

**An Examination of Freedom of the Mass Media
and Information Proclamation (590/2008) Vis-à-
vis its Practices**

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Getaneh Mekuanint, entitled *An Examination of Freedom of the Mass Media and Information Proclamation (590/2008) Vis-à-vis its Practices* and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of the University and notes the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Appendix II in- depth interview questions-English version

Appendix III in- depth interview questions-Amharic version

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the current mass media and information proclamation (590/2008) in light of the present media practice. The study assessed the current status of freedom of expression and the press based on the views of the practitioners working in both government and privately owned media. In order to assess the implementation of the media law, the study examined whether a gap between the law and the practice exists.

Data were collected using semi-structured questions with different journalists, editors, managers and government officials. The research used deliberative sampling technique to choose key informants. The researcher purposively selected journalists, editors and managers from both government and private media in order to get diverse and relevant data important to the study. As to the conceptual framework, the Hallin and Mancini's media systems model and other relevant literatures were reviewed. In addition, the Ethiopian constitution and international standards on freedom of expression and the press were reviewed.

The finding of the research revealed that a gap exists between the law and its implementation. There is lack of political commitment on the part of the government in paying attention to the implementation of the press law. Despite the fact that the press law permits the media to express opinions or criticisms on various issues, the government is very critical of those views and less tolerant to criticisms by the media. The absence of strong, credible and all inclusive press council or union of journalists has significantly affected press freedom in the country. Regardless of very little improvement, accessing information from public bodies has been the great challenge for the media, and this in turn affects level of press freedom.

Based on the findings, one can argue that the future of freedom of expression is dependent up on the contribution of educational institutions, public, media and other relevant stakeholders. The paper contended that the government could show commitment to the implementation of the press law. In addition, the government and private media should narrow the polarity between them to better serve the public and contribute their parts to the growth of the nation.

Chapter One

1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the topic of the study. Hence, it establishes background, states problem, and presents rationale of the study. It also deals with objective, significance, scope and limitation of the study.

1.1. Background of the study

The media under the post independence African governments closely resembled that of the colonialists. Both restricted freedom of expression, which is an essential precondition for a democratic society (Martin, 1998, p.66-69) quoted in Kassoma, 2000, p.34). According to Mwesige (2004), following the independence of most African countries, African leaders used to urge the media to play their function in integrating the spirit of the disintegrated communities and mobilizing them towards national unity and development. As Hachten quoted in Mwesige (2004) put:

Communication practice in the first decades of post-colonial Africa was predicated on the premise that the mass media were important for political integration, mobilization, national unity and economic development in the new nations. The media were to be used to foster the values and development objectives of the governments of the new independent nations (p.74).

According to Barland (2005), the new African elites who succeeded as rulers after independence continued to use mass media to consolidate their position. They tended to hamper press freedom

and benefited from the structure of the colonial system. Therefore in spite of national liberation, post independence leaders did not show any commitment to the provision and implementation of press freedom, and the media were considered as tools for the rulers. They justified control over the media on grounds such as national unity, development, culture, stability and religion. In contrast, the real intention was to ensure monopoly over state resources including information flow.

Post independence African countries were characterized by one party rule and military regime that denied the public of their basic rights: freedom of expression. According to Kassoma (2000), the then African rulers did not want freedom of expression and information, but rather they sought the media to work on molding the public towards nationhood.

Rulers' hostile attitude towards the media seemed to change after the collapse of communism. The end of the Cold War has brought changes to many African countries. As a result, many granted freedom of expression. What is more, issues of good governance and human rights as well as multi party elections took center stage. Free and independent mass media have been identified as crucial components not only in the strengthening of civil society but also in maintenance of political stability (Ungar, 1990; Martin, 1992; Kasoma, 1995; Hadenius and Uggla, 19980) quoted in Kassoma, (2000, p.34). Although Ethiopia was the only country in the continent that was never colonized, it shares similar history of press freedom with colonized Africa. Despite the fact that Ethiopia had two constitutions during the monarchical period (the revised constitution of 1955) and dictatorial regime (the 1987 constitution) which promised freedom of expression, the exercise of free speech was nothing beyond mention.

The Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front assumed power in 1991 and culminated Mengistu's dictatorial regime. The following year (1992) became a turning point in the Ethiopian media landscape as the government liberalized the media and granted press freedom. Accordingly, the 1992 press proclamation bestowed citizens the right to exercise freedom of expression through the private print media. Freedom of expression is further promoted in the 1995 constitution. The government kept on introducing media policies in the subsequent years: the 1999 broadcast proclamation, 2007 broadcast proclamation and 2008 freedom of the mass media and access to information proclamation are cases in point.

Laws are superseded by the new ones if there are changes that are relevant to the existing conditions, and it is with this understanding that the introduction of the current media law deserves close scrutiny. For example in its opening, the current media law states, "convinced of the need to amend the existing press law and to replace it by a new law that is commensurable with the ongoing democratic transformation that is taking place in Ethiopia, the law that governs freedom of the mass media and information access is proclaimed" (Negarit Gazzet of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2008).

This research does not attempt to find out whether the current media law is in line with the constitution of the country. It rather focused on the execution of the law on the actual ground. It is presumed that laws are enacted to bring about better changes. According to Shimelis Kemal¹(2013), the current Ethiopian media law is put in place to ensure better operation of the media in the country that is consistent with the country's development endeavor. However, empirical studies show that laws may not have the intended result. In other cases, a gap exists between laws and their implementations. Therefore, the present study tried to assess freedom of mass

¹ State Minister in Government Communication Affairs' Office

media and information proclamation, and find out if a gap exists between the law and its implementation.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Freedom of expression is one of the fundamental rights that each human being has to be endowed with. Accordingly, the Ethiopian Constitution guarantees all citizens the right to freedom of expression without any interference. The rights include “freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice” (Article 29 (2)). Ethiopia has also ratified international agreements relevant to freedom of expression including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

One of the greatest gains behind the enshrinement of freedom of expression in the constitution is the provision of special and legal protection to the press. This protection is guaranteed under article 29(4) of the constitution that states “in the interest of free flow of information, ideas and opinions which are essential to the functioning of a democratic order, the press shall as an institution, enjoy legal protection to ensure its operational independence and its capacity to entertain diverse opinions.” The constitution also puts restrictions as freedom of expression could be limited “only through laws which are guided by the principle that freedom of expression and information cannot be limited on account of content or point of view expressed” Article29(6).

The application of media law in a way that promotes the healthy and democratic function of the media may face challenges from various actors within and outside the media. In order for the

media to appropriately provide their service to the people, they have to be the eyes and ears for the wider public. However, the law that is set to govern the media may not be implemented in a way that it was intended for. Being the only nation in Africa that survived colonial oppression, Ethiopia has been suffering from poverty and under development for years. This reality demands aggressive and progressive media operation that would help the country address the social and economic problems that were the hallmark of Ethiopia. In the process, media can play critical roles. However, those critical roles can be made possible if there is only conducive environment for responsible, ethical, independent and professional media.

It seems in response to this demand that the current government granted press freedom. And the crucial contribution of the press is only attainable through permissive press laws along with their proper implementation. However, the nature and influence of subsequent press laws on media practices deserve close attention. Therefore, this study aimed at examining the current freedom of mass media and information proclamation (590/2008) vis-à-vis actual media operation.

1.3. Rationale of the study

It has been more than two decades since the introduction of the notion of democracy in Ethiopia following the seizure of power by the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front. One of the major departures of the current government from the previous ones has been its commitment to the provision and implementation of democratic rights such as freedom of expressions. It can be argued that it is the current government that created conducive environment for the media. Not only the change allowed private ownership but it also abolished censorship.

Accordingly, the liberalization of print media resulted in the birth of many newspapers and magazines and later broadcast media that FM radios came to existence. In order to provide a

framework for the operation of the media, the government set laws since 1992. Granting press freedom is one thing, but ensuring the smooth, professional operation of the media is quite another. Some may assume freedom of expression means freedom without responsibility. In fact, every freedom comes with responsibility. To promote freedom with responsibility, the government has enacted various press laws.

Regardless of the good intention in the laws, their implementations may pose challenge to the operation of the media. Therefore an assessment of the existing media law in light of current media practices may help us identify a) if a gap exists between the law and its implementation and b) factors affecting media practices in the country. Hence, the thesis which tried to examine the media law in light of the real practice on the ground and attempt to forward recommendation will have a good contribution.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The major objective of the study was to examine the current mass media and information proclamation in light of the present media practice. The study aimed at:

1. Finding out if a gap between the press law and practice exists;
2. Assessing current status of freedom of expression and the press in light of the press law.
3. Assessing how personal, economical and political factors would influence journalistic practices;
4. Examining how the political orientation of editors and media managers affect press freedom.

1.5. Research questions

The study attempted to find out answers for the following questions.

1. Does a gap exist between the press law and practice?
2. What is the current status of freedom of expression and the press in light of the press law?
3. Do personal, economical and political conditions influence journalistic practices?
4. How would the political orientation of editors and media managers affect press freedom?

1.6. Significance of the study

The research will have the following contributions:-

1. It will help identify factors affecting press freedom in Ethiopia.
2. It will serve as an input to media regulators and advocates of freedom of expression or of the press.
3. It will help trigger further discussions on press freedom in Ethiopia.
- 4, it will help indicate the status of freedom of expression and the press in Ethiopia.

1.7. Scope of the study

Since the study is an assessment of the implementation of the current press law, it includes facts from journalists and editors working in both private and government owned

broadcast and print media. The views from both sets of professionals were included as the press law governs the operation of both types of media.

1.8. Limitation of the study

The limitations point to three factors. The first one goes to the fact that the study did not go through each article of freedom of the mass media and information proclamation to make the analysis rather it focused on the entirety of the law and its implementation. The second limitation deals with interviewees. Interviewees' refusal to give an interview has limited the researcher's ability to gather data from a larger pool. The busy schedules of the journalists have also been another factor that discouraged some journalists from participating in the study.

1.9. Organization of the study

Chapter one establishes background, states problem, and presents rationale of the study. It also deals with objective, significance, scope and limitation of the study. Chapter two is all about conceptual framework and review of related literature. Chapter three presents the research methodology. Data presentation and analysis is what chapter four presents. The final chapter is about conclusion and recommendation of the study.

Chapter Two

2. Conceptual Framework and Review of Related Literature

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related literature on Media systems model by Hallin and Mancini. It will also try to touch on other issues that are relevant to the study.

2.2. An overview of media in Ethiopia

Ethiopia, which is the oldest independent country in Africa, is an early lead in developing script written literature. However, the publication of both secular and religious issues was incomparably low and concerning the production of newspapers, magazines and other periodicals the country was too late (Deneke, 1991 quoted in Shemelis, 2000, p.6). The development of modern periodicals can be traced only to the last years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century (Negussie, 2006, p.6). According to Shemelis (2000), the beginning of print medium in Ethiopia was sporadic and foreign inspired for the most part with its predominantly ecclesiastical issue publication. The start has been traced by some to the mid-nineteenth century, when the first printing press was set up in 1863 at Massawa by a Lazarist missionary known as Father Lorenzo Biancheri. Later on, the Swedish Evangelical Mission established a small press at Mankullo, near Massawa, in 1885.

According to Negussie (2006), father Bernard, a Franciscan missionary, is generally credited with publishing the first duplicated publication *Bulletin de la Leproserie de Harar* in French and Amharic that intended to win support against leprosy.

As Shemelis (2000) put out, Father Bernard started publishing; using a duplicating machine (Roneograph), a weekly French-Amharic newspaper entitled 'Le Semaine d' Ethiopie (which continued till 1911) in 1896. It was intended mainly for campaigns against leprosy. Just before the turn of the century, an Eritrean patriot Blatta Gabre Egziabher produced a weekly hand written sheets or newspaper (if it is called) in Amharic language. The paper focused on unity, strength and modernization though he was also critical of the feudals around Menelik(Negussie, 2006,p.6).

