drop the issue altogether. I think that when there are such religious issues, they can talk closely with the fathers of the faith and study what the news might bring, and report it carefully.”*

The editor in chief from Asham TV has also said that they failed to report the issue because of lack of tangible information and complexity of the issue. In his response, he said that the presence of illegal recognition entity at that time made it difficult for media to report, that is because since only the Holy Church had legal recognition, it was a challenge to distribute information from the entity that called itself Synod. He explained that knowing what exactly happened was another issue that challenged Asham Television at the time:

*Asham TV is not a religious media, it can talk to people who understand and explain the problem. At that time, however, they stated that it is difficult to find an entity that provides this type of information. At the time, although we were able to get the information, we were waiting for the response of the legally recognized church due to our lack of understanding of religious issues.*

However, he mentioned that to find out people's feelings they have conducted a Vox pop and aired their thoughts on their television station.

Contrary to the above two media the deputy director of Prime Media has expressed that they have their own editorial policy which allows them reporting on religious issues and does not prohibit reporting on religious issues.

He added that when there are religious problems in the country, there is a lack of information to make the report in depth. However, he mentioned that though there were not enough information they have tried to cover the issue:

*We tried to report the disagreement between the fathers of the Orthodox Church in a balanced manner. The incident seemed to contain ethnic extremism. Therefore, we started working after we agreed to report the issue in a careful manner and by talking to both parties. However, after we started working, it was difficult for us to get information from the Orthodox Church, because the church ignores us for press conference and also, they are not willing to give us information. According to that we have tried to get information from the church's television and website of the church, to report the issue in a balanced way.*

Except for Prime Media the other two media failed to cover the issue well and they have mentioned lack of information, editorial policy, political involvement and sensitivity of the issue as a challenge. This suggests that the religious issue that occurred in Ethiopian Orthodox Church doesn't get enough coverage as it was supposed to.

#### **4.2.2. Is there a Factual and Balanced Reporting of the Issue?**

According to the response of the interviewees, more or less the answers to the question whether the media have covered the issue based on facts and in a balanced manner or not seems similar. One respondent said:

*Everything is seen according to the law. Since it is the church that has legal recognition in the country, we reported its statements and worked independently. We reported news that did not reflect personal opinions. We tried to find and talk to those who are not legally recognized, but it was difficult for us to contact the people individually. It was difficult for Asham TV to get information because the Oromia and Nation and Nationalities Synod didn't participate Asham TV while giving a press conference, but we were reporting from other media.*

He further stated that the mixing of religious issues with politics has created the biggest problem. The private mass media work through editorial policy based on what is seen. The intrusion of politics into religion is making it difficult to do much and investigations are not being done and the truth is not being revealed. This indicates that they have tried to use secondary sources in order to balance their reporting.

On the other hand, another respondent said though there were some media that report one side of the issue but their media have tried to incorporate both parties of the dispute. This is what he said:

*At the time, most of the media was extreme. I don't believe that there was any media that reported the issue in a balanced way because there were no media that brought out the truth from the side of Father Sawiros. As Prime Media, however, we have tried to reflect the views of both parties. More importantly, Father Sawiros' side repeatedly called us for a press conference, but the main synod of the church refused to call us. However, we were able to make a balanced report using the information available on the website.*

Another respondent from the same media mentioned about the importance of media being neutral and should never reflect personal feelings. He stated that:

*It is seen that in the religious conflict which happened in EOTC a large population is participated and there was division which could lead to ethnic division. At this time, if the people who think that their voice is suppressed, if their voice is not heard and they cannot convey the message they want, it will lead to riots and violence. In this we think we have done a good job, although we have not fully adhered to the editorial policy.*

The responses from above imply that regardless of the media trying to cover the issue in a factual and balanced manner lack of information have posed a challenge a big on them. Hence, from the fact that they have mentioned above that they failed to get information from one side who were in the dispute, it is difficult to say that they have a balanced reporting. Though they have tried to use secondary sources to get information and balance their reports it is difficult to say actually they have succeeded in reporting the issue in factual and balanced way.

We can conclude from the above responses that not all media have covered the issue as expected and they have faced different challenges. Some parties unwillingness to provide information, sensitivity of the issue, and editorial policy of the media were the major challenges raised by the respondents. On the other hand, the external pressure like conflict in the country led some media not to report the issue on the most needed time.

Therefore, these responses suggest that all these challenges have made it difficult for the media to cover the issue as well as to report a fair, factual and balanced news as it was expected.

#### **4.2.3. Assessment of the Media Report in terms of the level of Professionalism**

In order to assess the level of professionalism of the three selected media reporting the issues of EOTC an interview was carried out with Ethiopian Broadcast Authority Private Media Monitoring Desk and a non-governmental organization called CARD. The results reveal that these media reporting doesn't meet the professionalism they were expected to follow.

Both interviewees stated that the reports covered by the media were unbalanced and biased to one side of the parties in the conflict. This was what the interviewee from Ethiopian Broadcast Authority Private Media Monitoring Desk said:

*When we look at the way the commercial or private media in the country reported the disagreement between the fathers of the Orthodox Church in 2015, it was mainly divided into three. One side was on the side of the new Synod established as the Oromia and Ethnic Synod. In this case, the media follows where the fathers of this side were going around the country and making reports about how many supporters they had, the reception they received and the opinions of their supporters. Apart from this, there were situations where they were shouting and making the issue worse. The other two of them stood by the side of church or the old synod, criticizing the new one and reporting on the doctrine and history of the church. The third had no involvement and passed the matter in silence as if it had not happened.*

Similarly, the interviewee from CARD stated how the media were divided into different sides and tried to report biased reports that mislead people, and these were his words:

*They do not have a uniform report. The state media, which is affiliated with the ruling party, mostly avoids reporting on the controversy. The religious institutions or their leaders try to pretend that they have a healthy relationship with the government. Many of the private media have reports that try to show that the Orthodox Church in particular is being influenced by the government. Others make reports against beliefs or institutions that are presented to the editors. Media such as ETV, Fana, and Walta completely avoided the issue and denied it*

*in their reporting platform. The media of the Amhara region reported the issue in favor of the church on other side Oromia region media showed its support for the separatist group. Many of the private media also produced news that was favorable to the church. There has rarely been a professional preparation by any side that claims to be this. There was a lot of partisanship.*

The interviewee from the Ethiopian Broadcast Authority Private Media Monitoring Desk concludes that based on their assessments the media reporting were not professional because they were not neutral and doesn't report the issue in balanced way.

