

**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**  
**Faculty of Journalism and Communication**

**A Study on the Nature of Journalism and Communication**  
**Education Curriculum at Mekelle University**

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**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

A Study on the Nature of Journalism and Communication  
Education Curriculum at Mekelle University

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication

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## List of Acronyms

AAU- Addis Ababa University

CIMA- Center for International Media Assistance

DJ - Developmental Journalism

DJC - Department of Journalism and Communication

EJR- Ethiopian Journalism Review

EMMTI -Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institution

ENA -Ethiopian News Agency

EPA -Ethiopian Press Agency

EPRDF- Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

ERTA -Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency

ETV -Ethiopian Television

FDRE -Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GCAO -Government Communications Affairs Office

MU - Mekelle University

PMC-Population Media Center

QAA - Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education [England]

TGE- Transitional Government of Ethiopia

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WJEC-World Journalism Education Congress

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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis was concerned with understanding of the composition of courses in journalism education program at Mekelle University in terms of theoretical and practical courses orientation; illustrating how contextual elements are included in it; and analyzing whether the courses in the program have the potential of achieving the prescribed goal. In order to investigate these concerns, research methods of content and document analysis, in-depth individual and focus group interviews have been employed. The overall approach was qualitative formative curriculum study.

The findings of the study exhibit that the program is skewed towards professional/practical orientation of journalism education. It has some courses that reflect contextual journalism knowledge and contextual knowledge other than the aspects of journalism. However, it was evident that the program has been observed deficit of university courses in order to produce those professional journalists who are at the same time intellectually rigorous and critical of mind compared to the UNESCO Model Curricula.

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## *Chapter One*

### **1.1. Introduction: The Research Title, Focus and Subject Area**

Mass media institutions can play a vital role in the democratic, social, economic, cultural, political and technological developments of any given country (Kumar, 2006: 58-63). Among the key factors behind that are the well trained, equipped, professional and intellectual journalists who could make such institutions play their role in a wide range. It is obvious that a good practice of journalism in a country's media could allow for a constructive use of the freedom of speech, one that offers truthful, useful criticism of a country's institutions (<http://www.ethiopia.media.com>). It has been seen worldwide that strong mass communication foundations are important indicators of development (Hachten, 1968: 101). As one of the developing nations, aspired in bringing about tangible social and economic progress, Ethiopia also needs well qualified and professional journalists. This, in addition to other qualities, requires, however, having effective training institutions with full facilities. For the fact that journalism education, more than any other field of professional education, is acutely sensitive to social change (Yu Xu, Leonard L. Chu and Guo Zhongshi, 2002:63), there should be a comprehensive journalism instruction incorporation into the curricula of the new universities in Africa, instead of crash courses (brief courses in the form of short trainings (Hachten, 1968: 107). Especially, in countries like Ethiopia, where mass media remains underpowered it is imperative to have educational institutions offering journalism and communication education that can take a lead in producing such manpower (Amol, 2008). It seems as a response to this urgent need that the Ethiopian Higher Education institutions (universities) are increasingly opening journalism and communication programs.

This master's degree thesis titled "A Study on the Nature of Journalism and Communication Education Curriculum at Mekelle University" is, therefore, to describe and analyze the nature of journalism and communication education offered by the Department of Journalism and Communications in one of the Ethiopian Higher Education institutions, namely Mekelle University. The curriculum in case is examined in relation to the reviewed related literature on world's trend of journalism education and the expectations of many stakeholders within the context where it is being applied. The focus then, falls on: understanding and analyzing what courses journalism education curriculum should constitute of in a given context; describing of the educational curriculum in case, in relation to the existing debates about the philosophy and courses construction of the field; evaluating the general objective of the syllabus; and finally reflecting on certain issues that could induce further discussion on what journalism and communication education should look like in Ethiopia and other developing nations. Here, I must declare that my research focuses on the intention of the journalism and communication curriculum in producing the required journalists.

## **1.2 Contextualization: Background and Statement of the research problem**

### **1.2.1 The social context**

It is obvious that unlike other professions, journalism training in Ethiopia did not get any attention for many years. [...] for many years there were only few journalists who have been professionally trained at higher education level abroad. But most of the working journalists in Ethiopia had no professional training based on a systematically d

esigned curriculum of journalism and mass communication education (Population Media Center, PMC, 2006: 51).

The public has been “served” just with common sense, case decision and news sense by those who were considered as having interest to the profession (Ibid, 51). In fact, it is undeniable that the journalism profession has also been probably the one that attracts more undisciplined free spirits than any other professions in many places of the world (Winship, 1988:24).

In Ethiopia, following the downfall of the Derg regime in 1991, the right of thought, opinion and expression has got acceptance in the Transitional Period Charter and later on, on 21 August 1995, in our Constitution. And as part of the democratization process initiated by the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)-the ruling party since 1991, the First Press Law (Proclamation No. 34/1992) has been promulgated. This, according to Birhanu, has paved the way for the proliferation of private press and other mass media establishments. On the other hand, Getachew is quoted in Birhanu (2009: 35) saying that although this has led to the quantitative growth of private press, the quality and professionalism of some remain questionable.

The existing studies on the Ethiopian journalists and journalism clearly indicate that the constraints of good practice of journalism in Ethiopia are multi-faceted. Among the many constraints that are told everywhere is the question of education of journalists; the lack of sound educational background and professionalism. For instance as indicated on <http://www.ethiopia.media.com>:

The mushrooming of “independent” papers and lack of professionalism in the field make it important that basic journalistic education in Ethiopia be improved, both in the long and short terms.

Ethiopian media professional at this point lack some of the basic skills and knowledge necessary for the press to play a significant role in any democratization process in Ethiopia. From a quick survey of the Ethiopian press, one can safely conclude that the country badly needs education in journalism.

This assertion can be strengthened by the findings of Birhanu (2009: 39) and Shimelis (2000: 65) that they have indicated as there is poor journalistic practice in this country which among others resulted due to underqualified journalists. Based on the data gathered from broadcasters and discussions of a workshop entitled “dialogue about broadcasting service in Ethiopia” Taddese (2007) identified that there is low quality of programs in the sector due to shortage of skilled and knowledgeable journalists and low awareness of these journalists on the broadcasting laws and regulations. In addressing the causes from within that negatively affect press freedom in Ethiopia, Amare (2009), managing editor and owner of the weekly *Reporter* newspaper mentioned that there is lack of professionalism and little understanding of the essence of press freedom in both the private and government presses. He wrote saying:

We don't have professionalism; we didn't go to schools of journalism. In the history of Ethiopia, for the last thirty years, we were cut off from the West. Of course, we came from Russia with diplomas in journalism. But the transcription says we have been to Russia for many years: two years learning Russia; three years studying Marxism-Leninism; two years visiting Uzbekistan, nothing about journalism. We have a journalism department in the Addis Ababa University which came very late. Sorry to say that: I really doubt if there are real journalists. So we lack professionalism (Amare, 2009:26-27).

In the same way, Mairegu (2000:133) saw the status of media in Ethiopia, both state owned and the private, as they are characterized by a degree of low quality of professionalism. To him, the practicing journalists “lack sound educational background, professional training, adequate experience and exposure to the working practice of the media in the highly industrialized western society.”

In addition to this, the independence of journalism practice in Ethiopia seems at risk. In this case both government and private media journalists have been criticized. According to Birhanu (2009: 46) and Wall (2001) government employed journalists are claimed by many to be the instrument of the government, whereas those in the private press are claimed to rebel against the government. “Many reporters operate as spokespeople for particular political views rather than as journalists.” (<http://www.ethiopia.media.com>). Based on his survey on the private press in Ethiopia, Shimelis (2000:69) also came to conclude that:

In its process of evolution and growth, full of trails and tribulation, the private press has blossomed out to be outspokenly partisan. Objective news- reporting is rendered difficult due to the political orientation of most private papers. Any sign of appreciation, even if limited, of government policy or action has thus been treated as being unpatriotic, a collusion with enemies [EPRDF] of Ethiopia.

Despite its infancy, according to Shimelis, the private press in Ethiopia has been informative and remarkably reporting on topics of national concern. At the same time, however, the private press;

has been as much libelous, uninvestigative, gullible, irresponsible, and highly sensational. There is a tendency among most titles to devote a large space to sensitive issues which, though they are extremely consumable news items, are at times mere fabrications and some of the reporters lack the professional skill, ability or experience to aggressively dig facts (Shimelis, 2000: 68-69).

On the other hand, the government media give prominent headlines to messages received from government officials (Mairegu, 2000:129). Actually, these media face far less hurdles in obtaining information from government agencies than the private ones. Furthermore, the journalists within the state owned media organizations are observed with many problems. When seen from the journalist's role aspect and the output:

[...] the ordinary journalist lacks public spirit; lacks professionalism; is devoid of professional spirit; exhibiting wrong attitude; suffers from the legacy of old order for instance, the journalist is too weak to criticize or expose corrupt officials; incapable of utilizing the provisions of government policies and the press law. (Gebremedhin quoted in Birhanu, 2009: 45)

Though are not exclusive, these research outcomes are certainly good indicators to show that there are problems of professional knowledge and skills of journalists and ambiguity regarding their role in the Ethiopian society. In addition to the absence of formal institutions that can establish standards of professionalism and ethical values, the confused role and orientation of journalists; the lack of adequate journalism education and training have greatly contributed to the weak professional practice of journalism in the country (Birhanu, 2009: 52, and Amol, 2008). The educational background of most of

editors and reporters also reveals this. In 2000, Shimelis had interviewed 31 editors and reporters and of these, 58.6 percent were 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates, 7.2 percent were college diploma holders, 5.2 percent had first degree....and of all these 43.5 percent had no previous experience in journalism (Shimelis, 2000:31).

Although journalism in this country has a history of one century, it has been only fourteen years since a formal media training institution has started offering journalism courses to address the problem of qualification (Ethiopian Journalism Review (EJR), 2003: 4; PMC, 2006: 51; Birhanu, 2009: 38). Except for some scattered mass media courses included in various programs found at the Institute of Language Studies, Departments of the Theatre Arts, Education, and Political Science and International Relations as part of their own disciplinary perspectives at Addis Ababa University, there has been no specialized training with an independent curriculum in media and communication in Ethiopian universities until very recently (PMC, 2006: 53). In 1996, with the mission of building a foundation for media education and uplifting the professional capacity of media practitioners [at diploma level] the Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute (EMMTI), now under Addis Ababa University, was established as a formal training institute and pioneer in the country.

Recently, apart from the School of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University, journalism and communication education is expanding in other universities of the country. So far, Bahir Dar University (2003), Mekelle University (2004), Dilla University (2006), Wellega University (2007) and Jijiga University (2007) have opened a department of journalism and communication. These universities are offering education in journalism at first degree level. There are also some other private universities and university colleges such as Unity University (offering diploma and degree), Rift Valley University College and New Generation University College that started offering journalism and

communication courses. Considering the context of the growing media industry (private newspapers and FM radio stations) and increased demand of qualified journalists (PMC, 2006:53), the expansion of journalism education in the Ethiopian universities can be seen as a response to the critical problem in the area.

However, as it applies to all other programs, the opening of departments and their expansion cannot be taken as a guarantee to produce qualified practitioners. Rather it is the type of curriculum, faculty, teaching philosophy and methods, admissions, infrastructure and facilities, school-media industry linkages and placements that determine the quality of the outcome (UNESCO: 2005). Moreover, even though everything has to go along together, the issue of curriculum is decisive. It is the nature of philosophy and content embedded in the curriculum that dictates the requirements for the students' admission, the recruitment of staff, infrastructure and other teaching learning facilities.

In other words, this can imply that designing a curriculum must be careful and for the fact the social realities and needs of the world is rapidly changing (Katzen; 1975; Taba, 1962:22-28), relevance of a curriculum has to be checked and assessed accordingly. There are some principal curriculum designing models that have been adopted in Africa to guide curriculum experts or workers. But, one thing remains central in the development of any kind of educational curriculum: the curriculum should be developed in a systematic and rationally planned way that takes into consideration the learner's and society's needs, the general ideological beliefs of the society, the philosophical and psychological teaching and learning process and the disciplines to be taught (Salia-Bao, 1989: 8-18). In general, the context in which the journalism and communication curriculum is to be used needs to be critically studied and considered (UNESCO: 2005).

### **1.2.2 The Theoretical Context**

Internationally there are different understandings of how journalism and communication as a field of study needs to be constituted (Vorster, 2008). There seems no consensus about what journalism and communication education is or should be, or whether it should exist at all (Dennis, 1988:3; Deuze, 2006:21; Macdonald, 2006:746). Amidst this perplexity, however, considering the crucial role and significant contribution of mass communication in general and journalism in particular, in national development and to the functioning of democratic and well-being of society, it has been considered as a field of study and is being studied in African universities and elsewhere in the world (Hatchen, 1968: 101; Deuze, 2006: 24). As Deuze (2006:19) puts,

Journalism is a more or less autonomous field of study across the globe.... Yet while this rather self-congratulatory conclusion may be true; one can not help but notice that the education and training of journalists is a subject much debated - but only rarely researched.

Very true, there are still people, especially from the media industries who do not accept journalism as a subject matter to be studied and maintain that college and university journalism programs are totally unnecessary (MacCombs, 1988:101). But that battle was won by the journalism schools long ago and vast majority graduates of these schools are being hired in media houses and other communication organizations (Ibid). Instead of pondering on whether to consider it as a standing field of study or not, the focus of journalism education is now, therefore, on what it should look like within the training centers and universities sphere (Vorster, 2008). One that is worth discussing here is how to

constitute the curriculum of journalism education to back up the journalistic profession.

One of the historic debates in journalism education is the liberal arts versus professional education debate (Christ, 2000). These camps are good at what they do but not at what they do not (Thorson, 2005: 17); for the earlier lacks skills and the later academic knowledge and critical reflection. According to Thorson's observation (2005: 18), to favor the professional journalism education (skill-oriented or train the work force) is a culture in the news media industry whereas to favor the liberal arts/theoretical concept in journalism and communication education is coming from schools of journalism including herself. But this can also be mingled into a single curriculum in a reasonably balanced way that could produce professionally practical, critical and intellectual journalists or else letting a journalist to receive education in separate curricula (UNESCO, 2007).

The other common area of concern in journalism and communication education stems from the general debate among educational researchers (for instance, Taba, 1962; Amare, 2009) on what the curricula at higher education should look like and what the goals of such institutions should be. Is Africa benefiting from the modern/western type of education? Amare (2009: 63-65) citing Itakagi argues that because western culture did not enable Africa to develop its own science and technology and because the most important stands, such as technical skills, hard work ethic, and western professional commitment have failed to be transferred, the African education needs to be based within its socio-cultural context. Though it is difficult to say implicitly that there is such thing as African journalism, however, commentators argue for the necessity in bringing about true liberation of African journalism through maintaining the journalistic 'universals' - western/liberal - while at the same time fostering and esteeming the cultural and social particulars (Skjerdal, 2009). Therefore, what- ever

arguments exist on where journalism education should be placed, one thing that seems to be a fact is that the development of journalism and communication education curriculum should make its base on the media landscape and the broad political, economic, socio-cultural and technology environment context (UNESCO, 2005; Jimada, 1992).

Last but not least to this discussion is the issue of specialization versus convergence in journalism. These thoughts can have a wide range of meaning and can be interpreted differently. To Larry Pryor as quoted in Quinn and Filak (2005: 7) convergence in journalism is to produce multiple products for multiple media platforms instead of for one (specialization). This embraces curricula that train students across media platforms rather than the traditional “media specific” curricula (Lowery, Daniels, and Becker, 2005). However, as Lawson-Borders quoted in a research article by Khaeplin and Criado (2005: 49) notes, convergence “should be strategic and should take place when the content and delivery system work together.” Because people in society have different backgrounds and needs, to meet these changing needs, newsroom diversity is needed (Berger, 2004). This complexity according to Khaeplin and Criado can be addressed by producing journalists and communicators who master different disciplines (other subject knowledge) in line with interdisciplinary approach skills on how to deliver.

On the other hand, there is an argument that media convergence is undermining competition and diversity of media products – which could lower down the quality of journalism at the end. Proponents of this idea suggest that the technological development to use multimedia can be addressed by offering multimedia and web courses along with all specializations or along with all the specific mediums (Castaneda et al. 2005).

This theoretical context is discussed in detail in the review of related literature part (chapter two). What I did here is, demonstrating what theoretical resources could be drawn on in operationalizing the research questions by being informed about the ongoing theoretical debates about the issue.

### **1.2.3 The Research Context**

As some research findings indicate, journalism and communication education in Africa is criticized for its dependence on Western textbooks, different set of presuppositions and ethics (James, 1990). Wimmer and Wolf also did analysis in 19 African journalism curricula and they found that these curricula were “largely Western in their outlook” (cited in Skjerdal and Ngugi, 2007:181). The fact is that because African countries were under the colonial power of Europeans and the educated Africans have become encapsulated and supposedly can not see beyond the Eurocentric and American walls that trap them, the goal of education in general and journalism and mass communication in particular in Africa seems to make Africans seem like Europeans in every aspect (Jimada, 1992: 366-379).

Contrary to this, Ethiopia could have had the opportunity to develop a curriculum for different programs in its higher institutions free of the influence of western culture of education, because it was never colonized (except for the short period of occupation by Italy) like the other African countries. Nevertheless, according to Amare, the curricula of our universities are unfortunately dominated by western ideals of education, neglecting aside the indigenous knowledge (2009: 62-63). But this general statement may or may not apply to journalism education for some reasons. First, the history of undergraduate journalism education at university level in Ethiopia is too short and second, a series of thorough dialogues and researches have to be made to make such strong statement. But it is obvious that the training programs that are being sponsored and delivered by international organizations could have their own impact. In the years between 1991-1999, for instance, there were short term

training programs to Ethiopian media practitioners and some leaderships and these programs were given by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung of Germany, the British Council, the United States Information Service of USIS Media Training Project, and Thomson Foundation of Britain (Shimelis, 2000:)-all Western organizations.

Undoubtedly, in an effort to design contextually relevant curriculum, there is high interest in Africa to adopt development journalism (Skjerdal 2009:31). For example, Wimmer and Wolf, after analyzing 19 African curricula, though the outlook they reached at conclusion was largely Western, they however found that most programs have incorporated development journalism in different forms; indicating a contextual journalism teaching (cited in Skjerdal and Ngugi, 2007:181). James (1990:5) even suggested that courses that constitute the core education in journalism need to be approached within the context of development communication/journalism. But the problem is, the meaning of development journalism is not clear (Skjerdal 2009: 31). Is it in the sense of development journalism that can be comparable to a western style investigative journalism or contributing to socio-economic development just like that of any development agent by assuming a collaborating role (Wimmer and Wolf:2005:2)?

In Ethiopia, with regards to how best to organize the curriculum of journalism in terms of professional, academic, context and whatsoever courses of orientation, except for the needs assessment at the launching or revision time of the programs (e.g. at Addis Ababa University), there is no comprehensive research made regarding undergraduate journalism education in general and its curriculum in particular. On the other hand, there is an urge (Tadese, 2007) higher education programs to review and improve their curricula to produce knowledgeable and skilled journalists.

The Department of Journalism and Communication at Mekelle University (MU), the subject of this thesis, when it was launched in 2004 under the English Department, its curriculum was a direct copy of Bahir Dar University. In 2006, this curriculum was revised by a group of staff members in order to curb some of its shortcomings (Needs Assessment Report, 2008:9). After two years (in the first half of 2008), a need assessment was conducted to change the curriculum. The need to do such need assessment at that time was initiated by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. All universities and departments throughout the country did so in the name of societal demands and new development strategies called for a change (DJC, 2008: ii). The needs assessment for the journalism and communication program at MU was made by a group of teaching staff of the department called 'curriculum taskforce' who conducted the assessment in Mekelle city and its surrounding areas. But the final draft of the curriculum was not only the reflection of the needs assessment and found in Mekelle city. It was drafted after all universities who have department of journalism and communication in the country made similar assessments in places nearby. Moreover, the results of the needs assessment were discussed thoroughly by journalism educators at a national workshop held in Addis Ababa University in September 2008.

This "new" curriculum being approved by the Senate of the Mekelle University came in to effect in the first week of October 2008. This undergraduate journalism and communication program is a three years long study that leads to a certification referred as Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism and Communications (DJC, 2008:V). It aims:

at producing professional journalists who are also intellectually rigorous and critical of mind, who respect fundamental rights, who are tolerant and respect diversities in society, who are

committed to social justice in theory and practice and who are dedicated to integrity and high ethical standards empowering them to use interpersonal and technically-driven communications in a multi-layered and multicultural world (DJC, 2008: III).

Here I would like to question whether the curriculum contains courses that could create professional journalists who are also **intellectually rigorous** and **critical of mind**. Where do such courses lay on the ongoing debates of journalism and communication education? This question leads me to analyze the rationale, description and general contents of the courses in light of those debates.

Apart from the general approach of producing journalists who can work for all types of media (print and broadcast) and “who can vigilantly serve the Ethiopian people”, the program profile indicates the other aim of the department is to train qualified public relations officers and communication specialists (DJC, 2008: iii). Here, one would ask whether the curriculum provides Ethiopian context and whether there are grounds to have a general/convergent or media specific curriculum. Still, one can also possibly ask whether the amount of credit hours of courses in this curriculum other than journalism can be taken as an end in themselves to produce such professionals (PR officers and other communication specialists) or they are there as means to backup in producing the required journalists.

