

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERISTY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

CHALLENGES OF PRIVATE MEDIA IN ETHIOPIA

BY
MISRAK ADUGNA

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Abstract

From the experience of many countries we observe media's great role in building democratic and prosperous society. **The challenges of private newspaper in Ethiopia: 2006-2008** attempts to discuss the challenges that hinder the private press in the country centers this research. To identify the factors and address the problem the researcher uses interview and questionnaire as methods of collecting data. Therefore five editors in chiefs from five selected newspaper are interviewed. In addition to that questionnaires are distributed to readers to collect their feedbacks on the issue discussed.

The findings of the study show that the private press has distorted orientation towards its role in the country. Weak financial status, lack of trained journalists and security force's assault are the most mentioned challenges that weaken the performance of the private press. Even though every one believes strong professional association can curb the problem of the sector journalists fail from establishing it. Government can try to weaken journalists association but most of the interviewed journalists point their finger on the practicing journalists.

Acronyms

ACHPR-African charter on humans and people's right
AU- African union
DPFE- declaration on principles of freedom of expression
EPRDF- Ethiopian peoples democratic front
ER- Ethiopian Radio
ETV-Ethiopian television
FDRE- Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia
ICCPR
MIO- Ministry of Information
PNP- private newspaper
PM- Private media
US- united states
TV-television

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background

Language refers the system of units which in combination provides meaningful communication (Thompson, 2003, 26). The units may be words, sentences or whole text. (Boulton, 1978, 56) on his part explains Man is the only creature that uses words intentionally and habitually. Although there is what we term as animal communication it is not as sophisticated as that of human communication which employs a complex system verbal symbols is very limited. By using language human beings share complicated concepts that lead to the development of the world. Deflure (2008, 32) views the level of communication in six levels. The first level talks about the communication some one has with himself which is referred to as intrapersonal communication. It is more of processing information someone obtains in various ways. It is a communication level someone speaks to himself. **The higher (six level) of communication is called mass communication.** Dominick (1999, 15) defines mass communication, as follows

Mass communication refers to the process by which a complex organization with the aid of one or more machines produced and transmits public messages that are directed at large, heterogeneous, and scattered audiences.

As the definition indicates press is the part of mass communication. The advent of press is crucial in the development and interaction of the world. Press helps the world to share different views and ideas; it helps to reconstruct common understanding on various issues. The institution of the typical press was mainly dependent on the findings of the printing machine by Gutenberg in the 15th century. The invention of Guttenberg replaced hand writing and store knowledge in the form of book and transmitting mass message to member of the society (Deflure, 2008, 18).

At its inception NEWSPAPER was highly influenced by goverenement (Peterson, Siebert and Schramm, 1984, 43). Government used newspaper as a tool to make the society submit their will. When printing machine become available and the time demanded individuals join publishing newspaper. However it was not easy for private newspapers to freely play on the field.

Challenges from government demanded private newspaper to pay a lot of sacrifice in its history. (McQuil/2000/20). Private newspaper was not allowed to publish any things that criticize the government and its officials. Those who oppose this will be forced to be out of circulation. The first victory private newspaper got over government is recorded on 1734 when John Peter Zenger wrote government criticizing article the authority made him to stand on trial (Nerone, 1994, 96). But he challenged the government arguing he wrote true story for the sake of the society's benefit. The court favored him and revoked the law that restrict private newspaper from criticizing government. Though there is not such strong antagonistic relationship between government and private newspaper in the west the trend continues in many African and other non democratic countries.

Society is becoming complex in its nature therefore media plays significant role in one society. Building a bridge to connect the different parts of the society is left to media. Media makes sure whether parts of society are functioning well or not. When social order and moral is violated the public get the alert through media. Informing the society about major events and who the actors are is left to media. Providing information is one of the media functions. The information can be new scientific innovations, entertainment, social issues and many others. The society entertains itself from information it obtains from the media, enrich its understanding about the world, and prepare itself to any changes that might come soon. This indicates how important information is. (Branscomp etal, 1993) explains information as "... a basic resource likes energy and materials. Without material there is nothing; with out energy nothing happens; with out information nothing makes sense."

Any society has its own ways of undertaking the daily affairs and social life. Social standards govern social interactions. It is the responsibility of every member to live according to the standards. The norms and cultures are the identity of a society. The cultures and social institutions (family, marriage, administration, elders, religion, e.t.c.) are the results of the society's experience over the years. Watching the society and its institutions carefully and gives critique where ever change demanded is the work of media. By watching other society's experience media take first position to criticize and upgrade the society to a better position.

Ethiopia is one of the few countries with long years of state existence. The country is known for its political independence in the continent. Ethiopia however does not have a long history of democratic governance. The people have been governed under one person or few individuals for **the past many** centuries. The imperials called themselves an elect of God appointed over the people. Therefore it was impossible to challenge the power and decisions of the imperials'. The 'Derg' military government **established** by few **individuals** used to take hard measures on anyone that raises questions and challenge. After EPRDF took power over the military regime things are changing to some extent. For the first time in the history of Ethiopia multiparty system is allowed by the constitution. Compared to the western countries Ethiopia is at the introduction of democratic governance. The people are expected to work hard in developing democratic institutions like electoral board and media. The development of independent private media is crucial to strengthen democratic values in the country. Private media play a great role to widen democracy in to the public mind. Machesney (1997, 23) says in democratic societies the manner by which the media system is structured, controlled and subsidized is of central importance.

1.1.2. Press in Ethiopia

The history of press

Ethiopia witnessed the first newspaper in 1905 during the reign of emperor Menilik II. The newspapers, *Le Semeur d'Ethiopia* (1905-1911) was published with two languages (bilingual). But the first full page Amharic newspaper came to publication in 1895. The paper is named *Aimero* (1902-1903). Broadcasting in radio and TV, on the other hand started in 1941 and 1946 respectively. The Ethiopian press experience ups and downs on its long journey of more than a century.

After the death of Menilik II there was a problem on who would take over the position. Competition between Iyasu and Hailesilasie created instability in the country. Both tried to get the support of higher officials and the public. Once Hailesilasie won the race it was not easy for him to secure the heart of the majority. For many years he was totally engaged in securing his power. During this years Ethiopia stopped importing modern technology and

ideas which was a fashion during Menilik II. Like any other things, the media was also the victims of it..

Even though Ethiopia has its own alphabet and own aged manuscripts the general public is isolated from reading and writing. Only those who lived around the palace and church got the access of writing and reading. Menilik II introduced modern education in Ethiopia. Neither Menilik II nor Hailesilasié could reach the general public on modern education. This reduces the number of literacy in the country. Both of the kings communicate the public and the international community through the limited literate officials who are around them. When state newspaper was established it carried message to those who are educated. Since the general public is pushed away from the nation's major activities, informing the public was not such an important issue. Therefore both the ruler and the public did not consider private media as an essential part of the state.

The Italian colonial power that invaded the country in 1935-1940 had its own negative effect on the growth of private media. Even if it was only five years the colonizers used the media to legitimize their colony over the people. In addition to controlling the content of state media they forbid the publication of private media.

After the fall of emperor Hailesilasié DERG(a group comprised of military force)took political power. Derg followed socialism political philosophy. Based on its socialist's orientation the authority promoted social thinking and attitude in all of its activities. This belief is reflected on state media. Privately owned media was restricted by law during the Derg regime. It is done to restrict views that challenge the socialistic attitude. Therefore private press was totally closed during the 17 years of Derg. In addition to this, the condition made the public to resist new ideas that are different. This mentality of the public was one of the major reasons that challenge the growth of private media after the 1991 political change. The public which was closed to different kinds of views become strong obstacle for the new type of private media. When the private media bring different kinds of philosophy (new to the public) majority of the public consider it as a treat to social harmony and existence. As a result it becomes hard for the media to get acceptance of the readers.

Rules of the country who were aware of the power of the press exerted their at most pressure on its development. Though press during the Menilik period it flourishes in the Hailesilasie regin.

The Italian invasion influences Ethiopian press negatively. After occupying the country the Italian invaders prevent the media from disseminating current issues. The development of free media became something unthinkable. The right of publishing private press and books which was granted by Emperor Haile Selasie on 15 Feb, 1934 by the proclamation to publish newspaper and book (Shimeles, 2000) ceased during the invasion. Rather the media started to serve the interested of the Italian army.

Following the end of the Italian occupation emperor Haile Selasie reorganized the country. The media is one of the areas reorganized in the new Ethiopia. The national newspaper which was stopped opened with new title "*Addis Zemen*". The paper started to circulate through out the country. Various issues entertained in the paper.

The young age of private media also create problem. Because of short experience journalists in the sector become incapable of handling the media. In the name of free press the inexperienced private media commit a number of mistakes at its inception in the beginning of 1990s. The media wrote articles that were not welcome by the public. The articles undermine the cultural and social value of the society. Therefore it made the public to be suspicious of the benefits of the media. This can be considered as one of the reasons for poor private media in the country.

Magazine is the first private media outlet after the 1991 political change. A magazine named *Tsedey* is the first private magazine Ethiopians read in 1992. *Hibir*, *Ifoyta*, *Tobia*, and *Ruh* are other magazines that start publication in the same year, following *Tsedey*. Though the first newspaper, *Iyita* started in 1992 the above indicated four magazines preceded it. *Iyita* was able to attract the attention of many readers. Within three months its circulation reached 50000. *Addis Dimts* and *Addis Tribune*, an Amharic and English newspapers respectively, followed the footsteps of *Iyita* on the same year with a circulation of 30000 and 2000 (Shimeles, 2000). More than 630 newspapers and 130 magazines had taken press license from which 401 newspapers and 130 magazines have been published and circulated in the period after the press proclamation on Feb, 2005 (population media center, 2006). But a total

of 809 press license is granted in 2007 (Panos Ethiopia, 2007). Currently there are 56 newspapers and magazines in circulation.

The society expects a lot from the activity of a press. In a country like Ethiopia the press has lots of constructive role. But Ethiopian press, especially the private press is in difficult course of race. It is not expanding as expected. Pressures from various directions prevent what the society desire to see. The number of press is not compatible with the population. Very limited number of the press is on circulation. Surprisingly these presses also face circulation and quality problem the content of the press is very limited. The general population is not represented well by the press. Generally speaking the press’s environment is not good. From time the challenges are getting tougher. Different researches conducted show the challenges in different historical moment.

1.1.3. Facts from Ethiopian press

➤ Capital

The press demands huge capital to stay in circulation with strong content and higher circulation. The level of the activity also depends on its capital since the equipments are required in huge payment. The total facilities media deploy in collecting and dissemination of information are the results of modern innovation acquired with huge budget. The Ethiopian media, especially private press, is not strong in its capital flow. The following table shows the starting capital of some press in the country.

Table 1: private newspaper, years of establishment and capital between 1985-1987

Name of the newspaper	Year of foundation	Registered capital	remark
Tobiya	Oct, 1986 E.C	9000 br	Died after 2005 election
Repotrro(Amharic)	Aug, 1987 E.C	50000 Br.	
Beza	Oct, 1986 E.C	15000 Br	Died after 2005 election
Ma’ebal	Dec, 1987 E.C	8000 Br	Died after 2005 election

Mebruk	Sept, 1988 E.C	7000 Br	Died after 2005 election
Seyfe Nebelebal	Aug, 1986 E.C	5000 Br	Died after 2005 election
Tomar	Feb, 1985 E.C	5000 Br	Died after 2005 election
Etob	Oct, 1986 E.C	5000 Br	Died after 2005 election
Genanaw	Nov & Apr, 1987 E.C	5000 Br	Died after 2005 election
Tarik	Mar, 1986 E.C	3000 Br	Died after 2005 election

Source MIO as indicated by Shimeles (2000); the remark is added for this work

➤ Ownership

The type of media ownership shows the nature of the administration a country operates. In addition the types of information entertained in the Medias can be known by evaluating the ownership. When media is dominated by the government and the private press is not operating well we see the non democratic governance of the country. Country that allows private media ownership allows the circulation of different point of view.