*Based on this, in all three ways, when we evaluate the media's reporting or participation in the issue, they all had their own gaps. The reason is that when the report made by a journalist or a media institution is expected to be neutral and balanced, the report made by the media at the time was biased towards one side. On the other hand, even those who chose to remain silent did not live up to the media's responsibility to educate and inform, and violated the people's right to know the issues that had arisen.*

The interviewee has even stated further that looking at these unprofessional media reporting they tried intervened with them in order to improve the situation. This is what he has said:

*The media authority that gives permission to the media operating in the country has been consulted with the media to make a balanced and careful report by doing its own monitoring and evaluation regarding the media's coverage of the issue at the time. After that, an attempt was made to take corrective action by having a discussion with the media, who were working in a way of supporting one side and opposing the other.*

He further stated that the media should be very careful when there are issues related to religion, which can cause such a major national crisis. Especially since the information disseminated by the mass media is believed to be true and can quickly be accessible to a large number of people, if not properly taken care of, it can aggravate the conflict and lead the country into crisis. Therefore, the media should be managed with great care and responsibility.

The interviewee from CARD also believes that much work remains to be done to increase the understanding and awareness of journalists. This was what he said to reason out his idea:

*Freedom of expression should be limited not by the content of the message on the religion, but by the content on the believer. For example, saying that a belief is a wrong belief, this belief should not exist, included in the freedom of expression. However, it is not permissible to pass a believer of a certain faith as "he should not live because he follows a wrong faith" because it violates the rights of the person to follow the faith of his choice or to live. Therefore, this transfer process can violate rights and create conflict. Based on truth, which does not violate the rights of others, especially refraining from giving mass conclusions that what a member of a religious institution says is the position of all the followers of the faith, all the actions of one person or any attack on a religious institution is the fault of all the followers of another faith, etc. In general, the media's reports about religion should not contain or promote any religious system or profile deeply.*

In addition, he emphasized that the media should be aware that reports containing religious themes may cause anger among followers of the religion or others. Offensive or derogatory remarks against the deities, scriptures, festivals, and religious practices of various religions can provoke intense anger. Criticism of the dogmas of faith should be taken with great care so that no one is harmed.

Moreover, he stated that religious beliefs and practices must be expressed carefully, accurately, and consistently. But avoiding anger should not be confused with devaluing other key values such as neutrality, integrity, and honesty. The report only needs to identify the religious institutions and the religion with the following people.

These were his words about the importance of neutrality and impartiality so as to be professional in reporting serious issues like religion:

*The reports should always take into account the guidelines followed by the followers of the religion or places. People of a particular administrative region, state or country should not be identified by religion unless absolutely necessary. The followers of a religion or the members of the followers of the religion should not be presented as representing the followers of the religion as a whole, regardless of their requests. If they are agency institutions, they should be called only by their institution's name. The media reports should not consider and associate the participation of famous individuals in social issues as being related to the following religion or the society they belong to.*

The responses from both interviewees suggest that the media failed to cover the issue as well as to report a fair, factual and balanced news. They both recommended that when conflicts arise, the media should report the facts on the ground in a balanced way and make the correct information accessible to the community so that they are not backed into a corner even after the conflict is resolved tomorrow.

## **B) CONTENT ANALYSIS**

### **4.2.4. Content Analysis of the News stories of the Media**

The content analysis was made based on whether the reporting of the media was factual and accurate, balanced and unbiased, and objective. Following a qualitative textual analysis the researcher focuses only on the how the three media have professionally reported the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) in January 2023 incident in their daily reporting.

#### **Coverage of Religious Issues**

For the qualitative analysis, the study found 9 relevant stories from the sampled media, specifically from Asham TV (4 stories); Prime Media (4 stories); and finally, EBC (1 news story). This part of the study will discuss how these stories were reported, how they were framed, to what extent they critically reported the cases, and so forth.

<b>News Stories Sources</b>					
	Incidents	Press Release	Press Conference	Journalist Observation	Public Interview
Number	4	8	3	2	2

**Table 7: Sample media source of news stories**

The study assessed the origin of the stories, which were either incidents, press releases, press conferences, journalist observation, interviews, or other. The study found that the media tend to report incidences of religion shallowly.

The majority (50%) of the stories were based on press conferences. Nevertheless, by its nature, a press conference is a well-orchestrated media event that could help the organizers send their framed message to the audience. Hence, the exact causes of the problem might not be thoroughly reported since the journalists may not get sufficient information of the actual incident. The organizers of the press conferences prepare the messages that they want to send through the media.

As such, it is hard for the media to report critically so long as they are limited to the parameters of the press conference, which is typically organized by the government or religious leaders. The media may not get the opportunity to ask critical questions and further probe the organizers on important public issues, which means that press conferences are mostly staged events.