Finally, what made me inspired to focus on this topic? Because I am a staff member of the department, I had the opportunity to participate in the national workshop I mentioned earlier. There, it was debated what journalism and communication education should look like in this country and what sort of courses the curriculum should consist of. These debates caught my interest and since that time, I have been eager to read about it. In my subsequent reading, I

found that the issue of journalism and communication education is controversial and debatable more than what was said in the workshop. It is therefore the object of this underlying thesis to look at the topic critically.

This has been strengthened by the information I acquired from the existing research findings regarding journalism education and media practice in Ethiopia, and the questions developed in my mind over the working curriculum of the program. Besides, this study can also be justified on a number of grounds. First of all, there is almost no literature relating to curricula issues on the subject in Ethiopia. Second, the study is justified by the fact that there still exist arguments on the acceptable type of curricula that journalism and communication training institutes and universities should follow. Finally, universities and their curricula are often subjected to reexamination of the role and purpose of their programs. It is said that together with the legacy that universities have to develop knowledge, they must also be reappraised in light of contemporary needs (Katzen; 1975; Taba, 1962:22-28). Curricula (in this case of journalism) need to adapt more dynamically to realities and needs of a rapidly changing world. Accordingly, as far as the responsibility of journalism education is to teach and produce good journalists who can shape the minuscule journalism industry that lacks professional expertise in this country, the conformity of the curriculum at Mekelle University towards this goal needs critical examination.

#### **1.2.4 Research Goals and Objectives:**

The goals of this research paper are: first, to analyze the Mekelle University's Journalism and Communications program curriculum in relation to the existing debates about the philosophy and program structures of the field; i.e. regarding of the professional-academic debate; second, to discover how Ethiopian context is entertained in the journalism and communication education curriculum at MU; third, to critically evaluate whether the goals of the curriculum are

achievable; and finally, to recommend possible areas for further research based on the findings.

### **1.2.5 Research Questions**

In line with the research problem and the objectives of the study, the following three questions are answered:

1. What is the share of courses in the MU's curriculum in terms of professional and academic orientation?
2. How does the curriculum at MU consider the demand of the journalism industry in the country in to account or in other words, how does it reflect the Ethiopian context?
3. Can the aim of producing professional journalists who are intellectually rigorous and critical of mind be achievable with the available composition of courses?

### **1.3 Research Methods**

In order to analyze the curriculum content, I have received views and suggestions as a primary data from people who are considered appropriate stakeholders in developing a curriculum. The approach is a qualitative research method. This method has the strength to imply the perception and expectations of the community/audiences (Creswell, 2002: 45). Different secondary sources of data such as theoretical literature pertaining to journalism education and its paradigms including relevant documents and indicators have been critically reviewed and used. This helps to describe the course content in relation to points found in debates about what universities should offer to journalism students. The qualitative element of the research may lead to a consideration of the internal and external effects of journalism courses, including the knowledge and

skills gained in courses and their relationship to the outside world (Creswell, 2002: 45). Thus in-depth-interviews and focus group discussions, document analysis and review of relevant literature are employed as instruments of data collection techniques. Finally, the case curriculum under scrutiny is examined in light of the transcribed and openly categorized themes from the results of the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as well as the outcomes of trends from the reviewed literature and documents.

#### **1.4 Delimitations of the Research**

To keep the scope of the study to manageable limits, issues related to the provision of facilities, teachers' qualification, and students' entry requirements etc.; elements which could have direct influence on the outcome of journalism and communication education are excluded. This study takes the undergraduate journalism and communication program at Mekelle University as a case by concentrating only on the composition of the content of courses in the curriculum and on the overall rationale behind the program. It concentrates on the very nature of the curriculum and the contribution of it in producing the required journalists as described in the program.

#### **1.5 Application of the Research Results**

I hope that the findings of this study will be of help to the Department of Journalism and Communication at Mekelle University, as well as lecturers in the field, education and communication officials, journalism and communication education curriculum designers and all those interested in relevant and functional curricula in Ethiopia. It may provide them with useful baseline data that can be used for understanding, appreciating or improving such curricula contents. I also hope it will generate further discussion and research on what

journalism and communication education should look like in Ethiopia and other developing nations.

## **1.6 Thesis Organization**

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter reflects the introduction, contextual background (i.e. social, theoretical and research background), the statement of the research problem (objectives and research questions), the research methods, its limitations and application of the findings of this study. The second chapter reviews the literature related to the subject under study. The third chapter is where the methodology of the study is discussed in detail. The fourth chapter deliberates on the findings and discussions. And finally, the fifth chapter concludes the thesis, highlights key findings and provides suggestions for further research.

## *Chapter Two*

### **Review of Related Literature**

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#### **Journalism and Communication Education: Presentation of the Ongoing Debates**

##### **2.1 Introduction**

In journalism education the most common area of debate and dissension has always been the curriculum (Gaunt, 1992:2). Should the journalism education curriculum concentrate solely on professional and technical skills, should it be inclined to the academic mission of education in universities, or should it follow any other pattern? Should journalism education aim at producing specialists of the different streams of journalism or strive for generalists (convergent journalism)? Should journalism education consider the context (political, economy, social, or ideological) in which it exists or is it something that can be taught universally without much difference? Due to the fact that journalism education influences the perceptions of journalists on the role they have in media and society, these questions are always on the stage, and debates are still ongoing among the concerned ones. Certainly, there are many other concerns to be dealt with in journalism education; however, these are the questions I would like to focus on, taking the limit of my research in to account. This chapter is, therefore, devoted to discuss some of the salient texts related to these questions. In seeking to explain some of these debatable issues, I have tried my best to refer and use some of the most contemporary research outputs and publications. It has helped me to specifically limit and identify my research problem and raise the

possible research questions. Hopefully, comprehending and exploring these issues will help me understand and examine the undergraduate journalism and communication curriculum at Mekelle University.

## **2.2. Overview: Journalism and Communication Education**

Journalism is a more or less autonomous field of study across the globe, as exemplified by the recent appearance of dedicated scholarly national and international journals, annual international conferences with dedicated panels, sessions and interest groups, and the emergence of a respectable body of theoretical and empirical literature particular to the field [...]. Yet, while this rather self congratulatory conclusion may be true, one can not help but notice that the education and training of journalists is much debated but only rarely researched (Deuze, 2006:19).

The world of journalism education is becoming more and more complex. Debates on how the curriculum should be organized, issues of relationship between the educational institutions and the society in general, and the media industries in particular are those areas that are tense (Ibid, 19-34). There has also been a parallel debate on where journalism education should be dispensed. In some countries, it has not been considered a fit subject for university studies and on the other hand, journalism along with media studies or communication studies is accepted as academic areas in the university tradition (Deuze, 2006; Gaunt, 1992). Though there are considerable differences among the set up of educational institutions in the world, journalism education is being conducted. Taking the cross-national comparative work of Gaunt, Deuze (2006:22) into consideration, there are five distinctive types of journalism education world wide based on the places where journalism education is given. These are (1) training at schools and institutes generally located at universities, (2) mixed systems of

stand alone and university level training, (3) journalism education at stand alone schools, (4) on the job training by the media industry, and (5) all of the above including commercial programs at universities as well as in-house training by media companies, publishers, trade unions, and other private or government institutions. To Deuze the literature on this regard is suggesting that most if not all systems of journalism education are moving towards the first or second model, indicating increasing formalization and standardization. In fact, as Deuze observes, the other types of training also exist in most if not all countries (2006:22).

But what may be the rationale behind teaching journalists at universities opposite to other places? In justifying this in the context of Africa, after a study on the state of journalism education worldwide was led by Ellen Hume, in which different journalism educators have been interviewed, the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA, 2007:12) has suggested the following labeling as significant advantages to housing journalism education within universities and colleges over the independent journalism trainings and workshops: (1) it is believed that journalism faculties are the main sources for educating new professional journalists. Though mid-career, in-house journalism training is important, emerging journalists come out of universities, (2) universities are established local entities, which address the need for training to have a strong local component, (3) long term training in a university journalism program provides “a systematic and comprehensive exposure for trainees both in the theory and practice of journalism”, (4) universities could have better political status and infrastructure to handle training, (5) universities could have also institutional pressure with the government to help shape media policies, (because independent journalism schools and workshop centers are often underutilized as sources of policy research and activism), and (6) finally, journalism faculties can influence the rest of the university, and thus the society,

to value open media, good journalism, and public expression. The assumption is that universities are important places to influence young people that help build a constituency and watch over the media practice in the form of criticism. Besides, as the report of the International Commission on the Development of Education notes (Katzen,1975), “universities are more directly open to movements of ideas than other educational institutions and more immediately required to keep up-to-the-date in the field of scientific and technical education.” Hence, to locate journalism education in the universities would have a big advantage.

Historically, the study of journalism and communication has got acceptance in universities since the first decade of the twentieth century (Katzen, 1975). For example, journalism has become a university subject in both the United States of America and Germany in the early years of the twentieth century, but in each country the conception of the subject was quite different. In the United States the courses were designed to train future professional journalists; in Germany they were purely academic studies of newspapers from the point of view of contemporary history, law and politics in the field of humanities and behavioral sciences (ibid). More specifically, according to Katzen, the education of mass communication (including journalism) and media studies has been widely spread worldwide after the Second World War, and more particularly in the 1960s.

In Africa, the training of journalists and communicators came along with the fairly recent development of mass communication in the continent, which was essentially a European import (Hachten, 1968:101). During the early 1960s, although obviously the technical inadequacies of Africa’s mass media were many, it was the lack of trained journalists that was indicated as a critical problem in many research outputs, for instance, the 1962 UNESCO meeting in Paris and the survey made by E.J.B. Rose for the International Press Institute in

1961 (Ibid: 103). In addressing this shortcoming, some Africans were sent abroad to be trained, and on the other hand, even before and after the 1960s there have been unspecified on-the-job trainings, several six month courses and many other crash programs given to trainees in Africa by foreign organizations (Hachten, 1968:103-104, Katzen, 1975:166). Later on, in the 1960s and early 1970s, the majority of African universities started to include journalism and mass media studies curricula granting journalism qualifications - with the exception of two Egyptian universities, which have provided journalism training since the 1930s (Katzen, 1975).

In Ethiopia, journalism and communication education started to be offered in a formalized institution in 1996 at the EMMTI (since 2003 under Addis Ababa University), many years after other African countries. But by now, as listed in the social context section of chapter one, there are at least six public universities and three private university colleges in the country that are offering undergraduate degrees in journalism and communication. Besides, the Faculty of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University is teaching both at the postgraduate and undergraduate levels.

Following the inclusion of journalism education in the university curricula, the question how best to educate journalists in a university sphere has been on the agenda for discussion (Katzen, 1975; Adam, 2001). Here after, I will discuss the areas of debate that I have tried to indicate here above in the introduction and overview of this chapter. But before that I wanted to discuss briefly what journalism and journalism education is.

### **2.3. What is journalism and what should its education be?**

Journalism is understood in many ways and can be defined based on the expectations that it provides service to the society and the way it is performed

(Adams, D. and Duffield, L., 2005). In most instances its meaning is attached to the roles that the mass media hold. And the role of mass media is widely varied throughout the world, depending on the established media systems (Tatiana, 2001; Ahuja & Chhabra, 1992). One would expect the role of media (the journalist being one actor in it) is to inform, educate and entertain. Indeed, it is. However, under what sort of orientation and under what kind of media systems? These orientations and media systems are nothing else but the result of “press laws, economic and political variables, cultural and social influences and such basic considerations as demographic distribution, literacy or personal income levels” of a nation or community (Tatiana, 2001). Based on this, there are seven identified concepts that could have a direct influence on defining journalism and media practice. These are: the Soviet Communist Concept, the Authoritarian Concept, the Libertarian Concept, the Social Responsibility Concept, the Revolutionary Concept, the Developmental Concept, and the Democratic Socialist Concept. A Western model, a concept resulted by combining the Libertarian and Social Responsibility concepts, is also added (Tatiana, 2001). All these concepts see the role of journalism and journalists in society differently. Being an honest agent of information in a society, however, journalists need to put in practice more than one of these press models (Chhabra, 1992).

The application of any other model might be reasonable under particular circumstances except the communist and authoritarian models which are generally rejected by journalists all over the world (Tatiana, 2001). Except for some of the repressive media concepts, all the remaining (the degree varies of course) have something in common with the public service role which is generally regarded as that of a necessary support for a democratic society (French, 2006). The concept of journalism is extremely important in functioning democracies, and its role places a particularly heavy responsibility on the practitioners of the journalistic tradition. In a political landscape, journalists are

the filter between politicians and the people. Far more importantly, however, journalists are one of the pillars on which democracy depends. Moreover, the function of journalists as whistleblowers, warning the public about multifaceted development problems in society and abuse or mismanagement by the government, is as important now as it ever was (Kamps, 2004). Understanding this nature and role of journalism in democratic societies or promoting democracy in emerging democracies - in societies of wide choices and preferences - the work of journalists must be *thoughtful* (Adam, 2001). Imagine journalists are taken as investigators who provide information to assist citizens in democratic decision-making (Adams and Duffield, 2005). They are primarily there (using the media as a tool) to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001), provided that citizens got that information from a free media that practices independent journalism (Marguerite H. Sullivan; <http://usinfo.state.gov>).

As a branch of mass communication, it is the concept of the role of journalism in a democracy that enables people to take control over their own lives, that enables people and societies to set their own agendas in relation to political, economic and social development, and that enables, in particular, the voices of the economically and politically marginalized to be amplified and channeled to mainstream public and political debate (Chandra, 2004: VI) using the media as a platform. Because of this great function it has in informing mass audiences and shaping public opinion, journalism can play a leading role in shaping the future (Gaunt, 1992:1).

In accomplishing their roles in society to the widest possible way, and due to the fact that not all communication of information can necessarily be taken as journalism, journalists need to involve in the sifting and editing of information,

comments and events into a form that is recognizably different from the pure form in which it first occurred (Rudin and Ibbotson, 2003:5). They must bother on how to gather, write, edit and present information for a variety of audiences through different media. Moreover, as the sources for information are multiplying and the channels and technologies that journalists communicate with people are growing, the potential contexts within which information can be understood will increase, and journalists will have to work smarter and more efficiently to successfully prepare their stories (Reddick, 1997:186).

What sort of university journalism education, especially at the undergraduate level, should then be designed to produce journalists who can perform these perceived journalism roles and tasks? In addressing this pressing issue, different reflections have been made. But here is a more sounding statement as to what journalism university education should promote in general. According to Adam (2001:317) education in journalism should be designed to promote:

thoughtful understanding of news judgment; solid grounding in methods of reporting, evidence gathering, and fact assessment; a capacity for literary and/or visual representation; and the ability to apply the forms of understanding born in the academy to the problems of the here and now.

Again, what courses should constitute the curriculum to help graduates to acquire such competencies is another challenge. They may or may not reflect the above mission but there are competing models in educating journalists. The natural tension between academic and professional models is particularly sharp (Reese, 1999; James, 1990). On the other hand, there are also insights that all the reflections and competing models are encouraging mixed and balanced approaches to journalism education (Reese, 1999; WJEC, 2007; Applebee, et al.

2007; Adams and Duffield, 2005; UNESCO Series on Journalism Education, 2007:6).

### **2.3.1 Professional versus Academic Oriented Journalism**

#### **2.3.1. A. Journalism Education as Professional Oriented Training**

As indicated in the theoretical context section of chapter one, one of the historic debates in journalism education is the academic versus professional/vocational education debate (Christ, 2000). These camps are good at what they do but not at what they do not (Thorson, 2005:17); for the earlier lacks skills and the later academic knowledge and critical reflection. According to Thorson's observation (2005: 18), to favor the vocational journalism "education" (skill-oriented or train the workforce) is especially a culture in the news media industry. This approach is believed to prepare students to report, write and edit for the various media and it is meant to prepare students directly for a career in journalism (UNESCO, 2007). It is strongly directed towards socializing the students into the culture and routines for their future careers in the media industry (Thomas, 2008:19). The assumption by the industry people is that journalism education should provide them with "well-trained" students who can be hired into the various news niches who could grind out whatever news products are needed without a lot of further investment (Thorson, 2005; Reese, 1999). They see it as a cheap way to gain their employees, without the problems of training them on-the-job (Macdonald and Reese quoted in Thomas, 2008:324). With such sort of training, students are assumed that their socialization to the media industry is almost complete. Being convinced of this view, and because of their adherence to this kind of "education" is the best way to train journalists, more than half of the television news directors in the U.S. responded to a particular survey made in 1997, as they chose to hire graduates who came from the University of Missouri, Northwestern University and the University of Florida than from others because they believe

that these universities provided broadcast students with quality hands-on-laboratory experience in broadcast journalism (Duhè, Forte Sonya and Zukowski, Ann Lee; 1997:12). In his PhD research, *"The Making of a Journalist: the New Zealand Way"*, Thomas (2008:19) has found that the teaching of journalism was in favor of vocational training and the scenario of doing it was in such a way that:

Classrooms are set up as newsrooms, as the unit standards stipulate that "the teaching programme should mirror the working environment appropriate to the unit standards being assessed (New Zealand Journalism Training Organization, 1997, p. 8). The emphasis is also on "real world" experience. Students are "attached" to different newspapers and must write to their requirements. They also visit newspapers and write stories for publication. The ultimate in this "real world" orientation occurs when the students are sent alone to various media outlets to work as junior journalists under the instruction of the chief reporter. This is seen as the highlight of journalism education by both students and journalism educators.

Such kind of journalism "education" in many ways still resembles the old-style apprenticeship training on-the-job because of the media industry has got the power of controlling the training orientation. In such circumstances, students are reinforced mostly to know the "how-to-do-nature" not the "why" case (Ibid). One correspondent who had completed a study of mass communication education in the United States, based on a listing of journalism schools in the *Journalism Educator* as quoted in Katzen (1975:19), also reported that the emphasis of journalism major courses were essentially on technical skills. According to this correspondent, those schools that offer 'mass communication' concentrate on both technique and theory courses plus liberal arts courses.

This sort of vocational training in journalism within a university framework was attempted in the United States of America before the end of the nineteenth century and has been a trend in some of its universities and some other countries of the world (Katzen, 1975). For instance, the University of Missouri, Colombia has arguably one of the most practically oriented journalism programs (Thorson, 2005:17). The Northwestern University and the University of Florida are also well-known for giving practice oriented broadcast journalism (Duhé et al. 1997:12). Vocational training was also the norm until Joseph Pulitzer funded the School of Journalism at Colombia University in New York (Brandon, 2002:60). In a report on journalism training in Europe, Ami Lönnroth (1997) concludes that the member schools of the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) generally have strong practical/professional elements in their curricula, and favor short programs. The same is true for Nordic programs. A majority of the schools train students for all types of media, favor teachers with a background as journalists, and include internships in the media in their programs (Jan Fredrik Hovden, Gunn Bjørnsen, Rune Ottosen, Ida Willig & Henrika Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2009:150). From their comprehensive survey of media training in Africa, Murphy and Scotton (1987) also noted that the stress on practical training and technical performance that has made U.S. journalism education known for has also been widely acceptable in Africa and much of the Third World (Okigbo and Pratt, B. 1997:13). The Ethiopian Mass Media Institute (diploma program) was also of this view until 2003 (Tadese et al. 2003). But in 2003, the institute made a curriculum change, upgraded to first degree program and finally affiliated to the Addis Ababa University. The inspiration according to the curriculum change committee was to incorporate social science courses, liberal art courses and business oriented courses to be able to produce a full rounded person not a narrow area specialist (ibid).

Though the academy-professional split is never clear cut (Banda et al., 2007:167), courses that are most of the time recommended to be included in the professional oriented journalism curriculum are those that impart basic skills in practicing journalism and help to be able to use media technologies (Mfumbusa, 2008). These courses are divisible into two: as transferable and vocational skills (De Burgh, 2003). The transferable skills include research and investigation, information assimilation and assessment; communication skills, and expression (De Burgh, 2003:95-112) whereas the vocational ones are those profession-specific skills. It is difficult to exhaustively make a list of all courses that fall under the professional journalism education; however, here below is an attempt at least as a sample that would guide to analyze the MU's curriculum.

Category	Description	Examples of areas of such skills
<b>Transferable skill (courses)</b>	These are skills that can be used in a wide array of work settings.	Research and investigation skills, information assimilation and assessment; communication skills, and expression (De Burgh, 2003:95-112), general writing skills, shorthand note taking (Rudin and Ibbotson, 2003:331), researching and research techniques, using computer data bases (Dickson, 1993:93, Written communication skills, languages skills, general computer literacy, Proofreading and editing skills, Working well under pressure, Flexibility/Adaptability and so forth.
<b>Vocational skills (Courses)</b>	These are skills that are profession-specific.	News-story analysis and construction, professional conventions in production, operating skills, production management, interviewing, and teamwork that is required for covering a big newspaper story or making a TV/radio production program (De Burgh, 2003:101). news writing and reporting, editing, headline writing, newspaper makeup, copy reading (Cohen, 1992:255), broadcast writing, online journalism, writing scripts for each media genre (Sissons, 2008: xiv), information or newsgathering (Rudin and Ibbotson, 2003:331), videography, digital

		photography, web-design or generally, skills that help to use each media technologies effectively (Mfumbusa, 2008), media attachment (Dickson, 1993:93), and many more.
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**Table 2.1. List of Examples of Professional Courses**

Here something must be clear. A so-called professional oriented curriculum does not mean that all course lists are intended to provide the technical skills. This is only to indicate that the ratio of the required professional courses is high or more than the required comparing to the academic courses (including media study and communication courses). In view of that, there are other courses that are required for journalism competencies, namely courses that focus on common standards and that widen the professional understanding including journalism ethics, media law, media history, news values/worthiness and news judgment, media role in society etc. These are some among the many other courses that we can probably find in a curriculum with whatever its orientation is.