Table 2: Media ownership structure (1998-2007)

Ownership by type	type									
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Newspaper										
Private	46	27	42	38	38	31	59	66	31	42
Government	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	6	6
Political parties	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	4	3	3
Religious organ		1	1	3	1	3	2	10	8	5
MAGAZINES										
Private	2	2	5	3	6	12	17	13	12	16
Government	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1
Political parties	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-
Religious organ	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	3	-	3

Source : Panos Ethiopia, 2007

➤ **Language used**

Ethiopia is known for its language diversity. The country has a number of languages. From this concept Ethiopia is expected to establish as many newspaper as the language differ. However the reality is opposite. Even the biggest language (in terms of its issue) are not represented in the press as they should be. Different reasons might rise for a reason. Only three local languages are seen in the press.

Table 3: newspaper in the media market and their language pattern

Year of publication	Amharic	Oromifa	Tigrigna	English	English/Amharic
1998	38	-	-	7	8
1999			-	3	1
2000		1	-	1	3
2001	40	-	1	3	1
2002		-	1	2	2
2003		-	1	6	4
2004		-	1	3	2
2005	3	2	1	16	1
2006	2	2	1	14	4
2007		2	1		3

Source : Panos Ethiopia, 2007

➤ **Circulation**

The Ethiopian press has very limited readership. The problem is evident either in state-owned or private press. Circulation number is very small in the country. Compared to the population of the country the number of copies published is very small. In the neighboring country, Kenya the population is four times lower than Ethiopia but the popular newspaper' circulation is three folds of the Ethiopian highly circulated newspaper. The Kenyan famous private newspaper Daily Nation sells 15000 copies while The Standard sells 50000 copies daily (Kalinaki & Mwesige, 2000). The two well known private newspapers, Addis Admas (weekly) and Reporter (bi-weekly) on the contrary has a circulation of 30000 and 1000 respectively (Panos Ethiopia, 2007). The circulation number in the country shows significant decline after the May 2005 national election. From the MOI data 1575,768 numbers of copies were sold for a month period but the number reduced to 461304 in Feb, 2007. the daily average circulation also reduced to 15377 from 52525 (Panos Ethiopia, 2007)

➤ **Legal frame work**

The country has its own legal frame work allowing the right of freedom of expression. It is included in the constitution and the laws.

The constitution

The constitution is the highest law of the country. It governs the government, political parties, non government organizations, media, police and military force. The 1995 FDRE constitution includes many articles which are new and encouraging to the people. Article 29 of the constitution specify about the freedom of expression. The article guarantees the right of thought, expression and having opinion with out any interference. The constitution indicates only in some conditions the press might be restricted.

The press law

The press law is enacted to lead the press activity of the country. The country. The country witnessed two press laws for the past 17 years. The first press law was enacted in 1992 while the second is approved in 2008. the 2008 press law is named “the Ethiopian Press and Information Right Law”. Section three of the law describes the right of the

press and the public to obtain public information. However this section is not applied up to now. According to the law this section will be applicable after two years since the law is approved. When the Information Ministry finished preparing a line that differentiate public information from national security in a given time it is expected to be applied in 2010.

The current law included many new things. Some people supports the law while some have critics. Some of the major limitations of the law are discussed below as the research conducted by Panos Ethiopia (2007) identified.

- ❖ To conduct any press activity the new law demands the individual to be Ethiopian citizens residing in the country (article 5). This means all Ethiopian nationals are not allowed to engage in press activity unless they are residing in Ethiopia.
- ❖ Banning of the journalists from any press activity, very using those exclusion such as a person “who has not been bared from exercising his civil or political rights,--”, is discriminatory and hence a breach of the ICCPR
- ❖ Article 7 and 9 of the law requires any Ethiopian nationals, who desire to carry out any press activity, to be registered and obtain a certificate or registration before entered in to publication, which many democratic countries condemned it as it is a kind of compulsory.
- ❖ Article 10, many believe restrictive to a free press, specify “conditions for issuance refusal and cancellation of a certificate of registration”. More than the conditions people are complaining about the authorities who are given the mandate to take the refusal and cancellation action. The law granted MOI and bureaus of information to the actions but in a country of emerging democracy the two parties hardly adhere to free and balanced decision. The court is advised to take the responsibility of refusing and cancellation of a press license.
- ❖ The law relies on the use of criminal prosecutions, civil litigation and other extraordinary judicial for its enforcement. Article 44 authorizes the prosecutor to exercise prior restraint and suspended publication, which is totally prohibited in most countries. This article implies a subject standard for the prosecutor in which he or she need only show that “(the person) had reasonable belief”. The law does

not see the applicable standard of proof in a press prosecution. In deed, it appears that once criminal charges are instituted the burden of proof is shifted to the press defendant to prove his/her innocence.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Media gives an opportunity for the unheard to voice their ideas. A media can facilitate conditions that able people express their comment on the socio political agenda, called public sphere. It is possible to say, public sphere can be realized only with the help of media. Machesney (1997, 9) support this idea expressing no institution is more important to the public sphere than the media. He advocates his belief by reflecting Jorgen Habermas's thought which states that '... a critical factor that led to the rise and success of democratic revolutions and societies in the 18th and 19th centuries was the emergence- for the first time in modern history- of a "public sphere" for democratic discourse.'

In Ethiopia where the democratization Process is at its infant stage the private media has irreplaceable role to speed up the process. The media can support the process during different events like national and regional elections. The media support election by explaining and verifying complicated issues raised in the campaigning so that the public will make an informed decision (Lambeth, Meyer, Thorson, 1998, 115). But in Ethiopia the private media was not strong to support the previous elections because of different reasons. While the government and other political parties struggle to control the political power the media was not this much prepared to integrate the public to the general election process.

Like many African countries there are two major groups of media ownership in Ethiopia, state owned and private media. The state owned media run their work from government budgets. The journalists working in state media are hired and paid by government or the ruling party. This makes the journalists dependent on government for their salaries and survival. The journalists are unable to criticize government, if not they will be forced to leave their job. The private media in the country also is not working as expected. Therefore it can not give the public the benefit which is competent to the sector's potential.

Reporting balanced information is expected from the private media. The fairness of one report is based on the opportunity it gives to all parties involved in the issue. The Ethiopian private media is not good concerning balance reporting. Most of the news and other writing pieces are one sided. Most of the reporting sympathizes to the opposition political parties. Many reporters operate as spokes people for particular political parties rather than as journalists. (Press reference, 2007). This reduces their contribution to full and balanced information. The incomplete news leads the public to wrong actions that lag the development of the country. Scholars argue that it is the right of the public to get balanced information from the media. Nyamnjoh (2005, cover page) writes “unbalanced news is also a human rights abuse” to express how crucial it is to the society to get balanced news. Therefore any information that affects the decision of the public should be provided correctly.

Achieving sustainable development is the other objective media can realize in developing country. That is why scholars from developing countries advocate that development journalism is the essential component to change the economic condition of the country. The private media in Ethiopia is not active in supporting the economic development of the country. The media neither encourage the promising development activities nor provide constructive advises on the defects. Most of the PNP is not ready even to cover the development projects undergoing in the country. The public is not allowed to hear positive or development projects and support them. In general development journalism is the forgotten concept in Ethiopia’s PNP.

The Ethiopian PNP journalists love to express their role as a watchdog. They say the PNP should dedicate its resources towards safe guarding the interest of the public against government officials (Shimeles, 2000, 25). Because of this, their pages are covered by reports that are against the government.

Newspapers can use their power to attract others and support their interest in the name of “watch dog role”. The interest can be profit, politics or something else. This makes the PNP to be negatively oriented towards goverenement. While journalism profession demands

reports to depend on facts. It is common to see words like “anonymous sources indicated” and “we heard” on PNP news. The newspapers do not collect concrete information on an issue before they repeat but they simply write stories based on the rumors they heard. This decrease the fact and correctness of their reporting. There are many reasons for the PNP to depend on rumors rather than concrete facts during reporting an issue. No matter what the reason would be the condition makes the public to decide issues with unconfirmed data. Such decision reduces the effectiveness of the public comment on national issues.

The above mentioned defects of the PNP are caused because of different challenges. The PNP is surrounded with many challenges that weaken its performance. These challenges reduce the performance of the sector. Following the lower performance of the PNP its contribution at the national level reduces significantly. The challenges (problems) are originated either from the media houses their own (internal challenge) and the environment they are working on (external challenges). The internal challenge originates inside the media houses and can be controlled by the media. It depends on the determination of the owner either to avoid it or live with it. But the external challenge is outside of the control of **the media house**. The media can not avoid external challenge by the decision of the media house but it is left to different parties who have interest on the sector. This research is dedicated to identify and describe the internal and external challenges of PNP in Ethiopia.

1.3. Objectives

1.3.1. General Objectives

The public benefits very small out of private-media’s vast potential. The paper’s general objective is to identify the challenges of private media which hinder its contributions to the democratization and development process of the country. The different challenges that are obstacle to the development of private media will be discussed. The challenges originate from somewhere or something. **Therefore** it tries to identify the causes of the challenges. This is because of the belief that identifying the causes helps the researcher in proposing solutions to solve the challenges.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

- similarities and differences of media challenge between Ethiopia and the rest of the world will be identified in the paper.
- Identifying the understanding (belief) of the public, journalists and government about the challenges of private media.
- identifying the kinds of challenges that face Ethiopia's strong and weak media.
- recommend probable solutions that could help the PM to overcome its challenges.

1.4 Research methodology

To conduct the research case study method is found relevant and applicable. Dominic (2006, 136) says case study method is most valuable when researchers want to obtain a wealth of information about the research topic and suggest why something has happened. The system is selected because it will give better allotment of private newspapers working per the law of the country. Five newspapers are selected to serve as case of this research. These newspapers are selected based on their circulation number and financial background. Interview and questionnaires are the two methodologies deployed to collect data from sources.

1.5 Scope of the study

The research focuses on the 24 months (2 years) activities of private media houses. The 24 months start 1 April, 2007 and ends 29, April, 2009. This period is chosen because it records relatively stable political conditions. As a result it is very less for the researcher and human sources to become influenced by a particular political situation. The research is expected to find out the challenges and causes of challenges of private media between 1, April 2007 and 29, April2009.

1.6 Significance of the study

The research aims to contribute something concrete in developing private media. Pointing out the real challenge of private media will give an opportunity for the concerned parties to direct their limited resources to the right areas. Instead of wondering in the bush spending their resources inappropriately the findings of the research enable the concerned bodies to effectively utilize their resources.

The findings of the research also help to create a frame on discussions that focuses on private media in Ethiopia. Discussions on challenges of private media in Ethiopia used to be based on mainly individual perception and suggestions but this paper will play a significant role to shape on-ward discussions. This research can serve as a base for the next researchers who will make their research on private media in Ethiopia.

1.7 Limitation of the study

The paper tries to address a vast issue however it evaluates the condition of only five media houses. This opens a space that the research could not include. In addition, there is lack of organized information that can be input to the research. The researcher was forced to look scattered information. The sources also were hard to cooperate to deliver their information therefore it takes long time to get their responses.

1.8 Organization of the study

The research is organized in five major chapters. Chapter one includes the back ground, statement of the problem, objectives of the research, significance of the research and limitation of the research. This chapter serves as a window to see the paper.

Chapter two contains the literature review. The related works collected from various sources are compiled here. These literary collections will help to evaluate the national condition with rest of the world.

Chapter three explains the methods the researcher followed to conduct the research. The chapter reason out why the implemented methodology is used.

Chapter four presents the data concerning private media in Ethiopia and analyzes it. It shows detailed information about the challenges of private media. The information is presented using narration when they are qualitative. The quantitative data will be displayed using tables and graphs as needed. The chapter also interprets, describes and criticizes the data in relation to the literature review in chapter two. Chapter five is the final chapter. It contains two major parts. The first part is conclusion. The conclusion summarizes the research findings. The second part or recommendation gives alternative solutions to change the awkward situation of private media in the country.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 History of mass media

2.1.1 History of mass media in west

The united villages that become nations were ruled by a certain authority. Rules and announcements of the central authority (kings and queens) were continually sent to parts of the kingdom hand written. Therefore the needs to transfer an identical (similar) message to large number of a society became the concern of man. We can imagine how tedious and boring it was written one message repeatedly to a number of localities around the kingdom. Gutenberg brought an amazing invention that could solve this problem. Gutenberg invented a printing machine in 1474(Deflure, 2008). The machine was able to produce a large number of identical messages with a short span of time. Following the innovation of the machine mass media came to existence in its fullest definition. Campbell define mass media

The process of designing and delivering cultural messages and stories to large and diverse audiences through media channels as old as the book and as new as the internet

Media does not have similar status through out the world. As the life style of people differ so does their media culture. Peterson, Schramm and Siebert (1984/35) indicated five reasons that differentiate press's performance from place to place

- i. The ability the society has to provide for the press. The press (journalists, publishing companies, distribution channels, etc.) costs a lot. Countries are not in equal status to satisfy the needs of the press.
- ii. The mechanical inventiveness and resource that can be put behind mass communication.
- iii. Degree of urbanization: - the percentage of population living in urban area makes great influence on the performance of media in the country. When

urbanization is at high level circulation become easier and media expands easily.