Hence, it can be said that the level of professionalism in reporting factual and accurate, balanced and unbiased, and objective news stories is very rare. However, among the assessed media Asham TV have stated at the end of their news stories that they tried to include the voice of others called Oromia Synod but they failed to get their voices heard in their reporting. On the other hand, Prime TV totally ignored about including the different voices and stucked to be the voice for Oromia Synod, while EBC choses to be silent. It can also be concluded that the media houses sampled for this study did not do any critical analysis or investigative stories.

### **Lack of Diverse Voices**

The stories analyzed in this study lack diverse views. As can be seen, in the table above, majority of the stories were fetched from only one source. This means only one side of the story is told in the media.

This simply does not bode well in a land of diversity because Ethiopia is a diverse nation. Thus, if a story is to be fair and credible, it should include as many sources and voices as possible. Relying on a single source often leads to slanted news coverage and deficient credibility. When many sources are ignored, despite the truthfulness of the news, many would perceive the particular news or the media at large are favoring one side, feeding further polarization.

From the analysis of the three media outlets, Asham TV reporting was better compared to the other two because at least they have mentioned to the audience that they have tried to include the voice of all parties even though they failed. Even though they have heavily portrayed the voice of the EOTC which may mislead the audience.

On the other hand, Prime TV totally ignored about incorporating diverse voices and become the voice of the Oromia Synod because most of the press releases of the Synod were staged in the media. Surprisingly, the government owned EBC chooses to be silent, but at the end they have streamed the press conference that the prime minister hosted with bishops and his cabinets.

Only Asham TV has tried to include diverse voices in their two stories by using at least two sources. This shows that the lack of diversity of voices is a chronic problem in the Ethiopian media when it comes to coverage of religious issues. Furthermore, among the stories that contain more than one source, majority of the stories reflect the ideology of only one group. This illustrates the trend in the Ethiopian media to present a one-sided view. Such one-sided news coverage would in turn have decisive impacts on the political and religious polarization in the country. Favoring only one group or ideology most likely results in out-group aversion and affective polarization – in other words fueling a tendency for citizens to dislike and distrust those from another (political) party or religious group.

### **The Polarization in the Attempted Schism of EOTC**

In general, the selected three media reveal two forms of polarization. The first one is in framing the recent case of the EOTC schism (for/against). The second one is by the extent of paying attention to the case (silence).

Regarding the media coverage of the disagreements in the EOTC, there are two dominant forms of reporting: in favor of or against the breakaway group of religious fathers. Their forms of reporting tend to either sympathize or ignore the causes of the EOTC with some attempts to avoid biases. In both forms of reporting, the media tend to send either negative or positive information about some aspects of the event. The media also used these two forms to send a message to the public based on that event. They may also be employed to sway public opinion.

For instance, even if Asham TV have tried to incorporate opposing views and mentioned they have failed to do so in their reporting they favored views of people related to EOTC in their reporting. On the other hand, Prime TV solely become the voice for the Oromo Synod in their reporting as well as programs.

While media should be neutral and report stories in balanced and fair manner, some stories and reflections of journalists in the sampled media appear to be in complete contradiction with professional values of journalism.

Instead of reporting the facts, they go against the one and favor the other. The sampled media used different techniques when they reported the EOTC case. For instance, Prime media used this scroll in their reporting ‘ለሰላማዊ ሰልፍ ጥሪ ሀላፊነቱን የጠራው አካል ይወስደዋል’ which roughly translated as ‘The one who called the demonstration will be responsible for the results of the demonstration’.

This type of frame tends to link the issue to the EOTC case with ethnic identity, which is potentially dangerous. They frequently used hostile terms and hate words in their weekly discussions. The hate words were used to label specific groups as cruel and power lusting.

False claims, manifesting political views, using language as a cause of conflict, and characterization were among the observed problems that encompasses the reporting of the selected media about the incident in the EOTC.

Lastly, the other type of polarization using silence as a frame was observed in the state owned EBC TV. This was a deliberate attempt to ignore or avoid reports about the event. While there have been hot debates and narratives across the country, almost no public media dared to bring the EOTC issue to the public. They did not report the case for a long period.

As journalists interviewed have stated above, they were ordered not to get involved in the issues which may suggest some kind of interference whether from the government or the media administration. However, they started reporting the case aggressively soon after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed attempted to solve the difference between the two blocs. Here one can argue that the public media have the right to reframe themselves from reporting cases that do not go in line with their editorial policies which is true.

To conclude both the public and private media has a wider chance to access information since digital media have become available now. While it is their role to provide neutral and balanced information for the public by scrutinizing different sources, the both public and private media failed to do so at least in the recent EOTC case. The media did not bring the real scenario of the country. This could have repercussions in the media and the journalists' future activities.

Moreover, they do not play their main role - informing the society. The public has the right to be informed. And thirdly, they missed a golden chance to play their roles in solving the problem by thoroughly investigating the case. As the main role of the media is serving as a platform, it would be possible to bring different ideas for discussion, and the public will get a chance to judge which idea is better.

Therefore, the Ethiopian media have been reluctant to report the controversies and conflict in the country. As noted in the previous sections, the Ethiopian media have been reluctant to report the controversies and conflict in the country. Mostly, the media either report in a different frame, give negative narration, or silence in dealing with controversies in the EOTC religion conflicts.

Media as a platform for the public should bring relevant cases for public discussion. And, the media should thoroughly report the causes, factors, consequences, and potential solutions for the cases by including diverse views, ideas from different sources. Then, they might succeed in playing a constructive role in society. Whereas journalists' denial of reporting important issues of religion and religious controversies and conflicts by claiming they are favoring secularism is purely their misunderstanding and missing their fundamental role in informing the public.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with a brief summary of the works, conclusions of findings and some recommendations. The first part is about summary and conclusions of the research while the second part dealt with some possible recommendations that the researcher believes, may minimize or curb some of the problems.