Yet, this kind of education is criticized by the academy as it tends to become too specialized and students who are taught these skills limit rather than expand their opportunities (Soloski, 1994:6). It is argued that if the greatest weight in journalistic education is given to courses that teach technical skills, then journalists would lack the basic knowledge that could help them as preparation for journalistic practice (Cohen, 1992:255). To the people in the academy, “professional programs are often considered second-class citizens because they are thought to teach nothing but technical skills and their professors are thought to be practitioners not scholars” (Soloski, 1994:4). Such criticisms have often been made, e.g. that these skills are not appropriate to a university; that they are applied in circumstances which develop merely mechanical understanding whereas university education, which favors academic subjects, develops reasoned understanding (Thorson, 2005; Amare, 2009). The understanding is

(though there is often considerable variation between one country and another) that firm lines of demarcation exist between the goals and sometimes between the subject areas considered fitting for universities as compared to other institutions of higher learning (Katzen, 1975). According to Amare (2009:71), for instance, the *raison d'être* for the existence of higher education institutions must be stipulated and clearly declared. The question is: Is the mission of a particular institution to offer vocational/professional, liberal/academy or a hybrid of the two? So, their mission must be put clear as is the case with the European higher institutions.

When we look at the history of European institutions of higher learning, for a long period of time they have maintained a clear mission by structuring their higher institutions into universities, colleges, and institutes. And the main mission of the universities is to provide liberal arts [academic] education whereas the mission of the colleges and institutes is to provide trainings in different professions (Martin and Etzkowitz in Amare, 2009:72).

The message is, therefore, journalism education taken as mere 'trade-school work', can not be considered appropriate for university education (Katzen, 1975). Or else, it must be the aim of other technical institutions. Yet, this professional model of journalism education does not analyze power, most notably the power of the employer, and fails to equip students with the tools to examine their own role in the media industries (Macdonald, 2006).

As already mentioned before, this model, as Macdonald argues, concentrates on journalism skills that produce narrow minded specialists, rather than producing full rounded mind persons with a wider critical thinking ability. Its negative consequence would also be high when most journalism educators have

distinguished careers as working journalists, who have not studied new methods of education and are only technically trained. These people will definitely continue to teach the professional model they know so well, while thoughts about what exactly they are teaching is often lacking (Thomas, 2008:45). As Dennis (1988) tried to show by taking the business schools reform in America as exemplary, the vocational trend can not help media industries to hire employees who have the understanding of media and society, people with the big picture, with grounding in theory or broadly trained and capable of leadership. Instead they will get technically skilled employees who serve the industry regardless of long term considerations. Furthermore, these people are assumed weak in thoughtfully analyzing and discussing the elements of journalism, for instance, news judgment, techniques of interpretation in journalism and they have little imaginative ability borrowing from other disciplines in order to strengthen journalism practices (Adam, 1988:113-114). Remembering the central role of media in society, Brennen (2000:107) has also observed a danger within this model. She thinks the role journalists play is never questioned in such technically oriented journalism textbooks (in fact, American textbooks) and there is almost no commentary being raised by these schools on the increasing concentration of media ownership. The postulation here is if these professionals could not question the increasing conglomeration of media ownership, the role of business and interest of few groups would erode the fundamental role of media in a democratic society.

In clarifying how professional training is not sufficient for human beings, an American school principal wrote a letter to his colleagues during a New Year school opening day as follows:

Dear teacher! I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: gas chambers built by

engineers; children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses; women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates. So I am suspicious of education. My request is help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters or skilled psychopaths (Tubbs in Amare, 2009:74).

Bringing this to media application, unless journalism students - the would be media practitioners - are taught to think clearly, critically, and creatively or unless they are mentored in courses which could help them to become human and appreciate culture, it can easily be imagined how less intellectual media or else only business aimed media could cost a society. To sum up, according to critics and taking the mission of university's education into account, the professional model of journalism education is just a craft that does not encourage conceptual systems of theoretical explanation of man and society, and non-intellectual for its own good. Thus it can not be considered fitting for university education (Katzen, 1975).

### **2.3.1. B. Journalism Education as Academic Culture**

**"Chance favors the prepared mind."** Proverb quoted in Harris, 1991

The tension between academic and professional - or between theory and practice - is incidentally directly related to the historical debate of what the function of education is. A group of theorists, who are philosophically classified as rational humanists and classicists, believe that the function of education is to develop rationality and cultivate intellect (Hutchins quoted in Taba; 1962:20). Because rationality is an essential element of humanity, these theorists insist that education should be concerned with essential subjects. "These subjects are the liberal arts, among the liberal arts, the humanities" (Brubacher in Taba, 1962:20).

And the home for these courses is on the higher levels of learning. Those who believe in education in higher education institutions particularly, that universities must be academic, recommend curricula to be constituted with a high dosage of liberal arts courses - what we call now academic education (Amare 2009:67-68). This is because, as Amare explains, liberal arts courses are well known for the broad and profound education they provide and the critical thinking ability graduates they produce. These courses are aimed at imparting general knowledge and developing general intellectual capacities, in contrast to a professional, vocational, or technical curriculum. According to the liberal arts educational philosophy;

An uneducated person is not free and does not respect the freedom of others. He who is uneducated is an animal who is dominated by the idol of materialism. Liberal arts are believed to liberate the mind, help to know the scientific knowledge, moral virtue and cultural heritages that the society produces and to transmit them from generation to generation. The goal of education is then, first, to create a human, next, able/skilled worker. Generally, the liberal arts model of education aims at creating an intellectual mind and this intellectual mind is good for a healthy society. Therefore, education should not be narrow and categorized down into specializations. What is more, for the liberalists, professional education is given in a field; i.e. in a factory, bank, in agricultural plot and is not fitting into university education (Amare, 68). [Own translation from Amharic].

በ“ሊበራል ኦርት” ስርዓተ ትምህርት መሠረት ያልሰለጠነ ሰው “ነዋ” አይደለም፣ የሌሎችንም ነፃነት ይጋፋል፣ ስለሆነም በቁስ አካላዊ ፍላጎት ብቻ የሚነዳ እንስሳ ይሆናል። ሊበራል ኦርት ትምህርት አእምሮን ከማጎልመስ ባሻገር፣ ማህበረሰቡ የወለደውን ሳይንሳዊም ሆነ ሞራላዊ

እንዲሁም ባህላዊ ቅርስን ጠንቅቆ ከማወቁ በተጨማሪ ይህ እውቀት ከትውልድ ወደ ትውልድ እንዲሸጋገር ያደርጋል የሚል ነው። ትምህርት “መጀመሪያ ሰውን መፍጠር አለበት”፣ ቀጥሎ “ብቃት ያለው ሰራተኛ መፍጠር ይችላል” ይላሉ። ባጠቃላይ ሲታይ የሊበራል አርት ስርዓተ ትምህርት አእምሮን በማሰልጠን ላይ የተመሠረተ ሲሆን የሰለጠነ አእምሮ ለህብረተሰብ ጤንነት ምቹ ነው የሚል አንድምታ አለው። ስለሆነም ስርዓተ ትምህርቱ፣ 1ኛ/ ጠባብና በዘርፍ የተለያዩ ትምህርት መሆን የለበትም፣ 2ኛ/ የሙያ ትምህርት ከዩኒቨርሲቲ ውጭ የሚሰጥ በተለይም በመስክ፣ ማለትም በፋብሪካ፣ በባንክ፣ በእርሻ ቦታ የሚሰጥ እንጂ በዩኒቨርሲቲ ውስጥ መስጠቱ አግባብነት የለውም ይላሉ አማረ፣ 2002፣ ገጽ 68።

Based on this mode of educational thinking, knowledge is born in universities and delivered to society in the form of teaching service (Gibbons et al. in Amare, 2009:78). As generators and repositories of knowledge, universities have the power to confer professional status. This educational philosophy was dominant especially in the early twentieth century in Europe and America, and universities were major authorities in society (Starck, 2000). Therefore, any encroachment to this realm from the professional community (for example, may be in the name of the university-industry linkage to address societal needs) is the very means of squelching the creativity and independence of the intellect (Bestor in Taba, 1962). The purpose of a university degree is not to make people adequate employees but thoughtful citizens and potential contributors to the intellectual and cultural life of society (De Burgh, 2003:98). The stand to base journalism education on the academic nature seems, therefore, because of the influence from the tradition and culture of university education. For instance, in the early years of the twentieth century in Germany, university journalism education courses were entirely academic studies of newspapers from the point of view of contemporary history, law and politics (Katzen, 1975). According to several educators at Russian journalism schools, Russian journalism education until recent times (until around

they got exposure to US universities) was also solely emphasizing on giving its journalists a firm basis in theory, history, philosophy, sociology and literature. Its education was with depth, breadth and focused on the academic courses. In fact despite some practical course added, it is also believed that the current Russian journalism education mainly focuses on the above core courses and is imbued with ideologically oriented courses (Morrison, 1997:33). This general philosophical conception of education and the classical debate on education has been taken by many, and many programs have also been influenced by this tradition.

Many journalism academics or/and others have also argued for journalism education to make it self too close to the academic world and as strong as the concept of education at universities. To cite some regarding where to focus journalism education, for example, the famous pollster George H. Gallup, speaking to a group of journalism educators meeting in Ohio on December 30, 1926 said, "Teaching of journalism must place less emphasis upon technique and practice and more and more upon theory. It must deal with the reasons which underlie the practices and less with the practices as such." (Stack, K., 2000:63). The hypothesis is that a person who can reason out and is liberated with the profound knowledge of solid liberal arts courses is capable of adjusting himself/herself to an environment and would have the capacity to transmit the knowledge, norms and values of cultures. Speaking on the future of journalism education Dan Gillmor (Doctorow, 2010) said that undergraduate journalism degrees should emphasize on the great liberal arts courses. This way it is more valuable than as training for the professional journalism careers.

In 1951, the thirteenth year of the Nieman Fellowship program for professional journalists at Harvard, Professor Edward Walsh of the Department of Journalism at Fordham University surveyed the fellows of that year for their views on

education of journalists. Those that supported journalism education in an extended formal way, the majority of them appeared to believe that the education of a journalist should consist of heavy doses of liberal arts courses. Lou Lyons, the esteemed curator of the Nieman program as quoted in Cohen (1992) spoke as follows:

... in general, I am for providing the maximum chance for studies of a general nature, history, literature, philosophy, economics, sociology, etc. and a minimum of time on techniques of journalism...my impression is that journalism programs are tending toward a greater concern for educational background and a lesser time for techniques and that this is, in most instances, good (Cohen, 1992:256).

Another journalism professor, Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, who left a permanent impression on journalism teaching (Boylan, James and Sims, Norman H. 1988, 53), has built a model of an undergraduate journalism curriculum with one quarter of journalism courses and three quarters primarily liberal arts for Wisconsin, the University where he was teaching journalism courses starting in 1905 under the English Department (Boylan, et al.1988, 53). Bleyer argued that:

no other profession has a more vital relation to the welfare of society or to the success of democratic government than has journalism... The most essential training which the university can give to a student thinking of journalism is to equip him [her] broadly with the knowledge of the ages and give him [her] such intellectual power that he [she] will be continually fertile in applying that knowledge to present conditions (quoted in Reese 1999:72).

Ralph Casey, who was one of Bleyer's followers, also wrote "journalism instruction can no longer depend on the intuitive guesses of former journalism craftsmen." Instead, journalism teachers had to be able to hold their own among psychologists, sociologists, statisticians, economists, and political scientists (Boylan, James and Sims, Norman H. 1988: 54). He was wishing to see the integration of journalism and communication or ultimately strong communication study. The communication field's institution builder, Wilbur Schramm, had also a similar high-minded vision for the academic discipline. He said in his time:

I would like to see the kind of School of Journalism that would be not as weak as itself, but as strong as the university ... a School that would be in the very heart of the university, which would begin with the assumption that the students it wants to produce will be the students in the whole university best equipped to understand and talk about the world (quoted in Reese 1999:73).

Though there was no specialized teaching of journalism and communication until recently in the Ethiopian universities, however, there have been scattered mass media courses included and taught in the various programs of the Addis Ababa University, namely in the Institute of Language Studies, the Departments of Theatre Arts, Education, and Political Science and International Relations as part of their own disciplinary perspectives (PMC, 2006: 53) and they are still being given in the Institute of Language Studies in Amharic and English (Asefa, 2003:7, in an interview with the *Ethiopian Journalism Review, EJR*). These "courses in journalism tended to be academic rather than professionally oriented" (PMC, 2006:53). It is also believed that the graduates from these programs are some of the leading professionals in the Ministry of information and well-known Ethiopian private presses (ibid).

There are many proven academic courses which are fruitful to journalism education. Here below are some among them.

Category	Description	Examples of courses
Academic courses	They are courses which could give a profound knowledge and beef up the ability to think critically.	Politics and political philosophy, law, history sociology, psychology, social psychology, statistics, aesthetic, literary criticism, rhetoric, linguistics, communication and information theory (Katzen, 1975; Adam, 2001), issues of politics and society (those encountered in the systematic examination of the Constitution), and economics, information science, film, journalism history, journalism ethics and law (Adam, 1988; Adam, 2001), public speaking, logic, art, literature, drama, music, philosophy, and religion, multicultural courses, mathematics, physical science courses (Mencher, 1994:71-76), and so on.

**Table 2.2. List of Examples of Academic Courses**

Pulitzer (cited in Adam, 2001:326) noted the following points for his inclusion of different courses into the study of journalism:

Journalists should know the principles of legal understanding and so they should study law. He believed journalism students should incorporate and thereby express the principles of social, political and scientific understanding and so they should be schooled in such

subjects as economics, politics and sociology, natural sciences and philosophy. He said they should study history, too, in his case, probably because he believed, if properly taught, historical topics would provide an appropriate backdrop and a form of consciousness essential to the exercise of good news judgment (Adam, 2001:326).

In general, such courses in social sciences and humanities, physical sciences, and mathematics center on the discipline and rationality that are essential to the journalist and help to develop the ability to think analytically (ibid). Once good analytical thinking habits are developed, it is easier to perform better in any job, but more importantly, it will be easier for further education and to living a happier life (Harris, 1991). It can be said then, that the liberal arts education creates an improvement of perception and understanding. This process explains why the freshman year of college (which most of the time is congested with general disciplines) is often so difficult - students come with such a poverty of intellectual abilities and knowledge that learning anything is very difficult. After a year of struggle, however, an informational base has been created which makes further learning easier. The brain has come up to speed and has been given something to work with (ibid).

There are, of course, many criticisms of and questions about this concept of academic dominated journalism education. Journalism and media professionals accuse this model of educating journalists as arid and detached from the livelihood of journalism practice (Boylan, et al., 1988:60). These parties are annoyed with the fact that newly trained journalists may have been qualified in academic rigor, but fail to indicate all the boxes of what they believe a good journalist should be (Kamps, 2004). Due to this, media industries are being forced to invest extra money to train the technically unprepared journalists (Thorson, 2005; Reese, 1999). Some professionals complain that this kind of education is too academic and filled with "useless theory." They believe academic

courses including research should be the mandate of graduate classes not of undergraduate classes. Graham Tibbetts, a Daily Telegraph journalist, for instance, believes that an in-depth study of the field of journalism is a waste of time. To him an honors degree in the liberal arts and theory of journalism is merely a turning of vocational subject into an academic one, padding out the subject over an unnecessarily long period of time (Kamps, 2004). When asked by a large student audience about academic training for journalists, ABC News Nightline anchor Ted Koppel also said, "Journalism schools are an absolute and total waste of time. You can not replicate true journalism – genuine pressure - in academic setting" (quoted in Dennis, 1988:4-5).

On the other hand, seen from the perspectives and goals of education, to attach education to the ancient concept of university education is to detach from realities and needs of contemporary society. Educationalists like Dewey who support education as an instrument for transforming culture maintain that education must deal with the needs of current culture and even help to shape the future (Taba, 1962:22). Education should be regarded as an arm of public policy and an instrument for dealing with problems that a nation faces (Horace Mann in Taba, 1962: 23). Because social changes today are rapid and radical and because there are blind consequences to the technological revolution which seem to endanger the democratic way of life, to take the tradition of university education as a sole solution would seem as a poor guide (ibid). That is why currently there exists an urge at higher learning institution including universities to incorporate vocational education (Amare, 2009; Taba, 1962). This is because today, especially, Third World countries are under severe economic problems and pressure from the global competition. There is a high unemployment rate. Considering this, the role of higher learning institutions must not be only on bringing and transmitting cultural development but should be also on bringing high national economic development by integrating vocational/professional education (Amare, 2009:68).

Some scholars and many governments including the Government of Ethiopia believe the vocational education (in Ethiopia science and technology) accelerates development (ibid). Therefore, universities should not be an ivory tower by considering themselves as the only entities of generators and distributors of knowledge. They must acknowledge that knowledge is also in the society and they have to find it in the form of research. Universities need to respond to the needs of employers. Obviously, to accomplish this, they need to work in close collaboration with the society and industries.

Coming back to journalism, the above educational debates signal that the academic journalism education must not be on the expense of the professional benefit. Otherwise, it can be argued that this is an education useful only to elites rather than to market needs (De Burgh, 2003:97).

### **2.3.1. C. Journalism Education is a Negotiated Enterprise**

**"When the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail." (A philosopher quoted in Harris, 1991).**

Considering the essential role that journalists have in making democracy work and serving the public interest responsibly, their education must be on the one hand beyond the professional skills (De Burgh, 2003; Reese, 1999; Macdonald, 2006 etc.), and on the other hand, equally sensitive to the professional skills; striking the balance between the academic and professional aspects (Stack, 2000). Journalism practitioners need to be taught with courses that could allow them to be intellectual practically; the way they can use practical skills to express intellectual thought (a Guardian Journalist quoted in Phillips and cited in De Burgh, 2003). Desertification of the ground by considering academic based journalism programs as non realistic and waste of time on one side, and underestimating the very practical aspect of journalism programs as trivial and

not imparting the ideals of journalism as a public service-oriented profession (Reese and Cohen cited in Macdonald (2006:747) on the other side , is unnecessary.

In fact, the reality is also that an education in the liberal arts and sciences initiates individuals into practice (Adam, 2001:334), and the practical application of what is known often becomes the very mainspring of theory or thought (Taba, 1962:22). For example, the philosophy of education as expressed by the British political philosopher Michael Oakeshott emphasizes that:

there is no radical separation between theory and practice, and that the world is made and re-made through the repetition of old practices based on old ideas and the invention of new practices based on new ideas (Adam, 2001:334).

Similarly, in his article 'Reconstructing the Curriculum for Service to the Nation' Mencher (1994) suggested that journalism curriculum should have to find itself in between the conceptual base of public service and the practical skills that would help deliver the required service. In describing the natural relationship between theory and craft, Mencher (1994:74) said: "in journalism we don't write writing but write reporting. In other words, we teach craft through substance." Therefore, unlike the false dictomy which dictates that there are super-academics or super-practitioners, the nature of journalism education should be rooted in the irretrievable mixture of academic and professional elements of journalism (Boylan et al. 1988, 60; De Burgh, 2003). It has to escape the traps of arid academic detachment from the livelihood of journalism practice and of the passive simulation of the newsroom (ibid). This is demanding for some concrete reasons.

First, as argued by Macdonald (2006) and many others, the concentration on journalism skills can not help to get full rounded persons with a wider critical thinking ability; instead it produces narrow minded specialists who can't analyze the power of media in society. But a bachelor's degree in journalism that mixes industry-specific practical courses with broad exposure to the liberal arts and humanities, is believed to produce well-rounded students who can write well-informed articles and make authoritative comments about the world around them. This sort of education can help more in producing reflective practitioners and can also be claimed as worthy university education in the name of meeting needs and "service to the nation" according to Boyer and others (Mencher, 1994:72).

Second, even taking journalism as not a body of knowledge as some people contend, what can it do unless it jumps into other fields? Nevertheless, the idea that journalism has no body of knowledge has no acceptance by many (Dennis, 1988; Deuze, 2006:19). Taking the first argument for valid, for instance, journalism must take other fields of knowledge into its own sphere as is the case in philosophy (Cohen, 1992:257). In his attempt to show the similarities between journalism and philosophy, Cohen made the following clarification:

Perhaps we all recall our freshman philosophy courses, where we were told that philosophy is "parasitic" on other disciplines - that philosophy takes as its subject matter other fields of knowledge. Ergo, one has philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, philosophy of education, etc. Is this not true also for journalism? The "subject matter" of the journalists' activity is precisely that which forms the content and subject matter of other fields of knowledge, much as is the case in philosophy. There are, e.g., science journalists, whose job is to write crisp accurate prose about science interpreting

its results to the world of non-scientists at large. But science is not part of any mythic body of knowledge called "journalism." *Mutatis mutandis*, the same is true for the political journalist, whose livelihood is parasitic upon the subject content of politics and political events in the real world. Thus, there is a natural, ontological fellowship between journalists and philosophers (Cohen, 1992:257).