According to Negussie (2006), the first real Amharic newspaper, Aimero- intelligence, was issued in 1902 by a Greek business man called Endreas E. Kavadia .The name Aimero was given by Emperor Menelik and it was a four page weekly having a circulation of only 24 copies. Later on Kavadia obtained a duplicating machine and the circulation reached 200 copies. Hence during the reign of Menelik II, the press was encouraged though it was not understood as a means of development for national identity or in enhancing government powers. The establishment of Berhannena selam printing press and Berhannena Selam- government owned weekly newspaper by Ras Tefari Mekonnen in 1923 and 1925 respectively became a land mark in the history of the Ethiopian press. Berhanena Selam became a forum for airing progressive ideas and views by some of the young intellectuals of the country at that time despite many poorly written articles, subject restriction, less appealing of the paper and limited circulation (Shimelis, 200, p.8). According to Tadesse (-), Emperor Minilik, who is the founder of modern Ethiopia, played a significant role in establishing diplomatic relations with European states. This helped many foreigners to establish printing presses in the capital city, Addis Ababa.

According to Shemelis (2000) and Tadesse (-), the progress of the Ethiopian press was interrupted for about five years (1935-1941) as a result of the country's occupation by Mussolini's forces despite some like Bandirachin (latter renamed as Sendeq Alamachin) of the liberation force. According to Ministry of Information(1966) quoted in Shimelis(2000), the publication industry comparatively expanded in the number of periodicals and the size of circulation as witnessed by the emergence of Addis Zemen, the Ethiopian Herald, Yezareyitu Ethiopia in 1941 , 1943 and 1952 respectively. As Tadesse (-) states until 1990's, running the mass media in general was the responsibility and function of the government. Woletaw and Tedbabe (1990 E.C) quoted in Shimelis (2000) stated that the period of military dictatorship from 1974 to 1991 was one of total government control of the media and the flow of information. Unlike the proclamation of 26/1967 which did not specify the possibilities for private press, the constitution of 1987 contained freedom of expression albeit its reality.

The destiny of the media did change in the aftermath of the downfall of the dictatorial regime in 1991. According to Shemelis (2000), the assumption of power in 1991 by the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front ushered in a period of fundamental transformation in the political economy of the country. As part of the democratization process, the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front-led government granted freedom of the press. The recognition to freedom of the press was in tandem with the new government's acceptance of the 1948 Universal Declaration of the United Nations (217 A/111), especially Article 19, states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

So following the new change the press started burgeoning. In fact the number of newspapers and magazines diminished after the nationwide election of 2005. According to the website of Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, presently 18 newspapers and 21 magazines, a total of 38 Periodicals Circulated in More than One Regional States in January , 2013 G.C.

As to the broadcast media, radio which was established in 1935 at Akaki town in southeastern part of Addis Ababa stopped its transmission till 1941 though the fascists installed their own for their propaganda in the meantime. And following the evacuation of the Italians, the radio station left behind was restored and put into operation, so normal radio broadcasting started in 1941(Ethiopian Radio Magazine, 2000,p.6 & Negussie, 2006,p.9).

The World Federation of Lutheran Churches broadcaster, Radio Voice of the Gospel aired religious and entertaining materials since 1963, Tadesse (-).The Educational Mass Media Center, which has been established by the Ministry of Education in 1965, has also played an important role in the development of mass communication in Ethiopia (Negussie, 2006,p.12). Television broadcasting which began in Ethiopia in 1964 was the result of both the country's wish to catch up with the rest of the world in information service and the medium's potential for education and in shaping Haileselassie's personality cult. In addition, it was a time that the Organization of African Unity was established (Negussie, 2006, p.11). According to the website of Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, there are about 30 broadcasters of which nine (9) are government owned broadcasters, five (5) commercial broadcasters and more than sixteen (16) community broadcasters.

The change of the regime from military dictatorship to the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front brought a shift in the state of the print media; it did bring the same change on

the broadcast media as shown in subsequent broadcast proclamations. I.e. the broadcast proclamation of 1999 allowed the launch of private broadcast media although the right of privately owning such type of media is limited only to the medium of radio. After the seizure of power by Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front, the media are allowed to operate based on the regulations laid down by the government and hence the 1992 press proclamation, 1999 and 2007 broadcast proclamation and the 2008 freedom of the mass media and information proclamation are the major ones put into effect to govern the media in the country.

In order to address the criticisms of the law which was in operation since 1992, the government introduced two draft press laws in 2003 though neither version was adopted into law. After this, the ministry of information released another draft press proclamation in May 2004. Indisputably, the drafts laid the ground for the draft press law and nearly after six years of the introduction of the first draft law that the Ethiopian house of peoples' representatives passed the mass media and freedom of information proclamation on July 1, 2008(Ross, 2010, p.1058).

As stated in Negarit Gazzet of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2008), the need to amend the existing press law and to replace it by a new law that is commensurable with the ongoing democratic transformation in Ethiopia drove the formulation of the 2008 proclamation of the media and information. The prelude of the proclamation promised better conditions for the media mentioning the grant of free expression and media freedom in the constitution including the prohibition of censorship. The good thing in this proclamation is the incorporation of freedom of information act, which was not given any special place in the previous press law, although some restrictions are also there. According to Ross (2010), the press law restricts the operation of the media despite the government's liberal press law preamble. The defamation

provision put out that any false accusation and defamation against the executive, legislative and judiciary will be prosecutable despite the victim's claim of any charge. Ross (2010) expressly forwarded the oppressive nature of this provision in that:-

Members of the private media and even the public will likely be intimidated by the possibility of prosecution for any comments they make about government business or officers. Without the freedom to comment on any and all news, whether regarding the government or not, the media cannot fulfill its responsibility to provide complete and accurate information to the public. Additionally, the public's right to receive the information is clearly violated (p. 1060).

The idea is that the government may prosecute on the base of any article written on its officials who even may disregard whether the article sound defamatory. It is also the same to say that if the media stop writing and commenting concerning officials probably the right of the people to get information is forgotten. The fines and retributions seem very repressive and formidable.

According to Ross (2010), the fines for mere media offenses imposed by the Ethiopian Press Law may easily be seen as cruel and unusual punishment. Furthermore, exorbitant fines will help perpetuate oppression by making journalists unable to pay, media out of business for even minor criminal offence. While the government is not using the Press Law to directly censor the media, the threat of legal action, the requirements for obtaining a media license, and the consequences of a violation will indirectly censor what the press is willing to publish.

According to Ross (2010), when the media are forced to balance the risks of publishing reports questioning government officials or policies against the importance of broadcasting critical

information, there is inherently a form of censorship involved. This means any channel that attempt to write and publish or broadcast any article critical of government and or its officials will risk the aftermath consequence. Despite the fact that the government claimed the press law will create amicable environment for the exchange of information, it tends to do the opposite in that it allowed the government to prosecute journalists and members of the media for expressing their views and sets strong foothold for government regulation of the media.

2.3. The regulation of media institutions

Although the government is most probably the important regulator through its legislative framework, it is not always the only one. Media institutions are part of the society and hinging on this broader perspective: - policy that will affect the media directly or in other way is made by various interest groups in society which also interact with each other (Oosthuizen, 2001, p.164). Hence there are forces in a society that come together to influence the functioning of the media. As Snyman quoted in Oosthuizen (2001) points out, the most decisive source of policy formulation is the state. Within the jurisdiction of the state, political parties (in multiparty system) can formulate their policies on information and the communication media.

All institutions or individuals outside the media –and in the position to regulate the media in some or other way-could explicitly and implicitly lay down media policy in the external framework. These parties may simply be referred as regulators and include groups or institutions like governments, advertisers, pressure groups and the expectation of the journalistic profession itself(ibid,p.166). Regulators function within the external framework and are institutions or measures that determine or codetermine media content from outside.

2.3.1. Government as a regulator

According to Gerbener (1977) quoted in Oosthuizen (2001), the nature of the relationships between a national government and the media is decisive for what the media are allowed to publish for they are legally, normatively and structurally subject to the control of political institutions. This implies that the media of the nation is highly shaped by the prevailing political power in the country. Concerning governments' control of the media Oosthuizen (2001) stated:

Governments have specific expectations about how media should fulfill their role in society. These expectations are normative pointers that governments provide to the media and could, of themselves, become forms of intrinsic regulations. i.e. the media will tend to act in certain way for the governments want them to act like that and any deviation from such expectation will result in negative feedback from governments in the form of criticism and threats and if this feedback effected in corrective action by the media, it serves as indirect form of control(p.167).

The type of political power can therefore have a profound effect on the nature of the media system in a country in particular on the rights afforded to the media, the restrictions that are placed on them and expectations about how they should behave in order to best serve the society(ibid,p.167).

2.3.2. Other regulators

In addition to government, norms (unwritten rules of conduct that apply within a community) tend to regulate media functioning. With regard to the news media the norms dictate what to be published and what may not be published .i.e. how the output of the media tastes to the recipients

of the media content (Oosthuizen, Faure & de Wet, 1991 quoted in Oosthuizen, 2001, p.178). Oosthuizen stated that pressure groups can also influence content of media. Individuals join for their voices to be heard and pressurize journalists to change or omit stories. He further argued that advertisers are guilty of subtle manipulation and hence influencing news content. In view of present economic demand, the newspapers are in challenge of producing news stories that may anger their largest advertisers however this influence is dependent up on the degree of dependence of newspapers' income from advertisement (Hierbert et al 1991 quoted in Oosthuizen, 2001, p.179). Journalism profession can also act as a regulator, and journalists have to make complicated decisions in their daily work and they use ethical codes to guide them in making these decisions for codes and journalistic conventions or professional standards of the media works are important in determining media content (ibid, p.181).

There is a contradiction intrinsic to the notion of regulating what are supposed to be the free means of expression and information in a modern society. Regulation by its very nature sets limits to freedom, which is the most basic principle of democratic societies. At the very least, this means that there have to be clear and convincing reasons for regulation (media regulation, 2011).

The grounds given in support of media regulation include, the protection of public order and support for instruments of government and justice, the protection of individual and sectional rights and interests that might be harmed by unrestricted use of public means of communication, the promotion of access, freedom to communicate, diversity and universal provision as well as securing communicative and cultural ends chosen by the people for themselves, maintaining respect for public mores in matters of taste, respecting human rights of expression and protection

from insult and prejudice, preventing harm to society, especially by way of harm to children and young people from undesirable content and indecency, and the promotion of the efficiency and development of the communication system, by way of technical standardization, innovation, connectivity and universal provision(ibid).

Similarly, media regulation is sought for issues of private concern like:-Protecting individual rights to reputation, preventing offence to individuals, avoiding harm to individuals from violent or perverted content, protecting property rights in communication and information (ibid).When talking about an aspect of media regulation, the point that needs to be thought is the insulation of the media from falling under the monopoly of a single body that do not let entertain diverse voices. As to the regulation of the media Hitchens(2006) put:

The media have become the town square. For citizens, the media are a major source for information and commentary on public issues. To be an effective contributor to this democratic process, the media, as a channel for ideas and information and generator of debate, must be able to offer a variety of voices and views, and operate independently, without undue dominance by public or private power (p. 32).

The idea is that the media which grant multifaceted benefit should not fall under private or government power supremely. If the media are within the sheer power of the government or the private power then they will not serve the people as expected in the right thinking for they cannot endure the influence of the power of the owners.

2.4. Media systems Model

Hallin and Mancini (2004) developed three models of media systems in which they illustrated the differences that exist among media systems and the ways in which these differences are connected with other characteristics of political and social systems, and with differences in political and social history.

Accordingly, the three models of media systems identified by Hallin and Mancini (2004) are the:-Liberal model, Polarized pluralist model and Democratic corporatist model. Even though only the polarized model is necessary in relation to this study, the researcher felt that the remaining two, liberal and democratic corporatist models would help understand the media systems of other countries. In addition, the inclusion of Liberal and democratic Corporatist model can help understand that polarized pluralist model is not the only model Hallin and Mancini developed. So it avoids confusion.

After the assumption of power by the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front, Journalists in the state-owned print medium were let loose to pursue their traditional function, which they did with great vigor and dedication: praising and glorifying the government, at times beyond reasonable proportions, and condemning and castigating actions of previous governments as well as those of current political opponents of the regime in power. This unprofessional and unethical campaign of vilification, smearing and name-calling could not be said to have been carried out without official blessing (Shimelis, 2000,p.14).This is expressive of the route the government owned media are taking though their original intent put on paper is quite different as can be understood from the constitution on government/public media.