#### 5.1. Summary and Conclusion

The main aim of this study is to assess about how the television stations covers religious conflicts using the recent case of EOTC. For this purpose, three television channels (Ethiopian broadcasting corporation, Asham Television, and Prime Television) were incorporated in the study. To support the study with previous works related literature on the issue has been discussed.

In order to conduct the study, both quantitative and qualitative research approach, were used. At the beginning quantitative data was analyzed in order to know the perception of the audiences about how the three selected media have reported the issue in a fair and impartial manner as well as factual and evidence-based reporting. To support this, in- depth interview was conducted with two editors in chiefs, one media deputy director, one chief editor at news desk, Ethiopian Broadcast Authority Private Media Monitoring Desk, and CARD.

Moreover, content analysis of 9 news stories from the three selected media were done in order to assess how these stories were reported, how they were framed, to what extent they critically reported the cases, and so forth. The designed questionnaire was distributed to respondents in 11 sub-cities of Addis Ababa city. Then, the data collected were coded. After that, the data were systematically organized and interpreted.

Regarding audiences' perception about how accurately and sensitively does mainstream media portray the archbishops' rift majority of the respondents (about 46.36%) stated that the religious issue portrayed by the media was inaccurate and insensitive while 17.27% also stated that it was very inaccurate and insensitive.

Only 25.45% and 5.45% respondents commented that the media reporting has been accurate and sensitive, and very accurate and sensitive respectively. It can be said that majority of the audiences perceive that the media coverage was inaccurate and insensitive.

As pointed out in table 6, totally 57.26% of respondents do not believe with the idea that media reports were factual and accurate. This is a huge blow to the media because majority of the audiences are not getting what they need from the news of the media. When we come to objectivity almost majority of the total population 59.08% disagreed with journalists being neutral in their reporting. As it can be seen from table 9, this result suggest that majority of the media were biased in their reporting.

Results from the interview also shows similar results that they failed to cover the issue in factual and balanced manner. The interviewees have stated lack of information, sensitivity of the issue, and editorial policy of the media as major challenges. In general, the responses from interviewees suggest that the media failed to cover the issue as well as to report a fair, factual and balanced news.

When we come to content analysis the results reveal that the media houses sampled for this study did not do any critical analysis or investigative stories, the stories analyzed in this study also lack diverse views. Majority of the stories were fetched from only one source.

Moreover, stories in the sampled media tend to pose particular forms of engagement which could be offensive to other groups. It can be said that extremely negative views about others take the highest share of the story. In addition, the sampled media content contains opinionated and sensational stories. Prime media and EBC portray religion as intertwined with and appropriated for political ends.

As part of the overhaul of repressive laws concerning democratic institutions, the justice system, and the media, the new government organized an independent advisory body – the Legal and Justice Affairs Advisory Council (LJAAC) in mid-2018. Proposing reforms on laws regulating civil society, media, freedom of information, and the anti-terrorism proclamation were among the mandates of the advisory council.

Thus, the Ethiopian parliament passed Media Proclamation No. 1238/2021 “to fully enforce the right to freedom of expression and citizens’ freedom of the media” (FDRE, 2021), which was stifled by the EPRDF government. The proclamation is praised for being better than preceding media-related laws. Among others, it decriminalizes defamation and establishes the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA) which is in charge of licensing, regulating and monitoring the broadcasting media.

The legislation also emphasizes the need for diverse and inclusive media content, encouraging the representation of multiple perspectives on political, ethnic, and religious matters. Broadcasters are expected to present a balanced range of views on potentially divisive issues like religion. Public service media, in particular, are required to reflect Ethiopia's religious and sociopolitical diversity in their programming. Above all, mainstream media are mandated to promote national unity by fostering shared constitutional values.

For instance, in its editorial policy, EBC, the giant state/public media company in Ethiopia, requires the media to cover all religious groups. The policy says: “Cognizant with the importance of all positive values and their contribution to the co-existence of the people, EBC’s journalists will pay fair attention to all religious denominations in the country.” It also underscores that EBC shall remain a secular media institution (EBC Editorial Policy, article 3.1.11). Arguably, one can here see a misunderstanding of what secularism means. The secular principles should not mean that the media ignore stories and controversies related to religion. This is a fallacy and pushes away the burden of proof.

While the public media’s role to provide neutral and balanced information for the public by scrutinizing different sources, they failed to do so. Only Asham TV to some extent tried to incorporate public voice while Prime Media chooses one side reporting and EBC uses silence as a weapon to deliberately ignore or avoid reports about the event. Therefore, false claims, manifesting political views, using language as a cause of conflict, and characterization were other problems observed that encompasses the reporting of the selected media about the incident in the EOTC.

## 5.2. Recommendations

Media as a platform for the public should bring relevant cases for public discussion. And, the media should thoroughly report the causes, factors, consequences, and potential solutions for the cases by including diverse views, ideas from different sources. Then, they might succeed in playing a constructive role in society. In doing so, the media were expected to follow professional way of dealing with serious issues like religion by covering the issues in fair and impartial manner as well as factual and evidence-based reporting. When we see the results of this study majority of the respondents believe that the media were reluctant to cover the issue and those who covered it lack the level of professionalism in their reporting.