- iv. How the people leads its life determine the extent media activate in the country. When the society is highly dependent on information flow for its livelihood it will demand media to expand. A country that has greater interaction with the globalized world it helps media to grow because the media is the tool to bring valuable information that increases the bargaining power.
- v. Social and political structure determines the development of media. Different political and social philosophies see media at different angle. A Philosophy that accept media as a means to control the society and other that takes it as a means of understanding societal needs value media differently. This lead to the type of media one country holds.

The history of modern media has begun with the printed book (McQuail, 2000/18). According to this scholar the publication of books in the vernacular languages, which is supported by a printed machine, played its own part in the transformation of the medieval world. Religious content dominated the earlier books. At the beginning the content of the books were similar. Latter, however, the trend starts to shift in content. Secular literatures like politics become included in books. Latin and Spanish language domination also started to change to local languages when time went on.

It takes long time to see the first newspaper similar to the current one. After 200 years of the innovation of printing machine the 1st newspaper that regularly appear with a multiple purpose came to market for sale (McQuail, 2000/19). Because of various reasons He believes newspapers is an innovation more than published books. This is because newspaper helps the people to communicate cultural issues, it is prepared for individual reader and contains stories those are real. In addition to this, newspaper's content is secular, it can be easily carried and suitable for the newly emerged social class, town based business and professional people.

A newspaper from its early period was not welcomed by political authorities. A newspaper publishes stories that are not comfortable to kings of the time. The rulers used to live executing whatever pleased them. There were no institutions that expose the scandals of the rulers and challenge their authority. Newspapers, however, started opposing the supremacy of the rulers publishing stories that are dangerous to the reputation and powers of the rulers. Because of this we see rulers creating obstacles on the expansion of newspapers at the time. Therefore we see vast violence committed to journalists, editors and publishers of newspapers on the early ages. Even sometimes rulers might create problems on publishers that publish offensive stories on the adjacent kingdom's rulers. The 1st American newspaper was forced to its closure because its story was criticizing the then French king. Publishers of the 1ST newspaper, *Public Occurrences*, Benjamin Harris's wrote stories that alleging the king France had hang about with his son's wife on his 1st issue. But the then English governor has not consented the report and closed the newspapers after one issue (Vivian, 2003/247). The press travels a long way of fighting for its freedom. This fighting was center on the movements of fighting for democracy and citizens rights. During those times when official newspapers publications are restricted underground press played a crucial role to organize the people (McQuail, 2000/18)

Different scholars divide the story of the press differently. McQuail(2000/19) divide press development in to three: political press, the prestige press and the commercial newspapers. Political press can be either published by the party or someone else who supported the party. Its major purpose is to activate, inform and organize supporters of the party. These newspapers are read by section of the society who is aligned to the party. Political press can be subsidized by the state to promote multiparty system in the country. McQuail(2000/21) call the prestige press those of bourgeois newspapers at the late 19th century. These newspapers operate from 1850 to the turn of the century. Unlike the political press the prestige (elite') newspapers are independent from the state and vested interest groups. Because of this we see them reporting objectively. The reports are not meant to multiply supporters of a specific group. Rather they show a highly developed sense of social and ethical responsibility. The rise of a journalistic profession is witnessed during this period. As the name indicated commercial newspapers are produced centering profit maximization.

Commercial newspapers are operated by monopolizing concern and heavily dependent on advertising to generate revenue. Publishers of these newspapers knew advertisers came to the newspapers only if it had higher circulation number. Therefore they focus their content on crime, violence, scandals and entertainment that can attract the mass reader (McQuail, 2000/23).

The other famous scholar John Vivian (2003/249) express press development into three: partisan period, the penny press, and yellow press. Like McQuail's political press Vivian's partisan period is characterized by intense partisanship. Vivian also called the period Federalist period. The roughly 50 years from American Revolution to 1830s witnessed a political debate over the political system the country should follow. People with various political standpoints publish their political thought on newspapers to obtain the support of the public. Newspapers entertain articles that are only suited to their personal choices. The penny press is introduced by a 22 years old young publisher. Benjamin Day started newspapers for a penny (Vivian, 2003/249). The newspapers called *The New York Sun*, brought a new era in the production and distribution of newspapers industry. The content of the newspapers was focused on human interest stories like crimes and distributed on streets. Because of its content and low price the paper reaches to the large number of the society. Since the selling price is too cheap it could not cover the production cost therefore Day focuses on advertisers' revenue to the cost. Since then newspaper's targeted advertisers as a source of major revenues. Yellow press is well known to fabricate news that aim to increase circulation. Joseph Pulitzer publisher of New York World and William Randolph Hearst publisher of New York Journal are the famous individuals known for introducing yellow journalism in U.S. (Vivian, 2003/250). This press was expanded at the late 1980s but it still exists.

2.1.2 History of mass media in Africa

Africa media traces itself back to the colonization period. KariKari (2007/10) quoted four main sources of the origins of the newspapers in Africa: the colonial states, the European settler colonists, the Christian missionary institutions and the early African elite. Concerning the colonial period, he quoted the introduction of newspapers in Egypt on 1790s by Napoleonic colonizers. McCarthy's *The Cape Town Gazette* in Cape Town in 1800 and *The*

Royal Gazette in 1801 in Sierra Leon are one of the early newspapers in Africa (Nixon and potter, 2001/3).

The first major foreign media investment in West Africa entered in 1950 as the Mirror News Paper Group of London set up papers in Ghana, Sierra Leon, and Nigeria (Karikari,2007/12). People in these countries enjoyed a press with diversified point of view since the big companies with large number of circulation are in the market in conjunction with a small number of publication made by nationalists and members of elite. Of course, African private media at the colonization was dominated by English and French entrepreneurs. The Standard, and renamed itself The East African Standard two year later is the 1st newspaper in Kenya that started circulation in 1902 (Kalinaki and Mwesige, 2007/14).

During the colonial period Africa media observed two almost contrary theme orientations. Media owned by the colonizers and their supporters' theme was highly inclined to the interest of the foreigners. It was a direct political and ideological instrument of the colonial state. The colonizers used the media to propagate their justification on their doings. The colonizing media made the African's struggle to freedom difficult in the continent. On the contrary, Africans use media to fight colonization. African's Media on the other hand was tool of resistance against the foreign colonial power. Organizing the people was not easy on public gathering therefore the media (especially newspapers) help a lot to bring African people to one direction. Most of the newspapers owned by Africans were not allowed to circulate freely since they oppose the colonial powers. Though Africans were able to publish newspapers radio and television broadcasting was totally controlled by the colonizers (Karikari, 2007/10).

Within short period of independence the foreign owned newspapers faced difficulties to operate in the newly established free African states. Newspapers that were under the former colonizers were not welcomed by the new African leaders. All African countries except Kenya and South Africa pushed the newspapers out of publication. African leaders nationalized the offices and operations of the Western owned newspapers. The political

ideology of the coming African leaders restricted alternative ideas entertained in the society. As a result we see African media history dominated by state owned media. Only few African countries allowed other media to exist in hand with state owned media. Kenya and South Africa are the exemplary countries that allow private companies to run a press after colonization. Because of this Kenya develops strong media industry for over a century. In 1963 when Kenya became independent most of the media was private and foreign-owned and it entertained the various issues raised in the public. The white settler community, the Asian business and merchant class, and the African politics and masses are all represented in the media (Mwesige and Kalinaki, 2007).

In fact South Africa and Kenya also put many restrictions on the free movement of information and the private media. Although Kenyan government did not nationalize west-owned media they have been influencing the media content. South Africa; however have something different in the continent concerning media development. The media in South Africa is highly dominated by private ownership. The country is the only one in the continent where the state has very limited ownership. South Africa government launched a magazine under its control in 2005 for the 1st time (Kupe, 2007/143).

Africa is a continent with many paradoxical backgrounds. Though it is one continent it has extraordinary different cultural, racial, political and linguistic difference. Similarly different African countries have different opposing media experience. While South Africa is known for its well nourished media development the other African states, Libya has no private media at all. The other northern African country Morocco has deep rooted private media. Moroccans' press entertain wide ranges of views and opinions: Islamists, socialists and democrats (Zaghlami, 2007, 70)

The end of cold war brought a number of changes in the African socio-political life. After the collapse of the former USSR there exists a change of political ideology in African governance. The sole dominance of the west (USA) influence African leaders' attitude towards democratic principles. The free flow of information which is realized by the presence of free media (private media) becomes the slogans of many African countries. This

historical moment brought a golden opportunity for the re-birth of private press in Africa. Frere (2007,47) express it figuratively as follows: “if African countries have had nearly 50 years of independence, francophone African journalists have only enjoyed 17 years of freedom starting 1990s”

Starting the time of colonization Africa media has been under strict state control. State monopoly of media characterizes the sector with very limited role in the transformation of the continent. Because of this Africans could not enjoy the benefits from the press in many aspects. The nearly emerged private press in Africa develops a sense of new identity different from the already existed state-owned media. The government media work to strengthen the power of the ruling party. In the contrary the private press becomes a critic of the political authority. Signifying the wrong-doings of government, private press exposes it to the public. Abusing political authority for the personal benefit has been common practice. The limited resources the society own to develop the economy has been mismanaged; democratic and human rights citizens have violated repeated. Previously the above problems were hidden or not challenged but reporters from the private press tried to end this using the new opportunity. Government loosening up its media monopoly creates a condition for a controversy issue to be raised in the private media. Like the west press at its beginning African private press also farces difficult situation.

“Africans are the least served people of the world in terms of the circulation of information, for the reason that this continent exhibits a mass medium that is everywhere limited in terms of quantity, and also sometimes quality. (Berger, 2007/160)

2.2 Benefits of private media

2.2.1 Watchdogs

One of the major functions of private press based on social responsibility theory that lies on safeguarding the rights of individuals by serving as watchdog against government (Peterson, Schramm & Siebert, 1984/50). This partly originates from a belief that advocates people with the power want to abuse the right of individual [the constitution granted]. Glancing human history and the current trend to many nations' government is seen oppressing the people who are not willing to carry it on their shoulder. From its inception media expose the unfair things government do.

Once they hold the power government officials easily exploit national resources to their personal benefits. Despite there are many social problems authorities entertaining their children with public money. But state owned media is not courageous to tell the public about the wrong doings because they are under the supervision of the authority and also can easily be silenced creating friendship with the rulers.

The watchdog role is unlike any other role of media. It demands the journalist to be honest and courageous. It requires special skills, a special temperament, and a special hunger. It also requires a serious commitment of resources, a desire to cover serious concern, and a press independence from any interest except that of the ultimate consumer of the news (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001, 46). But scholars like Nyamnjoh (2005/79) argue that journalists might have hidden agenda while they present themselves as a watchdog. Therefore the public has to be conscious of what the media is claiming about themselves and others.

Media execute its watchdog role using various journalistic skills. Investigative journalism is found to be effective for media to play its watchdog role. The job of investigative journalist is to find something wrong and expose it [and that] which makes the journalist a positive force for change (Bromley, 2005, 315). As the watchdog demands the journalists keep their eyes wide open to identify anything which is contrary to the constitution, laws, and culture of the society. Whenever they found something it is the journalists' duty to fight in

collaboration with the public. That is why investigative journalism is highly dependent on public support from pointing out problem, information collection, and publication.

2.2.2 Creating public sphere

A nation is a home of different people with different political, cultural, and economic background. All segments of the society need to create a condition where they all come together to discuss on national issues. The condition is termed public sphere. “The public sphere was a “space” independent of both state and business control which permitted citizens to interact, study, and debate (Machesney, 1997:10).