So if this is the case, journalism education at the undergraduate level has to be multi-disciplinary. It has to offer its students an exposure to different intellectual knowledge that will help them serve the public by applying the journalistic techniques they acquired.

Third, for the fact that education in this globally competitive world should respond to immediate development problems (Horace Mann in Taba, 1962:23; Amare, 2009:68), and for the fact that universities could have better political status and infrastructure to handle trainings, (CIMA, 2007:12), journalism education should be sensitive to the professional side instead of striving only for the intellect. In that case universities are sharing the cost of employers in training entry journalists but for the better image of the profession. Sure, the industry people must also take their own share to socialize the new graduates into the practice (may be during internship time or giving entry training). Unless the media professionals want to take advantage of everything at the expense of the public service (for the sake of profit), it would be difficult to conclude that they are ignorant of the value of broad university education. One example that justifies this is the employment of Lippmann by Steffens. Walter Lippmann was no journalism school graduate. But at college he was active in leftist politics. After graduating in politics, Lippmann was employed by Steffens to help on muckraking magazine assignment. Lippmann became an excellent opinion writer. Speaking on why he did that Steffens said he took on Lippmann to win a

bet with his editors, namely: "Give me an intelligent, college-educated man for a year, and I will make a good journalist out of him" (Winship, 1988:29). Now, you can imagine how taking core liberal arts and humanities courses during his/her education time could help a student journalist in his/her future journalism career.

Therefore, journalism education at the university should be a negotiated enterprise (Starck, 2000:58) that demands the collaboration of many stakeholders in achieving shared goals. But mainly journalism educators and professionals have a great potential to contribute (Macdonald, 2006) and help in the direction of Pulitzer's injunction that journalism should be more than a trade (or incidentally, a field of academic study) but "one of the great and intellectual professions" (quoted in Boylan et al. 1988:60).

The trends in the discussions about journalism university education are indicating that graduates should have intensive practical training and adequate conceptual or theoretical knowledge of the liberal arts courses or in other words, a balanced approach. Though this is the case, however, there is a difficulty in precisely knowing what the right balance should be of the practical skills and theoretical/liberal arts education. There is no down to earth clear consensus on how much share these courses should have in the undergraduate curriculum. What is the ratio of the balance? It is open for everybody's interpretation.

Many UNESCO documents, seminars and conferences advocate that there should be a balance between the theory and practice courses in journalism education (Communication Training in Africa: Model Curricula, 2002; Ocholi and Liososky, 2002; UNESCO, 2005; Berger and Matras, 2007; UNISCO, 2007). The Center for International Media Assistance (2007), and journalism scholars such as De Burgh, Adam, Macdonald, Reese, Starck, Boylan and others who

reflect on the subject also support the integration of theory and practice of journalism. But none of them puts the ratio of these courses in percentages that should be included in the curriculum. In this regard, the UNESCO “Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Developing Countries & Emerging Democracies” (2007) is interesting because this template categorizes journalism curricula into three axes: professional practice courses, media studies courses, and arts and sciences courses. The balance for a three year long degree program is estimated at 40%, 10%, and 50% respectively (UNESCO, 2007:10). This UNESCO model journalism curriculum designed for journalism schools in developing countries:

have the hallmarks of a sensible, practical and workable approach....The curricula strive for a ‘strong core educational structure with a balance between the practical and the academic’. Many schools...favor this approach....The proposed curriculum is a generic model that can be adapted according to each country’s specific needs (Singh, 2008, 234-236).

By analyzing the descriptive nature of the courses (Adam, 2001; De Burgh, 2006; Print and Web Journalism Department, AAU, 2008) found in this Model Curriculum, the media studies and arts and sciences courses can be grouped into the same general academic wing of journalism education. Based on this template, it can therefore be inferred that **40** percent of practical courses and **60** percent of academic inclined courses is a right balance for undergraduate journalism education.

### **2.3.2 Convergence and Specialization in Journalism Education**

The meaning of media convergence is manifold and depends on each individual’s perspectives. Convergence has become in fact one of the most hotly

contested topics among journalism educators (Castaneda, Murphy, and Hether, 2005:57). This is because convergence varies from country to country, from culture to culture both within countries and individual companies and due to the fact that laws that regulate media ownership and the power of digital technology influence the nature of convergence (Quinn and Filak, 2005:3). There can be convergences that call for corporate conglomeration, technological convergence that proposes many pieces of digital equipment to converge in to a single box, and convergence as a form of journalism (ibid, 4). Limiting the scope to the form of journalism, convergence can be defined as a merging of specialized knowledge areas associated with organizational work for particular media platforms (Lowery, et al. 2005:33). A “converged journalism refers to the practice of reporting news for multiple media platforms such as television, newspaper, the Internet and radio” (Huang, Rademakers, Fayemiwo, and Dunlap, 2004). Based on research findings, the media environment is moving to this so-called new media practice i.e. convergence (Quinn, and Quinn-Allan, 2005). In connection with the technological advancement, rapid economic growth and media ownership changes, convergence is becoming a revolutionary form of journalism that is emerging in many parts of the world (Quinn and Filak, 2005:3).

Because this kind of development is likely to influence the way journalism careers evolve, students graduating from journalism at this time need to know about media convergence and to deal with it at university journalism education is an urgent necessity (Quinn and Filak, 2005:3; Quinn, and Quinn-Allan, 2005). Based on a national survey made in the United States of America in 2004, between the years 1998-2002, “more than half of the journalism schools (60 per cent) had adapted their curricula or developed new courses to prepare for convergence” (Huang quoted in Quinn, and Quinn-Allan, 2005). Respondents of the survey suggested that schools needed to provide cross-media knowledge and experience to help students find cross-media jobs in the future. Similarly, such

curricular adaptations—or at least discussions of reforms—are taking place at many other universities around the world (Mould, 2009:58-60). According to Mould, in the future, journalistic specialization may not be by medium, but by discipline or the beat to reporting (2009:58-60).

The shift to convergence in the media industries comes after the concentration of media corporate ownership power following the context of neoliberal deregulation since the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 in the United States of America (Macdonald, 2006; Kraeplin, and Criado, 2005: 47). In addressing this phenomenon, journalism curricula have been (and are) on the reform path towards producing journalists who can work across media platforms.

This new trend of digitalizing and blending of different media formats in a newsroom is, however, criticized by many educators. They criticize it saying it is “an economic strategy in which media conglomerates take advantage of the digitization of content and government deregulation to reduce operating costs and expand market share” (Lorimer and Gasher quoted in Macdonald, 2006). The President of Columbia University, Lee Bollinger, saw this convergence as a rushed strategy that undermined the public interest and compromised public service mission of journalism in a democratic society (Macdonald, 2006). Many other critics are also arguing that;

the media is prioritizing profit imperatives at the expense of its public service responsibilities. In contrast to the needs of an informed citizenry, there is evidence that the contemporary “media often fail to inform people about significant issues” (Hackett and Zhao, 1996:44-45). The media conglomerates have been criticized for failing to fulfill the citizens’ need for local coverage (Cooper, 2003:73). News

has become secondary to revenues, advertisers and consumer preferences and newspaper companies are run by corporate boards made up of directors drawn from industry, finance and law and by Chief Executive Officers sharing a “common commitment to shareholders and stock value, not news and readers” (Cooper, 2003:78). (Macdonald, 2005: 751)

According to critics this will undermine competition and diversity of media products - which could lower the quality of journalism at the end. Proponents of specialized journalism argue that students can be taught with multimedia and web courses to address the technological development along with all the specific mediums (Castaneda et al. 2005). To these people, journalists who have trained strongly on critical thinking skills and basic writing in a specific medium will be competent enough in the job instead of those student journalists who are trained to work in more than one medium (Gil Thelen cited in Castaneda et al. 2005:57-59).

### **2.3.3 Curriculum Contextualization in Journalism Education**

Hochheimer indicated that “to educate truly means to provide the context and the support within which students can learn to reach within themselves to find out the power and abilities that lie within them to take control of their own lives” (Macdonald, 2006). Curriculum development has to make its base a more comprehensive framework that encompasses the society’s needs (historical, cultural, physical etc.), children’s needs (physical environment etc.), subjects of learning (knowledge, disciplines), philosophy and psychology of teaching and learning, and ideology or belief of the society in which the curriculum is to be used, however, this has never been the case in Africa (Salio-Bao, 1989).

Curriculum development for education in Africa has been taken from Western models and practices introduced in colonial days and still used today, not from the context of an African point of view (Ibid). African education has been dominated by the imported modern education that lays its origin in the West. This according to Elleni, does not value "Africa's insistence on the roundedness and indivisibility of person and community" (quoted in Amare, 2009:63) and thus it is not only less useful but it even tends to hamper development in African countries (Itagaki in Amare, 64).

Like the debates on the general sense of education, the education of journalists is also subjected to such debates, namely whether there should be the same type of journalism education elsewhere in the world or a different type of it subjected to situational analysis. In the practical world, the basic skills of journalism are widely recognized, but the role of journalism seems different. This is connected to the debates about whether journalism's role is that of a public service or predominantly that of a commercial enterprise (French, 2006). The later view leads to journalism being straightforwardly subsumed in to the general business oriented media industry whereas the earlier tends to be defined as a distinct field in the center of society. Nevertheless, the public service role of journalism was and is generally acknowledged as a necessary support of democratic society (French, 2006:2; UNESCO, 2007:6). The ultimate goal of the business (professional journalism education) should not be to its own end but to beef up the general professional competence of journalists to serve the public (De Burgh, 2003; Reese, 1999; Macdonald, 2006 etc). As it is said, the basic goal of journalists is "to serve the society by informing the public, scrutinizing the way power is exercised, stimulating democratic debate, and in those ways aiding political, economic, social and cultural development" in an informative, educative and entertaining manner (UNESCO, 2007:6).

Recognizing this basic goal of journalism, the curriculum of journalism education has to make its premises on the contextual political and social theories and themes (French, 2006). In general, the media landscape and other general contexts in which the journalism curriculum is to be implemented needs to be assessed and considered (UNESCO: 2005).

In defining a new identity, African journalism and journalism education, for example, is recommended by many to look into its own journalism education and training. It has to extract itself from the dependency on:

Western-based curricula, based on rationalist-scientific detachment, [that] tend to uproot African students from their history and culture, making it difficult for them to engage in reflexivity and critique on their own governments from the vantage point of engaged and constructive citizenry (Mazrui in Banda et al. 2007, 157-168).

As Hochheimer supports a more critical-pragmatic and less instrumentalist approach of African journalism education is needed (Banda et al, 2007:157). Journalism educators and practitioners need to use their skills and analytical power in blend. Moreover, it is examined that the African journalism and journalism education has to look into an alternative media mainly from the development-communicational perspective such as community radio including other folk media use (Ibid).

Journalism and communication training in Africa is, of course, at its crossroads (Boafo and Wete, 2002). There are attempts in designing curricula (for example by UNESCO) for training communication specialists and media practitioners which respond to social, political, economic, and cultural development needs and reflect the changing situation in the region (ibid). But what is important and

equally becoming challengeable is to understand precisely and thoroughly the socio-economic, political and cultural contexts of Africa.

In this regard, according to Odhiambo, Boafo, Aznar, McClain and Sy (2002:7-14), Africa is in general economically characterized as the least developed region in the world. Socially and politically, Africa is a region where armed struggle is a determinant of political instability and other forms of social oppression. In relation to other regions of the world, Africa is a victim of unfair trade practices, exploitation, racism and imperialism. Socially, Africa is a region where its health and education expenditure is low; in effect which has the lowest literacy and contraceptive prevalence rate, highest infant and maternal mortality rate. In addition to this, the kinship systems of traditional African societies favor such practices as girl-child marriage, female genital mutilation, and rigid age-related stratification systems. The social conditions of Africa are a direct outcome of political instability and bad governance. However, it is also believed that African countries are in transition to democracy (Wondwosen, 2009) and there are countries with good governance practice.

After assessing and analyzing African contexts as above, in November 1996, UNESCO and the African Council for Communication Education jointly organized a workshop to develop contextually relevant model curricula for Africa in Cape Town, South Africa (Boafo and Wete, 2002; Odhiambo et al. 2002). In that workshop participants urged African journalism and communication curricula to include:

1. Courses which discusses the prevailing development problems facing African countries. It was suggested that the curricula must prepare students to embrace change. To do this the curricula have to equip graduates with the intellectual competence to comprehend the situation of

Africa and the world around them and appropriate technical skills. Students need to understand the issues of the day and their interconnectedness, raise policy questions, and analyze the options offered. They also need to be grounded in basic social sciences, particularly economics, politics, sociology, social psychology, history and cultural studies among others in a way that helps them understand Africa's and the world's conditions better.

2. The curricula should also include courses on traditional African communication systems and intercultural communication, and
3. It should be gender-sensitive and include gender related courses.

In addition to this list, James (1990:5-12) noted that African journalism curricula should include the value of competence in language use (indigenous and working languages) and the importance of development communication. According to James, the multilingual nature of African nations makes it imperative for those facilitating the development to be competent users of one or more of their country's indigenous languages. Therefore, the schools of journalism in Africa need to include at least one indigenous language as a requirement in their programs (James, 1990:12).

Besides this, there is a general agreement among scholars and international agencies concerned with Third World issues that national development should be the forward thrust of these countries' policies. African journalists should therefore comprise one of the numbers of groups who should work actively toward the attainment of this goal (James, 1990:5). Then, in order to cater to the needs of Africa and the Third World, courses in print and broadcast and others that make the core of journalism education should be approached within the context of development communication.

Despite the fact that development journalism/communication has been offered as an alternative to the existing modes of communication practice, there is as yet no global consensus on its nature and role (Jimada, 1992:374). As Bourgault argues, many Western analysts felt the concept of development journalism was another ideological instrument used by African governments to exert control over their presses (Shaw, 2009:500).

### **2.3.3.1 The Ethiopian Context**

#### **General Context**

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual federation country, made up of more than 80 different ethnic groups and languages with some 200 dialects (Tewodros, 2008; Alemayehu, 2009:39). Amharic, Tigrigna and Oromiffa are the most common languages, spoken by roughly two-thirds of the Ethiopian population. Amharic and English remain *de facto* languages of state with English being the major foreign language taught in schools (CIA: The World Factbook 2007 cited in Tewodros, 2008).

Ethiopia, a country with a parliamentary democracy (Alemayehu, 2009:43) is known to the world as a poor nation but with good economic growth (11.1 percent growth at least for the last 7 years) at present. The economic policy of the country is agricultural development-led industry. The pro-capitalist revolutionary democrats believe that an economic development based on this path would benefit the vast majority of the Ethiopian people.

The political context of the country has decisively been changing since the downfall of the Derge regime. Ethiopia today is said to be a 'new' Ethiopia in the making (<http://www.ethiopia.media.com>). The EPRDF led government made radical changes to the unitary structure of the state and introduced federalism based on the principle of self-determination up to secession with a view to

“addressing the claims of ethnic groups in the country of historic discrimination and inequality, and to build a multi-ethnic democracy” (Alemayehu, 2009:44-45).

Though the redefinition of the Ethiopian state on a new basis is underway, however, the foundation of that project remains controversial in the political discourses of the country (<http://www.ethiopia.media.com>). While many viewed it as a bold attempt at nation building, others worried about what will become of the traditional "Ethiopian entity" after ethnic division.

In dialogues to bring a holistic development to this country, while the government urges the public that now is the favorable time to fight against poverty; taking it as the worst enemy of this nation, some personalities in the opposition camp do not believe (Negasso, 2009:61-66) that there is peace and stability that enable them to do so. To Negasso, former president of Ethiopia and now a member of opposition party, “politics is the root cause of socio economic problems” (62) in Ethiopia. Among the major pending questions of democracy, peace and stability according to Negasso are:

the politics of intolerance and exclusion, the basic constitutional freedom and rights are not respected in this country and political forces are not ready to willingly accept the verdict of the people expressed through their votes in elections...the question of the right of different peoples in Ethiopia to self-determination (Negasso, 2009:65).

Therefore, says Negasso, the absence of peace and political stability in the country which the current government has not been able to solve are the causes of our poverty and underdevelopment; emphasizing that the government has to work first at this issue.

## **Media Context**

With regard to mass media, the period since the change of Government in 1991 is among the events which have been given a unique place in the history of Ethiopian journalism. This period is taken as an exceptional one because of two basic reasons: The first reason is that in this period pre-publication censorship was outlawed. Secondly, press ownership, which had been monopolized by the government and political party for many years, was permitted to private citizens (PMC, 2006:32). Private newspapers and magazines began to evolve in Ethiopia, when freedom of the press was legally guaranteed under Proclamation No.34/1992 (Shimelis, 2000; Birhanu, 2009; PMC, 2006). Following the Proclamation, the Ethiopian reading publics have witnessed the appearance of a large number of tabloid newspapers parallel to the disappearance of many others (PMC, 2006:2). For example in 1993 there were **118** registered private and government newspapers and magazines. It has increased to **554** in 1998. This number has doubled in 2008 reaching **1000** and above. By 2009 the total number of registered private and government newspapers and magazines drastically decreased to reaching only **113** (Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, Yearly Magazine, 2009:23). But this figure does not indicate how many of them were actually circulated for public consumption.

On the other hand, electronic media did not show the same mushroom effect like that of the print (PMC, 2006:31). Television is still under the monopoly of the Government. Radio stations are also almost under monopoly of the government except four private FM radio stations (Sheger, Zami, Afro FM and Fana), two national radio stations in coverage (Fana and Voice of Woyane) and seven community radio licenses given. Some of the community radios are yet to start (Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, Yearly Magazine, 2009:35).

Most of the newspapers and magazines were short-lived, among others, due to the lack of professionally competent manpower, inadequate finance, and

incompetent leadership together with lack of appropriate and adequate feasibility studies before getting into business. They had been started without adequate research on the type, language, frequency, duration and the market needs in order to be the most viable press output in the market (PMC, 2006:31).

In addition to this, Wondwosen (2009:100) citing Reporter Newspaper (*7 Yekatit* 1999 EC), noted that the number of the independent newspapers in Ethiopia shrank in the 2005 post-election time due to:

the general reduction of the quality of the independent media; the gradual slide of the media from independent or “neutral” position to party-mouth status reflecting the view of only the opposition parties; the failure of government or other public officials to give adequate information to the independent media; the ever-increasing publishing cost; and the absence of professional ethics among the journalists of the independent media.

Since 1992, three proclamations have been proclaimed to regulate the media and freedom of information in the country. Based on the latest proclamation, the “Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation” (Federal Negarit Gazeta of the FDRE, 2009), media convergence in the sense of business corporate ownership is almost prohibited by sub articles 1, 2, 3 of Article 7.

In terms of the perception of the professional role and orientation of Ethiopian journalists, private journalists prefer to give more importance to the adversarial role than journalists employed in government media and the journalists in the government owned media give more importance to the developmental role of journalism (Birhanu, 2009:55). The journalists in the private ownership are

critical of the government in the name of the watchdog role. But most of them are reported as not being independent or not exhibiting objective news reporting due to their political orientation (Shimelis, 2000:69; Wondwosen, 2009:100).

On the other hand, the official policy of the “public” media is to practice development journalism and journalists are required to do so. For instance, one training manual, *(የሚዲያዎችን ልማታዊና ዲሞክራሲያዊ የአሰራር ፍልስፍና መነሻና አቅጣጫዎች (2000) ያልታተመ፣ አዲስ አበባ)* may be literally translated as “The Democratic Developmental Media Philosophical Foundations and Missions” (2008:32-47) prepared by the Government to train new entrant journalists to the “public” media, notes that the best media philosophy that could effectively strengthen and support the current democratic developmental state of Ethiopia is developmental journalism. It ascertains “in letting continue the success what the country is registering in development and democracy and to effectively overcome the dangers that the country may face, practicing developmental journalism is a timely option.” Based on this training manual, among the long list of major goals of developmental journalism in this country are: strengthening democracy and fast and sustainable development by telling success stories. At the same time, exposing development failures through investigation and indicating solutions for the problems, and creating national consensus on fundamental issues.

The occurrence of journalism education in addressing the demand of qualified journalists is a recent phenomenon in the country. On top of it, the relevance of the curricula in the mushrooming departments of the Ethiopian higher learning institutions is not yet well researched and debated. In fact, there were attempts in the form of assessment needs to revise syllabuses or “change” curricula. For instance, in 2003, the Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute (now part of the Addis Ababa University) made a curriculum change and upgraded its program

from diploma to first degree level (Tadese et al. 2003). In addition to the upgrading mission, the rationale to change the curriculum, according to the report of the curriculum development committee was to “have a program that incorporates social science courses, liberal art courses and business oriented courses, and to be able to produce out a full rounded person not a narrow area specialist whose use to the station or company is limited” (Tadese et al. 2003).