Based on the research findings, the researcher forwarded the following recommendations:

- ✓ The media should bring relevant cases for public discussion and play a constructive role in society. The media should thoroughly report the causes, factors, consequences, and potential solutions for the cases by including diverse views, ideas from different sources.
- ✓ If a story is to be fair and credible, it should include as many sources and voices as possible. Relying on a single source often leads to slanted news coverage and deficient credibility. When many sources are ignored, despite the truthfulness of the news, many would perceive the particular news or the media at large are favoring one side, feeding further polarization. Hence, the media must strive to make a report that includes the voice all parties.
- ✓ When sensitive issues such as religion and ethnicity are reported superficially, the public does not get the opportunity to understand the true scale and cause of the conflicts. Therefore, the media should thoroughly carryout critical analysis or investigation stories before making any report about such religious matters.
- ✓ The media must follow strict editorial policy or rules when it comes to dealing with issues like false claims, opinionated and sensational stories, manifesting political views and other similar problems observed in this study. The media should provide neutral and balanced information for the public by scrutinizing different sources.
- ✓ Religious institutions and other stake holders should be willing to provide information to journalists at the right time so that the media plays the role in solving problems.
- ✓ The media should upgrade their internal capacity including training its producers, reporters

and editors with all necessary technical and other standards.

- ✓ When conflicts arise, the media should report the facts on the ground in a balanced way and make the correct information accessible to the community so that they are not backed into a corner even after the conflict is resolved tomorrow.
- ✓ Religious beliefs and practices must be expressed carefully, accurately, and consistently.
- ✓ The media should be aware that reports containing religious themes may cause anger among followers of the religion or others. Offensive or derogatory remarks against the deities, scriptures, festivals, and religious practices of various religions can provoke intense anger. Criticism of the dogmas of faith should be taken with great care so that no one is harmed.
- ✓ Since the information disseminated by the mass media is believed to be true and can quickly be accessible to a large number of people, if not properly taken care of, it can aggravate the conflict and lead the country into crisis. Therefore, the media should be managed with great care and responsibility.
- ✓ State media should be free from any political or other type interferences so that they cover such issues professionally.
- ✓ A viable long-term strategy for Ethiopian media policy could be to be inspired by the ideals of the civic public square because it allows religious expressions and gives room for people of different faiths – as well as secularists – to exercise their deepest convictions both privately and in public without fearing sanctions from the state or from fellow citizens.

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## **APPENDIX I Interview Guide**

**Addis Ababa University  
College of Humanities, Language studies,  
Journalism and Communication  
Department of Journalism and Communication**

### **Introduction:**

This interview guide aims to explore how mainstream media in Ethiopia portrays recent religious issues specifically the case of religious issue coverage of the rift among Arch Bishops of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church in January 2023. It seeks to understand the level of sensitivity, accuracy, and objectivity displayed in media coverage and assesses its potential impact on religious communities and the broader society. Your respondents will only be used for this study and your identity will remain confidential.

### **Target Participants:**

- Journalists: Reporters and editors from Ethiopian broadcasting corporation, Asham Television, and Prime Media Television.
- Media scholars: Experts with expertise in media analysis and communication.

### **Interview Questions:**

#### **For journalists:**

1. What are the main challenges and considerations when reporting on religious issues in Ethiopia?
2. How did you provide a media coverage for the rift among Arch Bishops of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church? Was that fair and balanced news coverage?
3. Do you think that your media covered the issues in an impartial way?
4. What were the problems in your media coverage? What are the drawbacks in your media coverage?
5. Do you think your coverage is sensitive to the diverse religious landscape of Ethiopia?
6. How do you balance the need for objectivity and the potential for offending religious communities?

7. What are the ethical guidelines or principles your news outlet follows when reporting on religion?
8. How do you determine the newsworthiness of religious issues and ensure diverse representation?
9. What are your thoughts on the overall quality of mainstream media coverage of religious issues in Ethiopia?
10. What changes would you recommend to improve media representation of religion in the country?
11. How do you evaluate your journalists in relation to neutrality when covering religion?

**For media scholars:**

1. How do you evaluate the current state of media coverage of religion in Ethiopia?
2. What are the theoretical frameworks that can be applied to understand media representations of religion?
3. How do you assess the media's coverage of the rift among Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church Arch Bishops?
4. Do you think the media's covered the issue in a balanced way or they were biased and one-sided?
5. How do media framing and agenda-setting affect public perception of religious issues?
6. What are the potential consequences of biased or inaccurate media portrayals of religion?
7. How can media literacy be promoted to encourage critical engagement with religious content in the media?

**Closing:**

Thank you for your time and participation in this interview. Your insights are valuable for understanding the role of media in shaping religious discourse and promoting interfaith harmony in Ethiopia!

## APPENDIX II

### Questionnaire

**Addis Ababa University**  
**College of Humanities, Language studies,**  
**Journalism and Communication**  
**Department of Journalism and Communication**

**Dear Respondents,**

I am a postgraduate student at Addis Ababa University, undertaking Master of Arts degree in Journalism and Communication. I am conducting a research on “Assessing the main stream media coverage of religious conflicts: the case of recent EOTC issues, in partial fulfillment of the award of Master of Arts Degree. I would like to solicit your kind assistance by preparing yourself to provide responses to the questions posed below. Information is required for academic purposes. The data collected will be treated in strict confidentiality. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated. Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

**Instructions: Please answer the following questions. Your responses will be kept anonymous and used for research purposes only.**

#### **Section 1: Demographics**

Age: less than 21      b, 22-30      c, 31-40      d, above 40 Gender:

Region:

Educational Level:    A, No education      B, Diploma    C, 1<sup>st</sup> degree    D, Masters and above

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Average weekly media consumption (hours): \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred media platforms (e.g. TV, newspapers, social media):

Membership in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church: Yes/No

#### Section 2: Media Consumption Habits and Awareness

**Q 1.** How often did you consume news and information related to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church?