Democratic governance in one country is revealed when public sphere operates actively. On the public sphere citizens air their voices on current affairs. The will of the society is reflected in public sphere. When there is no sufficient sphere the society will be forced to hear only what the authority is saying. This definitely represents only one point of view. Media create public sphere by hosting all views of the society. In countries where the state media dominates the information circulation the public interest will be neglected. This gives the society extra opportunity to know the full picture of what is going on. The public empower itself through the information it obtains from the public sphere (media).

Efficient and democratic public sphere strengthen solidarity between citizens. It creates the opportunity to the unheard part of the society. The society reflects its views using the media. When the various opinions are represented on the public sphere the minorities also develop a sense of solidarity to the rest of the society. The private press is expected to give special emphasis to the minority groups like women, the poor, illiterate, and rural. Once the interest of a specific group entertained on media its members avoid a feeling of avoidance by the privileged. Private media is expected to accurately portray the social group or project a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism (Peterson, Schramm, Siebert 1984)

2.2.3. Entertainment

At its beginning media used to cover serious issues like philosophical, religious and politics. But because of market force the coverage is shifted to entertainment. The audiences are attracted to the media mainly for entertainment purpose. Some people (scholars or journalists) consider the trend as a warning. While there are many demanding critical issues the society need to solve media spends resources in entertainment. The media serve its audience presenting music, fiction, humor stories and other programs with light content. ‘The market fails audiences in a number of ways; that is market-driven media treat audiences as consumer rather than citizens’ (Campbell, 2004:55-56)

Campbell quotes O’Neill’s expression that advocates the press should satisfy the preference of consumers. According to these people the preference of the public is inclining to light issues from time to time therefore the press has to follow the public’s interest. They also believe the media should not spend all of its resource discussing on political and social problem.

2.2.4. Educate and globalize the society

Media play a great role in bringing new information to individuals and the society. New findings of research reach people through media (Dominick, 1989, 40). Researchers and experts spend their time and resource on something that advance the life of their citizens. Media is one choice or channel to create awareness of the mass about the findings, educate and encourage the people to use it.

A program is produced deliberately to increase the awareness of the society on various issues targeted educating the society. Health program for example prepare stories that focuses on tackling an epidemic spread in society. Programs on HIV, cancer, diabetes and others aim to educate the society about the disease and reduce their effect advocating the prevention method.

It is no longer possible for a nation to survive by separating itself from the rest of the world. Previously kings used to build tall fences around their cities to protect intrusion from the neighboring people. The building protects the kingdom from any danger. Currently this does not work because today's attackers could not be protected by fences. Even if it is possible we could not keep up to the fast changing world if we restrict our interaction to the outside world. But wise people strengthen it by increasing interaction with other people. The 21st century is characterized by vast communication of people through out the world. Countries are creating bilateral and multilateral agreement to get the benefit combining their resources. Trade with in a border no longer satisfies the needs of the society. Military agreements between countries increase the security of the nations. This and other realities brought a concept of globalization. Globalization is the widening and deepening of the international flows of trade, capital, technology and information within a single integrated global market, Peterson and Veltmeyer, 2002. Media takes the lion share of expanding globalization and its effect. Media help citizens to understand globalization bringing information from the rest of the world. People increase their awareness about what is going on through the media. Media propose opportunities globalization brought to the community. In addition the community increases its value in the international level showing its potential to others through media. U.S utilizes its media highly compared to African countries. Because of this U.S attracts investors, professionals, and sort of people. On the other hand Africa could not benefit its endowed resources since globalization disadvantages the continent. The international media disseminate unfavorable report about the continent that lags its development. Understanding this African should be devoted to establish strong media system that could increase the information flow about the real picture of the continent

2.3. Drawbacks of private press

2.3.2. Invasion of privacy

Disputes that arise between media and individuals centered mainly on issues of invasion of privacy. Focusing on their market journalists forget their limit of involvement on private lives of individuals. Personal affairs of individuals, especially famous individuals, attract the attention of private press because it has high market demand. Disregarding the consequence of the article the press discloses the information to public. Many people attract by few selfish

journalists' ego as a result. These people lose their work, marriage and social life because of what is written in papers.

Trivial things which are irrelevant to the public are covering the press. The public might not get benefit to such reports. Famous sport people, musicians, politicians, and others are the target group to private media. Some times people popularize their name using the media deliberately but after a time the media backfire them, exposing personal life to the public. Popular journalism which publishes the daily activity of popular individuals is expanding from time to time. Private press neglecting social issues focus on writing the life style of famous people. This journalism is invading the mind of the new generation. Audiences also develop a sense of following each and every activities of their hero individual avoiding current issues. The former Well's princes Diana is a good example of such people. Diana exploits the media to make herself famous. But at the end the media published her love affairs with many individuals which spoiled her fame. She also lost her life on car accident that was rushing to disappear from the paparazzi who sell Diana's life to media (Biagi/2000/349).

2.3. 2. Eroding public morals

A society has its own identity that differentiates itself from other societies. The social standards and morals the society develops help it to sustain. Citizens define themselves through their culture. It takes century to build a sound and self expressing culture to a society. The culture is expressed in language, clothing, food, housing and social interaction such as marriage and funeral. Campbell (2002, 06) define culture as the symbols of expression that individuals, groups, and societies use to make sense of daily life and to articulate their value. The activities of media might endanger the culture (morals) of the society. Opening up the society to new thinking and technology is the benefit of media. But smuggling odd life style on the other hand counted as disadvantages of media. Media introduce odd life **styles** like homosexuality and individuality that are not common to African society. While the society expects private media promote social value it could play the opposite. The west is using media to impose their culture on the new generation of Africa.

2.3.3. Weapon for individuals (groups)

The nature of media demands the public attention because it should dedicat~~e~~s resources for the common good of the society. Using the media, the public strengthen its cooperation, improves the life standard, advocates the social norm and many others. But when it is controlled by few hands it might misguided. It is possible, for media, to serve as weapon of those who controlled it. Private media established by individuals or group is influenced by its owners.

Investors who control the media use it to propagate what they want. Everything these individuals advocate reflects in the media so that the people will believe it through wrong information. The public will not be aware about the other side of the story therefore it will make decisions on the limited (one-sided) information provided by the media. The owners have propagated their own opinion, especially in matters of politics, and economics at the expense of opposing views (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1989).The management (owners) publicizes what he wants quietly through persuasion. Since reporters understand the message what the boss says, it will be published or air immediately otherwise the management fire the journalists as he/she hire it. (Cambell, 2004, 66)

2.4. Challenges of private press

2.4.1. Internal challenges

2.4.1.3. weak structure of enterprises

Newspaper is known for the large number of human power it demands for gathering, editing and disseminating news (Vivian, 2003, 74). However African media is typically known by its shallow organization. In Africa Media can be established by very few personnel and short funding. An individual ~~with~~ his few friends tries hard to run a media. Media organizations

are under centralized and personnel management. The editor-publisher holds total decision-making power and controls all financial aspects. The works of media by its nature demand sufficient number of people to collect, organize, and publish information.

Media house with wide structures hire reporters, editors, columnists, proof readers, and layout designers. When an article pass through all these levels it advances its quality. The accuracy and taste of the article also increases. The weak structure on the other hand lacks all these benefits. This might be the major reason why African media face quality problems. There are few exceptional in the continent concerning the strength of media structure. We can take Sud Communications Group in Senegal. The company develops a strong organizational structure that helps to run efficient work. It publishes a daily newspaper, owns several private radio stations and run its own School of Journalism (Frere, 2007, 44)

At the 21st century communication by itself is a product of high technology. African media established in single or two offices are characterized by weak communication apparatus. Some African private media do not have computers to type text and design pages therefore they finish their work in secretarial offices located at the neighborhood to (Shimeles, 2000, 58). It is not hard to imagine how weak the activity of a media will be with no computer and secretary. The concept of management and editorial staff segregation is something beyond the imagination of such newspapers. Planning and editorial meeting might be a dream.

Nixon and Peter (2001, 11) argue that Africans should not follow media ownership type similar to the west. The American press focuses on profit. It gets rich and powerful. According to these scholars the American media is not entertaining the voiceless rather it is partaking with the action of the stronger. The media stand with powerful by hiding issues that could damage the reputation and financial of the owners and advertisers. Therefore Nixon and Peter derive a media model that fits African context known as Articulation Model. “Articulation model” of the press advocates media to be associated with civil societies. While globalizing model of the west advocates media to exist by itself and manage itself. Articulation model opposes “globalization model”. When media run under the associations it will engage on promoting the organization and the people it represents. This helps the media

to stand for group or social value opposite to individualistic concern of the west model. Articulation support professional groups, religious organizations, cooperatives, trade unions and other civic groups to run media. To support their argument the authors of the model show the role of trade unionist overthrowing dictators in Zambia and Malawi. National Mirror the only independent media in Zambia under Kenneth Kaunda also quoted to support “Articulation Model”

2.4.1.4. Financial problem

Establishing media house demands significant amount of finance. Strong media house should have an apartment that allows all professionals to work with sufficient rooms. **In addition to that** the equipment like computer, fax, telecommunication, internet, and others should be fulfilled for proper media work. All the above expenses including salary to professionals demand strong finance. To meet their expenses mass media sell their product in two ways. Either they derive their income from selling a product or collect their revenue from advertisers (Vivian, 2003, 10). The above sources of money are not the only ones but the major ones. The rest includes private support, government subsidies, government advertising, and auxiliary enterprises.

Financial **shortage** handicaps the activity of African private press. Because of various reasons it becomes difficult for the press to strengthen its financial capacity. Newspaper sales are very limited **in many African states**. The continent is known for its low per capital income. Africans spend the whole day working **but** unable to cover their daily needs. In this condition it is **convincing if the majority avoid buying newspapers**. The rise of newspapers publication is making the condition worse. As Frer (2007) wrote the cost of a newspaper is at present higher than that of a meal. The **inefficient system of newspaper distribution** also reduces the number of **copies** sold and its revenue. Newspaper circulation in Africa is limited to capital cities and small number of other major cities. The system is not well developed to reach all the potential readers.

Newspapers' advertisement revenue outweighs sales revenue throughout the world. In the modern market system advertising plays a great role for manufactures and other profitable companies to attract the attention of the customers, Therefore we see western media earning millions of dollars every year by placing advertisement. For example, in U.S. Newspaper attracted 44.3 billion dollar in 1998 which is greater than the 38.9 billions televisions attracted on the same year (Vivian, 2003, 74).

In Africa however, the private press is unable to earn enough advertising revenue. The economy is dominated by nationalized companies but government takes private press as its adversaries. Therefore does not allow government owned companies to advertise on private press. This means the big sack of money is closed to the private press. The investors could not advertise on the private press because they are afraid that government will label them as the supporter of the ideas written on the media (Fere, 2007, 54). Antagonistic relationships between the private press and government make the few investors to restrain themselves from advertising in the private press even though they knew there are lots of customers they can reach through the media. Individuals who have enough money to invest in the media sector are not willing to invest because they know it is not profitable business in Africa (Tamirat, 2001). Private support, audience donations, government advertising and subsidies which are the other source of media income, are not common in Africa Vivian (2003, 13). Even though private press support democracy, creates public sphere, and increases the awareness of the people we see negligence and a deliberate action of African governments not to subsidize the private press. To survive in the market African private press are forced to look to other financial alternatives. The other alternatives are politicians, religious organizations and possibly commercial interests of dubious origin.

2.4.1.5. Shortage of **trained** professionals

Lack of trained journalists in Africa create problems in the development of the profession. The profession demands individuals with a background of good writing skills, professional ethics and journalistic know-how. **In many African countries however**, no body can join the profession at any time. A person who knows reading and writing joins the profession easily. These individuals could not serve the society to the best of the profession. Having difficulties in identifying the difference between news and feature such writer uses the same kind of writing. That is why news with full of opinion crowded many African newspapers.

Unemployment is a problem for many Africans. University graduates of different fields of study suffer to get a job. They find journalism as an opportunity where they get themselves hired. Every thing these people worry is about the little money they collect **from** writing an article. They might not worry whether the issue is current, keeps its balance, and worth to the community. ‘Dozens of young university graduates deprived of jobs (formerly assured) in the civil service, have found the means to survival in the private press (Frere, 2007, 48).