The department of journalism and communication at Mekelle University, the focus of this study, also did a need assessment in 2008 for the first time. The assessment was conducted to know the demand and contextual expectations and thereby to make a change. Based on the final report of the assessment, the curriculum was found short of the following major elements (Need Assessment Report, 2008:9): It gives little attention to the culture, history, development policies and knowledge of the country. It fails in giving considerable focus on linguistic and literary competence. Besides, respondents were of the view the program should focus on specializations (like TV, radio and print) and include gender issues in the media courses (ibid). The program was also found that the practical and theoretical aspects of the program were not reasonably balanced - theoretical courses dominated (Need Assessment Report, 2008:9; DJC, 2008: II). The currently working curriculum claims that it gave a response at least to some of the major need based requests.

### **Education Policy Context**

Considering the status of Ethiopia that is currently characterized by widespread poverty, poor health and education coverage and quality, environmental degradation, HIV/AIDS and malaria pandemic, and obsolete ways of farming, education establishments, especially higher education institutions are increasingly required to be at the forefront of the development and poverty alleviation efforts of the country (Teshome, 2007). According to the education

policy of Ethiopia, a relevant higher institution's curriculum is one that gives education that enables to solve problems (TGE 1994 cited in Amare, 2009:61). This means to help the society to eradicate poverty and hunger. Thus, Ethiopian higher institutions are expected to play their role in bringing economic development by producing not only competent servants but also competent entrepreneurs who can create jobs. In order to produce graduates who can contribute to the achievement of the required sustainable development and build democratic culture, the curricula of higher learning institutions "shall aim at enabling the learner to acquire pertinent knowledge; independent thinking skills, communication skills and professional values that together prepare him/her to become a competent professional" (Article 21 of the Proclamation on Higher Education, Federal Negarit Gazeta, 2009:4987). Moreover, as it is indicated in Article 7:

among other things Ethiopian higher education institutions must be characterized with the values of pursuing truth and freedom of expression of truth, participatory governance and rule of law, culture of fighting corruption, democracy and multiculturalism, and justice and fairness (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 2009:4981).

In addition to the above elements, gender, civic and ethical education, HIV/AIDS, special needs education and environmental issues are the cross-cutting areas that are recommended to be reflected in the curricula of the Ethiopian education sectors or either be implemented as extracurricular activities (Ministry of Education, 2005).

#### **2.3.4. Conclusion**

In journalism education the most common area of debate and dissension has always been the curriculum (Gaunt, 1992:2). For some, journalism education that can impart technical competence is a sounding strategy and for some others, it is

the strategy that gives particular attention on the development of critical competence more sounding. Still others say that there is no such natural split and journalism education is a hybrid of all.

The meaning of convergence in journalism is manifold and has become the most contesting topic in the field. There are convergences that call for corporate conglomeration, technological convergence and convergence as a form of journalism. Basically, the concept of convergence is the result of media industries corporate ownership. While this trend claims to provide cross-media knowledge and experience to help students find cross-media jobs in the future, it is however, criticized as a rushed strategy that undermined the public interest and compromised public service mission of journalism in a democratic society.

Even though the journalism education that reflects the media landscape is suggested as effective, African journalism education has been dominated by Western models of education.

## *Chapter Three*

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 The Research Design**

The research approach is a qualitative method design. This approach provides review of literature on diverse models of journalism education, interviews with editors, student journalists, journalism teaching staff and government officials whose work is related to media practice. The term qualitative has been and is being used in the fields of social sciences and humanities (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006): Data in qualitative research come in a variety of forms. In addition to the information that a researcher can obtain from field notes, individual and focus group interview transcripts, documents and journals, it allows him/her to accumulate a great deal of data during the course of study (ibid). This study about the content of a journalism education curriculum is a descriptive one and at times it is also analytical. It attempts to determine or identify what the curriculum is in relation to the professional and academic journalism education orientations. On the other hand, it attempts to analyze or evaluate the content of the curriculum qualitatively. The literature review has helped to thoroughly describe what the existing curriculum looks like. In addition to the theoretical background, the inductive analysis of the individual and group discussion interviews has helped to develop contextual themes which finally contributed to the overall analysis process. This research can be considered as part of a **formative curriculum evaluation or study**; an evaluation

or a study which is not summative that looks at the whole effect of a program including the practicality of the curriculum (Salia-Bao, 1989:34). Rather, it is a sort of continuous evaluation but critical and a way of making value judgments whether the goals and objectives of the program would be met with contents of the existing courses. It is one way of studying **the intent of the content of the curriculum** based on theoretical discourses led by educators in the area, teachers, students' reflections and expectations of media practitioners in this country.

## 3.2 Data Collection Methods

### 3.2.1 Primary Sources of Data

In order to explore the evaluation of the content of the curriculum by the students and teaching staff members on the one hand and to **know the expectations** of media practitioners and media related officials on the other hand, primary data was collected through individual and focus group interviews.

#### 3.2.1.1 In-depth Individual Interviews

Because social researchers emphasize on searching for meaning, among other methods, they use in-depth interview to gather information (Yates, 2009:156). In finding information on perspectives and experiences of people about something, the best way is to ask them in close. For this study, 17 persons from different sectors were asked with interview guiding questions. Three private newspapers and one private radio station that have operated for long periods of time were selected purposely and their editors/editor-in-chiefs were interviewed. One editor-in-chief from the government newspaper and two editor-in-chiefs from two government FM radio stations were also part of the interviews. Moreover, two government officials, two editors from television (one ETV news editor and

one Tigray Television program desk editor), and six available teaching staff at Mekelle University (out of the 9 teachers) were among the sample interviews of this study.

In selecting the informants, I did it on a pre-determined set of screening requirements (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006); because I believe that these individuals are the appropriate stakeholders to explain their own perspectives and experiences on journalism practice and education. I believe that these people have the ability to provide relevant data on the area under investigation. In addition to this, in evaluating the educational curriculum (in this case journalism curriculum content), at least teachers (journalism teaching staff), employers (of media houses), students and administrators (government information and broadcast authority officials) must be consulted and have to participate (Salia-Bao, 1989:29-36).

Aiming at the detailed account of the participants' understanding on the research topic, the in-depth interview was semi-structured with open-ended questions. This has helped me to ask follow-up questions during the interview and the respondents were able to talk in detail with a certain direction (indicating high validity). The interviewees fully consented to being named and quoted in the research. They were interviewed at their work places and recorded on audiotape.

### **3.2.1.2 Focus Group Discussions**

"Focus groups can be seen as a form of 'group in-depth interviewing'." "Getting the participants to talk, discuss and debate amongst themselves is part of the reasoning behind focus groups" (Yates, 2004:171). Recognizing this fact, I had a discussion with two focus groups of second year journalism students at Mekelle University. This batch of students is the first to be taught (first seniors to be trained) by the curriculum under investigation after a change has been made to it

in 2008. Each focus group had six students and they were selected by their course instructors based on their good achievement and experience of reflectivity in class. The assumption was that these students can evaluate the curriculum better critically.

A set of questions which were drawn up from the discussions in chapter two were designed and served the interview as a guide. The interview took place at the last week of May, 2010, i.e. almost at the end of the academic class year. This was made to give chance for the students to give their own evaluative suggestions on the curriculum based on most of the courses they have been taught (86 credit hours out of 113±3). The discussion was held in one of the students' laboratory rooms and the selected students were interested to participate in the focus group discussion.

This method, as Wimmer and Dominick (2006:130) and Yates (2004:171) noted, is important at least for two reasons. First, it took me less time to generate the data; and second, I have observed that more ideas have been generated in the focus group discussions than in the individual in-depth interviews.

### **3.2.2 Secondary Sources of Data**

Due to the fact that available professional or academic literature on a research topic can be considered as qualitative data itself (Yates, 2004:163; Adams and Duffield, 2005:17-19), I have extensively reviewed literature on the area (see chapter two) as secondary sources of data. Besides, available documents and reports are taken as secondary sources of my qualitative data. The Needs Assessment Report (2008) of the Department of Journalism and Communication at Mekelle University, and public documents such as the Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation (2008), the Editorial Policy of the Ethiopian Press Agency (2003), the Higher Education Proclamation (2009), the

five years Education Sector Development Program Plan III (Ministry of Education, 2005) and a training manual for journalists prepared by the Government which may be translated as “The Democratic Developmental Media Philosophical Foundations and Missions” (2008) are among the documents and reports examined. The use of these documents and report was helpful especially for setting the context.

Because of the absence of local literature works in this area, the thesis has heavily relied on literature review from the world’s journalism education trends and the African context. The extensive volume of literature reviewed herein is deliberate for the reason of providing a better understanding of the nature of journalism education and the discourses about it.

### 3.3 Analyzing the Data

The goals of this thesis are to describe the content of the curriculum based on the professional and theoretical discourses of journalism education and analyzed results of the data collected through primary and secondary sources, and finally to test how it conforms to the goal of the curriculum itself. In order to meet this intent, the themes started to be developed in the review of the literature along with the analyzed data found from the primary and secondary sources have been developed in open categories, thus the first and second research questions are based on that. The last question is analyzed based on the categories refined in questions one and two and the UNESCO (2007) template. This template is the **Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Countries of Developing and Emerging Democracies** developed by UNESCO to be adopted by the developing nations but according to their own contexts. At this stage, the task is an attempt to evaluate the content of the curriculum based on the indicating criteria that are developed in the discussions with the earlier questions and the UNESCO template.

## *Chapter Four*

### **Presentation and Discussions of Findings**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the presentation and interpretation of findings of the thesis by describing the curriculum of journalism education at Mekelle University in terms of its professional and theoretical composition of courses, exploring how context is accommodated, and finally by analyzing or evaluating whether the general set objective would be achievable.

#### **4.2 Part One: Share of courses in the journalism and communication curriculum at Mekelle University in terms of professional and academic orientation**

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As discussed in detail in chapter two, how to educate journalists in university is an existing debate. For some, journalism education that can impart technical competence is a sounding strategy and for some others, it is the strategy that gives particular attention on the development of critical competence more sounding. Still others say that there is no such natural split and journalism education is a mix of both. To study the MU's curriculum courses composition in terms of these discourses, it would be imperative to know what looks like the existing framework first.

The course breakdown of Mekelle University’s journalism and communication education indicate that there are **Major Area Courses** (categorized as Print, Electronic, Common to Both Strands, and Communication courses), **Supportive Courses and Elective Courses**. The required grand total credit hours for graduation based on this curriculum are **113±3**. The curriculum has included professional and knowledge about journalism oriented courses. Most of the supportive and elective courses are taken from other departments of the university. The full list of names and their allotted credit hours is presented below.

<b>COURSE BREAKDOWN</b>			
<b>1. Major Area Courses</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Course code</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
<b>1.1 Print Media Courses</b>	News writing and reporting for print	JOCO 101	3
	Feature Writing	JOCO 103	3
	Advanced Reporting	JOCO 302	3
	Magazine Journalism	JOCO 201	3
	Photo Journalism	JOCO 202	3
	Publication Layout and Design	JOCO 102	3
	Newspaper Production	JOCO 301	3
	<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		
<b>1.2. Electronic Media Courses</b>	Broadcast News Writing and Reporting	JOCO 112	4
	Broadcast Project	JOCO 311	3
	Radio Program Production	JOCO 211	4
	Television Program Production	JOCO 212	4
	<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		

	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Course code</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
<b>1.3 Courses Common to Both Strands</b>	Introduction to Journalism	JOCO 131	3
	Online Journalism	JOCO 303	3
	Media Management	JOCO 332	3
	Media Law and Ethics	JOCO 232	4
	Internship	JOCO 331	2
	Media and Com. Research Methods	JOCO 233	3
	Senior Essay	JOCO 335	3
	Senior Essay (proposal	JOCO 334	2
	Media and Society	JOCO 132	3
	Media Translation	JOCO 231	3
	English for Journalists	JOCO 135	3
	Survey of Ethiopian Mass Media	JOCO 134	2
	Total credit hours		
<b>1.4 Communication Courses</b>	Advertising and social marketing	JOCO 222	3
	Introduction to Communication	JOCO 121	3
	Communication Theories	JOCO 223	3
	Public Relations	JOCO 122	3
	Development Communication	JOCO 321	3
	Intercultural Communication	JOCO 221	3
	Communication and Conflict Management	JOCO 322	3
	Total Credit Hours		
<b>2.Supportive</b>	Intermediate Writing Skills	FLEE 133	3

<b>Courses</b>	Civic and Ethical studies	CEED 201	2
	Computer literacy	ICT 101	3
	Entrepreneurship	BMGT 104	2
	Advanced Writing skills	FLEE 202	3
	Creative non fiction	JOCO 336	3
	Art Review and Critics	JOCO 333	3
	Amharic Advanced writing skills	ELAM 202	3
	<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		
<b>3. Elective Courses</b>	Tigrigna Advanced Writing skills	ELTi 202	3
	<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		<b><u>3</u></b>
<b>Grand Total Credit Hours</b>			<b><u>113±3</u></b>

**Table 4.1 Journalism and Communication Courses at Mekelle University**

By carefully reading the courses' description (see Appendix VII) and chapter contents included in each course of the curriculum, it is possible to make a judgment or evaluation where the courses should fall in terms of professional and academic orientations based on the description provided in the literature review and evaluative suggestions gained from the in-depth interview with teaching staff and focus group discussion with students. This is not, however, simple and can not be complete. There are courses which overlap and difficult to identify as are this or that. But most of them are courses that can be categorized

as professional or otherwise by looking in to the contents they intend to offer to students as written in the curriculum.

#### **4.2.1 Courses' Analysis**

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From the above table and earlier premises, without doubt, all the courses under the print and electronic streams of the program are more or less practical/professional courses. As any one who is close to the field can understand, their descriptions (see Appendix VII) clearly indicate that the courses are designed to help student journalists to be able to write and report for both electronic and print media practically and effectively. In addition to these vocational skills, the curriculum has also included professional courses that can be considered as transferable skills. The vocational skills are those skills which are profession-specific; whereas, the transferable skills are those skills and abilities that transfer from job to job no matter which position(s) are to be holding (De Burgh, 2003). Therefore, in addition to the skill courses specific to the print and electronic media, the curriculum has contained courses that are common to both strands namely; Online Journalism, English for Journalists, and the supportive courses like Intermediate Writing Skills, Computer Literacy, Advanced Writing Skills, Amharic Advanced Writing Skills and the single elective course i.e. Tigrigna Advanced Writing Skills. These are practical courses that encourage students to get the required skills in language, computer and internet technology for different media use. In other words these are certainly among the courses that can provide journalists with what we call transferable skills.

In the world debate of journalism education, courses that generally fall in this professional group (vocational and transferable) basically focus in producing graduates with technical competencies. They are believed to prepare students to

report, write, edit and help to be able to use media technologies for the various media, and are at the same time meant to prepare students directly for a career in journalism (UNESCO, 2007; Mfumbusa, 2008). These courses are considered as strongly directed towards socializing the students into the culture and routines for their future careers in the media industry (Thomas, 2008:19). The assumption of such journalism courses according to Thorson (2005) and Reese (1999) is that they should provide the media industry with “well-trained” students who can be hired into the various news niches without a lot of further investment. However, to make this real, teaching should mirror the working environment i.e. the emphasis should be on real world experience. Students should be attached to different media and must actually write to the media they are supposed to be employed (Thomas, 2008:19). Generally, with such kind of teaching, students are reinforced mostly to know the how-to-do-nature but not the why case (Ibid).

Based on the analysis, the following courses can surely be taken as professional/practical part of the journalism curriculum at Mekelle University.

Course title	Course code	Credit Hours	as in the Curriculum
News writing and reporting for print	JOCO 101	3	Print
Feature Writing	JOCO 103	3	Print
Advanced Reporting	JOCO 302	3	Print
Magazine Journalism	JOCO 201	3	Print
Photo Journalism	JOCO 202	3	Print
Publication Layout and Design	JOCO 102	3	Print
Newspaper Production	JOCO 301	3	Print
Broadcast news writing and reporting	JOCO 112	4	Electronic
Broadcast Project	JOCO 311	3	Electronic

Radio Program Production	JOCO 211	4	Electronic
Television Program Production	JOCO 212	4	Electronic
Online Journalism	JOCO 303	3	Common to both
English for Journalists	JOCO 135	3	Common to both
Internship	JOCO 331	2	Common to both
Intermediate Writing skills	FLEE 133	3	Supportive
Computer literacy	ICT 101	3	Supportive
Advanced Writing Skills	FLEE 202	3	Supportive
Amharic Advanced Writing Skills	ELAM 202	3	Supportive
Tigrigna Advanced Writing Skills	ELTi 202	3	Elective
Creative non fiction [writing]	JOCO 336	3	Supportive
<b>Total</b>		62 chrs	

**Table 4.2 List of Professional Courses**

From this table, it is evident that 62 credit hours out of the total 113±3 (116) credit hours of the program are professional courses i.e. more than half (53.448 percent) of the courses demand real practice.

In summary, courses like in the above list which are taken professional/practical in their mode of “education” are the way to make students acquire many skills, best labeled as those of investigation, analysis and expression. Moreover, their application is subjected to pressures not only to achieve deadlines but to exploit the newest technology and other resources (De Burgh, 2003:101). In other words, these courses are those that emphasis on the articulation skills (the how to present of information and news, i.e. on genres, formulas, conventions, design,

and so on) and instrumental skills (such as reporting, writing, editing) of journalism (Deuze, 2006:28).

On the other hand, courses that are not mentioned in the above table 4.2 are more of academic in their content and approach (see Appendix VII). These are the courses that in other words considered as media studies, communication studies and campus courses (courses that are taught in other departments of the university). The intention and emphasis of these courses is to enable students to be analytical; largely concerned with developing the ability to assess the roles and impact of the mass media and communication in society, and enabling students to be analytically and critically reflective, rather than with developing specific media production skills.

To be precise, for instance, the Introduction to Journalism course introduces students with the field of journalism. It addresses the multidisciplinary nature of and philosophical issues of journalism and its function in society. The Media Law and Ethics, and Media and Society courses wed the media with the core courses of liberal arts i.e. Law, Ethics, and Society. They intend to familiarize students with; the study of legal and ethical issues in the media, and the power that media has and the socio-economic and political role it plays within the society and vice versa respectively. The purpose of the Survey of the Ethiopian Mass Media course is primarily to offer students an analytical and historical perspective of Ethiopian mass media.

The Media and Communication Research Methods course is an academic one and introduces students to the approaches to social science research in media and communication. Based on the knowledge and skills they will get from this course, students are required to reflect critically by practicing the subsequent research courses namely; Senior Essay Proposal Writing and the final Senior Essay course in the area of media and communication practices. The Art Review

and Critics course is also aimed at enabling student journalists to critically review and analyze media content, meaning, aesthetics and impact including their own power of reflection.

For the fact that the Media Translation course goes beyond the simple techniques of translation, it can be taken as an academic/rigorous media study course. As it can be understood from the course's description and its chapter's content, it is about the study of the main causes of linguistic variation and language functions and their applications in media. All the communication courses including the Public Relations, and Advertising and Social Marketing are also more of theory than practice. For example, the Public Relations course has only one chapter that deals with practical aspect of the field from the nine chapters that it has.

The department is named as "Department of Journalism and Communication". As it has been raised in chapter one, beyond producing journalists, the program is also aimed at producing public relations officers and communication experts. However, it has communication courses that only account 21 credit hours. They are indeed more of introductory in their nature. Then, how could it be called "Department of Journalism and Communication" and produce the claimed experts?

To be fair, there is no convincing detailed treatment that the communication courses are there as an end in themselves to produce public relations and communication experts. However, considering the few courses and their shallow treatments, definitely, they can be good ingredients to produce good journalists but not to what is additionally claimed. In fact, as what Berger ([guyberger.ru.ac.za/fulltext/tenyearsteaching.doc](http://guyberger.ru.ac.za/fulltext/tenyearsteaching.doc), accessed on March 20, 2010) says, with the support of these few communications courses, all kinds of jobs other than journalism that are mentioned in the curriculum can be beneficially informed by the core teaching of journalism. But they can never be primarily

taken as certain as they can contribute to the profession of journalism. In other words, the theoretical communication courses included in the curriculum can be considered relevant to strengthen the profession of journalism. To include such cognate courses is in actual fact what makes university journalism education different from other training centers (Berger, [www.guyberger.ru.ac.za/fulltext/tenyearsteaching.doc](http://www.guyberger.ru.ac.za/fulltext/tenyearsteaching.doc), accessed on March 20, 2010; CIMA, 2007; Katzen, 1975). The underlying logic to include these subjects which are either from other disciplines or courses which are theoretically weaved into journalism and media studies in the curriculum is believed to produce well-rounded undergraduate student journalists while they learn the ability to express well from the practical ones (Sundar and Oliver, 2005, pp. 6-12).