A. Rarely

- B. Sometimes
- C. Often
- D. Always

**Q 2.** Are you aware of the rift among the Archbishops of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church?

- A. Yes
- B. No

**Q 3.** Which media platforms do you rely on for information about the religious topics?  
(Selecting more than one is possible)

- A. Television
- B. Radio
- C. Newspapers
- D. Magazines
- E. Online news websites
- F. Social media platforms
- G. Church publications
- H. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**Q 4.** How satisfied are you with the recent quality of media coverage of the problem in the orthodox religion?

- A. Very dissatisfied
- B. Dissatisfied
- C. Neutral
- D. Satisfied
- E. Very satisfied

**Section 3: Perceptions of Media Coverage**

**Q 5.** In your opinion, how accurately and sensitively does mainstream media portray the Archbishops' rift?

- A. Very inaccurate and insensitive
- B. Inaccurate and insensitive
- C. Neutral
- D. Accurate and sensitive

E. Very accurate and sensitive

**Q 6.** Do you believe media coverage presents a balanced and fair representation of the various perspectives within the Church?

A. Strongly disagree

B. Disagree

C. Neutral

D. Agree

E. Strongly agree

**Q 7.** Have you encountered any instances of biased or unfair media coverage of the conflict in the church?

A. Yes

B. No

If yes, please provide details. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Q 8.** How has media coverage of the conflict in the church affected your own understanding of the situation?

A. A great deal

B. To some extent

C. Not very much

**Section 4: Suggestions for Improvement**

**Q 9.** How can media contribute to promoting understanding and reconciliation within the Church?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q 10.** What role do you think the Church itself can play in shaping media narratives and promoting accurate information?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q 11.** What are your thoughts on the role of social media in shaping public opinion regarding the Archbishops' rift?

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Nature of reporting

Media reports	Strongly Agree	Agree		Dis agree	Strongly dis agree
They were factual and accurate					
They were balanced					
There were no biases in the reporting					
The journalists were neutral					
in their reporting					
Reports were sensitive it the feeling of different religion					

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your feedback is valuable for this research.

### **የቃለ መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች**

ይህ ቃለ መጠይቅ በጥር ወር 2015 ዓ.ም የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን የሃይማኖት አባቶች መካከል ተፈጥሮ የነበረውን አለመግባባት ሚዲያዎች እንዴት እንደዘገቡት ለመዳሰስ ያለመ ነው። ይህ ቃለ መጠይቅ የሚዲያዎች ዘገባ ጉዳዩ ጥንቃቄ የተሞላበት፣ የመረጃ ትክክለኛነትንና የጋዜጠኝነት መርሆች የታዩበት መሆኑንና ዘገባው በሃይማኖቱ ተከታዮች ዘንድ እንዲሁም በመላው ኅብረተሰብ ላይ ያደረሰውን ተጽእኖ ለመረዳትም ያግዛል። ለዚህ ጥናት የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ ለትምህርት ጉዳይ ብቻ የሚውልና የመላሾችም ማንነት የማይገለጽበት ነው። አስቀድሜ ለትብብርዎ ላቅ ያለ ምስጋናዬን አቀርባለሁ።

የቃለ መጠይቁ ተሳታፊዎች፦ ይህ ጥናት የሚዲያ ምሁራንን ጨምሮ ከኢትዮጵያ ብሮድካስቲንግ ኮርፖሬሽን፣ አሻም ቴሌቪዥን እና ፕራይም ቴሌቪዥን ጋዜጠኞች የሚካተቱበት ነው።

### **ለጋዜጠኞች የሚቀርቡ ጥያቄዎች**

1. በኢትዮጵያ ኃይማኖታዊ ጉዳዮችን ለመዘገብ የማያስችሉ ችግሮችና ተግዳሮቶች ምንድናቸው?
2. እርሶ በሚሰሩበት የሚዲያ ተቋም ኃይማኖታዊ ጉዳዮችን ስትዘገቡ የምትከተሏቸው የሥነ ምግባር መርሆችና መመሪያዎች ምንድናቸው?
3. እርሶ የሚሰሩበት የሚዲያ ተቋም ኃይማኖታዊ ጉዳዮች ዘገባ ብዝሃነትን ያከበረ ነው ብለው ያምናሉ?
4. እርሶ በሚሰሩበት ሚዲያ ውስጥ ኃይማኖታዊ ጉዳዮችን ለመዘገብ የዜና መስፈርቶችን የምትወስኑት እንዴት ነው?
5. በጥር ወር 2015 ዓ.ም በኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን የሃይማኖት አባቶች መካከል የተፈጠረውን አለመግባባት እንዴት ባለ መልኩ ነው እርሶ ወይም የሚሰሩበት የሚዲያ ተቋሙ የዘገበው?

6. ዘገባውስ ሚዛናዊ ነበር ወይ? እርሶ የሚሰሩበት ሚዲያ ወይም መገናኛ ብዙሃንስ ጉዳዩን በገለልተኝነት ዘግቦታል ብለው ያስባሉ?
7. የማያስቡ ከሆነ የእርሶ ሚዲያ አዘጋገብ ላይ የተስተዋለው ችግር ምንድን ነበር? የዘገባችሁ ደካማ ጎንስ ምንድን ነው? እንዴት ይገልጹታል?
8. በእርሶ ሚዲያ የሚገኙ ጋዜጠኞች ሃይማኖታዊ ጉዳዮችን ሲዘገቡ ገለልተኛ ናቸው ብለው ያስባሉ? ጋዜጠኞቹን እንዴት ነው የሚገመግሟቸው?
9. በአጠቃላይ በኢትዮጵያ ሚዲያዎች ባለው የሃይማኖት ጉዳዮች አዘጋገብ ላይ ያሉት አስተያየት ምንድነው? ምን አይነት ለውጦች ቢደረጉ ብለው ያስባሉ?