According to Tedbabe (1990 E.C) cited in Shimelis (2000), one of the rationales for being a journalist or start newspaper(private) is "love for the country," a claim which could, and did in fact, imply opposition to the government in power. This claim was particularly presented in the most direct terms possible in the Editorials of several of the newspapers. The following is a case in point:

.....it will oppose some of the policies of the political establish;

. . . it will work for the preservation of the country's unity and foundation of a democratic system;

. . . it will not publish any news or article favoring or promoting the policies of the government (p.25).

The above two paragraphs are demonstrative of the direction the media took since the early days of media liberalization in Ethiopia. The division among the print media has been reflected in the variability of their output in relation to the government. Shimelis (2000) stated:

The picture of differentiation is also a reflection of the polarization of the print medium in Ethiopia - not just the conventional division between the government and the private but also within the independent press itself: between those which are opposed and those which are friendly to (some would prefer to say 'critically supportive of') the government in power (p. 38).

The polarized nature of the society seems to have opened the divergence among the media too. According to Aadland and Fackler(1999) quoted in Hallelujah(2008),the public debate in

Ethiopia seems polarized and events and statements are easily interpreted to fit into the patterns of old conflict, and few people seem willing to engage in constructive dialogue with adversaries.

This idea is further seconded by Tafari, in a personal interview held with Hallelujah in 2007, that the political and ethnic polarization in the society is clearly reflected in the activities of the independent media. “If you are not harsh on the government you will be labeled as government-affiliated as it is presumed that the government press is there to talk about the good of the government and the independent press should always talk the bad side and be an enemy” (Hallelujah,2008,p.60).

“The current Ethiopian media situation, as for the past 20 years, is commonly described as a polarized state of affairs between the state media and private media outlets” (Aadland and Fackler, 2001; Price et al., 2008) quoted in (Skjerdal, 2012,p.35). In relation to the polarized state of the media in Ethiopia, Nicole Stremlau (2011) quoted in Skjerdal(2012) attributes polarization in the press to Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front revolutionary democracy ideology, which leaves little room for a dynamic opposition. According to Øyvind Aadland and Knut Røe (2000) cited in Skjerdal(2012), the tendency of polarization is attributed to the absence of a tradition of dialogue in the local society, where disagreement customarily ends in enmity and division.

The present government in its intolerance to diverging ideas along with the poor culture of dialogue in the society to solve problems tended to have paved the way for the emergence of polarization that happens in the Ethiopian media environment. The separation among the media is not limited only to government versus private but also among the private ones. This trend of polarization is still enduring and noticeable between the government and the privately owned

media and between those private ones. Additionally, the separation between the private media can be easily understood in their output in that some are pro-government in either visible or invisible way while handful ones which appear and disappear seem to be very critical of the government.

The polarization also exists in the presence of party newspapers and the affiliation of the private media to opposition political parties and the government owned media to the government and hence the media are being used as an instrument for political intervention. Privately owned newspapers are established, though they appear and disappear, partly as a vehicle for political intervention. The level of professionalization is still toddling like a baby and the practice is a mix of information, commentary or advocacy journalism. Therefore the state of the Ethiopian media can be best expressed by polarized pluralist model other than democratic corporatist or liberal model.

According to Halin and Mancini (2004), there are four major dimensions proposed which would help compare the media systems in Western Europe and North America. These are:-

- (1) The development of media markets, with particular emphasis on the strong or weak development of a mass circulation press
- (2) Political parallelism; that is, the degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties or, more broadly, the extent to which the media system reflects the major political divisions in society
- (3) The development of journalistic professionalism; and

(4) The degree and nature of state intervention in the media system: The state plays a significant role in shaping the media system in any society. In fact there are considerable differences in extent of state intervention as well as the form it takes. The most important form of state intervention is public service broadcasting and state intervention is also expressed in owning of news agencies, newspapers or other media related enterprises either directly or through state owned enterprises.

The intervention of the state according to Hallin and Mancini (2004) is also explained in Libel, defamation, privacy, and right-of-reply laws, Hate speech laws, Professional secrecy laws for journalists (protecting the confidentiality of sources), Laws regulating access to government information, Laws regulating media concentration, ownership, and competition, Laws regulating political communication, particularly during election campaigns are among others.

2.4.1. The polarized pluralist model

This media system exists across the Mediterranean countries of Europe that had relatively long and conflicted transitions from feudalism and patrimonialism to capitalism and representative democracy. It is characterized by an elite-oriented press with relatively small circulation and a corresponding centrality of electronic media. Freedom of the press and the development of commercial media industries generally came late (near the end of the 20th)(Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.73; Hallin & Giles, 2005, p.10).

According to Hallin & Mancini (2004), Political parallelism tends to be high; the press is marked by a strong focus on political life, external pluralism, and a tradition of commentary-oriented or advocacy journalism persists more strongly than in other parts of Europe. Newspaper owners and

journalists in southern Europe customarily have political alliances. Instrumentalization of the media by the government, by political parties, and by industrialists with political ties is common. Public broadcasting tends to follow the government or parliamentary models and is relatively weak.

Professionalization of journalism is not as strongly developed as in the other models; professionalism is not deeply rooted in this system: journalism is not as strongly differentiated from political activism and the autonomy of journalism is often limited (control of the work process in journalism is to a significant extent collegial, in the sense that authority over journalists is exercised primarily by fellow journalists)(Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.73).

Journalism has been an elite occupation in southern Europe, at least at the top of the media hierarchy. And still according to the criteria of professionalization (the emergence of norms and practices distinct to journalism), the autonomy of journalists and the strength of the ethic of public service –professionalization has developed more slowly, and not as, as in other systems. In addition, writers and editors were political actors above all, and their commitment to strictly journalistic standards of practice, to the extent that these existed, was weaker than their commitment to political factions and principles and code of ethics developed slowly (Hallin & Giles, 2005, pp.10-11).

The state plays a large role as an owner, regulator, and funder of media, though its capacity to regulate effectively is often limited. The system is rooted to a large extent in the high degree of ideological diversity and conflict and the state and political parties have played a strong role in a society and the media were closely tied to those institutions (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.74). However, France is characterized by polarized pluralism and a strong role of the state, certainly,

and by a history of strong political parallelism in the media, but also by stronger industrialization and stronger development of the mass-circulation press and of rational-legal authority along with journalists' autonomy (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.74).

2.4.2. The democratic corporatist model

The model which combined incompatible characteristics developed in northern continental Europe. Countries in northern and central Europe combine strong principles of press freedom with active state intervention in the media and press freedom developed early, like in countries of North Atlantic, beginning with Sweden in 1766 (Hallin & Mancini, 2004,p.74).

Accompanying the press freedom was a high circulation of newspapers to which strong party newspapers were contributory and the political press had a history of coexistence with commercial press. Political parallelism is historically high and, though it is diminishing, a moderate degree of external pluralism and a legacy of commentary-oriented journalism persists, mixed with a growing emphasis on neutral professionalism and information-oriented journalism (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p.74).

As Hallin and Mancini (2004) put it, journalistic professionalism is high and marked by a high degree of formal organization. Likewise media are seen to a significant extent as social institutions for which the state has responsibility, and press freedom coexists with relatively strong state support for and regulation of media. Public broadcasting systems tend to follow the parliamentary or civic/corporatist model with parties and organized social groups involved in broadcast governance, but professional autonomy in broadcasting is also normally high.

Regarding the coexistence of conflicting characteristics in democratic corporatist model, Hallin and Mancini (2000) put:

Strong commercial media industries have coexisted with politically linked media and a high degree of political parallelism; high political parallelism has also coexisted with a high degree of journalistic professionalization; and a strong liberal tradition of press freedom and freedom of information has coexisted with strong state intervention in the media sector as in other sectors of society (p.74).

The level of journalistic autonomy is equal to what journalists in the liberal media systems enjoy. As Peter Katzenstein in Hallin and Giles(2005) put it, democratic corporatism joins ideological diversity and with social partnership and is characterized by strong sense of, and commitment to common norms. The form of journalism in this media model is different from the liberal one in that it is less tied to the norm of objectivity with high level of institutionalization (strong union of journalists 'exist).

2.4.3. The liberal model

According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), the liberal model which is also named as the North Atlantic model got its manifestations in the early development of commercial newspapers. There is limited role of the state in the affairs of the media and development of strong form of journalistic professionalism that center around the “objective norm” –the separation and political neutrality of journalists from political factions and other organized social groups. In such media systems political parallelism is low with the predominance of internal pluralism except the British partisan press and journalistic professionalization is strong without formal organization.

Journalistic autonomy has been limited by commercial pressure than political parallelism though the latter is more common in Britain. Public broadcasting and broadcast regulation is organized according to the professional model, with relatively strong insulation from political Control (ibid, p.75). The model is also revealed in the earlier development of liberal institutions with traditionally strong role of the market and relatively limited role of the state though more vivid in United States than in others (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.75).

According to Hallin and Giles (2005), the government's limited role as owner, funder and regulator of the media in liberal systems does not necessarily mean that the state has less influence on media content though the watch-dog role of checking government power is certainly part of the liberal media culture.

2.5. Freedom of expression

According to Pearson (2004) Freedom of expression being an important human right, various scholars have been advocating for it since the seventeenth century. Freedom of expression is the prerequisite for the search for truth: as Milton, Locke and Mill argued, it is an instrument for truth to be discovered and thrived. Mill in his famous essay on 'Liberty' argued that without freedom of expression we might be deprived of the opportunity to learn the truth-if we have not discovered it yet, and we cannot perfect our partial knowledge of the truth we have learnt, or will not have the opportunity to have a clearer understanding of received truths (Pearson, 2004, p.25-28; Gedion, 2010, p.202).

According to Hachiens(2006),enabling free discussion will help to arrive at a discovery of the truth. Free speech is necessary if true facts and reliable opinions are to be ascertained, and false

Claims discerned and hence enabling truth to be discovered. Speech must be unrestricted to enable individuals to develop, if they are to develop as persons with their own sets of beliefs and opinions, then they must be free to engage in discussion and to hear ideas. This is an argument for free speech which appears to be more concerned with the interests of the speaker, although it may also be in the interests of the individual, and his or her development and self-fulfillment, to be able to have access to speech as a recipient, since the ideas and opinions of others may contribute to the individual's development (Gedion, 2010, p.204 ; Hichens, 2006,p.33). And this helps the media in the dissemination of material which may contribute to the individual's self-development.

Freedom of expression is essential to citizens' participation in democracy and as check on government. This justification asserts that freedom of speech is necessary for the proper functioning and accountability of democratic government. Freedom of speech enables citizens to receive information, to debate and assess government actions and policies, and so to participate in the democratic process (Zelezny, 2011, p.39; Hichens, 2006, p.33). The proponents of this view like Alexander Meiklejohn, claim that democracy as a system of self governance requires that citizens be well informed of issues of public interest so they could make informed and intelligent decisions taking into account all available alternatives. It serves to deter or bring to light abuses of power by public officials (Zelezny, 2011, p.39).

Freedom of speech actually helps assure social stability, contrary to the traditional assumption of some government officials that it disrupts society. This is because a free flow of information allows society to see its problems better and to respond with continual, incremental adjustments. It also allows displeased individuals to vent their anger before they reach the boiling point, a sort

of therapeutic or safety valve effect. On the other hand, government suppression of speech in a quest for “order” breeds fear, resentment, and hate—the perfect mix for social unrest and a violent eruption against authority (Zelezny, 2011,p.39).

The media, in addition to their entertainment role, have an important function providing information, and facilitating and promoting the public debate which is seen as essential to the proper functioning of a democracy. Governments, politicians, and public figures are rarely able to gain access to citizens in sufficiently large numbers except through the media and so the media have become the town square. For citizens, the media are a major source for information and commentary on public issues. To be an effective contributor to this democratic process, the media, as a channel for ideas and information and generator of debate, must be able to offer a variety of voices and views, and operate independently, without undue dominance by public or private power (Hachines, 2006, p.31).

To the extent that the functioning of democracy requires the exchange and debate of information and ideas, the media are a participant in the democratic process, as well as forming a space which facilitates that interchange(ibid,p.32). The role of the media is significant in elevating the spirit and initiation of citizens’ towards democratic debates that has to do with their life and that is why they are equated with town square.