The decades of state control and monopoly of media critically stifled the expansion of media in Africa. Compared to the private, the state owned media have better skilled man power. The state trained its journalists sending to other countries. But these journalists are forced to censor themselves and contribute negligible to the profession. To talk of a profession is to talk of a group of people who distinguish themselves through their training and competence to practice a given trade (Fonchingong, Nyamnjoh, Wete, 1996, 54). To up-grade the journalistic skill of African practitioner-journalists, different workshops and seminars held in the continent. The workshops and seminars help to create an insight to the understanding of the journalists. However the continent could not utilize the opportunity to its maximum because of various reasons. (Ibid, 48) wrote ‘the selection of participants is not always well targeted. The same journalists travel across the continent or in Europe from one training seminar to the next no longer even having the time to return to their writing to put their knowledge into practice’

In fact there are journalism training institutions in the continent. The institutions provide short term training and a full fledged program at the higher institution level. Compared to the population and the demand the colleges are not producing sufficient number of journalists. The number of journalists per 1000 head of national population is very low in many African countries. Ethiopia and Zimbabwe for example have 1 journalist for every 99000 and 34000 people respectively (Berger, 2007). Quoting a research made by African Council on Communication Education on 1998, Ogundimu (1990, 83) on his part indicates there are 86 journalism schools in Sub Sahara African countries. Almost half of the schools were in Nigeria alone. These schools also are not in good condition. Their facilities are not up to date with modern equipments. The universities face acute staff problems. **To manifest the problem Ogundimu quotes** the University of Maiduqiri in Northern Nigeria that struggles to provide journalism course at a bachelor degree with just 2 journalism teachers. Universities like Maiduqiri are not in a position to create fruitful and competent journalists. Graduates from such universities could not be equipped properly with proper journalistic knowledge.

2.4.1.4. Conglomeration

Conglomeration is a trend of accumulating different organization under one or few ownership. In the west, especially U.S, number of media ownership is getting fewer and fewer. Many media houses are coming under the control of very few strong companies. Financially weak media easily gives its hand to the stronger in the form of merges, acquisition, and even buyouts.

Negative effects of conglomeration

- I. Quality:** - quality of media out put decreases when Medias become under conglomeration. The conglomerators' focus on their profit therefore they force the media house to reduce its costs (expenses). Because of this fewer people are expected to do more work.

- II. Sameness:** - different news media owned by a single parent has high tendency of sharing stories. Once a news or article is prepared the management wants the story to fill the gaps of all media outlets under its control.

The company saves its money by suffering the quality of the media. By doing so diversity on media content is reducing from time to time. The society also lack an opportunity to obtain various issues in the market. The media world focusing on single issue bore readers.

- III. Corporate instability:** - The continuous buying and selling of media house create instability on the journalists in west. Journalists could not be sure when their media house is going to sell or merge with others and all working environment changes. In general, the following realities of chain ownership reflect corporate instability (Ibid).
- IV. Weak entry-level salary:**-the company that aims only for profit reduces the entry salary for journalists from time to time. Because of this experienced journalists fly from one media house to the other to get better job. As a result the media loses its experienced and well informed journalist.
- V. High news room turnover:** - cost-conscious policies at chain newspapers restrict the amount of the roof salary one journalist could get in the house. Therefore journalists will be forced to open their eyes searching for better payment in other areas once they become well known to the community and media house. Leaving the experienced journalists media houses hire new graduates with lower price. The turnover brings instability and reduces the productivity of the media.

Others on the other side argue for conglomerates. These scholars indicate different benefits of the conglomerates to defend their position. The strong financial capacity of the huge conglomerates is accepted as one benefit (Vivian: 15). Media is highly dependent on finance for its activity starting from the collection of information up to the dissemination process there is huge amount of expenditure. The fast changing communication technologies which the media highly depend costs a lot. Media house can cope to these technologies only when they are financially strong. The ordinary media is incapable of to pay for the expensive technologies. But when the conglomerates are active they can easily acquire new technologies so that the media delivers message with better quality.

Creating suitable working condition and hiring sufficient number of qualified journalists is the challenging issues for weak Medias. This is highly portrayed in the

African weak Medias, including Ethiopia. The major constraint of these Medias is their poor financial capacities. These Medias usually run their activity in a single room office, with a single computer and very limited number of journalists. Because of this the quality of their report deteriorates. Conglomerates, however hire sufficient number of journalists as far as they feel it is necessary. In addition to that they provide their journalists with the at most suitable working environment.

Allen (2006; 13) also wrote that the large media companies occupying market position encourages creative works better than the smaller companies. They support creative works financially expecting both profits and loss as well. But the small are afraid the if they bankrupt it would be difficult to survive in the market. On the contrary the conglomerates are eager to get the profits that would come from the new work. They are also ready to any loss because they know they have the financial strength to carry the burden.

Conglomerates use one work on different media outlets. This gives them the opportunity of producing products at a lower cost. As a result they have lower production expenses compared to the smaller companies. Economists named this as Economies of Scale. Economies of Scale mean producing items at the lower possible cost of production. The lower expense encourages them to sell the products at a lower price. Therefore the public gets a variety of opportunity at a lower expense. At this time the benefit goes to the public as well as it is for the companies. This is why Allen (2006:14) says “Economies of Scale and Scope may mean lower price for consumer.”

2.4.2.5. Tabloidization

Tabloid newspaper is expressed in two characteristics. First they are known to their small size. Compared to the broadsheet tabloid newspapers are small in size. **Tabloid is a small NEWSPAPER, usually 11 inches by 14 inches, featuring illustrations and sensational stories (Biagi, 2000, 46).** Second we can characterize them by their content. Broadsheet newspapers focused on series issues of politics, economic development while tabloid newspapers devoted to light issues. As we discussed earlier the decline in audience is related to the decline in the interest of the young generation. In their effort to stop the shift from newspapers readership to internet browser-ship western newspapers focuses on reporting personal and private lives

of people, both celebrities and ordinary (Campbell,2004: 139). Especially famous politicians, artists, and sport people attract the attention of the youth and the media as well.

Media gives little attention to socio-political issues. Currently issues concerning election and foreign policies of the country lost their weight on the eyes of media. The media prefer to write detailed information about the clothing, houses, and romantic life of Beyonce than the nuclear dispute between Iran and United States. This is mainly to keep the readership, especially youth and sustain in the market. But critics say media's major role is to serve as watchdog. **On the other side** defenders of the market philosophy advocate people must be allowed to choose what they want. **Professionals count as** the trend in shift from news and information towards entertainment tabloidization. In Britain this has led to changes in terms of layout, design, and editorial content in broadsheet newspapers, and the re-formation and re-scheduling of news and current affairs programs increasingly outside of primetime (IBID, 35).

2.4.3. External challenges

2.4.2.2. legal shortcomings and political pressure

Political pressure and legal shortcomings is mainly the problem of African media. Campbell (2004, 6) explains African journalists' major problem is the fear of intimidation, arrest and torture from the security forces. Most of the time African leaders see the private press as their enemy like one Nigerian official name it "enemy publication" (Sankore,2007, 29). The freedom house's press freedom survey in 2001 put Africa with 11% "free" media which is least next to the Middle East with 7% (IBID, 15). The survey uses four key criteria mainly of the law, political influence, violation, against media, and economic influence. The AU adopted The Declaration on principles of Freedom Expression (DPFE) in Africa in Gambia, Banjul. The African Charter on Humans and People's Rights (ACHPR) accepts freedom of expression and information as one of the fundamental citizen rights. Any thing that happens to African journalists contrary to the declaration is illegal. The declaration asks authorities to take appropriate measures on those who undermine the free flow of information or attack journalists. **However** the reality on the ground is hard for journalists. For example Kenneth Best, publisher of the Daily Observer in Liberia has been closed five times in its 10 years experience ... As for Best; he kept himself alive by selling bread during the closure (Ogundimu, 1990, 82)

Even though many African countries are allowing a private press to operate we still see a lot of legal shortcomings. **Many African countries declared laws that grant press freedom; however** the law is not working properly. That is why Berger (2007, 163) said “African countries have never experienced real press freedom, neither during nor after colonialism”.

It is common to hear African journalists **around the continent** complaining how the law is complicating their work. **Compared to other parts of the world** the press laws in many African countries are not free by themselves. The press laws which are supposed to support free environment to journalists are working against the journalists themselves. It is mainly because of the vagueness and openness to varying interpretation (Wanyande, 1996, 17). Exposing the immorality of the authority and their corruption attracts the focus of African private press. But the authorities attack the journalists quoting the laws of libel and sedition. Some of these laws were enacted during the colonial time which the colonizers **used** to protect themselves from any complaints (Gathu, 1995, 82). Because of this Africa is labeled among the most devastating areas to a free press.

To serve the public need the press should be able to obtain information from the concerning government bodies. When government closes its door to the media it **becomes** impossible for media growth. When officials want to hide information they use the term “national secret”. A journalist who goes far to obtain information **or** publish it in a newspaper will be thrown to jail for publicizing ‘**national** secret’.

2.4.2.2. Advertisers

Media’s activity is highly dependent **on** advertisement’s money. The strength and weakness of media house is attached to its power to attract advertising. Advertising and advertisers were not known at the introduction of media. But the start of penny press by Benjamin Day introduces the idea of advertising (Vivian, 2003, 75). As the west economy grows companies direct their strategy of searching more market through attracting newspapers readers. From time to time media and advertising become the two sides of a coin. It is impossible to separate media from advertising. The survival of one media is becoming highly dependent on

its potential of attracting advertisers. The US's national newspapers and TV generate 44.3 and 39.2 billions of dollars respectively in 1998 (Vivian, 2003, 75).

The money advertisers pour to the media enables them to exert influence on the media. Media houses also know what will happen if they do not keep the advertisers. Advertisers influence the news and contents of the media which they advertise. Stories which affect the profit of the advertisers hardly entertain by the media. Though the journalists want to write critical stories for the benefit of the public the owners are not ready to allow it. Even though journalists know the product of one company has defect he/she can not say anything if the company inflow huge money in to the media through advertisement. The mouth of western media is shut by the millions of dollars they collect from the advertisers. Advertisers-pleasing stories, which are irrelevant to the public, get coverage while current social issues are ignored. Advertisers are competent to influence the editorial position as well. Editors could not reflect their editorial freely rather they should double check whether it satisfy the needs of advertisers **or not**.

Campbell (2004, 62) quoting a research conducted on 241 journalists show advertisers influence journalists to change the content of their writing through threatening to or actually withdrawing advertising and recommending favorable ideas about themselves to be written. 40% of the journalists testify that their media house also faced the problem at the institution level. Surprisingly 56% of the journalists explain their bosses push the journalist to write favorable stories about advertisers.

2.4.2.5. Weak professional solidarity

The first journalists association in USA is held in 1934 by Heywood Broun (Biagi, 2000, 47). The rise of the association help the journalists alot like increase negotiating capacity of journalists, rise salary and brought professionalism through adopting codes of conduct. In a continent where there is repeated harassment on journalists the professionals should be able to express their solidarity against such attacks. As the proverb says "unity is strength" Professional associations could create an opportunity to denounce **any** thing **which is** against their members with better **strength**. Unlikely professional's associations of journalists in Africa are not strong. African journalists do not develop **a spirit of group work**. Luck of

professional body to protect journalists has contributed to their misery and weak position in their relationship with state. Journalists can defend their interests against the external body when they are united in association. 'Unlike other professional groups in Cameroon (e.g. medicine, law) journalism is the only one whose practitioners have stayed disunited without a consensual professional association of any kind.' (Fonchingong, Nyamnjoh, Wete, 1996, 55).

Those **countries** who established **journalists'** association also face management inefficiency and many journalists are not members of the associations. Kenyan union of journalists was run by one person for more than 23 years as secretary general (Wanyande, 1996, 18). The establishments of multiple associations which are hostile to each other **create disagreements** instead of working together for the benefit of journalists.

Confusion between journalism and advertising, lack of distinctions between news and commentaries, sensationalism, and confusion between public and private life are some of the ill practice of African media. To solve such problems professional associations play great role through adaptation of codes of ethics for professional conduct. The codes of conduct enable the media to execute its social responsibility in better performance. Minimizing the risk of internal divisions, manipulation from outside and attain high professional standard can be realized. People who are ready to respect the rules and regulation of the profession become members and get benefits.