**ሚዲያን ለሚያጠኑ ምሁራን የሚቀርቡ ጥያቄዎች፦**

1. በአሁኑ ጊዜ የሀገሪቱ ሚዲያዎች ሃይማኖታዊ ጉዳዮችን የሚዘገቡበትን መንገድ እንዴት ያዩታል?
2. የሃይማኖት ተቋማት በሚዲያዎች ላይ የሚወክሉበትን አሰራር ለመገንዘብ የሚያግዙት ቲዎሪዎች የትኞቹ ናቸው?
3. የሀገሪቱ ሚዲያዎች በኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ አባቶች መካከል ተከስቶ የነበረውን አለመግባባት የዘገቡበትን መንገድ እንዴት ያዩታል? ወይም ይገመግሙታል? ሚዲያዎቹ ሚዛኑን በጠበቀ መልኩ ነበር የዘገቡት ወይስ ለአንድ ወገን የወገነ አዘጋገብን ተከትለዋል?
4. በሃይማኖት ጉዳዮች ላይ ከሚዲያ ፍሬሚንግና አጀንዳን ከማስቀመጥ አኳያ መገናኛ ብዙሃን የሕዝቡ አስተሳሰብ ላይ እንዴት ነው ተጽዕኖ ያደረጉት?
5. ሃይማኖትን ወይም ሃይማኖቶችን ሚዛናዊ ባልሆነና በተሳሳተ መልኩ በመገናኛ ብዙሃን መገለጻቸው የሚያመጣው ወይም ሊያመጣ የሚችላቸው ተጽዕኖዎች ምን ምን ናቸው?
6. ሚዲያው ከሃይማኖት ጉዳዮች ጋር በተያያዙ ዘገባዎችን እንዴት ነው ወሳኝና አሳዋቂ በሆነ መልኩ ሊያደርስ የሚችለው?

በዚህ ቃለመጠይቅ ላይ ስለተሳተፉ እናመሰግናለን።

**መጠይቅ**

**አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ**

**የጋዜጠኝነትና ስነ-ተግባራት ትምህርት ክፍል**

**ውድ የዚህ ጥናት ተሳታፊዎች፤**

እኔ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የጋዜጠኝነትና ስነ-ተግባራት ትምህርት ክፍል የማስተርስ ዲግሪ ተማሪ ስሆን ለዚህ የሁለተኛ ወይም የማስተርስ ዲግሪ ማሟያም ይህን በኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን የሃይማኖት አባቶች መካከል በ2015 ዓ.ም ተፈጥሮ የነበረው አለመግባባት ላይ የሚዲያው አዘጋገብ ምን ይመስል ነበር? በሚለው ጉዳይ ላይ ጥናት እያከናወንኩ እገኛለሁ። ለዚህ ጥናቴ እንዲያግዘኝም ከታች ያሉትን መጠይቆች በመሙላትና በመመለስ የሚያደርጉልኝ ድጋፍ ያስፈልገኛል። ስለሆነም ለሚከተሉት ጥያቄዎች ምላሽ በመስጠት እንዲተባበሩኝ እየጠየኩ ለዚህ ጥናት የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ ለትምህርት ጉዳይ ብቻ የሚውልና የመላሾችም ማንነት የማይገለጽበት መሆኑን አሳውቃለሁ።

አስቀድሜ ለትብብርዎ ላቅ ያለ ምስጋናዬን አቀርባለሁ።

መጠይቁን ለመሙላት ፈቃደኛ ስለሆኑልን ከልብ እናመሰግናለን፤ መጠይቁን ሲሞሉ ማንነቱን መግለጽ የማይጠበቅበት ሲሆን የእርሶ ምላሽ ጥቅም ላይ የሚውለው ለዚህ ጥናት ብቻ ነው።

**I. የምርጫ ጥያቄዎች**

**ክፍል 1/ ግላዊ መረጃዎች**

እድሜ፡ ሀ/ ከ21 አመት በታች ለ/ ከ22 እስከ 30 አመት ሐ/ ከ31- 40 አመት መ/ ከ50 አመት በላይ

ጾታ፡ ወንድ ሴት

የትምህርት ደረጃ፡ ሀ/ 12ኛ ክፍል ያጠናቀቀ ለ/ ዲፕሎማ ሐ/ የመጀመሪያ ዲግሪ መ/ ማስተርስና ከዚያ በላይ

ሥራ፡ ሀ/ የግል ለ/ የመንግስት ሐ/ መንግስታዊ ያልሆነ ተቋም መ/ ሌላ——

**ክፍል 2: የሚዲያ ክትትል ልማድ**

1. የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያንን የተመለከቱ ዜናዎችን ወይም መረጃዎችን በምን ያህል ጊዜ ይከታተላሉ?

ሀ/ በጣም አልፎ አልፎ እከታተላለሁ

ለ/ አንዳንዴ እከታተላለሁ

ሐ/ አዘውትራ እከታተላለሁ

መ/ ሁልጊዜ እከታተላለሁ

2. በ2015 ዓ.ም በኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን አጋጥሞ ስለነበረው ችግር ( የእምነቱ አባቶች ወይም ጳጳሳት መካከል ተፈጥሮ ስለነበረው አለመግባባት) ያውቃሉ?