2.6. Access to information

According to Kahn(2003) quoted in Mendel (2008)the free flow of information and ideas lies at the heart of the very notion of democracy and is crucial to effective respect for human rights. In the absence of respect for the right to freedom of expression, which includes the right to seek,

receive and impart information and ideas, it is not possible to exercise the right to vote, human rights abuses take place in secret, and there is no way to expose corrupt and inefficient government. Central to the guarantee in practice of a free flow of information and ideas is the principle that public bodies hold information not for themselves but on behalf of the public. These bodies hold a vast wealth of information and, if this is held in secret, the right to freedom of expression, guaranteed under international law as well as most constitutions, is seriously undermined.

According to Mendel (2008), effective participation at all levels depends, in fairly obvious ways, on access to information, including information held by public bodies. The people should have access to information in order to involve in the decision and policy making of the government, if not for the government to get inputs from them. In addition, democracy involves accountability and good governance. The public have a right to scrutinize the actions of their leaders and to engage in full and open debate about those actions. They must be able to assess the performance of the government and this depends on access to information about the state of the economy, social systems and other matters of public concern. One of the most effective ways of addressing poor governance, particularly over time, is through open and informed debate.

Apart from the political aspect of the right to information, the right to access one's personal information is part of respect for basic human dignity, but it can also be central to effective personal decision-making. The right to information is most commonly associated with the right to request and receive information from public bodies. Most right to information laws also places an obligation on public bodies to publish information on a proactive or routine basis, even in the absence of a request (ibid, p. 5).

According to Global Campaign for Free Expression(2004), freedom of information is an important component of an internationally guaranteed right to freedom of expression, which includes the right to seek and receive, as well as to impart information and ideas of all kinds regardless of frontiers. Accordingly, it got recognition during the first session of United Nation General Assembly in 1946, which adopted Resolution no.59 (1) stating: freedom of information is a fundamental human right and ...the touchstone of all other freedoms to which the United Nation is consecrated. In the same way, the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa affirms the principle that everyone has a right to access to information held by public bodies, subject only to clearly defined rules established by the law.

The concept of freedom of information is based on the principle that public bodies hold information not for themselves but as custodians of the public good and hence everyone should have the right to access this information, subject only to clearly defined exceptions to be determined by the law (ibid, p. 23). And this access to information should be led by the principle of maximum disclosure.

2.7. International Standards: Freedom of expression provision

2.7.1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Ethiopia has signed various conventions on freedom of expression and among such conventions is the universal declaration of human rights. Though signatory states are expected to act in accordance with this convention, there is no legal and binding force. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration proclaims the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom “to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

The right is limited by Article 29, which permits restrictions "solely for the purpose of protecting the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society." Moreover, the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration "may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations"(Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 19, 1948).

Article 29 of the 1995 constitution of Ethiopia affirmed the article of Universal Declaration of Human Rights on freedom of expression. Furthermore, the constitution in article 9 (4) states that "all international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the land." Hence citizens are entitled to seek, receive and impart information. Therefore the grant of freedom of expression to the citizenry is stated in the following way.

1. Everyone has the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression without any interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice.

Freedom of the press and other mass media and freedom of artistic creativity is guaranteed.

Freedom of the press shall specifically include the following elements:

- a. Prohibition of any form of censorship.
- b. Access to information of public interest.

4. In the interest of the free flow of information, ideas and opinions which are essential to the functioning of a democratic order, the press shall, as an institution, enjoy legal protection to ensure its operational independence and its capacity to entertain diverse opinions.

5. Any media financed by or under the control of the State shall be operated in a manner ensuring its capacity to entertain diversity in the expression of opinion.

6. These rights can be limited only through laws which are guided by the principle that freedom of expression and information cannot be limited on account of the content or effect of the point of view expressed. Legal limitations can be laid down in order to protect the well-being of the youth, and the honor and reputation of individuals. Any propaganda for war as well as the public expression of opinion intended to injure human dignity shall be prohibited by law.

7. Any citizen who violates any legal limitations on the exercise of these rights may be held liable under the law (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution, Article 29).

Hence the country is supposed to act in accordance with the constitution and other international laws and agreements that it became signatory including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2.7.2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which, Ethiopia ratified in June 11, 1993, (was originally adopted in 1966) entered into force in March 1976 and it states that:-

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.

2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;

(b) For the protection of national security or of public order (order public), or of public health or morals (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Art.19).

2.7.3. African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity adopted the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1981 and it entered into force in 1986. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which Ethiopia ratified on 15 June 1998, guarantees the right to freedom of expression as follows:

(1), every individual shall have the right to receive information

(2), every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law (African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Art.9).

2.7.4. Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa

The African commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, meeting at its 32nd Ordinary Session, in

Banjul, The Gambia, from 17th to 23rd October 2002, adopted the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa. The introductory explanation of the Declaration states:-

“Reaffirming the fundamental importance of freedom of expression and information as an individual human right, as a cornerstone of democracy and as a means of ensuring respect for all human rights and freedoms” (Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, 2002). Besides the Declaration under the guarantee of freedom of expression section states that:-

Freedom of expression and information, including the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other form of communication, including across frontiers, is a fundamental and inalienable human right and an indispensable component of democracy. Everyone shall have an equal opportunity to exercise the right to freedom of expression and to access information without discrimination (Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, 2002).

The media’s freedom of expression is not a privilege of the individual but an unmistakable public good, suggesting that the public interest is a weighty factor in assessing the way in which media actors exercise their freedom (Gies, 2008, p.93).

2.7.5. Windhoek Declaration

The Windhoek Declaration was endorsed during the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 29 April to 3 May 1991. May 3, the date of declaration, is commemorated as World Press Freedom Day since then.

The declaration affirms the importance of freedom of expression, media freedom, access to information and free press which African countries are encouraged to act in favor of. Additionally, it states that “Consistent with article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the establishment, maintenance and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development”(Windhoek Declaration, Article 1,1991).

Any restriction on freedom of expression shall be provided by law, serve a legitimate interest and [must] be necessary in a democratic society (Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, 2002, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966).And according to Global Campaign for Freedom of Expression (2004), not only is the restriction based in the law but also the relevant law must meet certain standard of clarity and accessibility. The requirement of necessity means that even where measures seek to protect a legitimate interest, the government must demonstrate that there is a “pressing social need” for the measures; moreover, the restriction must be proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued and the reasons given to justify the restriction must be relevant and sufficient.

Therefore any sort of indirect restriction and impediment on the practice of the press is not justifiable and is an attempt to bridle the progress and improvement of freedom of expression and the press. The operation of the media hinges on the political system of the country: in a country where there is better political condition running through a well established democratic system, the function of the media will go further in benefiting the people. However, in countries with fledgling democracy, the media are engulfed by myriad problems originating from within and out of the media house. As Ethiopia is one of those countries struggling to deepen the system

of democracy, the media operating in the country are facing many obstacles in their daily routine. The absence of strong professional association, the division among the media based on political lines and their being used as instrument for politics, the great role of the government through media regulation, the presence of less autonomy of journalists coupled with low level of professionalism being reflected in the media is attributed to the presence of polarized media system in the country. In such media systems, the relationship between the private media and the government is not healthy. The government capitalizes on any mistake the media may commit to further tighten media regulation. So freedom of expression and the press will be eroded by those who exercise it and from administrative body.

2.8. Local studies and background to the current press law

This part assessed local researches conducted in relation to freedom of expression and the press. It also highlighted the underpinnings for the enactment of the law that is operational today.

The first of those studies which is articulated to the right of citizens to access information held by public bodies was conducted by Getahun Amogne in 2005. The study was induced by the right granted to citizens of the country to access information including the right to seek, receive and impart information in the 1995 constitution of Ethiopia. The research used predominantly survey method and interview as secondary to gather the data. The research revealed that public institutions in Ethiopia are not effectively discharging their responsibilities of informing the public about their activities. The reason is partly attributed to the absence of specific legislation governing public access to government information. This research was done in the period where there was no particular information legislation.

Merone Berhane on her part studied the Ethiopian media law with particular reference to the 1999 broadcast proclamation in which she critically examined the constitutionality of the broadcast proclamation of the specified period. She found some contradictory and inconsistent clauses that enforce undue limitation on freedom of expression. A year after Meron's study, there was another study by Nestanet Yilma, who examined the Ethiopian broadcasting media regulation till 2007. Using interview and document analysis, he found that private broadcasters and licensees do not work together; the new broadcasting regulation policy gives broadcasters a chance to appeal, and most importantly, imprisonment has been excluded from the punitive articles.

Hallelujah Lulie dealt with A Political History of the Private Press in Democratic Ethiopia 1991–2007. In so doing, he used informal talks and in-depth interview methods to gather the data. He identified that the Ethiopian independent press failed to play its role as an independent institution in the new system. He put it that the press acted irresponsibly and unprofessionally against internationally accepted ethical and professional yardsticks of journalism creating a negative state-press relation where one considers the other as an arch enemy.

The study on freedom of the mass media and information proclamation, though sharing a similar data gathering technique chiefly interview, mainly focuses on how the current press law is operating on the ground. This study did not separate broadcast media from their print counterparts, or between government and privately owned media outlets. So the core of this study is the assessment of the practical application of the press law through the basic mirrors of freedom of expression and the press.

Successive studies on the various press laws enacted at different times are essential in order to understand the changes and the accompanying features introduced. It can be taken for granted that the government did not have any intention to change an existing press law and introduce another unless there is a concrete motive which should deserve the replacement of one by another. Hence the press law which functioned for about sixteen years since 1992 was finally replaced in 2008 by freedom of the mass media and information proclamation. So this press law has been in operation for the last six years.

The current press law is founded on the base of the general direction put for the Ethiopian media in 2002 as part of the key players in the process of building a democratic system in the country. The government has been closely monitoring the activities of the press since the inception of the private press and making sure that the press is discharging its responsibilities: informing the public. The media contributes a lot to mobilize the public and create consensus among the public. So to make sure that the media play a key role in the growth effort of the nation and to create conducive media environment, it was found important to enact a new press law((Ministry of Information, Press and Audio Visual Unit, 2002, p.109-126).

The realities of the Ethiopian media are construed as the preconditions for making the draft of the new mass media and information freedom proclamation. Hence a meticulous assessment on the role of the Ethiopia media for developing the country necessitated the draft of the new proclamation (Shemelis Kemal, Zemedkun Tekle, Tesfaye Goyte, Fantahun Asres, 2001, p.12).

The media play decisive role in strengthening further the process of building a democratic system that has been underway and in creating national consensus that can perpetuate the successive higher economic growth being registered. In a democratic system the media are key

players in shaping and molding societal outlook by disseminating current and accurate information. They serve as democratic forum for unlimited discussions and debates on various national issues and having understood these roles of the media, the Ethiopian constitution declares that the media should be given the necessary protection (ibid, p. 12).

Since the period of the transitional government censorship is abolished and the necessary legal frameworks that are important for the growth and existence of the media have been set. As a result it became possible to see many private periodicals in the market and the broadcast frequency wave which was under government monopoly was allowed to the private sector that resulted in the existing commercial Fm radio stations. That being the case, the growth of the media both in broadcast and print is not satisfactory. Both the private and government owned media are constrained by many factors. Among the factors that affect both the private and government owned media: Low level of journalistic profession, absence of professional association that works on capacity building and ethical issues, absence of detailed law procedure that helps access government information, absence of structural and legal instruments that help protect professional autonomy and absence of autonomy of editors(ibid,p.13).

Factors influencing the private media are inclusive of higher unethical practice that came up with reports and media products which can endanger the national interest of the country, the reliance of the private media for their revenue on illegal support from both the external and internal forces other than advertisement. In addition, absence of institutional and structural procedure that helps reinforce the media industry based on free market and rule of law. Hence to avoid these factors constraining both the private and government owned media and to build a good media industry, making a move on having structural and institutional changes is necessary. So freedom

of the mass media and information proclamation is a leap forward in this regard. The new proclamation is made so as to avoid the weaknesses of the proclamation which has been in operation since 1992 and to bring changes on the aforementioned media problems (ibid, p. 14).