As Adam (2001:326) noted that the inclusion of such theoretical courses or courses with academic rigor in to journalism education is meant for producing a journalist whose ability to think analytically is high. The argument is that once good analytical thinking habits are developed, it is easier to perform better in any job (Harris, 1991). The fundamental aim of such courses is therefore at exposing journalists to different intellectual knowledge that will help them to serve the public by applying the journalistic techniques. Although whether these courses are enough to produce the required journalists is yet to be examined, at this moment it can be said that the curriculum has included liberal arts courses including the communications mostly mingled with the media study courses and are supposed to improve the perception and understanding of journalists. These courses tend to deal with the reasons which underlie the practice of journalism rather than the practice itself (Stack, 2000:63) and are believed to enable practitioners to be intellectual practically (Burgh, 2003). As discussed in chapter two, there are many proven academic courses which are fruitful to journalism education. In general, according to Adam (2001:326) and others, such academic courses drawn from social sciences and humanities center on the discipline and rationality that are essential to the journalist and help to develop the ability to

think analytically. They have a paramount of importance in developing reasoned understanding and good leadership (Thorson, 2005; Amare, 2009). This can then expand journalists’ opportunities to enrich their profession (Soloski, 1994:6). On this level of analysis, the following courses, found in the curriculum under study, can be considered mostly theory based or academic.

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Course code</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
Introduction to Journalism	JOCO 131	3
Media Management	JOCO 332	3
Media Law and Ethics	JOCO 232	4
Media & Communication Research Methods	JOCO 233	3
Senior Essay Proposal	JOCO 334	2
Senior Essay (main)	JOCO 335	3
Media and Society	JOCO 132	3
Media Translation	JOCO 231	3
Survey of Ethiopian Mass Media	JOCO 134	2
Advertising and Social Marketing	JOCO 222	3
Introduction to Communication	JOCO 121	3
Communication Theories	JOCO 223	3
Public Relations	JOCO 122	3
Development Communication	JOCO 321	3
Intercultural Communication	JOCO 221	3
Communication and Conflict Management	JOCO 322	3
Civic and Ethical Studies	CEED 201	2
Entrepreneurship	BMGT 104	2
Art Review and Critics	JOCO 333	3
<b>total credit hours</b>		<b>54</b>

**Table 4.3 List of theory based or academic oriented courses**

From table 4.5, it can be concluded that courses with 54 credit hours (46.55 percent) out of the total 116 credit hours of the program are more of academic or concentrate on the theoretical aspects of journalism and liberal arts knowledge. It is supposed that such courses can help journalists to think clearly, critically, and creatively. Moreover, they do have great contribution in equipping journalists with the knowledge and understanding of the central role of media in society (Brennen, 2000:107).

Besides to the above analysis, teachers and two groups of students were also asked to evaluate the curriculum's balance between theory and practice. Many of the teachers interviewed saw the curriculum as it invites to be more practical than theoretical. But they do believe that it is not being implemented that way due to the lack of professional equipments. Mesfin Demissie (Head of the Department), Mengstu Gebremedhin, Mohammed Selman and Tefera Teklu are lecturers in the department. They think that the curriculum hold more courses that should be turned out to practice. But to the knowledge of these lecturers, what is mostly happening currently is providing students with more of theoretical lectures about the practical courses. This is just similar to what some media industry practitioners like Graham Tibbetts, a Daily Telegraph journalist, argue that university journalism education is some times a waste of time because vocational courses are turned to academic one or in to theory; padding out the subject over an unnecessarily long period of time (Kamps, 2004). This is what was also raised in the focus groups discussions with the students. All members of the two focus groups were in consensus that except with some few courses, they are being taught theory while they have been told more than 70 percent of the courses are practical when they joined the department. In the words of one participant from Focus Group one:

When we start, our instructors were telling us more than 70 percent of journalism courses are practical. But now they are teaching us about the courses almost through lecturing. I do not know what the problem is, but we do not do practical exercises. Of course there are two teachers who teach us practically and encourage us to do so (in a Focus Group discussion, May 24, 2010).

Though there was one teacher informant who maintained that the curriculum is theory inclined by its very nature, however, most of the data are indicating that more than half of the courses in their nature calls for practice. The general analysis is indicating that the composition of courses in the three-years long journalism program at Mekelle University is skewed towards professional practice courses (20 courses with a total of 53 percent of credit hours); while the general courses that stress theory get 47 percent of the total credit hours of the program with 19 courses.

#### **4.3 Part Two: How does the curriculum at MU consider the demand of the journalism industry in the country in to account or in other words, how does it reflect the Ethiopian context?**

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Journalism cannot exist independent of community; it is a profession interacting with society in many ways and should therefore be seen as influencing and operating under the influence of what happens in society (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001). Just as the news media organization cannot maintain itself completely distanced from society, journalism education also has to define ways to culturally and thematically contextualize its courses (Deuze, 2006). But this does not mean that journalism education has to be only tasked with national or local agendas. There are principles of journalism which are universal that cannot be attached to any specific system or culture. It is unquestionable that “the occupational ideology of journalism is indeed largely similar across the globe-

with journalists agreeing on shared values like working fast on deadline, being ethical, championing editorial autonomy, and so on” (Deuze 2005 cited in Deuze 2006).

Being aware of this, there are a number of issues that a curriculum has to address for the purpose of meeting contexts however. Recognizing the basic goal of journalism, the curriculum of journalism education has to make its premises on the contextual political and social theories and themes (French, 2006). In other words, the media landscape and other general contexts in which the journalism curriculum is to be implemented needs to be critically studied and taken in to consideration (UNESCO: 2005). What might be these contexts?

### **4.3.1 Context Analysis**

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#### **A. Stakeholders’ expectations and their orientations on journalism role**

To keep the curriculum in tune with the contextual needs of the time, and to help determine which objectives to stress, evaluation should be a continuous part of ongoing curriculum (Taba, 1962). The type of evaluation described here is concerned chiefly with determining the actual curriculum from the expectations of practitioners, as well as from the evaluation by teachers, students and the examined literature.

For this purpose, editors, relevant officials, teachers and students were interviewed and large amount of secondary data were reviewed. With regarding to the role of journalism practice in Ethiopia, the responses are greatly varied. There is this belief that journalism has to take the watchdog role on the one hand, and developmental role on the other. There is still difference in defining developmental role of journalism among the informants. Others are at ease to say

the role of journalism is just providing the truth to the public as it happens with responsibility.

Solomon Gebreezgabihier, a Senior Editor at the Addis Admas newspaper, Melaku Demissie, Editor-in-Chief of the Amharic Reporter newspaper and Mohamed Selman, a teaching staff at Mekelle University are of the view journalism role and practice in this country to be critical of the government. They see as the normal function of journalism elsewhere is to be as the fourth state; checking on the government. They also wish journalism education in Ethiopia to preach this function of journalism. They believe that it is this media function that could prevent government intervention in to the media work. Otherwise freedom of press would be on compromise.

Solomon Yohannes (Senior Editor in ETV), Birhane Tsegay (Editor-in Chief of social programs in Radio Dimtsi Woyane Tigray), Tsehay Chane (editor-in-chief of FM 97.1), Shifaraw Solomon (Director, Mass Media Inspection & Support Work Process, Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority), Kiflu Worku (Print Media Head, Government Communication Affairs) and others support that the role of media and journalism in this country has to be that of developmental one (personal interview, May & June, 2010). But the meaning they attached to development journalism is different. For some of them, the role of developmental journalism is as critical and crucial as that of watchdog role. For example, Mengstu Gebremedhin, Tefera Teklu (are teaching staff at MU) and Shifaraw Solomon do believe that the function of developmental journalism (DJ) should be in the sense of investigative journalism. To borrow the words of Shifaraw Solomon:

DJ is not meant talking only about success stories. It is also about practicing investigative journalism and exposing failures in

development projects. But the aim is at bringing holistic development. To me, DJ has watchdog role and responsibility. But the focus is on the essentialities of development (personal interview, June 02, 2010).

Of course, the rest of informants who stick on development journalism also agreed that there should be critics and exposing of development failures but were not as strong as the others in commenting this. They were comfortable to say the role of journalism in this country should be for strengthening the ongoing development efforts in a way it expands successful achievements (e.g. Solomon Yohanes, and Birhane Tsegay) and “should be contributing for the overall nation building efforts” (Kiflu Worku). Indeed, the official policy at the state owned media is also developmental journalism. This is clearly indicated in their editorial policies and training manuals.

There were also informants who support that the role of journalism is simply providing the truth to the public responsibly. Dejene Tesema, Editor-in-Chief of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper thinks that – “because we are living in a multi-ethnic society, reporting the truth with responsibility should be the ideal role of media and journalism in this country” (personal interview June 12, 2010).

From the above discussions it is crystal clear that the media and journalistic ideology in this country greatly varies. There are different perceived journalistic roles and ideological preferences which can most probably be termed as developmental, libertarian and social responsibility. Previous research findings also indicate that in terms of the perception of the professional role and orientation of Ethiopian journalists, private journalists prefer to give more importance to the adversarial role than journalists employed in government media and the journalists in the government owned media give more importance

to the developmental role of journalism (Birhanu, 2009:55). If this is the case at the ground, how is journalism education at MU addressing such contexts?

To know whether there are courses that accommodate such contexts, course outline content analysis has been made and students and teachers were also asked. In the focus group discussion, the discussants made clear two different points about the role of journalism. The points were watchdog role and reporting the truth with responsibility. They mentioned that they learned about these roles in the 'Media and Society' course under the 'Four Theories of the Press' topic (Authoritarian, Soviet Communist, Libertarian and Social Responsibility theories). Though some teachers claimed that the 'Development Communication' course can familiarize students with the role of media in development and what developmental journalism is, however, its syllabus chapters' contents (course outline) do not indicate that. Of course this course can help students to discuss about development agendas. But it is more general and does say nothing about development journalism specifically. It is all about development paradigms, concepts and other related issues. Menstu Gebremedhin who uses to teach the course at the department has also evaluated the course as it is about broad development issues not specifically about journalism professional orientation. Similarly, Furtuna Kahsay who was a former student in the department and now a teaching staff suggested that there is no course in the curriculum that exactly addresses what developmental journalism is all about. She wants to see the curriculum incorporating a course or topic about developmental journalism.

### **B. Teaching Approach context**

Editors and officials were asked to reflect on the approach of journalism teaching they would like to see in Ethiopia in terms of specialization and convergence

Two suggestions were bold. Some suggested that specialization is better because journalists who are educated strongly in a specific medium will be competent

enough in the job instead of those who are trained to work in more than one medium (Yikum Haile and Teklebrhan Tekle, personal interview, May 20, 2010). Others advise for integrated or converged type of media education in Ethiopia for two reasons. First, because of the media technology is pushing the work of different media to be packaged in to the World Wide Web (Melaku Demissie, personal interview, June 03, 2010). Second, because graduates will have more chance to be employed in the context of Ethiopia; where the development of media that can absorb all graduates is slow” (Birhane and Shifaraw, personal interview, May 20-June 02, 2010). They have the fear that specialized graduates will face unemployment fate, especially in broadcast area where there is only one television and one national radio stations.

The teaching staff and students at MU were also asked about this issue to put their evaluation on their own curriculum. Some of the teachers interviewed and students participated in the group discussion maintained that specialization could have been better because there are specific skills that go with each medium. Tefera Teklu , a teaching staff, feels graduates of the department are becoming “jack of all trades and masters of none” (Tefera Teklu, personal interview, May 22, 2010); because they are being forced to learn all the knowledge and skills of different media genres in the same period that would have been given to a specific medium. On the other end, there were teachers and students who appreciated their curriculum for its comprehensiveness. In the focus group discussion, the participant students were emphasizing on the importance of convergence. But it was because they can apply at least for a job in any of the media vacancies available. In addition to job opportunity, some teachers see their department’s curriculum is appropriate because it familiarizes students with all media genres so that they can make an informed decision when they want to specialize later on at master’s degree or any other educational level.

Despite the fact that there are such discourses, the journalism education program at Mekelle University is aimed at graduating journalists who can be hired across all media platforms (radio, television and print media). The approach is integrated or converged. This is good news (1) for those of the view that journalism specialization should not be by medium, but by discipline or the beat to reporting like what Mould argues (2009:58-60); (2) for those who would like to take advantage of the digitalization of content and government deregulation to reduce operating costs and expand media market share; and (3) for those who see it as good path, especially in the context of Ethiopia for expanding graduates' job opportunity.

But this is bad news (1) for those who believe convergence will undermine competition and diversity of media products – which could lower the quality of journalism at the end; (2) for those who believe that each major medium has its own characteristics, hence be taught separately. Opponents of the converged approach of media practice like Hackett and Zhao say that the converged approach is simply a mechanism of prioritizing profit imperatives at the expense of public service responsibilities (Macdonald, 2005: 751). If the trend of convergence is genuinely the result of technological digitalization, according to Castaneda et al. (2005), students can be taught with multimedia and web courses to address the technological development along with all the specialized journalism education.

However, in the legal context of Ethiopia, there is no legal environment that encourages media economic convergence. In the latest proclamation, the “Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation” (Federal Negarit Gazeta of the FDRE, 2009, sub-articles 1, 2, 3 of Article 7), it has been proclaimed that:

Any person who exercises direct or indirect effective control over a company possessing a nation-wide broadcasting license or a broadcasting license for an area with a recorded population of more than 100,000 inhabitants, may not exercise direct or indirect effective control over another company holding such a license and servicing the same or an overlapping market (Article 7 (1)).

Any person who exercises direct or indirect effective control over a company holding a nation-wide license or a license for an area with a recorded population of more than 100,000 inhabitants may not exercise direct or indirect effective control over a company operating a periodical servicing the same or an overlapping market (Article (2)).

Without prejudice to sub article (1) and (2) at this Article any person who exercises direct or indirect effective control over a company operating a periodical may not exercise effective direct or indirect control over another company running a periodical published in the same language and servicing the same or an overlapping market (Article 7(3)).

So if there is an intention by people in the media industry and the department of journalism that producing journalists who can work across all media platforms would be important may be seen from the angle of reducing operating costs and expanding media market shares by hiring a single journalist who can work for different media under one ownership firm, that chance is narrow.

### **C. Language(s) Context**

James (1990:5-12) noted that African journalism curricula should include the value of competence in language use (indigenous and working languages) and the importance of development communication. According to James, the multilingual nature of African nations makes it imperative for those facilitating the development to be competent users of one or more of their country's indigenous languages. Therefore, the schools of journalism in Africa need to include at least one indigenous language as a requirement in their programs. Similarly, this issue was also raised by employers during the time the needs assessment was made to change the curriculum at MU in 2008. The curriculum was found at that time as it gave little attention to local languages (Need Assessment Report, 2008:9). Respondents of the needs assessment had been suggesting Ethiopian languages to be offered for journalism students. For the purpose of this particular research, when editors asked to mention the deficiencies they observe in their journalists, several of them observed that their journalists have problems in the languages they work. Though one can never be sure (because success of any curriculum depends on having good instruction and a good environment for achieving its goals) whether the existing deficiencies will be eliminated, however, the existing curriculum has contained Amharic and Tigrigna advanced writing skills courses in addition to the English language writing courses. Mesfin Demissie, Head of the Department, considers the inclusion of Amharic and Tigrigna languages in to the curriculum as a response to the contextual gap that existed before (personal interview, May 21, 2010). Some of the focus group discussion participants have got these language courses important and igniting to read more other materials written in them while some of them don't think they are enough. Definitely, it is possible to argue on their adequacy, yet, the presence of these local indigenous language courses in the program can be taken as an attempt in ensuring the linguistic ability necessary for journalistic work in this country.

#### **D. Education policy implication for job creation**

Considering the status of Ethiopia that currently is characterized by widespread poverty, education establishments, especially higher education institutions are increasingly required to be at the forefront of the development and poverty alleviation efforts of the country (Teshome, 2007). According to the education policy of Ethiopia, a relevant higher institution's curriculum is one that gives education that enables to solve problems (TGE 1994 cited in Amare, 2009:61). This means, Ethiopian higher institutions are expected to play their role in bringing economic development by producing not only competent servants but also competent entrepreneurs who can create jobs (Teshome, 2007; Amare, 2009).

But to create job for oneself and others demands entrepreneurial ability. Otherwise it may also end up in lose. This is what exactly happened in the Ethiopian media business practice. Most of the newspapers and magazines that were in operation following the Media Proclamation No.34/1992 were short-lived, among others, due to the lack of incompetent leadership together with lack of appropriate and adequate feasibility studies before getting into business. They had been started without adequate research on the type, language, frequency, duration and the market needs in order to be the most viable press output in the market (PMC, 2006:31). To solve such problems, introducing those who would like to have their own media firm to the world of entrepreneurship would have great importance.

In this case journalism students at Mekelle University are lucky. Their program has offered them entrepreneurship course (campus course). In the focus group discussion, participants were asked about problems they think will face after graduation and how they expect to overcome them. They raised many problems that they think will face them. Unemployment was raised as one problem. When

asked how they can solve this problem, one participant from Focus Group two answered:

Yes I can guess what my fate will be. I use to see many journalism graduates in town without job. The employment opportunity for us is narrow. But I think we can start our own media business. We have learned how to start and manage new business in our entrepreneurship class and I think there is an opportunity to borrow money from Dedebit Credit Institution to finance my business. This is what I am thinking (in a focus group discussion, May 24, 2010).

*[Note: Dedebit Credit Institution-is a local microfinance enterprise that lends money for people who would like to start new business or advance existing one when they go there at least in a group of three.]*

But for the fact that the course is given by a teacher from Business and Management Faculty, ideally, he/she needs to co-operate with the journalism and communication teachers in the department to develop the course module/handouts with pertinent examples from the field of journalism and communication. Similarly, the continuous assessments are also expected to enable students to brainstorm media and communication business ideas, demonstrate how to write media business plan and manage it. It shouldn't be totally out of the touch of their field as what is happening today.

### **E. Cross Cutting issues in the Ethiopian Education Sector**

In the purpose of producing graduates who can contribute to the achievement of the required sustainable development and build democratic culture, the curricula of Ethiopian higher learning institutions “shall aim at enabling the learner to acquire pertinent knowledge; independent thinking skills, communication skills

and professional values that together prepare him/her to become a competent professional” (Article 21 of the Proclamation on Higher Education, Federal Negarit Gazeta, 650/2009:4987). In building democratic and ethical culture, Civic and Ethical Studies is one among the recommended courses to be given across all programs (Ministry of Education, 2005). There are also other points of discussion that can be considered as cross-cutting issues e.g. gender, HIV/AIDS, special needs education and environmental issues that are recommended to be reflected in the curricula of the Ethiopian education sectors or either be implemented as extracurricular activities (Ministry of Education, 2005).

Similar to the aim of higher learning institutions as stipulated in the proclamation No.650/2009, the aim of the department of journalism and communication at MU is to produce journalists who are professionally competent, intellectually critical and rigorous (DJC, 2008:V). Being compulsory common course for all students in the university, civic and ethical studies has also been become part of the journalism education curriculum. In addition to the general concepts about civic and ethical studies, the course has many issues to deal contextually.

#### **F. Contextual Knowledge in the curriculum**

A relevant curriculum is expected to address contextual issues in which it is used (Amare, 2009; Wimmer and Wolf, 2005). Despite the fact that identifying contexts rightly is challengeable, journalism and communication training should be in a way that respond to social, political, economic, and cultural development needs and reflect the changing situation (Wimmer and Wolf, 2005). Together along with the professional and essential knowledge of other courses, university journalism education has to be normally organized with contextual knowledge of journalism that emphasizes on the social, economic, political, cultural, legal

and ethical aspects of journalism practice both within and outside the nation borders (UNESCO, 2007).

In reflecting Ethiopia's contextual knowledge of the legal and historical aspects of journalism, the curriculum has 'Media Law and Ethics' and 'Survey of the Ethiopian Mass Media' courses. The media law and ethics course, for example, is designed including topics on the 'Right of Thought, Opinion and Expression' of Article 29 of the Ethiopian Constitution, Ethiopian Press Proclamation No.34/1992, and Ethiopian Broadcasting Proclamation Service No.533/2007. It helps students to understand what looks like the legal environment for practicing journalism in this country. The 'survey of Ethiopian mass media' course aspires to offer the historical analysis of mass media development in Ethiopia.

Courses like Media and Society, and Development Communication also try to touch on some important aspects in the context of developing countries including Ethiopia. They cover, for example, democracy, good governance, diversity and media approach, mass media role in emerging democracies, etc. Of course, there are also many courses in the curriculum that can be taught contextually. Courses like intercultural communication, media management and other courses in communications are suitable to turn them out in to the political, cultural and economic context of Ethiopia. But for one who can look at the course outlines of these courses, it is evident that at the coursework level they are almost concerned with the generalities. They may reflect global contexts but are more general and introductory. Their contexts depend on the knowledge, effort and good will of the respective courses' leaders or are totally left for the students. In the focus group discussion many of the participants said that when they learn these courses they hadn't the chance to see the Ethiopian experience. One female participant in the focus group discussion made clear that what they

discussed in their 'media and society' and 'intercultural communication' courses classes is a research outputs made abroad and most of them about American society. She said:

Our courses don't have Ethiopian context. We learn about the American society and their journalism code of ethics. We were learning two foreign cultures in comparison instead of Ethiopian cultures in our 'intercultural communication' class. Teachers don't prepare such materials (in a focus group discussion, May 24, 2010).

Mengstu Gebremedhin and Firtuna Kahsay, teaching staff members in the department, believe that the curriculum could have had more courses or topics under the existing courses that look in to local contexts but the problem is there is difficulty in getting materials produced on such context-based issues.