2.4.2.6. Declining readership

The newspapers industry is the major media outlet that faces declining in audiences. At the beginning and following decades people used to read the media extensively. However the trend seems to differ in the recent few years. Of course the invention of radio and then TV hurt the preference of newspapers. People shift to some extent to the new technologies. However the numbers of newspapers customers were not this much decreased at the beginning (Campbell, 2002: 07). There are many reasons to the decline of audience. The

expansion of internet makes it easy to collect information like news, research findings, and many others. In the west internet is readily available. The all inclusiveness' of internet tempt people to loose its interest to newspapers.

The change in the taste of the new generation causes readership to decline. The young are less interested to serious issues of politics and economic policy. Therefore the new generation is not as eager to read newspapers with social issues as the previous one. Rather the young people prefer on light entertaining issues. In US, 356 copies of daily newspapers were printed for every 1000 people in 1950 but in 1995 the number declined to 234, a 34.2% decline (Vivian, 2003: 78).

Chapter Three

3. 1.Research Methodology

The study entirely focuses on privately owned media and its activities. Almost, all private newspapers in the country settle in Addis Ababa. For this paper qualitative method is selected because the data mainly focuses on qualitative rather than quantitative.

For convenience the researcher determine to conduct the research by taking specific private media houses as case studies. Case study is an empirical inquiry that uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Dominick and Wilmer, 2006, 136). A case study helps to obtain a wealth of information about the research topic. The key feature of the design of case study research is the number of cases included in the project. Case study can be considered weak when few numbers of cases are taken to generalize the whole picture of an issue. To curb this problem researchers are advised to take multiple cases that can provide sufficient information on the general phenomenon. Multiple case are better (preferable) to describe phenomena with better background. It also allows cross case analysis which is helpful for widespread generalization of theories.

To minimize the above indicated side effect of case study the researcher decides to take five media houses that can represent all segments of private media. They are chosen based on their circulation. Media houses that are both strong and weak in terms of circulation and financial strength are taken as case studies. The researcher level the news papers in three levels based on their financial strength and circulation. The first level belongs to the strong newspapers with a circulation of twenty thousand and more. The second level is given to the medium capacity newspapers that have between eight and thirteen thousand circulation. The third level categorizes the relatively weak newspapers that have less than six thousand circulation.

Two of the first level newspapers (*Addis Admas and Addis Neger*) have higher circulation and relatively strong financial strength. On the other hand the other two (*Futhu and Google*) are among the weak media organizations that are leveled in the third level. *Ethio-Channel*, the fifth news paper selected as a case is belonged to the middle level news papers. *Addis Admas and Addis Neger* has circulation more than twenty five thousand per week. *Futhu and Google* however has less than five thousand circulation. *Ethio-Channel* has a circulation that fluctuate between eight and ten thousand.

3.2. Primary data

Primary data is a data obtained from the persons and documents that shows first hand information concerning the issue under study. The primary data collected in this research comes from the people who are involved in private media. This data helps a lot to indicate the position of private media in the country at the moment. The challenges facing the media will be explored deeply based on the information from primary sources. The primary sources are media owners, editor in-chiefs, managing editors and legal documents.

To collect the primary data structured questionnaire with open ended and closed ended is prepared. The questionnaire is mainly closed ended so that it will enable the researcher obtain straight forward information concerning the issues discussed in the research.

3.3. Secondary data

Secondary data is collected from the secondary sources. These sources support the research by adding something to the primary sources. Though primary sources have higher credibility secondary sources also have their own help in conducting a research. Among other things books, reports, and other research papers are counted as secondary sources. Internet, journals, researches, and books are used to secure secondary data for this research.

3.4. Data Collection

A researcher should be careful on selecting the technique of data collection. The technique should be relevant to the source the type of data collected. This paper use two techniques to collect data which are Interview and questionnaire.

3.4.1. Interview

A purposive selection of interviews was made so as to ensure the views of different bodies concerned with the challenges of private media. In qualitative research interview studies the demonstration of causation rests heavily on the description of sequence of events (Maxwell, 2005, 22). Individual in-depth interview is employed to get the primary data from government authorities, the media owners, editor in-chiefs, managing editors and legal documents. These people are found on the front line of the media organizations that have first hand information on the challenges of the media they are working on. The semi structured interview conducted with media owners and the concerned government authority help to obtain qualitative data essential to the overall findings. Lindloff (1995:5) express the role of in-depth interview in qualitative research as follows

“ One interviewees people to understand their perspective on a scene, to retrieve experiences from the past, to gain expert insight or information, to obtain description of events or scenes that are normally unavailable for observation, to foster trust, to understand a sensitive or inmate relations or to analyze certain kind of discourse. ”

3.4.2. Questionnaires

The questionnaire is designed to obtain data from journalists or reporters and readers or the general public. It is prepared in two formats, targeting two groups. The first format aims at the journalists while the second focuses on the readers (audiences). The division is essential because it will help to address the group separately. Next it become easy to identify whether there is common understanding between journalists and the general public about the constraints the fourth state (media) faces in the country. The research becomes efficient to suggest solutions based on the feed back from the owner, journalists and the public which is collected through the interview and questionnaire.

3.5. Data presentation

Data collected in various techniques should be presented in a way the reader will understand and give meaning. Relevant data might be omitted or loosely portrayed during presentation and weaken the paper. The researcher use narration to present qualitative data. Through narration the researcher describe the responses of people concerning an issue.

The findings will be expressed in organized forms to make readers understand the general picture of challenges on the private press. As indicated earlier data is collected from government authority, professionals, owners and the general public. The presentation will put everyone's response as reflection so that readers will identify the agreement and disagreement of all bodies on the issue. The questionnaire collected from the readers and journalists will be presented in tabular form. The table will indicate the magnitude of agreement between the public and professional.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1. Role, responsibility and performance of Private media

- ❖ **PNP** has a multiple benefits to a community. The benefits possibly originate from its role in the society. There are different views about media's role in a society. The journalists and readers accept the following as a role.

Biruk Mekonen from *Ethio-channel*

15 years ago when private media started the first journalists used to advocate that government media report the good of government therefore the private media's role should be reporting only the failures. But in my understanding the role should be reporting the truth to the public about what is going on in the country. It can be done either by government or oppositions.”

Other newspapers like *Fethe* and *Google* have common principle on the role of the media. They said the role should be to fill the information gap in the country.

Birhanu Belachew, from *Google*.

There is no democracy in Ethiopia and the public can not get full information from the state media. Therefore the private media should work to inform the public which is hidden by the state media

Temesgen Desalegn from *Fethi*

The role has to focus on providing the public important information which is hidden by the state media.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas* has different understanding on the role of media. He believes that there is serious philosophical problem in the society which is reflected on the political, economic and social lives of the people. Therefore he said

The role of the media should be finding out this attitudinal or philosophical problem and challenged it on news and other reporting. Such reports will help the people to discuss on the deep rooted problems and work for social change.

Tamirat Negara, editor-in chief to *Addis Neger*, which is a newly emerged strong NEWSPAPER, believes it is impossible to get common understanding about the role of media in one country. Concerning his Newspaper Tamirat said

Addis Neger tries to play a role of promoting public reasoning. We work to enable the public exercise its decision based on reason.

➤ Providing truthful information, educating the public, supporting development **activity of the country** and **entertaining the people** are the roles suggested by the readers.

❖ Media is a powerful weapon that can help a society to accomplish a tremendous result. Scholars named media as the fourth state to indicate the power it holds. The effectiveness of a media is attached to its responsibility. Almost all of the interviewed journalists agree that the Ethiopian private NEWSPAPER does not accomplish its responsibility.

❖ Reasons why the media is not up to its responsibility

Birhanu Belachew from Google

I do not believe we are executing our responsibility. NEWSPAPERS shout news headline to attract the market rather than looking how to carry out its social responsibility.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas*

The media has no respect to principles and reality therefore it is not able to execute its responsibility. The number of NEWSPAPER is

not sufficient compared to the number of the people. Therefore it is not performing well like any of the economic sectors in the country.

Tamirat Negera from *Addis Neger*

It is known that the private NEWSPAPER is not doing its responsibility. Before I involve in the sector I used to complain on them but now I become sympathetic to it because I know there are many reasons that make them to behave this way.

Temesgen Desalegn from Fethe

We know the media is not taking care of its social responsibility. The news is not balanced. This shows our incapability to cope up with the expectation of the society.

- ❖ Once we discussed about the role of the media we shall have to discuss whether it is competent to accomplish its role or responsibility. All of the journalists and the readers anonymously agree that private media in Ethiopia is not strong. The situation where it stands is not satisfactory at the moment. Concerning the performance of the media all of the journalists and the readers agree that it is weak.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas*

Journalism in the country is at its infant age. In Kenya there are NEWSPAPERS that have daily circulation of a million or seven hundred thousands but here the largest NEWSPAPER has a circulation of 30 to 35 thousands a week.

Journalists working in the strong and weak (based on circulation) agree with Solomon's idea. Tamirat Negera expresses his disappointment on the status of the media. He said that Ethiopia has a three thousands of year's history and developed her own alphabet. In

addition to this, the big population of the country was an opportunity however the reality is the opposite. In his argument the volume of newspaper circulation and the office building alone indicates the poor performance of the media. He said

“you can not found a NEWSPAPER that has its own office building in Ethiopia but when you go to Kenya, Daily Nation has 500 thousands of daily circulation. It has seven strong building and its own printing enterprise”

- From the hundred readers questioned in this research 95 (95%) said the private media is not working to discharge its responsibility. However the 5 (5%) believe the media is discharging its social responsibility.

4.2. Challenges of the private newspaper in Ethiopia

- ❖ The major question of the research paper requests journalist and the readers to discuss on the challenges of the private media. **Every individual** journalist and reader point out the three common challenges that face the PNP as follows.

Biruk Mekonen from Ethio-Channel

1. Lack of professional skill: most of the journalists are not journalism graduates.

Different NGO's give journalists' short term training it focuses on the tradition of the specific country that gives the training. This makes the journalists face difficulty of developing concrete understanding about the profession.

2. Intimidation of business people: the private media is highly intimidated by the business people. We are not freely reporting on issues. When you write about some company they bring you **advertising and a correction paper** to silence you. This highly challenges the Ethiopian private media.

3. Public Influence (market influence): the public wants you to exaggerate your news on government otherwise your paper will not be bought.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

1. Poor financial capacity: - the private media is highly limited financially. We can not send our reporters to report something out of Addis Ababa. If we heard something happened in *Dese* town we simply report it from what someone or a friend told us in phone.
2. Lack of advertising: advertisers are not willing to advertise on our NEWSPAPER simply because we published photo of opposition parties' leaders. It is because they are afraid of government.
3. Unavailability of information: - the private media is denied to access of information. It is difficult to get information from government offices.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas*

1. Lack of effective media management: media owners are not capable of leading their media house. They are unaware or reluctant to modern management principles. In addition to that they are ignorant of advanced theories and ideas.

2. Poor reading habit (lower circulation): - the public does not develop the reading habit.

For example every year universities around the country graduate thousands of students but they are not reading NEWSPAPER.

3. Information unavailability: - it is a social problem because both government and

others (in general the public) are not cooperative to give media information. They deny the information in one of the two reasons. First they might not have the information themselves. We **Ethiopians** do not have the culture of trucking and organizing information. Second the **officers** are afraid of the consequence that would come **if** the information shows the office's weakness.

Tamirat Negera from *Addis Neger*

1. Lower income of the PNP: - in Ethiopia media, especially NEWSPAPER, is not profit making. Therefore the financial capacity of many newspapers is weak.

2. Unfavorable politics: - the Ethiopian politics is not suitable to private media. There are various political measures that discourage your activity.

3. The public has lower understanding of the profession. Many people do not consider journalism demands knowledge but it was judged as something which sales rumors. This refrain the public from providing the necessary support which is crucial to the sector.

Temesgen Desalegn from Fethi

1. Untrained journalists: - the journalists working right now are not trained in the profession. We involve in the sector because we love it but we have no clue about it.
2. Weak financial strength: - the PNP is characterized by its weak financial strength.

Neither the companies advertise on NEWSPAPERS nor does it have good circulation.

3. The PNP has high tendency of polarizing itself either to government or the opposition parties. This forces it to compromise the quality of its work.

Officer from Ethiopian broadcasting quote four challenges of the private media

1. Weak finance:- financially the media is very weak. The new law demands higher financial strength to **establish one media which** encourages owners to build their financial strength.