The press proclamation that operated till 2008 had its shortcomings: the registration system created unnecessary pressure on the media in addition to its license renewal system. The previous press law included articles that contained criminal decrees and responsibilities which should have been in the criminal law. The previous law (1992) lacked decrees that would ensure diversity of media outlet and content. It did not have a system to reduce accusations on the press and above all it did not have details on the issue of access to information and also on those categories of prohibited information along with the obligations of information delivery. Therefore to address the above problems which did not get any solution in the press law of 1992, it is important to initiate and enact a new press law. Hence mass media and information proclamation was enacted in 2008 (ibid, p.15).

The contemporary freedom of the press and information proclamation has five parts under fifty one (51) articles

The very first part of the proclamation is a prelude about the need to freedom of the mass media and information supported by the core notions from the constitution on freedom of expression and the press.

Part one: This one deals with general provisions about the proclamation, definitions and statements about freedom of the press.

Part two: It is about the right to engage in mass media activities including issues of ownership and registration.

Part three: This is in fact the broadest section of the proclamation and it is predominantly concerned with access to information (the right to access information), request to obtain information, duty to publish, exempted information, appeals against refusal of information among others.

Part four: rights and responsibilities of the media which talks about right of reply or correction.

Part five: The last part of the proclamation is about the lawful measures to be taken on the media for failing to act pursuant to the law.

Chapter Three

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The main objective of this research was to examine the current mass media and information proclamation in light of the present media practice via the mirror of freedom of expression. So it attempted to assess the ground practice of the press law in the media and the challenges that may hinder the application in the daily routine of the media operation. Hence this chapter is consecrated to the presentation of methodology, data collection process, and sampling method.

The research employed qualitative methodology for it helps approach the subject of the study from the view of the sources used in the research. According to Mack et al (2005), it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspective of a local population. Yin (2011) states that qualitative research differs because of its ability to represent the views and perspectives of the participants in a study. In addition, this methodology is beneficial as it depends on variety of sources to get consolidated evidence about the issue under study. Yin (2011) states:

Qualitative research strives to collect, integrate, and present data from a variety of sources of evidence as part of any given study. The variety will likely follow from your having to study a real-world setting and its participants. The complexity of the field setting and the diversity of its participants are likely to warrant the use of interviews and observations and even the inspection of documents and artifacts. The study's conclusions are likely to be based on triangulating the data from the different

sources. This convergence will add to the study's credibility and trustworthiness (p. 9).

Hence qualitative methodology is helpful in order to get data on sensitive issues there by involving different sources.

3.2. Data gathering method and process

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources in the study. The main data collecting instrument for this research is in-depth interview and hence the researcher has conducted in-depth interviews with various sources. More to the point, documents are secondary sources for the study. The sources interviewed for the research have experiences developed from being a junior journalist to senior reporter and editor-in chief. The interview included not only journalists but also editors and media managers who have been engaged in the business of either broadcast or print media.

The major data gathering technique is therefore in-depth interview. According to Mack et al, (2005), in-depth interviews are optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored. Mack et al (2005) states:

The point behind the use of in depth interview during qualitative research is the need to garner the view and perspective of the participant about the issue under investigation. Accordingly, such data collecting method is indispensable for it allows the researcher to probe and ask the participant follow up questions hinging on his or

her response in order to glean the clear picture of his or her thinking on the given research topic(p,29).

The researcher, in the first place, formulated the interview questions in a semi structured way in English language. Those questions were translated by the researcher into Amharic language in an attempt to maintain the same sense of the questions in both versions. The researcher did not stop by this rather he wanted to get the same version of the translation of those questions by another translator. Accordingly, the translator came up with more or less the same sense of the translation helping the researcher to reconsider the first version of the translation of the questions. Though the researcher prepared the questions for the in-depth interview, he was free to change the sense of the questions according to the situation of the interview. Note was taken during each individual in-depth interview. The individual responses of the interview were recorded via the help of a digital audio recorder in order to support the note taken and to avoid some elements that might have been missed during the note taking process. Furthermore, the researcher managed to get worthwhile information from the interviewees as he kept on probing and asking follow up questions. So the semi structured questions designed lead to initiate further relevant questions based on the interviewees' response there by contributing further sense to the analysis part of the study.

3.3. Key informants

As mentioned earlier the data for this study is collected through in-depth interview using semi structured questions. So the primary sources for the study are interviewees. A total of sixteen individual in-depth interviews were conducted with various media practitioners including journalists, editors and media managers with reference to the present press law (mass media and

information proclamation of 2008) and its application using freedom of expression as foundation stone. The individual in-depth interview was also conducted with deputy director and communication directorate director of Ethiopian Broadcast Authority. What is more, the researcher managed to conduct the same individual interview with State Minister in Government Communication affair's Office. Hence the different views and perspectives obtained from various sources about the issue builds an important input for the study.

3.4. Secondary sources

In addition to in depth interview the researcher drew on document analysis. According to Prior(2004), documents are put forward for consideration in schemes of social research and are approached in terms of what they contain and the focus is primarily on the language embodied in the documents as a medium of thought or expression.

He also puts it as the content of a document is flexible not least because documents have always to be read and reading implies that the content of the document will be situated rather than fixed. Documents are source of data and are used in relation to the subject under study. The document can be put within a context and hence will support the main tool of data collection. Besides, the document itself can be analyzed depending on the objective and perspective of a study. And within the context of this research, documents like the constitution, press proclamation and other commentaries are used.

3.5. Sampling method

As to the sampling method, the researcher used deliberative or purposive sampling technique to collect the data. According to Kothari (2004), this sampling method involves purposive or

deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe. The researcher purposively and selectively approached those journalists, editors and managers who work (have worked) in the media. He selected such persons who are presumed to be representative of practitioners in the media. The selection of these key informants from both print and broadcast media would help get diverse and relevant data for the study.

According to Oliver (2012), purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. Some types of research design necessitate researchers taking a decision about the individual participants who would be most likely to contribute appropriate data, both in terms of relevance and depth.

Therefore journalists, editors and media managers were chosen with the complete discretion of the researcher for he thought that these chosen sources are representative samples of the population. Accordingly, sixteen individuals from different media house and government office were chosen and interviewed in order to gather the relevant data for this study.

Chapter four

4. Data presentation and analysis

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the finding of the study and the analysis. The main purpose of this part is to examine freedom of the mass media and access to information proclamation vis-à-vis the actual practice. The data obtained through interview will be presented and analyzed in light of the research objective

4.2. Current status of freedom of expression and the press

According to Amare Aregawi, General Manager of the Reporter, the Ethiopian Constitution Concerning freedom of expression and the press may nearly take the first position in the world (personal interview, April 04, 2013). He stated that Article 29 of Ethiopian constitution is word by word the direct copy of Article 19 of the United Nations on freedom of expression and the press. So this is internationally accepted right of human beings to express ones thoughts, and the constitution also states that freedom of expression and the press is given the necessary protection. According to Amare, the bigger question simply becomes why the constitution is not respected. The laws that govern the media originate from the constitution and hence these laws should be given the necessary attention. But there is lack of commitment on the part of the government in paying attention to the implementation of the press law.

General Manager of a private FM radio station (anonymity is maintained) appreciated the abolition of censorship both in the press law and the constitution. The informant put the state of freedom of expression and the press as follows:-

Now there is freedom of expression and the press which of course is very nascent. However, the press law is not implemented and the government does not give attention to it. The government should be serious in implementing its own laws. The recent freedom of the mass media and information proclamation is very much helpful because it explains some of the issues that were not clear in the press law of 1992. However, there are problems when practicing the right given in the press law on actual ground (personal interview, February 15, 2013).

It can be understood from the discussion that the government lacks concern to implement its own laws. The importance of the law is not its mere presence on paper rather when it is put into effect properly that it can bring a change in the media. If the press law does not get attention with respect to its implementation, there could not be a change because the law can be eroded by different entities. According to Shimelis Kemal and Leuel Gebru, State Minister in Government Communication Affairs Office and Deputy Director and Communication Directorate Director in the Ethiopian Broadcast Authority respectively, the government is concerned about freedom of the press and expression since the period of the transitional government. Both informants added “the government showed conviction for the right of free expression of citizen’s views and thoughts since the first press law” (personal interview, March 17 and February 3, 2013).

In fact, the destiny of the media changed in the after-math of the downfall of the dictatorial regime in 1991. According to Shemelis (2000), the assumption of power in 1991 by the

Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front ushered in a period of fundamental transformation in the political economy of the country. As part of the democratization process, the government granted freedom of the press. As a result the press started to burgeon within short period of time. Shimelis and Leuel expressed “freedom of speech and the press is at good condition today than in the past, and it is showing progress. Access to information and press freedom is getting promoted, and the base for this is the constitution” (personal interview, March 17 and February 3, 2013). However, if the present freedom of expression and the press is reckoned in terms of the number of both print and broadcast media which can help people express their views on different socio-economic and political issues, level of press freedom is still at its infancy. In a nation where more than 80 million people live, there still is one government owned television station which hardly entertains wide range of issues. Most interviewees agree that freedom of expression and the press should have gone far considering the country’s journey in a democratic system for about 22 years.

According to Temsegen Desalegn, General Manager of Fith (defunct newspaper), freedom of expression and the press seems to hardly exist in practical sense because of the fact that the government does not want any voice different from its own. Temsegen argued that freedom of expression and the press is “when there is the right to freely express ones’ idea and thought in a way that the rights of others are not infringed” (personal interview, March 14, 2013). The government, which is supposed to serve the people in a democratic system, has to provide opportunities, in addition to making press laws, to help the governed participate in the affairs of their country. Citizens should be encouraged to actively express their views which have a significant contribution to democratic governance. According to Zelezny (2011) and Hichens (2006), freedom of speech is necessary for the proper functioning and accountability of a

democratic government. Freedom of speech enables citizens to receive information, to debate and assess government decisions and policies. The media should entertain variety of views and ideas to help the public see different aspects on different issues of importance. The need for the reflection of diverse views in the media is supported by the constitution that state, “any media financed by or under the control of the State shall operate in a manner ensuring its capacity to entertain diversity in the expression of opinions” (Article 29(5) of 1995 Constitution). Thus government owned media should entertain diverse opinions from different parties. However, the role of these media in being the mouth piece of the government hardly makes them different from the Derg regime despite the presence of democratic system in the country today. Concerning the entertaining of diverse views in government media, for instance in Ethiopian television, Solomon (2005) states that the station serves the political propaganda of the party in power disregarding different views from opposition parties.

4.3. The challenge of exercising freedom of expression and the press

One of the challenges to exercise freedom of expression and the press is lack of understanding about the rights and duties granted to the media. As to Menalachew Semachew, veteran journalist who worked in the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency for long years, the persons who are positioned in the management of the media have party affiliation. They hardly have a relation to the profession but they are there because of their political fidelity. He argued “these persons do not have a good knowledge of media operation, profession, freedom of thought or expression rather they tend to protect the interest of their party than protecting professional freedom” (personal interview, February 3, 2013). This reminds what Hallin and Mancini stated in relation to politically based appointments in media houses. According to Hallin and Mancini

(2004), appointments tend to be made more on the basis of political loyalty than purely professional criteria in the case of public media and this helps to use the media in favor of one entity or party.

Lack of understanding about the rights and duties of the press along with its legal framework is also a problem for many journalists. Belay Manaye, reporter in the Ethiopian herald, shared the idea that lack of understanding about the rights and duties of the press is a problem of both journalists and editors. He expressed:-

I do not think that all journalists know the content of the press law and work accordingly. The persons on the leadership level starting from the editor have to know the law including its detail and coach journalists working in the media outlet (personal interview, February 5, 2013).

Higher education institutions graduate students in journalism and communication and this can reduce the problem of professional knowledge and skill in the area. However, since the vacancy of media houses is open almost for all graduates in social science, it is difficult to know how many of journalism graduates join the media. Hence the gap in professional knowledge is evident on journalists who join the media without taking any journalism training.

Dagne Biazen, Editor in-chief of the Ethiopian Herald, stated that other than putting documents of the press law, press freedom and expression in the library of the media house, there is no any proper in-service training given to journalists within the media houses (personal interview, February 8, 2013). So it can be understood that it is up to each journalist to read and know the rights and responsibilities of the press including the limits of press freedom. In order to increase

the knowledge and skill of journalists, in-house training on issues of press freedom and journalistic responsibility should be given to journalists to better discharge their professional responsibility. The finding clearly shows that those who join the field are from various disciplines. Given this, no matter how hard it might be, giving in-house training is critical for the effectiveness of the media in Ethiopia.