To point out some additional analysis that focus at context, the Development Communication course is intended to help student journalists understand the practical and general concepts of development and underdevelopment. It introduces on how media can help create a climate for development, and their priority task to counter the fatalistic attitude (learned helplessness) towards one's own fate connected with poverty. This can be without a doubt regarded as a contribution to the existing general agreement among scholars and international agencies concerned with Third World issues that national development should be the forward thrust of these countries' policies (James, 1990:5). The course also aspires to introduce students to community-based communication for development and other alternative media. This by far matches to the recommendation that African journalism and journalism education has to look into an alternative media mainly from the development-communicational perspectives (Banda et al, 2007:157). On the basis of this hypothesis, African

journalists should comprise one of the numbers of groups who should work actively toward the attainment of national development goal (James, 1990:5). But the process of practicing journalism to attain this goal is disputing or otherwise must be different. Lastly, even though the treatment would be most of the time dependant on the availability of local materials and the course's teacher competence, the course has an objective to discuss development and communication specifically in the context of Ethiopia.

On the other hand, for the fact that journalism practice is taken place in a general global or specific national contexts, graduating practitioners need to have more general knowledge than what they get from the aspects of journalism or topics weaved in to the journalism, media and communication courses. Students have to be acquainted with the general history, politics, economy, philosophy, law, sociology, psychology, social psychology, statistics, linguistics, religion, literature, logic, music, etc. (Katzen, 1975; Adam, 2001; Mencher, 1994:71-76). In other words, journalists have to get education on the above mentioned and other academic courses which are recommended as fruitful to journalism education (ibid). Especially, with a journalism program that aimed at producing graduates "who can vigilantly serve the Ethiopian people" (DJC, 2008: iii) like that of the MU's and which has been criticized for its little emphasis to the culture, history, development policies and knowledge of the country (Need Assessment Report, 2008:9) with its previous syllabus, this has special meaning.

Such courses that are drawn from other departments in university at the undergraduate level can be given as elective courses or be given as minor courses or in any appropriate mechanism. Concentrating in such second disciplines is supposed to prepare critical student journalists and above all provide them a foundation for specialized journalism (beat reporting) in such subjects and would qualify them for post-graduate study (UNESCO, 2007). However, when

the curriculum is analyzed from this angle, it showed clear deficit. Except the general entrepreneurship course and civic and ethical studies, there are no other university courses about the politics, history, economy, sociology, etc.

But the course Civic and Ethical Studies has interestingly been aimed at familiarizing the students with many topics of international and national interest. In addition to the general concepts of civic and ethical studies, the course is designed to introduce students to the historical forms of Ethiopian state and government structure, the Constitution, democracy and human right issues in the country. It also touches up on basic principles and objectives of the FDRE foreign policies; and some major contemporary global issues such as the issue of environment, drought and famine, HIV/AIDS, terrorism, globalization, North versus South conflict and international trade. But one can guess that the treatment of these topics would be shallow due to the broadness and two contact hours in a week that lasts for only a semester of the course.

#### **4.4 Part Three: Can the aim of producing professional journalists who are intellectually rigorous and critical of mind be achievable with the available composition of courses?**

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The program has already been outlined to produce journalists who are practically intellectual; those who are with pertinent knowledge and ability to express their knowledge journalistically. This is indeed fitting to the purpose of Ethiopian higher learning institutions as indicated on the Proclamation on Higher Education (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 650/2009:4987). So far so good! But do the courses compositions in the curriculum allow to produce such journalists?

With regarding to this, it has been suggested that journalism education has to be beyond the professional skills (De Burgh, 2003; Reese, 1999; Macdonald, 2006

etc.), and equally sensitive to the professional skills; striking the balance between the theoretical knowledge and professional aspects (Stack, 2000). Mencher (1994) suggested that journalism curriculum should have to find itself in between the conceptual base of public service and the practical skills that would help deliver the required service. A bachelor's degree in journalism that mixes industry-specific practical courses with reasonably balanced exposure to the liberal arts and humanities, is believed to produce well-rounded students who can write well-informed articles and make authoritative comments about the world around them. In addition to the professional courses, journalism education at the undergraduate level has to be multi-disciplinary and offer its students an exposure to different intellectual knowledge that will help them serve the public by applying the journalistic techniques that they will acquire from the professional or practice oriented courses.

In the context of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute (now part of the Addis Ababa University) made a curriculum change in 2003, and upgraded its program from diploma to first degree level (Tadese et al. 2003). In addition to the upgrading mission, the rationale to change the curriculum was to “have a program that incorporates social science courses, liberal art courses and business oriented courses, and to be able to produce out a full rounded person ...” (Tadese et al. 2003). The time MU has made needs assessment to change the previous curriculum, the report indicated that theoretical and practical courses were not reasonably balanced (Need Assessment Report, 2008:9; DJC, 2008: II). In addition to this, several of the editor informants who have been interviewed for this purpose were suggesting that journalists who are good both at practice and with theoretical knowledge are quite demanding. And they have also suggested courses or areas of knowledge that they thought would be helpful to build the theoretical knowledge of the journalists both at local and global levels.

Background knowledge about multiethnic society, human rights, the difference between nation and government (Dejene Tesema, personal interview June 12, 2010), constitutional law of the country, the economic, political and social policies and strategies of the country, good governance, concepts of development, and sociology ( Shifaraw Solomon, personal interview, June 02, 2010), philosophy, psychology, economics and history (Solomon Gebreezgabiher and Melaku Demissie, interview June 12, 2010) were among the areas of knowledge they recommended to be given for students in addition to the practical courses. This indicates that there are also existing demands to balance journalism curricula in Ethiopia.

It has been repeatedly said that to produce professionally competent journalists, a reasonably balanced natural combination of the professional and academic courses is required. As Mencher (1994:74) rightly noted, journalism is not simply writing. It is practice through substance. But on how to make a balance of these, is an assignment that should get an answer. In this regard, except the UNESCO “Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Developing Countries & Emerging Democracies” (2007), it is hard to get an attempt that has been made to precisely put a balance of practical and theoretical courses in a journalism education curriculum.

The UNESCO “Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Developing Countries & Emerging Democracies” (2007) is designed for journalism schools in developing countries and is appreciated by many for it has hallmarks of a sensible, practical and workable approach.

The curricula strive for a ‘strong core educational structure with a balance between the practical and the academic’. Many schools...favor this approach....The proposed curriculum is a generic

model that can be adapted according to each country's specific needs (Singh, 2008, 234-236).

This UNESCO model curriculum is categorized into three axes: professional practice courses, media studies courses, and arts and sciences courses. The balance for a three year long degree program according to this model is estimated at 40%, 10%, and 50% shares of credits respectively (UNESCO, 2007:10).

Compared to this three-year long UNESCO model curriculum, the composition of courses in the journalism education at MU seems to face deficit of academic courses to achieve the goal of the program in general. Because the composition of courses in this UNESCO document is estimated at 60 percent of theory oriented courses (media studies courses, 10%; and arts and sciences courses, 50%) and 40 percent of practice oriented courses. Or looked at a little different estimation, it is calculated as professional courses, 47%; theory based courses, 53% (media studies, 10% and arts and science, 43%) (UNESCO, 2007). In either case, more credit is given to the theory based courses. Where as in the MU's curriculum as it has been indicated in the course analysis section of this chapter (4.2 Part One), the professional courses take 53 percent share and those under academic oriented category take 47 percent. Therefore, in the UNESCO curriculum, a reasonably balanced three years long journalism education program is with more credits to academic courses when compared to the MU, in which it is almost the reverse.

More specifically, the theory oriented courses in the UNESCO Model curricula exclude coursework in communication studies, public relations and advertising, all of which according to developers of the model should be offered separately (ibid). Instead of such courses, the model curricula provide other arts/science courses. But in the MU'S curriculum, there are seven communication courses including PR and Advertising with a total of 21 credit hours.

## *Chapter Five*

### **Conclusion and Scope for Further Research**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study has been done with the chief aim of describing MU's journalism education curriculum in terms of theoretical and professional courses' orientations; understanding how it accommodates issues that could reflect country context, and analyzing whether the goal of the program would be achievable compared to UNESCO Model Curricula.

In order to meet these research objectives qualitative data collection and analysis method was employed. The aim was at understanding the intent of the content of the curriculum, and the specific approach applied can best be described as formative curriculum evaluation or study; an evaluation or a study which is not summative that looks at the whole effect of a program including the practicality of the curriculum (Salia-Bao, 1989:34).

Based on the subsequent analysis, the curriculum has been found with more practice oriented courses. More than half (53%) of the program's credit hours tend to impart technical competencies. The remaining are media studies, communications and other campus courses that could basically be considered theory oriented.

In addressing context, the curriculum has included some aspects at the course outline level. Despite the fact that there are different perceived journalistic role preferences; which can most probably be named as developmental, libertarian and social responsibility in contextual reality, the courses analysis showed that

the curriculum of the program attempts to familiarize its students with the libertarian and social responsibility roles of media besides to the soviet and authoritarian concepts in a course named 'Media and Society.' It gives little due attention to the lately developed developmental role of media and journalism.

The aim of producing graduates, who can work across all media platforms (converged journalism) of the program, can be taken contextually best paracetamol to the fear of unemployment fate expressed by several of the individual in-depth interviewees and focus group discussants. However, there are opposing ideas especially when convergence is seen from perspectives of journalistic form and technological advancement. What is more, there is no legal Ethiopian context that encourages convergence in journalism in the form of media business convergence.

The curriculum has included local language courses in Amharic (required) and Tigrigna (elective). For the fact that the core objective of the program is to produce journalists who can serve the Ethiopian people, the importance of these language courses would definitely be outspoken. The value of such courses is by far vital considering the multiethnic and multilingual nature of Ethiopia, and their contribution to the easiness and effectiveness of the work of journalism. Especially, in Africa where journalists are expected to facilitate development, to offer local languages aimed at enabling graduates who can be competent users of one or more of their country's language/s, is very important (James, 1990:5-12).

With regard to education policy context, the MU's curriculum goal has been found fitting to the goal of higher learning institutions as proclaimed in the Proclamation on Higher Education in Ethiopia. It is to enable the learner to acquire pertinent knowledge and professional values that could make him/her competent professional. In addition, the curriculum has Entrepreneur course

which can be taken as an endeavor to respond to the critical problem of lack of entrepreneurial ability being observed in the media business practice of this country. It is also a positive gesture to the general national call; that is, universities have to play their role in bringing economic development by producing not only competent servants but also competent entrepreneurs who can create jobs (Teshome, 2007; Amare, 2009). Beyond this, what the curriculum analysis showed is Civic and Ethical Studies' course is incorporated in an attempt to the achievement of building democratic and ethical culture; a course which is recommended to be given across all programs of higher learning institutions and education sectors (Ministry of Education, 2005).

In reflecting Ethiopia's contextual knowledge of the legal and historical aspects of journalism, the curriculum has 'Media Law and Ethics' and 'Survey of the Ethiopian Mass Media' courses. These courses help students to understand what looks like the legal environment for practicing journalism and to analyze the history and development of mass media in this country. Other courses that found in the curriculum like Media and Society, and Development Communication also try to touch on some important aspects in the context of developing countries including Ethiopia. These courses try to cover, for example, issues of democracy, good governance, diversity and media approach, mass media role in emerging democracies, etc. With the other remaining courses, the issue of turning them into context depends on the knowledge, effort and good will of the respective courses' leaders or are totally left for the students.

To point out some additional analysis that focus at context, the Development Communication course has been found at intending to help student journalists understand the practical and general concepts of development and underdevelopment. This can be without a doubt regarded as a contribution to the existing general agreement among scholars and international agencies

concerned with Third World issues that national development should be the forward thrust of these countries' policies (James, 1990:5). Based on the findings of the course analysis, the course also aspires to introduce students to community-based communication for development and other alternative media. Though the treatment would still be dependant on the availability of local materials and the course's teacher competence, this course has an objective to discuss development and communication specifically in the context of Ethiopia.

On the other hand, for the fact that journalism practice takes place in a general global or specific national contexts, graduating practitioners need to have more general knowledge than what they get from the aspects of journalism or topics weaved in to the journalism, media and communication courses. However, when the curriculum is analyzed from this angle, it showed clear deficit. Except the general Entrepreneurship course and Civic and Ethical Studies, there are no other university courses about the politics, history, economy, sociology, philosophy, psychology etc of Ethiopia and the world. But courses like general history, politics, economics, sociology, philosophy, psychology, law, social psychology, statistics, linguistics, religion, literature, logic, music and others are among the liberal arts courses which are considered fruitful to journalism education (Adam, 2001; UNESCO, 2007; Katzen, 1975; Mencher, 1994). The goal of such courses is to create journalists who are in command of the knowledge and thought to support the reporting and analysis called for in a beat (UNESCO, 2007:9), in addition to the skills they get from the professional courses. Such courses that are drawn from other departments in university at the undergraduate level can be given as elective courses or be given as minor courses or in any appropriate mechanism.

Finally, the three years long journalism curriculum at Mekelle University has shown deficit in theory and academically rigorous independent university

courses to achieve its goal (the goal of producing both knowledgeable and professionally skillful journalists) when compared to the UNESCO Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Developing Countries and Emerging Democracies. On top of this, while most of the theoretical courses in the UNESCO model curricula are arts and sciences courses which are supposed to be taken from other departments of a university where as in the MU'S most of the theory oriented courses are communications and media studies. The three years long journalism education program designed by the UNESCO excludes coursework in communication studies, public relations and advertising, all of which according to developers of the model should be offered separately.

The intended result of the UNESCO model curriculum which is considered as theoretically and practically balanced education is to develop student journalists' competencies, including adopting professional standards, acquiring knowledge of journalism's roles in society (media studies), and obtaining general knowledge in the liberal arts tradition (knowledge of other courses in campus). It is aimed at producing journalists who would be analytical and critically reflective along with the acquisition of the media production skills. Therefore, the Mekelle University's journalism education has been found short of academic courses which could have been taken from other departments of the university compared to the UNESCO model curriculum to achieve its goal; a goal which is similar to the UNESCO's.

## **5.2 Scope for Further Research**

The result of the analysis has indicated that there are courses which address contextual knowledge. But the adequacy of treatment of contextual issues discussed in those courses and their relevance; need further investigation.

Whether the contextual elements raised in the curriculum are enough or not is also another concern.

It has been shown that except for the general treatment of development communication, the role of development journalism in a society is not addressed in the curriculum. However, there exists the need to have the practice of developmental journalism. Yet how to practice developmental journalism in general and its relevance to Ethiopia in particular, is not precisely defined. On the other hand the curriculum has a room to discuss on the libertarian, social responsibility, authoritative and Soviet Communist Concepts. Wouldn't it be also possible to expose students to the developmental, revolutionary, and democratic Socialist media concepts?

The program is intended to produce graduates who can work across all media platforms. But what is the rationale to do so? What are the benefits and harms of this approach to the professional journalism practice in Ethiopia in the long and short run terms?

The UNESCO "Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Developing Countries & Emerging Democracies" (2007) is designed for journalism schools in developing countries and is appreciated by many for it has hallmarks of a sensible, practical and workable approach. It has been said that this is a generic model that can be adapted according to each country's specific needs (Singh, 2008, 234-236). But is this MODEL the only option that we have to adapt and compare our works to?

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## Appendices

### Appendix I

#### Profile of In-depth Interviewees

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Type of Organization</b>
1	Melaku Demissie	Reporter Newspaper	Editor-in-chief	Private
2	Solomon G/Ezgiabher	Addis Admas Newspaper	Senior Editor	Private
3	Solomon Bekele	Capital Newspaper	Editor	Private
4	Dejene Tessema	Ethiopian Herald	Editor-in-chief	Government
5	Solomon Yohannes	Ethiopian Radio and Television	Editor, program desk	Government
6	Tsehay Chane	FM 97.1	Editor-in-chief	Government
7	Birhane Tsegay	Dimitsi Woyane Tigray	Editor-in-chief, Programs	Private
8	Yikum Haile	FM Mekelle 104.4	Head of the station and Editor-in-chief	Government
9	Teklebrhan Tekle	Tigray Broadcasting Agency, Television Program	News Editor, Television Program	Government
10	Shifaraw Solomon	Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority	Director, Mass Media Inspection & Support work process	Government
11	Kifle Worku	Government Communication Affairs	Media Head	Government
12	Mesfin Demissie	Mekelle University (MU)	Head and Lecturer, DJC	Public
13	Mohamed Selman	MU	Lecturer, DJC	Public
14	Mengstu G/Medhin	MU	Lecturer, DJC	Public
15	Tefera Teklu	MU	Lecturer, DJC	Public
16	Mekonen Amare	MU	Lecturer, DJC	Public
17	Furtuna Kahsay	MU	GA I	Public

## Appendix II

### List of Focus Groups and members (2nd year students)

#### Focus Group One

1. Adanech Gebremariam
2. Betelihem Tiegstu
3. Million Desta
4. Adane Anmut
5. Tsigereda Tewolde
6. Abel Guesh

#### Focus Group Two

1. Alem Desta
2. Woldedawit America
3. Beza Wondimagegn
4. Wasihun Aweke
5. Frew Bekuretsion
6. Jemila Jemal

## **Appendix III**

Faculty of Journalism and communications

Addis Ababa University

### **Interview Questions for -editors and journalists**

1. How do you describe the current media practice in Ethiopia; what are the strong and weak sides of media practices in Ethiopia?
2. What are the deficiencies that you are observing in your journalists when they practice journalism?
3. What should be the role of a journalist in this country? Why?
4. Do you believe in journalists going to training centers/universities to earn degree in journalism? Why?
5. When do you think that a journalism curriculum is adequate to produce excellent journalists?
6. What model of journalism education do you suggest to be given at our universities at undergraduate level (practice oriented, academic oriented, balanced, specialized in print, radio... or generalist)? Why?
7. Do you think Ethiopia can use the same type of journalism education as elsewhere in the world or you believe there should be a different type journalism education? Why?
8. What do you expect from stakeholders to strengthen the capacity of media and journalists in Ethiopia?
9. What class/es do you wish/plan to attend? Why?

## **Appendix IV**

Faculty of Journalism and communications  
Addis Ababa University

### **Interview Questions for government officers and experts**

1. What is the current media practice in Ethiopia; the strong and weak sides? Why do you think is so?
2. What do you think should be the role of journalists, in this country? Why?
3. What fundamental subject areas do you suggest to be covered in journalism and communication education at higher institutions in Ethiopia to produce such human power?
4. Do you believe university journalism courses could equip the coming graduates to play the role you are suggesting now effectively?
5. How do you think journalism should be taught in universities at undergraduate level? Why?
6. How do you think could gender, Health, diversity, and multicultural issues etc. be dealt with in the curriculum of journalism?

## **Appendix V**

Faculty of Journalism and communications

Addis Ababa University

### **Interview Questions for Mekelle University's journalism & communication teaching staff**

1. What is the role of media and communication in the Ethiopian society?
2. Do you think the syllabus of this department is designed in a way that helps graduates to assume such role? How?
3. Do you think this curriculum is rich and diverse in context? How?
4. How do you evaluate the curriculum's balance between theory and practice, among Journalism, communication and PR Practice courses? What do you suggest in this case (are you in favor of theory/academic oriented, practice/vocational, or balanced) university journalism and communication education? Explain?
5. Specialization or convergence? Which approach do you think is an appropriate to offer journalism & communication? Why?
6. How and where do you teach how to report on key issues (e.g. Health, HIV, gender issues, crime, ethnicity, development concerns, rural-urban issues, democracy, election, history, economics, politics, community media, and etcetera)?
7. What are the strengths of this curriculum and the areas that this curriculum has to be improved?
8. What problems do you think will face graduates of this department in their future work/career? Why?

9. What class/es do you wish/plan to attend? Why?

## **Appendix VI**

### **Faculty of Journalism and communications**

#### **Addis Ababa University**

##### **Questions for focus group discussion (second year students)**

1. What is journalism and communication?
2. What do journalism and communication courses told you about the role of journalists in a society?
3. Do you think you will be excellent journalists, communicators and PR officers? Why or How?
4. How did you get the curriculum in providing you with rich and diverse contextual knowledge?
5. How do you evaluate your curriculum's balance in terms of; theory and practice, among Journalism, communication and PR Practice courses? What are the practical courses and theoretical courses you learnt? Name them. Your criteria to say so?
6. How and where did you learn how to report on issues (e.g. Health, HIV, gender issues, crime, ethnicity, development concerns, rural-urban issues, democracy, election, history, economics, politics, community media, and etcetera)?
7. What are the strengths of your curriculum and the areas that this curriculum has to be improved?
8. What problems do you think you will face after graduation i.e. in your future work/career? Why? How do you expect to overcome them?

## Appendix VII

### Courses' Descriptions, Rationale and objectives

#### **Course Title: Introduction to Journalism**

##### **Rationale:**

This course is framed with an intention to give students an introduction of what the whole discipline of journalism is. Since the course analysis the discipline from various perspectives, students will develop a clear concept of what makes journalism. Generally students will be acquainted with some perspectives that will enable them to become good journalists.

##### **Course Description**

This course introduces students to the field of journalism. It addresses the multi disciplinary nature of and philosophical issues of journalism, types of journalism, and other issues related to and influencing journalism as a profession. It also gives comprehensive historical development description of the different types of media i.e. broadcast, print and multi media. The course focuses on and demonstrates how journalism, information and mass media go hand in hand and writing for each medium follows the same concept of news writing, and why each medium requires a unique style of writing suitable for its form.