2. Poor content and poor professional orientation of the journalist:- the contents of the NEWSPAPERS are poor which can not encourage the public to read. The problem may be related to the poor professional orientation of the journalist. The practitioners do not have good understanding of the profession. Because of this they do not follow the professional ethics.

3. Law commitment:- the media or owners are not committed to the public and the profession. The major goal is profit or political game.

4. Private NEWSPAPER, especially **before the May 2005 election, are** party affiliated. This can be seen on the high sensitivity of the media to mistakes of government or its organizations and total negligent to the failures of opposition.

- The press law, the lower understanding of the owners to run the press and the weak financial strength of the media are the major three challenges respondents vote as

the challenge of private NEWSPAPER. 62 (62%) of the respondents vote for the difficult press law while 23 (23 %) vote for the incapability of media owners. When 15 (15%) of respondents vote to weak financial strength the rest 10 (10%) goes to various factors as challenges of the press.

- ❖ Sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 discussions are based on section 4.2. The discussions in the indicated sections will help to investigate the challenges in detail.

4.3. Relationship between private media and government

- ❖ The relation ship between private NEWSPAPER and government is a serious discussion in the country. Most of the interviews describe that the relationship between government and the private NEWSPAPER is improving even if it is not very good.

Tamirat Negera from *Addis Neger*

Compared to some years back I believe it is improved but it is not good. The newly established communication ministry organized advertisement and public relation office. the office is informing the media what is happening in different government offices, which is new trend and good to the media. But there are many unsolved questions. The new Media and the terrorism laws create fear on the media because they have a kind of restriction on the news we cover.

Temesgen Desalegn from Fethi

The communication ministry gives us **schedules for** all press conferences that would be conducted in every week. This is something good **we see in recent times**. But on the other side you see government discriminating among newspapers. For example we were not invited on the public discussions the ministry organized on the press law. In addition to that still

polic call **us** to police stations and threatened **us** in different occasions. Therefore I do not see visible improvement in the relation between government and the PNP.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

The relation is not bad at the moment. We are informed every week about the activity of government more than ever but we are still under pressure from police (security) officers because of our news content.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas*

There are two changes I observed. On one side you can get the information better than some years back. On the other side government's bureaucracy becomes more efficient in controlling the overall activity of the country. Government is strengthening its control on media's activity. Therefore we can say it is good and bad at the same time.

Biruk Mekonen from *Ethio-Chanale*

It is better than the previous many years. Now when you ask government offices about specific issue they could reply you personally or give press conference based on your questions. But some times they still deny verification on issues. And after you report it they accuse you for not reporting an accurate report. For example we heard that seven Ethiopians poisoned and died in the Middle East but when we ask a clarification the foreign ministry denied that **but after a week they gave press conference on the issue.**"

An officer from the Ethiopian broadcasting however thinks the relationship is in good position right now. The regular discussion schedule between the two parties is the sign for good relationship as he quoted.

We have good relationship right now. We start a regular discussion program with the private media about media development and diversity. In addition to that we are tolerating the media to help it solve the problem. If the office takes measures according to the press law the majority will be out of the circulation.

- Readers believe there is bad relationship between government and the private media. When 90 (90 %) of the respondents says there is bad relationship between the two bodies 5 (5%) says there is good relationship. But the rest 5 (5%) says it is difficult to judge on the issue. Those who say ‘there is bad relation’ suggest four possible reasons for the bad relationship. Critical of media towards government, media’s sympathy towards the opposition, wrong activities of journalists and others are the possible reasons respondents thought as reasons for the bad relationship between government and private media.
- ❖ Media law is a crucial issue every body focuses to identify the free activity of a press. The freedom of press is expressed mainly on the press law. Ethiopia adopted the first press law on 1993. The law is revised on 2008. The new law has been a discussion point since government expressed its preparation to adopt a new press law. Since many journalists and politicians quote the press law as one of the major challenges of private media the next feedbacks from journalists focuses on it. Some of the journalists are totally opponent to the press law while others have an intermediate position. Few journalists also prefer to see the strength of the law rather than emphasizing the few dark holes as they expressed it.

Tamirat negera is not worried about the law because he thinks it is not influential compared to political decisions.

To be honest I do not read the law deeply because in Ethiopia law does not matter. Many things are not decided according to the law. It is a political decision that matters a lot. Therefore I am asking a political determination from the government to build a strong private media in the country. The Protestants used to face serious problems in the country but the current government was politically determined to give them a right to follow whatever they believe and it becomes realized. This should be repeated in the media sector as well.

Temesgen Desalegn from *Fethi* also has dark view on the newly adopted press law. He believes it is bad to the expansion of media.

The new law is not law to me rather it is a political instrument government prepared to guard its own benefit. It restricts media owners from working as editor in-chief. The penalty for a defamation reporting also increases from ten thousand to one hundred thousand.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas* and Birhanu Belachew from *Google* however indicate there are positive changes as well as negatives in the law. For the two journalists the law has both strength and weakness.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas*

Now the right of obtaining information is stated clearly better than the previous press law. However many restrictions are included in it: information is hidden in the name of national security, draft policies is allowed to be hidden and penalty for defamation rose to one hundred thousand birr which was ten thousands.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

The law has both good and bad sides. It legally forces the public relation officers to give journalists information. However it gives them a right to wait thirty to sixty days before delivering information. This contradicts to the nature of the profession because an information can not be news after such a long period of time.

Biruk Mekonen does not accept the accusation many journalists forward on the press law because he believes there are many good things in the law which the press **fails** to exploit it.

The private journalist does not utilize both of the press law properly. We complain on the law while we are far behind from the privileges given to us. Had it been used the private press would be in a better position

Officer from broadcasting authority

The press law is adopted from many democratic countries, like France, press laws. The law has many good things. The law set some prohibition where it is needed to create strong private media. The law also tries to protect media monopoly in the country. We believe it has many advantages to the press which was not included on the previous press law.

- ❖ The private press extensively covers the failures of government. In addition it is inclined to the opposition parties. Whenever controversies raised between government and opposition parties majority of the private press always stands on the side of opposition parties. It is uncommon to see articles or news which is against the parties. Because of this and other reasons government has been accusing private media. It says the media is supported by the opposition parties.

Officer from the broadcasting

“A journalist should work independently just like a judge but they are not working like this. Journalists from the private media become members and reporters of opposition parties in Europe and America. If they were not working with the parties here how they **would** easily agree to work right after they left the country. We do not have documented evidence but it is said that “the act speaks by itself.”

The journalists in one voice describe it is impossible to accept the accusation.

Tamirat Negera from *Addis Neger*

I can not speak about all but our NEWSPAPER is working independently. But if you ask them (goverenement) they will say it is funded by CIA because they always have something to say. In the other side government subsidizes *Addis Zemen* **from the tax I pay but it** does not entertain my view. In fact there are such allegations in both sides.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas*

Opposition parties are not wealthy. Some years back only 17 birr was found from one party’s bank account. This shows how the parties are unable to give financial aid for the media. A politician can influence one journalist by giving 500 or 200 birr but this does not mean the party support the media house. Media owners also can incline to one party but I don’t think they **get** considerable amount of money that can run a newspaper.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

I do not know the trend before the year 2005 election but after that I do not believe the allegation is correct. The parties themselves are not aware of the power of media to do politics. Let alone giving money to newspapers, they are not ready to buy a page to advocate their politics.

Temesgen Desalegn from Fethi

Before 2005 there was media owner who was member of the central committee for opposition parties. This shows it was possible at that time but now there is not such relationship. But privately owned NEWSPAPERS that have no advertising are in publication for long period of time which provokes you to believe that they are financed by government or its supporters behind. Because I am definite that the NEWSPAPERS' market can not able them to carry the cost by themselves.

- When readers were asked about the financial support three different feed backs are observed. 53(53%) respondents respond that they do not accept government's accusation. These respondents do not believe the media is supported by the opposition. 10 (10%) respondents however believe the media is supported. On the other hand the other respondents expressed that they are not able to judge whether or not there is connection between the two parties.

- ❖ Readers hardly read the success of the nation on the private press. It seem that media houses reached agreement not to cover any things that portrait the success of government. The discussions below circle on this issue.

Temesgen and Birhanu express that they do not cover development activity because it is covered by the state Medias. According to their answer there are other stories which are not covered by state Medias and wait their NEWSPAPERS.

Temesgen Desalegn from *Fethie*

Ethiopian Television (ETV) and Ethiopian Radio (ER) cover the development activity the moment it is done. But our NEWSPAPER that comes once in a week can not cover it because it is already covered or loses its newsworthiness. But because of this government consider us as if we oppose it.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

Since the state media covers development activities I believe PNP should direct its limited resource to something the state media does not cover.

Biruk Mekonen and Solomon totally oppose Temesgen's and Birhanu's argument. He believes development activity has to be reported but the problem traces back to the beginning of the private press.

Biruk Mekonen from *Ethio-channel*

Private NEWSPAPERS should cover development works but the reality is different. At its beginning journalists and professional association's leaders campaigned that NEWSPAPERS should not cover development works. Therefore development journalism becomes unknown.

Solomon G/Egziaber from *Addis Admas*

For the past thirty years *Addis Zemen* has been reporting one side information. This trend is transferred to the private presses. I do not accept this. *Addis Admas* tried to free itself from this influence and we succeeded it.

- As indicated on chapter two the private media is not ready to cover the development activity of government. When readers are questioned about whether the NEWSPAPERS should cover the development activity, the higher majority 95% accepts the media to cover development (success) of government. The respondents also express that the media however fails to execute this responsibility.

The big difference between the reader and the media indicate the media does not understand the need of the public or negligent to the need of the reader. Neither could be the case the media is not satisfying its readers.

4.4. Reporter's capacity and cooperation between journalists

- ❖ One of the major weaknesses of the PNP directs us to the quality of journalists. It is rare to get competent journalists in the sector. The competence of the private NEWSPAPER is compromised mainly because of lack of competent Journalists. Many of the media houses quote this problem among one of the challenges to the sector's development.

The feedbacks of the journalists on the issue look as follows.

Tamirat negera from *Addis Neger*

We have serious problem on journalists. The sector does not provide attractive payment therefore intellectuals are not ready to involve in it. This disabled the media from printing quality works. Intellectuals are collected in NGOs because it pays well.

Temesgen Desalegn from *Fethie*

You can not see one editor-in-chief who is journalism graduate. Most of the journalists working right now are not professionally trained. Personally I do not believe any of the editor-in-chiefs working right now are competent to the position.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas*

There is high shortage of trained journalists. Most of the reporters do not know the professional standards that guide journalism. I have big hope on the new journalism students I saw on the internship.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

You can easily identify the lower capacity of journalists from reading what they wrote. No one deny that. The trained people should come to private media if we want to change the situation.

- ❖ Higher education institutions started journalism education in Ethiopia few years ago. The objective of the education is to inject modern journalistic principles to the sector and produce trained professional journalists. There are two opposite attitude towards the contribution of journalism schools to the sector. Temesgen and Tamirat argue there is nothing the universities could do to strengthen the media.

Temesgen Desalegn from *Fethi*

The school is not contributing to the development of the private media. I heard the school dean speaking that he himself is not confident on the education and students at a dinner program held by the former United State's Ambassador Donald Yamamoto.

Tamirat negera from *Addis Neger*

The university contributes zero if not negative. The education does not have intellectual content because it only gives writing techniques. Therefore our NP decided not to hire journalism, language and literature graduates. Because the students might know how to write but they do not know what to write.

Solomon and Birhanu on the other hand have strong hope on the universities to see the next skilled journalists in the country.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas*

The launching of journalism education is encouraging because in the long run it will change the practice of media. I saw fresh graduates struggling to implement what they learned. In fact the untrained journalists might discourage them from implementing what they learned in the university.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

I think it is good. Most of the journalists right now are not educated and that is why they commit serious mistakes. When the trained journalists join the working force they will help to change the condition. But I request the universities to create linkage between their students and the media, at least in internship program.