Self-censorship has been another constraining factor in the exercise of freedom of expression and the press in the media landscape. The majority of the informants believed that the reason not to fight against self-censorship is the risk of job security. Because of economic problem, they do not dare to tackle self-censorship because they want to earn livelihood. In addition, an informant (anonymity is maintained) explained that journalists are not confident about what is put on paper as the right of the press. The informant added “to avoid self-censorship, we choose to write issues that are less critical and less sensitive” (personal interview, February 13, 2013).

Apart from any influence, lack of gut sometimes pushes journalists into self-censorship. Tebebu Tadesse, Amharic Program Director in Fana Broadcast Corporate, believed “some journalists themselves lack courage to do what is permissible and instead externalize their own weakness on government officials” (personal interview, February 18, 2013). Journalists fail to be daring enough partly because of their own past experience and by the experience of others they heard. The tendency of censoring oneself also arises from the general observable media environment. In fact the reason for censoring oneself can hail from various internal and external things.

According to Belay, political intervention on issues which have to be handled by professionals and practitioners has been the routine challenge in media houses (personal interview, February 5, 2013). As politicians get involved, especially in those the government media, through the

rejection of news stories by editors, journalists feel frustrated and lack courage to argue with editors. Sometimes confrontation to get the news story published or broadcast will result in harsh relationship with the editor. Once a journalist knows that a story of some sort will bring discomfort for the editor then he will choose news stories that will put both the reporter and the editor at the safer side. Any political intervention frustrates the practice of journalists especially when the intervention is clearly identified.

4.4. Printing press

According to Grume Abate, Assignment Editor in Capital, the cost of printing is increasingly weakening the publication of newspapers just pushing few press outlets out of the market. He stated:

Berhannena Selam printing press is increasing the cost of printing exorbitantly and continuously. The quality of the paper is fine in Berhannena selam as compared to the quality of the paper in other printing enterprises. In addition, the cost of printing in other printing houses is damn expensive so the only option is Berhannena selam printing press (personal interview, March 9, 2013).

Despite the prevalence of printing enterprises in the capital, the low quality of their paper added to the high cost has brought dependence on Berhannena Selam. As informants pointed, the printing capacity of some of the printing enterprises is low. Added to this, some printing presses prefer to read the content of the newspaper before publication while it is the publisher which should be the responsible body for whatever the publication may result in. In fact, the printing enterprises may want to be free from being accountable following the unintended effect of a

publication. However, this kind of practice is almost prepublication censorship as it determines the removal or presence of content in the newspaper or magazine. This is a bad practice for the printer cannot judge the journalistic writing of the journalist.

The majority of informants explained that the greater increment of the cost of printing forces the newspapers to find ways in order to sustain the running of the newspapers. And the primary means of sustaining the life of the newspapers is relentless search for advertisement. As the business group presently is getting attracted to the media for advertising goods and services, the influence of the business group is likely to grow. Since the hub for the survival of the private press is advertisement, they have to look for advertisers. One of the informants point out that advertisers put a pressure on the media outlet to cover a news story about the product or service of their business before giving money to the outlet for advertisement. Even having covered a story in advance, if the advertiser is not well persuaded by the angle and writing of the story, there is a chance of losing the advertisement money, which is double loss for the newspaper. In fact, some newspapers do reject such approach to get advertisement. So the financial capacity of each outlet determines how strong and weak it may be in its operation.

Journalists' right of choosing stories using their knowledge to determine trustworthiness will be in danger and hence journalists' freedom of writing may be curtailed because the advertizing money may dictate what to write. In such a situation, the press outlet should have a firm stand to say no. If journalists lose their autonomy to work on stories of their choice and of high public interest then the whole concept of freedom of expression and the press in general will be in jeopardy.

4.5. Government intervention in the media

According to Leuel, nothing that can diminish freedom of expression and the press exists. He maintained that constitution does not allow any kind of government intervention in the affair of the media. He said “the government initiated and made the operative press law (freedom of the mass media and information proclamation) which explains the need for a democratic media. In fact, the law forces public bodies to give information to the media” (Personal interview, febraury3, 2013). The government should act in line not only with the constitution but also with international laws which the country is signatory. Accordingly any act and interference of the government in the media is violating the law which the country granted. In the interest of the free flow of information, ideas and opinions which are essential to the functioning of a democratic order, the press shall, as an institution, enjoy legal protection to ensure its operational independence and its capacity to entertain diverse opinions (Federal democratic republic of Ethiopia Constitution article 29/4).

Amare contended that there is government intervention in the media which affects freedom of the press. He expressed “the interference of some ministers who do not want to see their weakness televised and or published on newspaper or magazine is significant” (personal interview, April 04, 2013). Officials force to change angle of a story in favor of them and sometimes they tend to give an alternative way to cover a story. However, the strength of the journalist and the media house determines whether to cover or reject it. Most of the time, government intervention in the media is implicit.

Belay supported the view of Amare that there is tacit government intervention in the media. He expressed government owned media should serve all political parties fairly (personal interview,

February 5, 2013). The government media are expected to serve the people, government and political parties fairly. These media are presumed to be intermediary between the people and the government without being influenced by the government. However, the influence of the government most of the time is greater and the media become under the control of the party that governs. Tebebu held the view that government puts pressure on the media through officials who may or may not understand that freedom of expression is also the right of the media (personal interview, February 18, 2013). No matter how the media are doing the right thing, government officials are likely to put pressure on journalists and the media in different ways when the wrong doings and gaps of their respective offices are covered. The government in fledgling democracy seems to react to criticisms by the media inexorably. This is when the government fears that allowing criticism will expose weaknesses and gaps in its administration despite the consideration of the constructive role media criticisms play.

According to Bereket Simon, who was Information Minister (presently, Minister of Government Communication Affairs Office) at the peak time of the state-media tension (2000-2005) the government has been utterly tolerant towards the press (Hallelujah, 2008:51). While the press is usually expected to give opinion and criticism that are valuable in indicating the gaps on the actions of government, the government should not take the criticism of the press as an attack. All public bodies shall have regard to the right of the mass media, in fulfilling their public function, to express opinion or criticism on various issues (freedom of the mass media and information proclamation Article 4/3(b)).

According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), the intervention of the state is explained by issues or factors such as libel, defamation and hate speech. While it is not relevant to damage some body's

reputation, the retribution on defamation is inflated. The law states that “in an action for defamation through the mass media the court may award, having regard to the seriousness of the moral damage, compensation up to 100,000 birr having regarded to the seriousness of the damage.” The increment according to Shimelis Kemal is to encourage individuals to stand to protect their reputation during media defamation (personal interview, March 17, 2013). However the financial penalty has a chilling effect on the media as the punishment is exaggerated. It also puts a pressure that constrains the media from commenting and criticizing on the activities of the government. According to Ross (2010), the fines for mere media offenses imposed by the Ethiopian Press Law may easily be seen as cruel and unusual punishment. Furthermore, exorbitant fines will help perpetuate oppression by making journalists unable to pay, media out of business for even minor criminal offence.

4.6. Press council

According to Yohannes Gebreegziabhair, correspondent for Deutsche Welle radio station, the absence of strong journalists’ union and press council has contributed its part to the weak performance of the press. He stated “the absence of cooperation among journalists and other stakeholders to establish press council has given the government and other entities to capitalize on the gap created” (personal interview, April 7, 2013). This situation is a reminder of what Hallin and Mancini argued about a decade ago. According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), professional associations are weak and journalistic practice is not strong in a situation where the profession is not deep rooted in the system. The Ethiopian situation lives up to this point in a sense that journalism practice is very nascent and still in its embryonic stage. In addition, there is no strong press council and or journalists’ union that can work for the betterment of the media in

the country. However, there is a move to establish a press council while this study is underway. This is a good start to the media in Ethiopian.

According to Tebebu Tadesse, the absence of strong press council has left the profession exposed to variety of challenges (personal interview, February 15, 2013). Evidently, the council would promote the profession thereby giving trainings to journalists and formulating code of ethics that can govern the practitioners. The council can also help solve problems without taking it to the court and this reduces the time wastage. Lack of unified effort among the Ethiopian journalists to establish a strong press council has contributed to the deterioration of freedom of expression and the press. It is helpful to have unity among media practitioners in the struggle to establish a body that serves as foundation for the routine function of the media.

According to Grume Abate, one of the reasons for failing to establish a press council is personal attacks and issues which resulted in the dearth of broad agreement among journalists. He expressed “even the previous journalists’ associations were not free of political influence so they lacked the trust of journalists.” (personal interview, March 9, 2013). However Anteneh Abrham, chair man of the National Ethiopian journalists’ Union, opposed the idea of informant Grume that the union is working hard for protecting the right of journalists. He asserted that the role of the association is significant in fighting for freedom of expression and the press.

We are member of world federation of journalists’. We inform and announce what is going on here to the members of the federation. We urge the United Nations and other concerned bodies to put pressure on the government in various ways. So if the government does not want to negotiate with us, we express our denouncement in official statement. If journalists are imprisoned, we try to get

them release. The union also tries to create conditions for journalists to live abroad if they cannot live here (Personal interview, February 7, 2013).

Union of journalists or press council should be strong to stand for the profession and hence it should avoid relations to a political faction which may jeopardize its existence. The presence of division among journalists of government owned media and private media may discourage the confidence of journalists to establish a credible council. To this end, there must be a healthy relationship among journalists and between journalists and a press council. The split that has been witnessed between National Ethiopian Journalists' union and Free Ethiopian Journalists Association is the case in point. The issue of establishing press council is omitted from the press proclamation of 2008 in the sense that the government should leave the task to the media. However, till the time of this thesis writing, the researcher did not see any strong commitment to establish a press council.

4.7. Anti-Terrorism law

While the country has to be well protected from insurgents' and fundamentalists', the antiterrorism law has created extremely menacing atmosphere for the media since its proclamation in 2009. Article six of the anti-terrorism law is particularly concerning. This part talks about encouragement of terrorism and it reads as follows:-

Whosoever publishes or causes the publication of a statement that is likely to be understood by some or all of the members of the public to whom it is published as a direct or indirect encouragement or other inducement to them to the commission or preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism stipulated under Article 3 of this

Proclamation is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from 10 to 20 years (A Proclamation on Anti-Terrorism Proclamation No. 652/2009, Article six).

Getachew Teklemariam, Opinion Editor of the Fortune expressed “anti-terrorism law is number one bottleneck for the media in Ethiopia. The Anti-terrorism law highly limits freedom of expression and the press.” (Personal interview, April 7, 2013). Along the same line, an informant (anonymity) explained “the addition of anti-terrorism law on top of other challenges to freedom of expression and the press has already put the media in a vicious circle of self censorship”(personal interview, February 15, 2013). Unmistakably, in a country where freedom of expression and the press is struggling to unfetter itself from multifarious challenges, anti-terrorism law can really create tension in the mind of journalists. Clearly this law has contributed very badly to creation of bad media atmosphere in Ethiopia.

Article six does not give any guarantee to journalists of being free from facing charges because this article can be interpreted in many ways. As journalists cannot be sure about the interpretation of their writing by those few, it is not easy to write on an issue (idea) which may be of public interest. The responses from the interviewees as well as the analysis of the anti-terrorism law suggest that the law tends to create confusion, tension and fear among media practitioners. In fact, one can argue that the law was not intended to create those reactions from media professionals.

4.8. Polarized Media

According to Leuel Gebru, the presence of unethical journalists who reflect antagonistic politics, have clear political affiliation and partiality will negatively affect press Freedom.

He stated:

Quite a few newspapers are run by the collection of individuals who share the same political view. The affiliation of the media with political parties indicates that they serve as an instrument for those parties. This is dangerous for it badly encourages the government to take serious administrative measures on issues that even can be tolerated (personal interview, February 3, 2013).