ሀ/ አዎ አውቃለሁ

ለ/ አላውቅም

3/ ሃይማኖታዊ ጉዳዮችን በተመለከተ መረጃ ለማግኘት የሚመርጡት ወይም የሚመርጧቸው የሚዲያ አማራጮች የትኞቹ ናቸው ? (ከአንድ በላይ ምርጫ መምረጥ ይችላሉ)

ሀ/ ቴሌቪዥን

ለ/ ሬዲዮ

ሐ/ ጋዜጦች

መ/ መጽሔቶች

ሰ/ የአን ላይን ወይም በይነ መረብ አማራጮች

ረ/ የማኅበራዊ ሚዲያ አማራጮችን (ፌስ ቡክ፣ ዩቲዩብ፣ ትዊተር፣ ቲክ ቶክ ወዘተ)

ሠ/ የቤተክርስቲያንን የኅትመት ውጤቶችን ወይም መንፈሳዊ ይዘት ያላቸውን የህትመት ውጤቶች

ሸ/ ሌሎች አማራጮች ካሉ ቢነግሩን

4. በኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ተፈጥሮ የነበረውን ችግር ወይም አለመግባባት ላይ የመገናኛ ብዙሃን የነበራቸው የአዘጋገብ ሁኔታ ወይም የዘገባ ጥራት አስደሳች ነበር?

ሀ/ አዎ በጣም ደስተኛ ነኝ

ለ/ ደስተኛ ነኝ

ሐ/ ደስተኛ አይደለሁም

መ/ በጣም አበሳጭቶኛል

ሰ/ ገለልተኛ አቋም ነው ያለኝ

**ክፍል 3. በሚዲያ ዘገባዎች ላይ ያሉት አመለካከት**

5/ በእርሶ አገላለጽ የሜንስትራም ሚዲያዎች ወይም የቴሌቪዥን ጣቢያዎች በቤተክርስቲያኒቷ አባቶች መካከል የተፈጠረውን አለመግባባት በትክክልና የጉዳዩን አሳሳቢነት ተረድተው የዘገቡበትን መንገድ እንዴት ይገልጹታል?

ሀ/ በጣም የተሳሳተና አሳሳቢነቱን ያላገናዘበ ነው

ለ/ የተሳሳተና ጥንቃቄ የጎደለው ነው

ሐ/ ትክክልና ጥንቃቄ የተስተዋለበት ነው

መ/ በጣም ትክክለኛና ከፍተኛ ጥንቃቄ የተደረገበት ነው

ሰ/ ገለልተኛ አቋም ነው ያለኝ

6/ ስለቤተክርስቲያኒቷ አባቶች አለመግባባት የቀረቡት የሚዲያ ዘገባዎች የሁለቱንም ወገኖች አመለካከትና መርሆች ሚዛናዊና ፍትሃዊ በሆነ ሁኔታ የዘገቡ ናቸው ብለው ያምናሉ?

ሀ/ በጣም እስማማለሁ

ለ/ እስማማለሁ

ሐ/ አልስማማም

መ/ በፍጹም አልስማማም

ሰ/ ገለልተኛ አቋም ነው ያለኝ

7/ ስለቤተክርስቲያን ጉዳይ የተዛባና ሚዛናዊ ያልሆነ ወይም አድሎ ያለበት የሚዲያ አዘጋገብን አስተውለው ወይም አጋጥሞት ያውቃል?

ሀ. አዎ

ለ. አጋጥሞኝ አያውቅም

ለጥያቄ ቁጥር 7 ምላሽ አዎ ከሆነ እባክትን ተጨማሪ ማብራሪያ ቢሰጡን

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8. የሚዲያዎች ዘገባ ስለቤተክርስቲያን የሃይማኖት አባቶች አለመግባባት ያሉት አረዳድ ላይ ምን ዓይነት ተጽዕኖ ነበረው?

ሀ/ አስተሳሰቤን በጣም ቀርጾታል

ለ/ በተወሰነ መልኩ ቀርጾታል

ሐ/ እምብዛም ወይም ያን ያህል አልለወጠውም

መ/ ምንም ተጽዕኖ አልነበረበረውም

ክፍል 4.

9. የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን የሃይማኖት አባቶች አለመግባባት ላይ የሚዲያዎች አዘጋገብ

ስለኹነቱ የሚዲያዎች ዘገባ	በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አልስማማም	ፍጹም አልስማማም	ገለልተኛ
እውነታን ያዘሉና ትክክለኛ ነበሩ					
ሚዛናዊ ዘገባዎች ነበሩ					
ዘገባዎቹ አድጊ ዊነት ያልታየባቸው ነበሩ					
ዘገባውን የሰሩት ጋዜጠኞች ወገን ሳይለዩ ገለልተኛ ሆነው ሲዘገቡ ነበር					
ዘገባዎቹ የጉዳዩን ጥንቃቄ የሚሻ መሆኑና የዘነጉ ነበሩ					

**ስለኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን የሚዲያው አዘጋገብ እንዴት ይሻሻል?**

10. የመገናኛ ብዙሃን በቤተክርስቲያኒቱ ውስጥ የሚፈጠሩ አለመግባባቶችን በስምምነት እንዲፈቱ የሚዲያው አስተዋጽኦ ምን መሆን አለበት?

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11. ቤተክርስቲያኒቷ ሚዲያው ላይ ስለ እርሷ የሚቀርቡትን ትርክቶች በማስተካከል ተፃማኒነት ያለው መረጃ ማቅረብ እንዲቻል ምን ማድረግ አለባት ይላሉ?

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12. በቤተክርስቲያኒቷ ተከስቶ የነበረውን የሃይማኖት አባቶች አለመግባባትን በተመለከተ የማኅበራዊ ሚዲያው የሕዝቡን አመለካከት ከመቅረጽ አኳያ ምን አይነት ሚና ነበረው ብለው ያስባሉ?

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**በመጠይቁ ስለተሳተፉ እናመሰግናለን!**