- While asked about the performance of the reporters respondents of the questionnaire indicated four reasons that lower the reporters' performance. The smaller amount of reporter's salaries, owners' reluctance to support their reporter the awkward press law and offence from security forces are the suggested reason from the public.
- ❖ It is advised to build harmonious relationship between journalists for the success of stable and strong media in one country. The experiences of other countries show the benefit of building good relationship. The next discussion help to identify what is the journalists saying about the relationship between two media houses. All of the journalists agree that in general there is no hostile situation except few newspapers. But they do not believe it is good.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas*

I do not think there is bad relationship right now. Few newspapers can insult and accuse one another but the majority live together in peace.

Tamirat Negera from *Addis Neger*

It is not good, even sometimes it is shameful. We have common interests but we can not work together. It is mainly because of difference in political orientation of the owners.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

Still you see tension between newspapers. Sometimes you can read insulting articles in the private Media. I can not say it is promising. This can be one thing we should do about it.

Biruk Mekonen from *Ethio-channel*

The relationship is weak after the 2005 election. Lack of one body that creates a dialogue forum makes it **difficult** to improve the weak relationship.

- The respondents indicate different possible reasons for the weak relationship of the private media. The reasons indicated are difference in political orientation of the owners, the unfair competition, lack of organization that facilitate dialogue forum and the wrong attitude of the owners towards others,
- ❖ The establishments of strong professional association in Ethiopia become very difficult. The journalists are not able to create a central body that could represent their interest on the international and national level. Currently there are three journalists' associations in the country. The journalists have their own view on why it is impossible to establish strong association.

Lack of group spirit (culture) is the reason Tamirat and Solomon accept as the reason behind the difficulty to establish strong journalists' association.

Tamirat Negera

We do not develop a culture of working in group **achieves** a specific goal. I have been participating as a leader in political, religious and media organizations and the experience thought me 'Abesha' do not like to work together. Addis Neger is established by 7 friends and many people always ask us how this could happen.

Solomon G/Egziabier has almost similar answer on the issue.

In this country we do not have strong life principle that supports group work. Everything is hot when it is in conversation but no one works to bring it in reality. I do not think the trend will change in few years. If we take the sport as example we see Ethiopia in athletics where individualism dominates the activity.

The wide gap between the journalists' interests is the major reason for the weakness of their association as Biruk and Temesgen

Biruk Mekonen from *Ethio-channel*

The founder of the first journalists' association create bad attitude about the role of the professional association. The leaders activate only to give press release when a journalist is jailed. They were not ready even when a press law was prepared. They did not work to build the members capacity. Some of the **association's** leaders were serving their personal interest. Because of this journalists who are jealous to the profession withdraw themselves from the association.

Temesgen Desalegn from Fethi

The presence of different interest groups prevents the establishment of strong journalists' association. Some of the journalists are after their

personal benefits, while others are inclined to government and the rest work for other reason therefore it become possible to establish strong professional association. Governement uses this to weaken the established associations.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

There used to be professional associations. Currently there are three associations in the country but many of the working journalists are not members of these associations. This is because one, they are affiliated to government. Second, the journalists think they can attract government's attention and will easily attacked. Third, they are worried that government can divide the members by inflicting its supporters in the association.

An officer from broadcast on his part accuses the journalists themselves.

Governement wants to see a strong journalists association but the journalists are not ready to work together. We planned to establish the association through the owners but people complained that it should be left to the journalists themselves therefore we abandoned it. However the journalists are not ready to attend a training or conference together.

- ❖ It is known that unity is strength. The establishment of professional association can bring benefits to the journalists. The impossibility to establish the association suffers the journalists in many ways. Journalists have something to say on it.

Temesgen and Birhanu think that the association could do something when printing's price hiked up last year.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

The presence of professional association increases the power of the journalist to negotiate with government on different issues. Now we can not negotiate with government even why illegal thing happen to journalists or printing's price increase. But we are not sure when this will happen in Ethiopia.

Temesgen Desalegn from Fethi

We lost many benefits. We are not able to negotiate with government when five newspapers are forced to go out of the market because of high price increase in printing with in a short period of time. When I asked Ato Biriket Simon, Minister for the Ministry of Information, about the price he told me to come in group (association) if government has to deal with the issue. This indicates how we become disadvantageous because of lack of association.

Tamirat and Biruk accepts the loss for the reason that of lack of the association.

Tamirat Negera from *Addis Neger*

We lost many things because of our failure from establishing media association. For example distributors, determine your content and number of copy. If we had strong association we can fight this easily.

Biruk Mekonen from *Ethio-channel*

The journalist lost a lot because of lack of strong professional associations. We failed from influencing government when the press law was prepared. .

Unlike other journalists Solomon does not consider the association this much necessary.
Solomon G/Egziaber from *Addis Admas*

If individual media houses solve their personal problem many of the big problems can be solved therefore the association may not be this much necessary.

4.5. Advertising and copy sales of NEWSPAPER

- ❖ NEWSPAPER's revenue mainly originates from advertising (Vivian2003, 10). When it is impossible to attract enough advertising the media will be in big trouble. The number of advertising in the private NEWSPAPERS is very small. The journalists have different reasons concerning the reason why the number is small.

Tamirat Negera speaks the printing quality limit the flow of advertising.

There can be many reasons but the inferior printing quality and the weak potential of Ethiopian business people can be the major ones for lack of advertising in the NEWSPAPER.

Temesgen and Birhanu point their fingers to the oppressive political attitude of government.

Temesgen Desalegn from Fethi

Companies think that government will attack them if they advertise on our paper therefore they are afraid of it. Personally

three banks told me that our content is against government therefore they could not sponsor on our NEWSPAPERS.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

You can not get advertising if you are going to have the picture of opposition leaders. Many companies told us that they want to advertise their product but **frightening** the consequences that could come from government they are forced to withdraw advertising in the NEWSPAPER.

Unlike other journalists Solomon thinks that the major accepted NEWSPAPERS have more than sufficient advertising.

The standard text/advertising ratio is 40/60 but the five strong NEWSPAPERS have more advertising greater than the standard.

- ❖ Lower number of copy sales is one of the challenges that face the NEWSPAPERS. The following feed back of readers indicates why the readers are avoiding the purchasing.
- The small volume of copy sales is among the challenges of PM in the country. The questionnaires ask why the public fails from buying NP. The feed back includes different reasons. Weak content of the NPs, inaccuracy of the information published in the NP, unattractive layout, and poor purchasing power of the people. Poor purchasing power of the public took the front place with the support of while poor content is the second most choose reasons with vote Out of the respondents.

4.6. Information access and government support

The private media complains the unavailability of information in the country. Because of this the problem can be considered as one of the major challenges to the sector.

Solomon G/Egziabier from *Addis Admas*

It is difficult to get information. The problem is mostly observed in government offices. Officers or the office head prefer accusation because of his denial of information from the revision that comes from leaking information that is bad to the office.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

The private media is denied access of information. It is difficult to get information from government offices.

Government accepts the complaint of journalists about the unavailability of information in various government offices. But officials say it will be solved in short period of time.

According to the new Media and Information Right Law the federal government is preparing a guide line that differentiates national secret and public information. Therefore we expect it will be solved in short period of time.

In addition to the denial of information journalists complain government is abusing them from doing their job freely.

Birhanu Belachew from *Google*

The public trust the private media more than the state media. But we can not work freely. People from government have the tendency of restricting the content we write. They try to divert you from what you write.

Temesgen Desalegn from Fethi

Police warn us simply because our news is not pleasing to government. They call for us to police station and tell us to change the way we write news.

The officer however defends the accusations. He said that government is asking the media to behave properly not any thing else.

Our office is not attacking the media. But you see NEWSPAPER publishing something which it claims is demanded by the market but contrary to the professional ethics. How could they claim government is attacking them while they are working like this. Police and the attorney general have the obligation to check when there is illegal act but this is not an offense against journalists.

To create strong private media the public request government to help the sector. From the respondents want government to support the media. Creating free environment, providing training, reducing tax on printing materials and providing information are some of the suggested support from the respondents.

An officer from Ethiopian broadcasting on his part answers the following.

Government can not support a newspaper that provokes war and disturbance of the country. But we are planning to provide necessary support to the private media through the media support office of our ministry. But we can not reduce the price of a paper as many people complain because the price is the result of international market. We can do nothing about it.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1. CONCLUSION

- ✚ -From the interviews and questions it is known that the private media is found in weak position.
- ✚ there is bad relationship between government and the private media. This makes difficult for the two parties work together.
- ✚ Because of the weakness the private media become incapable of carrying out its social responsibility. The media fail from contributing its share for the economic and democratic development of the country.
- ✚ -The private media faces difficulty to identify its social role in the country. This force the media to fluctuate to differentiate directions any time it feels.
- ✚ -The media is too hostile to government. This is the cause for emotionally filled news we see in the NEWSPAPERS
- ✚ Instead of sticking to the profession principles, such as balance, the private media easily drive by few people who make phone calls. In the name of satisfying 'audience' the paper goes far away from journalistic principles.
- ✚ -The journalists in the media do not know the need of the public. From the data collected almost all of the questioned readers want private media to report the success of government. However most of the journalists in the private media wrongly believe the public do not want to see about government achievements.
- ✚ -There is high shortage of professionally trained journalists. Majority of the journalists working right now do not know journalism principles. Therefore we see a lot of mistakes that could be eliminated if the journalists were professionally trained.
- ✚ -It is difficult to resist any pressure once the journalists are disintegrated. Many of the problems that face the private media were easily abolished if there were strong professional association. The failure of establishing strong professional association worsens the problem.

- ✚ -Lack of information struggles the private media. The media could not satisfy the information need of the public mainly because government offices are closed to provide information.
- ✚ -Government becomes unfair to the private media because the media is unfair to government.
- ✚ There is bad relationship between government and the private media. This makes difficult for the two parties work together.
- ✚ -The weak financial status of private media leads them to the influence of NEWSPAPER distributors. Distributors set what NEWSPAPERS to contain and what not to contain.
- ✚ -The media is highly challenged because of lack of advertisers. The number of companies that advertise in the private media is very low. In addition to this the advertisers focuses to specific newspapers. The uneven distribution of advertising income creates bad relationship between the strong and weak media.
- ✚ The press law is highly opposed from the journalists. While government says it is derived from the experience of democratic countries journalists believe it is oppressive.

5.2. RECOMENDATION

The private media should know what the public wants from it. The private media does not know what the majority public expects from them most of the time. For example most of the interviewed journalists expressed their readers do not want to read anything good about government. But 95 percent of the readers respond that the private media has to report the achievement of government especially in the economy sector. Therefore to satisfy their readers and build positive relations with government they have to give space where they wrote development activities.

The private media have to work a lot to shape its relationship with the market, especially distributors. Distributors might want news full of exaggerations or the headline that shouts but the journalist have to fight back to keep its freedom of expression from the distributors as it is fighting to any kind of government pressure. If the journalists continue to follow or execute what the distributors want their independence will be at risk.

The quality of journalistic work is highly dependent on the profession's ethics. As can be seen in the paper the private media is highly ignorant of the journalistic ethics. The journalists should be ready to submit themselves to the professional ethics.

Government have to ready itself to support the private media if it wants the sector's help in creating a stronger nation. Since the media can initiate the public to stand by the side of development activities government have to think critically how to narrow the gap between private media and government. This can be achieved by providing support to the media. The support can be training, office equipments, finance or access to information.

The public itself have a lot to create responsible private media. Non governmental organizations (NGO), business organizations and individuals can create training opportunity for journalists. They can also provide financial and non financial supports which are critically handicapping the private media in the country. NGO and other

organizations can host periodical programs such as competition and panel discussions to show what the public expect from the media and its performance

Educational institutions can strengthen the private media by linking its activity with the sector. Media houses are crying out for the institutions' support. They need the contribution of journalism graduates. The current working journalists are making mistakes because they are not professionally trained. The involvement of graduates to the sector can bring visible difference. The involvement can be as permanent employee, freelance writer or internship programs. Education institutions can widen its contribution by contextualizing its curriculum with the need of the sector as many people from the media requests.

Goverenement should move faster to implement the information right of the public as per the newly enacted Press and Information Right Law. It is expected that the guidelines that identify which kind of information is national security and which one is not will answer the long standing complaint of luck information. Therefore goverenement have to encourage its officials or the public relation officers to open their doors for the private media. Even though there is information officials and public relation officers are afraid of providing information to the private media because they think the media is goverenement enemy.

The private media always complain government as if the problem is totally from there. However media owners and journalists need to stop a moment and look towards themselves.