Apart from newspapers which operate officially as party press, other newspapers or magazines cannot be labeled as affiliated to political parties distinctly. The private press cannot be obliged to write in favor of the government. Hence the private press may not cover similar stories the government media covers for their stand is different. Hence the critical coverage of government activities by the private press should in no way encourage the government to take measures against the private press. One of the informants expressed that the government labels the press as such to get the pretext of taking measures against the private press.

According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), instrumentalization of the media by the government, by political parties, and by industrialists with political ties is common. However, Temesgen Dessalegne contended that the media which the government labels dangerous to the system cannot exist. He maintained that when the private media becomes critical of the deeds of the government, the government labels such media as politically affiliated.

We do not cover the positive deeds of the government because the government media are enough for it. So we focus on the negative ones to show the gaps and weakness so that the government can learn from it. The government except

attacking the private media does not have any interest to take lessons from criticisms on its activity. The private media should publish and broadcast about the wrong deeds of the government (Personal interview, March 17, 2013).

The course the media have been taking partly contributes to the prevalence of the polarity among the media. The polarity exists because government owned media claim as a guard for the government while they are supposed to serve political parties, the public and the government. In contrast, the private media focus on the shortcomings of government activities. However, As long as there is a democratic constitution that granted freedom of expression and the press, nobody can compel the private media to cover the positive deeds of the government. What matters is how balanced, accurate and impartial their news coverage on different issues is.

The tendency of the private media to serve both voice of the market and the voice that is not being heard by government owned media resulted in polarization in the Ethiopian media landscape. The current Ethiopian media situation, as for the past 20 years, is commonly described as a polarized state of affairs between the state media and private media outlets.” (Aadland and Fackler, 2001; Price et al., 2008) quoted in (Skjerdal, 2012, p.35).The polarized nature of the society seems to have opened the divergence among the media too. According to Aadland and Fackler(1999) quoted in Hallelujah(2008),the public debate in Ethiopia seems polarized and events and statements are easily interpreted to fit into the patterns of old conflict, and few people seem willing to engage in constructive dialogue with adversaries.

In relation to the polarized state of the media in Ethiopia, Nicole Stremlau (2011) quoted in Skjerdal(2012) attributes polarization in the press to the ideology of Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front that leaves little room for a dynamic opposition.

After the assumption of power by the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front, Journalists in the state-owned print medium were let loose to pursue their traditional function, which they did with great vigor and dedication: praising and glorifying the government, at times beyond reasonable proportions, and condemning and castigating actions of previous governments as well as those of current political opponents of the regime in power. This unprofessional and unethical campaign of vilification, smearing and name-calling could not be said to have been carried out without official blessing (Shimelis, 2000, p.14).

This is expressive of the route the government owned media are taking though their original intent put on paper is quite different as can be understood from the constitution on government/public media. Obviously, the media will not be out of the political and economic situation in any country so they are likely to be attracted to political lines. The infancy of professionalization with low level of press freedom will make the situation worse. This fits to what Hallin and Mancini (2004) calls Political parallelism; that is, the degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties or, more broadly, the extent to which the media system reflects the major political divisions in society.

The basic principle that dictates the practice of the profession should be the ethic of public service. Thus, journalists should work to narrow the polarity and avoid unhealthy competition between the private and government media to better serve the people. The contribution of the media in informing the people about different issues of importance will be greater provided that journalists and media houses avoid taking sides based on political lines.

4.9. The bound of freedom of expression and the press

The exercise of freedom of expression and the press is bound to certain limitations. Hence, the media and the practitioners are responsible for their actions. So they should respect the limitations imposed in the constitutional/press laws. Shimelis Meressa, News and Content Service Head in 105.3 AFRO FM, stated “anything journalists do on a daily basis should not jeopardize the interest of the public” (personal interview, February 5, 2013). The operation of the media must be in way that should not compromise national security and public safety. In order to function in a way that the media routine will not cause any public disorder and chaos, the practitioners should be aware of the impact of each activity.

The Ethiopian constitution has put the condition where freedom of expression and the press is subject to limitation. For example, Article 29 (6) reads as follows:

Freedom of expression and the press can be limited only through laws which are guided by the principle that freedom of expression and information cannot be limited on account of the content or effect of the point of view expressed. Legal limitations can be laid down in order to protect the well-being of the youth, and the honour and reputation of individuals. Any propaganda for war as well as the public expression of opinion intended to injure human dignity shall be prohibited by law (1995 Constitution, Article 29/6).

The universal Declaration of Human Rights puts restrictions on freedom of expression stating "solely for the purpose of protecting the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society."

Moreover, the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration "may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations"(Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19, 1948). While Eyob Kassa, Deputy Editor In-Chief of Addis Admass, stated that limitation on freedom of expression is dependent up on the law of the country, Temesgen Desalegn maintained that anything that threatens national security and public safety should be limited (personal interview May 08 and March 14, 2013 respectively).

The fact is that freedom of expression and the press should be exercised with responsibility. Hence national security deserves greater attention. The protection of national security is the protection of the people of the country. So the media should be responsible for keeping the interest of the nation. The media should consider the benefit and detriment of divulging the information to the people. The key thing is that no media benefits from endangering national security, creating public disorder, compromising the moral of the youth and women.

4.10. Political orientation of editors and managers

Editors are the first gatekeepers who sift any kind of material that either will be published or broadcast. No matter how polished the article is or well written broadcast piece is, it has to go through the gate keeper. Menalachew Semachew concerning the influence of political views put:-

Because of being an editor there is a chance of merging political views and interest of a party with the news story. It is difficult to say that editors working in the media should not have their own political stand or cannot be member of a political party.

However, it is incumbent on them to work in a way that their political orientation does not interfere with their profession (personal interview, February 3, 2013).

The editor may have his or her political view like any citizen but that political view should not affect the practice of the media. Not only editors but also journalists should avoid their political leaning and stick to the norm of objectivity. The media practitioners should not take sides instead they should entertain the interest of the public. According to Kovach and Rosenstiel(2007), the practice of journalism should provide enough information that the audience wants and needs for variety of purposes. Hence the media should be a place where the interest of the public is entertained and media practitioners should work to provide the information the public need and want.

However, Temesgen expressed that the political view of the editor and editor in-chief has a great influence on the rest of the journalists. He expressed:

Tough I believe that it is not good to influence journalists; it is the system which forces us to organize ourselves in this way. So I look for journalists who have the same political orientation as mine. Hiring a journalist with a political view different from mine is a threat to the newspaper. Professional requirements are becoming secondary but the back political view is obligatory when hiring journalist (personal interview, March 14, 2013).

This view is similar to the view of Leuel who said “the collections of journalists with the same political view and without professional ethics in a few newspapers write based on personal opinions and animosity to the system.” (Personal interview, February 3, 2013). The Practice of

journalism should never be based on the hiring of journalists with the same political orientation. Unlike political parties where the collection is based on sharing the same political viewpoint, media houses are institutions where journalism practice should be guided by professional ethics, and public service. Given that, the hiring of journalists should not be based on political rather professional criteria. It is when editors and journalists work based on professional norms and independence from different factions that the media can deliver unbiased information to the people.

According to Getachew Teklemariam, the political orientation of either the editor or manager does not have any influence on the content of the channel (personal interview, April 7, 2013). However, editors and managers are likely to influence the content of the channel. Sometimes mediocre journalists become lenient and do not question whatever change is made to the content of their article. A daring journalist who says no when a part of content is omitted or when a news story is given another slant significantly contributes to inform what has happened. However, it does not mean that a journalist always should be adamant enough not to accept the idea of his or her editor. It should not be mistakenly understood that all editors are politically attached. There are editors who even do not have any political leaning both in broadcast and print outlet. However, they think of the influences inflicted on them by each story journalists write.

The management of the media house is another key issue in each activity in a sense that good managers considerate of the public and the role of the media will create promoting environment for journalists. This is because while there are good journalists in the media house, if the management (leadership) of the house is constraining then it is difficult to see content diversity and change of content. There are different hierarchies in each press outlet to which individuals

are assigned. The positioning of individuals above the editor is appointment and appointments are based on merit, political loyalty or both. Any appointment based on professional skill is much better than politically based assignment for the latter works towards being political gatekeeper. A journalist who argues such politically assigned individuals mostly in government owned media will face sacking. The fact that journalists know what sort of news the editor wants, they tend to write in a way that it pleases the editor. Furthermore, they get used to the system of the media house gradually. In turn, the editor also thinks of the influence from persons above his level. So to bring a change in the journalistic practice, it is important to bring a change on the managerial aspect as well.

4.11. Access to information

According to Kahn(2003) quoted in Mendel (2008), the free flow of information and ideas lies at the heart of the very notion of democracy and is crucial to effective respect for human rights. In the absence of respect for the right to freedom of expression, it is not possible to exercise the right to vote, human rights abuses take place in secret, and there is no way to expose corrupt and inefficient government.

One of the great challenges for journalists is getting information in time. Yohannes stated that it is hard to get information from officials. He stated:

Government officials lack will to give information for private media. There is alienation of the private media by the government officials attributed to the separation that exists between the private and government owned media. In addition, the government officials suspiciously observe the private media and this

has influenced the private media to get information (personal interview, April 7, 2013).

The majority of the informants stated that, despite little improvement to access information after freedom of the mass media and information proclamation was put into effect, there still is a great problem to get information from public bodies. The broader section of freedom of the mass media and information proclamation is the part that deals with issues of information. It is predominantly concerned with access to information (the right to access information), request to obtain information, duty to publish, exempted information, appeals against refusal of information among others (freedom of the mass media and information proclamation 2008, Article 11). Accordingly, it states that any individual has the right to access information from public bodies unless the information requested is prohibited. An interesting part of the proclamation is that it also allows foreign citizens to get information from public officials. So the public bodies which have a duty to give information for foreign citizens should not refuse to give information to the private media which are operating and giving service in the country.

The problem of getting information is partly caused by the poor culture of giving information in the society. Public officials do not understand that giving information to the media is their obligation. Tebebu expressed that some of the officials do not know whether giving information to the media is part of their duty. He stated the difficulty of accessing information in relation to public relations practitioners as follows.

Those public relation practitioners who are at institutions, organizations and companies are not agile enough to give us the information in the time frame we need it. So they appoint us day after day and we get feed up of going many

times so we leave it. They call us to give the information after we forget it.

Because of transparency problem, I do not think the public is getting the right information which they must get (personal interview, February 18, 2013).

Most of the informants stated that a month's period to give information is being used as a cover not to give the information at all. Some public relation practitioners postpone appointments not to give information to journalist in time. So when a journalist gets fed up, he stops asking the public relations practitioners and look for other ways. Whenever journalists do not access information, they tend to write based on rumor and gossip obtained from sources that are not right. In relation to this, Temesgen attributed the problem of writing unbalanced news stories to the refusal of government officials to give information on the area requested (personal interview, March 14, 2013).

According to Mendel (2008), the people should have access to information in order to involve in the decision and policy making of the government. In addition, democracy involves accountability and good governance. The public have a right to scrutinize the actions of their leaders and to engage in full and open debate about those actions. They must be able to assess the performance of the government and this depends on access to information about the state of the economy, social systems and other matters of public concern. The informants stated that regardless of the good will to give information to the media, public bodies still discriminate the media on the basis of ownership to give information. In fact, this is denigrating the role of the private media in creating awareness of the public about variety of issues and their overall democratic function.

The media should contribute their part to mould the view of the public thereby informing the people about issues of importance. To do so they need to have information access to promote or criticize the activities of the government. Furthermore, the creation of positive relationship between the government and the private media is helpful in reinforcing the contribution of the media towards the growth effort of the country. Though journalists like any citizen have the right to accuse those persons who refuse to give information, they do not take it to the concerned office like office of ombudsman, if not to the court. This is attributed to the fact that sources will be closed in the future in addition to journalists' unproven fear of losing the case. One of the informants claimed that journalists will not win if they accuse the body who refused to give information after the informant saw an experience from his friend. The informant added that most journalists do not have the courage to stand for their right of getting information from public bodies. They rather look for other options to get the information or they leave it.

In order to increase the contribution of the media in creating a stage for public debate and discussion, peace building and democratization process, the government should have a commitment to the implementation of the information provision. Hence public bodies should be responsible to give information about their doings to the media. The presence of the law on paper does not bring any change if it is not properly perused and implemented as most informants remarked. The public relation practitioners, rather than being carriers of the bag and luggage of their boss, should be cooperative to journalists in both giving information and facilitating the request.

4.12. The future of freedom of the press

This part discusses what respondents think about the state of freedom of expression and the press in the years to come. According to Yohannes, freedom of expression and the press is determined by the political system of the country. He stated “any improvement on the political system dictates the press system and hence it lies on the politics, not only on the media themselves” (personal interview, April 7, 2013). The technology will be part of the changing instrument on the future of press freedom. In line with this, Leuel expressed that the practice of the media will get better in relation to the growth of technology and new media. The growth of information technology and infrastructure will help the growth of the press in the future (Personal interview, February 3, 2013).

Amare seemed to be certain that freedom of expression and the press will face better future on the condition that the press council is realized. He put the conditions as follows:

If the government encourages the media to investigative reporting and is committed to the implementation of the press law, then there will be improvement.

The government should not leave the law on paper and it has to supervise the application of the law (personal interview, April 4, 2013).

The majority of the informants believe that the future of freedom of the press is at the hand of many entities. The improvement of freedom of the press and expression is dependent upon the establishment of strong press council, the commitment of the government to the implementation of the press law and active role of stakeholders.

The destiny of freedom of expression and the press will turn out to be better if the people understand the media and become stakeholder. Additionally, freedom of expression and the press will be promoted if the government becomes attentive to the various roles of the media in a democratic system. In addition, if educational establishments contribute highly in graduating skillful students then there will be a change in the practice of the press. More to the point, the establishment of press council together with the government's attention to check the implementation of the press law is decisive. Lastly, freedom of expression and the press will be improved if government encourages both the private and government owned media through creating open access to information without any discrimination

Chapter five

5. Conclusion and recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

The purpose of the study has been to examine the current mass media and information proclamation in light of the present media practice. The study aimed at assessing the current status of freedom of expression and the press based on the data gathered from media professionals working both in government and privately owned broadcast and print media. As the study focused on the implementation of the law, it assessed the gap between the law and the practice with the hope of making some recommendations.

Freedom of the mass media and information proclamation has come across many challenges since it was put into effect in 2008. The finding of the research revealed that a gap exists between the law and its implementation. There is lack of commitment on the part of the government in paying attention to the implementation of the press law. Apart from making the law, the government has been reluctant on the implementation of the press law. Despite the fact that the press law permits the media to express opinion or criticism on various issues, the government is very critical of the views and criticisms of the media. This indicates that the government disregards other views different from its own. Implicit political intervention has been prevalent in the media which increases self-censorship.

There is lack of understanding about the rights and duties of the media both on the part of journalists and those in different managerial levels in the media houses. The case is more obvious in government owned broadcast media where managers have party affiliation, and others

are rarely professionals. These managers do not respect the rights and responsibilities of the media since their role is political gatekeeping. Lack of understanding about the rights and obligations granted to the media through the press law has affected press freedom negatively. The research found that lack of understanding on the part of journalists about the provision is attributed to lack of training. In addition, the effort of journalists to know the legal framework and act accordingly is found to be weak.

The increase in cost of printing is likely to be a threat for freedom of the press and expression in the country. The print media do have a great power to entertain diverse views, voices and concerns and hence the stoppage of newspapers and magazines narrows the scene for bringing into light those different voices and views. So freedom of speech and writing will be limited. The presence of inexplicit government intervention in the media through few ministers to influence the coverage of some stories that are critical to the government has been an impediment to the press. This is the violation of the right of the media granted not only by the press law but also by the constitution of the country.

The absence of strong, independent and credible press council (union of journalists) in the country has drastically affected the progress of the performance of the media. The council would have promoted the profession by setting code of conducts, actively giving trainings to journalists and solving journalistic problems. It would have tried to reduce the polarity between the private and government media so that the journalistic practice could have been better. While the issue of establishing press council is omitted from the press law and left to the media, there has not been any significant move on the part of journalists and stakeholders to establish one. However, there is a move to establish a press council while this study is underway and this will be a good start to

improve the operation of the media in the country. The trend of polarity between government and privately owned media ever since the coming of the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic front to power has continued to drastically affect the trend of journalistic practice. The polarity has caused the government to lose its patience and take administrative measures that resulted in the decline of the print outlet. The decline of the number of newspapers and magazines partly suggests the deterioration of press freedom in the country.

The study also found that journalists adhere to the fact that freedom of expression and the press has a bound. They believe that the media should not work against the interest of the nation and its public. They firmly believe that the limitations imposed on freedom of expression and the press by the constitution and the press law should be respected for the benefit of the people and the nation.

Despite the fact that the editorial policy guides the overall running of a media, the research identified how the political views of editors and media managers affect the way the media house operates. The influence of editors and managers on the rest of the staff has been found significant. Regardless of very little improvement, accessing information from public bodies has been a serious challenge for the media. This is mainly due to the failure of public bodies to carry out their duty of giving information for the media as per journalists' request. A month's period to make information available to an entity that requested the information has been considered by some as a cover to delay granting information to journalists. What is more, a month's period, out of exceptions, to give information to journalists is inconsiderate of the immediacy of news. What is more serious is officials' unwillingness to give information to the private media. This

alienation of the private media from their government counterparts in access to information from officials is another constraining factor for freedom of expression and the press.

The study found that the future of freedom of expression and the press depends on the joint effort of journalists and establishment of strong press council. The role of the government should not also be forgotten in creating conducive environment to the establishment of the council. It is also dependent on a remarkable contribution of educational institutions and the people, and above all the improvement of the political system. The system of democratic governance is still infant and on the process of development. As the political system gets more and more democratic, there will be parallel degree of improvement in freedom of expression and the press. Citizens, political parties and various entities will have active stake in the affair of the media so that the practice of journalism will be more based on professional norms thereby reducing unethical and slanted journalistic practices.

5.2. Recommendation

The media have an important function in providing information, facilitating and promoting the public debate which is essential to the proper functioning of democracy. They are the main source of information for the people on various socio-economic and political issues. For the media to serve as forum for variety of views, they need to function with autonomy and without interference by either government or business sector. In a developing country like Ethiopia, the contribution of the media is indeed significant. They are supposed to create not only awareness among the public on various issues and mould public view but also mobilize the public on various developmental efforts. Besides, the media have a great contribution in educating the public about issues that may have direct or indirect effect on their life. The information provision

role of the media about the new policies together with their potential contributions and weaknesses is so significant. The media are instrumental in setting agendas on various public issues and hence they contribute in bringing the problems of the public to the attention of concerned bodies.

The government, considering the profound function of the media, should have commitment to freedom of expression and the press thereby giving attention to the implementation of the press law. The government should not disregard the views and criticisms from the media since part of the contribution of the media is the criticisms they publish and broadcast to show the weakness and gaps of the government. Media houses must give trainings to journalists so that they can be familiar with the legal provision in the press law. Any attempt to change the landscape of the Ethiopian media for the better would not be possible without bringing a change to the management or leadership of the media. Hence, the gatekeepers of the media should be thoughtful of the role of the media in informing the public and creating awareness on different matters of public importance.

The establishment of strong press council will be key to create a better, more responsible media. The press council not only helps guide the media practice through code of ethics but also solves various journalistic problems like gaps of professional skill. The public bodies should make information available to help journalists inform the citizenry about the actions of the government. Easy access to information will increase the participation of the people on vital developmental initiatives and efforts.

The contribution of educational institutions should be high in producing skilled graduates who will bring changes in the media house. This will reduce the problem of skilled manpower in the

media. In addition, to promote freedom of the press and expression, the government should develop culture of tolerance towards the media. What is more, the government, professionals and the media should look for ways to narrow the gap between the government and the private media so that both the private and government media can contribute better to the development of the nation.

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Appendix I

List of key informants

1. Shimelis Kemal: State Minister in Government Communication Affairs Office. March 17, 2013
2. Leuel Gebru: Deputy Director and Communication Directorate Director of Ethiopian Broadcast Authority. February 3, 2013
3. Amare Aregawi: General Manager of the Reporter. April 4, 2013
4. Dagne Biazen: Editor in- chief of the Ethiopian Herald. February 8, 2013
5. Temesgen Desalegn: General Manager of Fith (defunct newspaper). March 14, 2013
6. Tebebu Tadesse: Amharic Program Director in Fana Broadcast Corporate. February 8, 2013
7. Yohannes Gebreegziabhair: correspondent for Deutsche welle. April 7, 2013
8. Getachew Teklemariam: Opinion Editor of Fortune. April 7, 2013
9. General Manager of Private FM Radio Station (anonymity maintained). February 15, 2013
10. Senior journalist in the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (anonymity maintained). February 13, 2013
11. Menalachew Semachew: was Senior Editor in the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency. February 3, 2013
12. Shimelis Meressa: Content and News Service Head in 105.3 AFRO FM. February 5, 2013
13. Eyob Kassa: Deputy Editor in-chief of Addis Admass. May 08, 2013
14. Grume Abate: Assignment Editor of Capital. March 9, 2013
15. Belay Manaye: Reporter in Ethiopian Herald. February 5, 2013
16. Anteneh Abraham: President of Ethiopian national journalists' Union. February 7, 2013

Appendix II

In-depth interview questions for key informants

- 1, What do you think about the current status of freedom of expression and the press in Ethiopia?
- 2, What are the opportunities of exercising press freedom in Ethiopia?

- 3, What are the challenges of exercising press freedom in Ethiopia?
- 4, How do you explain government intervention in the media on the issues of freedom of expression and the press?
- 5, How do you evaluate the limits on press freedom for the sake of national security and public safety in Ethiopia?
- 6, How would the political orientation of editors and managers influence press freedom?
- 7, What are the main challenges that journalists face when they discharge their professional responsibilities? What problems are there among journalists when exercising freedom of the press?
- 8, How far journalists are striving to improve the level of press freedom thereby promoting ethical, responsible and independent reporting?
- 9, How accessible are government offices to provide journalists with information?
- 10, What can you say about the futurity of press freedom in this country?

Appendix III

ለ “ቁልፍ አስረጃወች” (Key informants) የሚቀርቡ መነሻ ጥያቄወች

1. በአሁኑ ወቅት በኢትዮጵያ ስላለው የመናገር እና የፕሬስ ነጻነት ሁኔታ ምን ያስባሉ ?
2. በኢትዮጵያ የፕሬስ ነጻነትን ለመተግበር ያሉ እድሎች ምንምን ናቸው ?
3. በኢትዮጵያ የፕሬስ ነጻነት ትግበራ ላይ ያሉ ተግዳሮቶች ምንምን ናቸው ?

4. ከመናገር እና ከፕሬስ ነጻነት አንጻር በሚዲያው ላይ ያለውን የመንግሥት ጣልቃገብነት እንዴት ያብራራታል ?

5. ብሄራዊ ደህንነትን ፣ የሀዘብ ደህንነትን እና ጥቅምን ከመጠበቅ አንጻር የፕሬስ እና የመናገር ነጻነት ገደብ እስከምን ድረስ መሆን አለበት ይላሉ ?

6. የዋና አዘጋጆች የፖለቲካ አመለካከቶች በጋዜጠኞች የጉዳዮች እና ድርጊቶች ሽፋን (ዘገባ) ላይ በምን መልኩ ጫና ያሳድራሉ ?

7. ጋዜጠኞች ሙያዊ ሃላፊነታቸውን በሚወጡባቸው ጊዜያት ያሉባቸው ዋናዎና ተግዳሮቶች(መሰናክሎች) ምንምን ናቸው ?

8. ጋዜጠኞች ነጻ ፣ ስነምግባርን የተከተለ እና ሃላፊነት የተሞላበት አዘጋገብን በማዳበር የፕሬስ ነጻነትን ለማሳደግ ብሎም ወደተሻለ ደረጃ ለማድረስ የሚያደርጉት ጥረት ምን ይመስላል ?

9. ለጋዜጠኞች መረጃን በማቅረብ (ከመስጠት) ረገድ የመንግሥት መስሪያቤቶች ምን ያክል ተደራሽ ናቸው ?

10. ስለ ሀገሪቱ የወደፊት የፕሬስ እና የመናገር ነጻነት እጣፈንታ ምን ይላሉ ?

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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