#### **Course Title: News Writing and reporting for print**

##### **Course Rationale**

This Course is designed with a view to equipping students with the basic skills of news gathering and writing, headlines writing, editing and editorial practices which are supposed to be facing them when they come out to the real world. It primarily focuses on making students identify the basic issues and challenges in newspaper journalism and drill it in and out of the class with sequence of practices.

##### **Course Description**

It introduces students with the emergence, development and practice of newspapers as forms of mass communication. It particularly deals with the history of newspapers, basics of news writing, editing, and headline writing, editorial and newsroom performances of newspapers. The course lays greater emphasis on familiarizing students with the practical aspects of newspaper journalism so that students not only learn but realize newspaper journalism as a performance.

#### **Course Title: Introduction to Communication**

##### **Course Rationale**

Theoretical skills in communications in this course will help students to recognize the importance of successful communication in work and professions and become more competent communicators with other individuals and groups.

### **Course Description**

In this course, the processes of communication, the uses and the impact of the media, including the socio- economic and political dimensions are examined and explained. Theories, types, functions, etc. of communication are also addressed. The course however will not focus on mass communication theories since they will be discussed deeply in the course entitled "Mass Communication theories."

### **Course Title: Computer Literacy**

#### **Course Rationale**

Today's life style is highly interrelated with computers. Especially it is true for journalists where computer literacy is indispensable to this highly competitive market. Thus, this course is designed to acquaint students with necessary computer skills.

#### **Course Description**

An introduction to computer software packages commonly used in Journalistic research and expression Experience with using the Internet and other library resources for research different types of systems used at the work place such as Manual, mechanical, computerized and automated systems shall be introduced briefly. Emphasis is put on computerized systems. Components of a computer system: Data, software, hardware, and human ware are discussed in some detail. The windows operating system is used for file, disk, and memory management tasks. Students are provided with work sheets that cover different aspects of the windows environment.

### **Course title: Entrepreneurship**

#### **Course Rationale**

This course intends to teach necessary skills to students in looking for markets for their deeds. In addition it helps them to create new jobs and seize market opportunities to their creative works.

#### **Course Description**

It is designed to introduce practitioners with the nature and importance of entrepreneurship, routes to business, financing the business, managing the business and finally winding up of the business.

### **Course Title: Civic and Ethical studies**

#### **Course Rationale**

This course is believed to equip students with the knowledge of the past and present political, social and economic situations of the country. Upon completion of the course students will be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of Ethiopia throughout its history. Then, students are expected to fix some of the problems and move forward with integrity.

### **Course Description**

The course Civic and Ethical Education, which is a compulsory common course for all students of the faculties and their respective departments of the University, is designed to introduce students to and familiarize with the meaning, concept, purpose and significance of Civic and Ethical Education as well as the interdisciplinary nature of the course. More fundamentally, the course profoundly deals with the meaning, purposes, principles and various theories of ethics and morality as well as the morality and ethics in the context of profession. Equally important is that the course touches up on the concept, purposes, organs, types, systems (forms) of government, in general and in the Ethiopian context in particular. Added to the above is that the course also covers the essence, essential elements/ attributes/ of state and various forms of state structure in general and federal state structure in particular in the context of the current Ethiopia. In association with this, it also deals with the meaning and concepts, practices and characteristics of good citizenship in the Ethiopian context. Further more, the course also profoundly focuses on the concept of constitution of state and constitutionalism; major purposes and functions, and classification of constitution of state. In doing so, it conspicuously dwells on the constitutional experiences in Ethiopia in general and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) constitution in particular.

Besides, the course also touches up on major agents and actors in the process of democratization and development. Inline with this, vital roles and imperatives of the major actors, such as government, political parties, civil society and pressure groups as well as how they can conspicuously play their roles is also focused. Likewise, the course also deals with the concepts of equality and development; major issues of development; gender and development; alternative conflict resolution mechanisms. Last but not least essentially focused in the course is also that of international relations and contemporary global issues. In this part, the course deals with the concept and models of, approaches to, international relations; foreign policy; National interest; basic principles and objectives of the FDRE foreign policies; and some major contemporary global issues such as the issue of environment, drought and famine, HIV/AIDS, terrorism, globalization, North Vs South conflict and international trade shall be discussed.

### **Course Title: Feature Writing**

#### **Course Rationale**

The course is believed to give forth to the students the basic issues in feature writing, the necessary knowledge and skill features and articles writing demand as a separate area of journalism practice. Besides, Students are challenged to generate ideas and develop the skills of looking at the fresh angles of events justifying the art of structuring and writing features with flavor.

#### **Course Description**

This course focuses on feature article story structures and/or opinion based approaches of writing stories. It is a build up on newspaper journalism and is characterized by an advanced form of writing with emphasis on feature writing; profiles of people and places, issues, stories, commentaries and investigative reporting etc. Students will be

expected to complete numerous off-campus writing assignments, as well as in-class writing exercises.

**Course Title: Broadcast News Writing and Reporting**

**Course Rationale**

It is crucial that students be introduced to writing and reporting news particularly for broadcast copy with especial focus on relating image with sound (for TV news) and radio news scripts with sound (for radio news). This course, thus, helps them to analyze why and how broadcast media requires a unique style of writing and reporting.

**Course Description**

This course primarily deals with four indispensable issues concerning broadcast news writing and reporting. These are the techniques of newsgathering, writing, editing and presenting respectively. The course will also familiarize students with some of the definitions and types of broadcast news. In line with the necessary issues stated above, the course will also enable students with efficient manipulation of radio and television equipments. The course is also aimed at enabling students to practice preparing broadcast news script and presenting it in package form and live.

**Course Title: Magazine Journalism**

**Course Rationale**

Magazine journalism as a separate area of practice in journalism is due to be offered to students owing to the fact that magazines these days have enjoyed wider acceptance by the reader public and their practice is claiming a distinctive approach. The course provides students with the distinguishing elements in magazine writing and makes them realize and experience the snapshots of magazine performance with particular emphasis to magazine practice, production and business.

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to theories and techniques of magazine writing and editing. It gives students the opportunity to practice in-depth reporting- editorial, feature, profile writing etc. It also helps students to be familiar with the duties and responsibilities of magazines staff, magazines organizational structure, magazine industries, specific magazines and the audiences they serve. The course also covers planning, printing and distribution of magazines.

**Course title: Public Relations**

**Rationale**

This course will make acquaint students with the skill of identifying the difference of public relations with other fields. It will also enable them have full understanding of all communication processes and methods of management function. Further more, it equips students with the knowledge of communication expertise and social sensitivity to enhance organizational communication with the rapidly changing environment.

**Course description:**

This course is an introduction to the practice of public relations, including its fundamental concepts and theories, historical development and current trends, analysis

of ethical perspectives and application of strategic communication theories in the field of public relations. The course provides opportunities to introduce public relations writing, its scientific and ethical approaches in the process. It also enables students the techniques of measuring public opinion and its application and equips them with ethical, moral and legal responsibilities of public relations.

**Course Title: Online Journalism**

**Course Rationale**

This course introduces students with what is usually referred as 'the new medium.' Knowing how to effectively pass on an idea through Internet is an indispensable skill for journalists. Thus, this course is designed to let students cope up with the competitive and more globalize world.

**Course Description**

The course introduces students to the Internet and will provide skills needed to effectively use it. Students will also learn reporting, writing and editing stories for the web. They will be exposed to the various search engines of the World Wide Web and how to gather and develop information in the newsroom. It also provides students the chance to learn the principles of web construction and explore the differences between traditional news media and the web in production and audience contexts. Students undertake a needs specification for a community group or organization.

**Course Title: Development Communication**

**Rationale:**

This course makes students to contribute their part on the going development process of the country by demonstrating the skills of communication in using indigenous knowledge, applying participatory communication approach and identifying and giving solutions for the major development problems.

**Course Description**

This course enables students to understand and appreciate definition, concept, and scope of development communication. It also enables them to conceptualize what social change is and how communication used for development of the country. The course comprehensively covers the concept and historical evolution of development communication: some of the related theoretical dialogues, communication and social change with particular references to developing nations, how media can help create a climate for development, and their priority task to counter the fatalistic attitude (learned helplessness) towards one's own fate connected with poverty are thoroughly treated.

**Course Title: Advanced Writing Skills**

**Course rationale**

This course takes students to a higher level of using English language for writing purpose. It is particularly useful for students while they start to dwell on preparing writing projects and senior essays. In addition, as the name implies, the course will provide opportunities for students to develop the writing techniques and systems they acquired during writing courses at beginners and intermediate levels.

### **Course Description**

Argumentation: forwarding original cases, refuting, correct and appropriate reasoning, using hard and strong evidence; reacting and critiquing; book review; writing for social and personal purposes: letters, diaries, journals, recipe, etc.; re-writing; expanding; written advice; advanced editing. Language research: concept, scope, types, components, steps; procedures in conducting research: selecting a topic, narrowing it down, stating problems, writing objectives, selection methods, organizing (outlining) and interpreting data, and concluding the study; techniques of referencing; methods of documentation: in-text citation, bibliography, etc.; format of research; data presentation; report writing: concept, types, major features.

### **Course Title: Advanced Reporting**

#### **Course Rationale**

This course is offered with a view to making students practice on the reporting and writing techniques they are believed to acquire in many other courses. It provides students with contextual techniques and solutions in contextual situations and problems while they are reporting and writing on events or happenings. Moreover it is thought to give them the glimpse of the challenging nature and experience of specialized and investigative reporting and writing.

#### **Course Description**

The course will introduce students to analyze how to develop and fine-tune the reporting frame works, and critically write different types of advanced reporting for newspaper and magazines. It focuses on specialized type of reporting like reporting courts, health, economics, politics, sport etc.

### **Course Title: Photo Journalism**

#### **Course Rationale**

Today's practice of journalism and communication can certainly be claimed to rely on photo events and photo journalism so much so that the relevance of this course to the students of journalism and communication is profound. To basically practice journalism, students are required to be highly familiar with modern techniques of photography and photographic performance. Thus, Students are thought to learn and master the overall techniques of taking, developing and fitting pictures for any of communication media.

#### **Course Description**

This course will introduce students with the concepts of photojournalism for newspapers, magazines, web and corporate publications. This course is all about reporting the news through images and graphs using color and black and white photograph. It addresses the skills of taking photos to be used in the print and web journalism, and encompasses the use of digital cameras, electronic darkrooms and image transfer techniques. It gives students the chance to apply journalistic principles to photography including theoretical and practical activities, camera handling, shooting, and ethics of photojournalism.

**Course Title: Media Translation**

**Course rationale**

Journalists may gather news from foreign media agencies. A journalist in one of the Ethiopian regional states may also reports to other regional states, the federal government or the international community. Thus, this course is extremely important for journalists to achieve better results in communicating effectively.

**Course Description**

This course begins with the treatment of the different definitions, characteristics and functions of language as well as the main causes of linguistic variation. It also covers principles, techniques and problems of translating news from source language to receptor language. Emphasis will be given to agency copy translation and editing aiming at fidelity, readability and speed. The course looks in detail at media language in connection with translation.

**Course Title: Media Law and Ethics**

**Course Rationale**

Journalism as a profession is highly affected by laws and regulations in any given country. Journalists should equip themselves at least with some of their own country's laws especially those that have direct relationship with their profession. In addition to the legal issues, students are also expected to be aware of the ethical issues journalists face dealing with the profession. Thus the course will help students to develop their moral reasoning skills so that they can examine, analyze and resolve ethical dilemmas and to be more responsible in doing their job.

**Course Description**

This course will introduce students to the study of legal and ethical issues in the media. It will be divided into two major parts. The first part covers the fundamental "Guiding Principles for Journalists" and the duties incorporated therein, codes of ethics and their roles as the conscience of the professionals are discussed. The second one focuses on legal issues journalists in the world and particularly in Ethiopia are facing frequently today. The course also offers students a chance to examine a wide range of case examples for discussion and analysis, and eventually requires each student to develop a framework for making ethical and legal decisions in their profession.

**Course Title: Communication Theories**

**Course Rationale**

Journalists and their profession exist as long as the media exist. Therefore, for students, knowing the existing concepts and theories affecting communication through the mass media is an indispensable tool in their future endeavor to achieve excellence in the profession. Thus, this course is expected to acquaint students with a number of different theoretical perspectives on mass communication and their application in real life

**Course Description**

This course reviews theories and principles of communication and introduces theories applied in mass communication. By carrying the reading research and theories in Mass communication, this course will engage students in the detailed analyses of how

audiences create and maintain relationship with the products of the mass media. This course also provides insights on how mass media theories can be developed and criticized as well.

**Course Title: Publication Layout and Design**

**Course Rationale**

Having equal weight with the reporting and writing practices of journalism, layout and designing has become a major concern particularly with regard to newspapers, magazines and on line/ web pages. This course is thus very much important to students of journalism and communication in such a way that they will be acquainted with the necessary knowledge and skills required in preparing the lay out and designs of newspapers, magazines and on line/ web pages.

**Course Description**

This course deals with the theory and practice of layout typography and design for print and web journalism. It also covers the past and current trends of page design and layout. The course will help students critically analyze major publications and redesigning them according to newest principles. The course will introduce students with Desk Top Publishing (DTP) or in design software so that they will be able to present material graphically to achieve aesthetic value for the print media. Emphasis will be given for the practical part of the course.

**Course Title: Media and Communication Research Methods**

**Course Rationale:**

This course introduces students to the approaches to social research in media and communications as well as prepares students to become familiar with, and develop the understanding and ability to apply research concepts to media and communication problems.

**Course Description**

This course gives to students some concept on research, scientific research method and fundamentals of research methodologies in media and communication. It also highlights historical perspective of media and mass communication research. Research vocabulary as well as components and methods of media and communication research are included. In addition to this, various methods of research techniques which are meaningful to mass communication research are included. How to define and delimit research problem, the importance of reviewing the literature, how to prepare bibliography, how to coding data and tabulate, how to analyze and interpret data and give conclusion and recommendations are adjusted to be treated under this course.

**Course Title: Advertising and social Marketing**

**Course Rationale**

Mass media survives mainly through the money that flows from governmental and non-governmental institutions for advertising. Therefore, making students be aware of the commercial matters that affect journalism is crucial. Accordingly, this course is believed

to create efficient students with the required skills and techniques for planning and producing mass media advertisement

**Course Description**

This course introduces the origins and development of advertising and details the current trends in advertising and the roles that advertising has in modern marketing: commercial marketing and social marketing. It provides students with the necessary skills and techniques of broadcast and print advertising planning and production. The course also deals with the social and legal aspects of advertising, and the advertising business.

**Course Title: Internship**

**Course Rationale:**

This course enables students to see the practical application of previously studied theory and draw an inference for theoretical interpretation. It gives them good exposure of the media and communication organizations working environment and grasp good knowledge of the practice.

**Course Description:**

Student journalists will work for 2 months in journalistic and public relations tasks on a newspaper, magazine, radio, TV or in a news agency in media enterprises and PR offices, which is financially supported by the University. Normally the department handles it during the end the first semester of any academic year between December and January. And based on their practical and professional observation and practice, students will present a written report on the media or PR office attachment.

**Course Title: Intercultural Communication**

**Course Rationale**

In a world pulsating with varying thoughts and thus differing ways of behaving, a look into the inner workings of cultures is of paramount importance for harmonious coexistence.

**Course Description**

This course examines intercultural mass communication, with special emphasis on problems of the free flow of information, the role of states and international organizations in fostering communications. The relationship between globalization and the media is also examined in light of the debates over cultural imperialism, information and technology flow, and cultural hybridization.

**Course Title: Communication and Conflict management**

**Course Rationale**

This course is necessitated by the need to promote the emotional maturity of learners whose work world is predominantly characterized by communication and building productive relationships

**Course Description**

This course is designed to explore and understand the roots and nature of conflict, responses to conflict, and models for constructive ways to deal with conflict between oneself, individuals, groups and nations.

**Course Title: Media Management**

**Course Rationale**

Journalists are busy in having day-today meetings concerning their job. They produce a single news or program through a combined effort of different journalists and technicians. Journalists have to be answerable to their managers and responsible in their relationship with the audience. Most of the things journalists do, therefore, should be managed. Thus, this course is believed to provide students with some knowledge of media organizational structure that could enable them to perform well.

**Course Description**

This course introduces practitioners with what media management means, the way managerial decisions are made with in media firms, the different types of approaches on which media organizations are structured, and the adopted managerial hierarchies of the different types of media outlets. It also attempts to explore the nature of media markets and how factors that affect media firms in these markets can be analyzed. And finally, it discussed on some of the research types used by media managers that are important to effective media management.

**Course Title: Creative non-fiction**

**Course Rationale**

This course aims at exploring and experimenting with the abilities of learners to generate and communicate fresh ideas and thoughts.

**Course Description**

The course focuses on proving students with opportunities to practice what they have learned so far and to explore their own creative skills clearly and effectively.

**Course Title: Art Review and Critics**

**Course Rationale**

Art ignites the creative power of the mind. A critical look into this faculty of humanity, thus, calls for such a course.

**Course Description**

This subject explores theoretical frameworks within which the content, meaning, aesthetics and impact of art is critically reviewed and analyzed.

**Course Title: Television Program Production**

**Course Rationale**

Television unlike any other media has a large audience. It is a desirable medium since it helps journalists to tell a story using pictures and sound to many people within seconds. Therefore acquiring practical and theoretical issues concerning television is very important for students of journalism. This course is designed to achieve this goal.

**Course Description**

This course is designed to give students an opportunity to practice writing for a range of television programs, analyzing, evaluating and directing and producing interview shows, discussion programs, Music and variety of other shows. Since the course is of practical nature, it involves television field production: field techniques of shooting for television programs and video editing or editing sequence of shots.

**Course Title: Senior Essay**

**Course Rationale**

This course as a course should be given to students for the best rationale that learning can only be confirmed through reflection. It is, thus, a kind of course which helps students not only reflects what they earned in the course of their study but also gives them the opportunity to investigate and provide solutions to problems in the society.

**Course Description**

The project paper is a research paper leading to a Bachelor of Art's thesis (BA thesis). The projects will be conducted on a news and researchable area of the students choice and equips them with research skills which they will use various primary sources. This research is conducted with the consultation of an advisor.

**Course title: Survey of Ethiopian mass media**

**Course Rationale**

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with historical development of mass media in Ethiopia and providing working environment and trends of the existing media.

**Course Description**

This course will teach the historical background of Ethiopian media and development across time. The course aims to discuss the social, political, and economic impact of media in the country. Trainers can survey the development of different media in the country and present the application of editorial policy, press law and press theories in the country's media

**Course title- Media and society**

**Course rationale**

The very reason why this course is given is to produce a better informed citizen that comprehends well the roll and power of the media on a societal life. And do one's best in the process of building a democratic and informed nation.

**Course description**

This course clearly outlines the definition, types, and scope of mass media. It stresses on the power the media has and the socio-economic and political role it plays within the society and vice versa. It depicts the various aspect of interrelationship between the media and the society.

**Course title: English for Journalists**

**Rationale**

Students are expected to know the major vocabularies, journalists use in their day- to - day activities. Besides, the course will equip students to manipulate English language to transmit their ideas or reports effectively. English is a global language; therefore, it will be indispensable for students of journalism to be equipped with its skills in order to be competitive in the global market.

**Course description**

This course is found to be important as there is a wide variety of context in which journalists use the different kinds of vocabulary. In addition, this course is designed in a way that it can build on what students have acquired in the different language courses. The course can also give them additional exposure to other types of contexts in which journalists use English such as crime and court reporting, reporting accidents and natural disasters.

**Course title: Newspaper production**

**Course Rationale:**

Newspaper production is designed to enable students acquire the necessary skills in producing a well qualified newspaper independently. It helps them to refresh what they have been taught in writing and design courses previously. It is all about synergizing all the skills and knowledge students acquired to produce a professional newspaper publication.

**Course Description:**

This course builds up on “publication layout and design” and demands producing a newspaper. The course shows the scope, feature, importance, structure, content diversity and depth of newspapers. Newspaper advertising, ownership, circulation and production processes are thoroughly dealt with, including analysis of newspaper industry and organizational structure. Editorial objectives and formulas, issues planning, article selection, layout, illustration, typography, printing and distribution. Newspaper project are required.

**Course Title: Radio Program Production Techniques**

**Course Rationale**

Radio is one of the media that connects ideas of large amount of people. Journalists provide a crucial step in connecting these ideas and disseminate information using radio as a medium. Therefore, this course is important since it equips students with theoretical and practical issues concerning the radio.

**Course Description**

This course provides in depth opportunity to students in acquiring the major techniques of radio program production. It gives an opportunity for students to be familiarized with different radio program formats and to be able to produce different program. The course specifically looks at radio program other than news and grants students practical exposure.

**Course Title: Broadcast Project**

**Course Rationale:**

Students may face the task of manipulating media equipments in the practical world. They will also be expected to produce broadcast programs and documentaries. Thus, this course is designed to let students achieve the necessary skills that are highly related to broadcast program productions.

**Course Description**

This course is entirely devoted to practical works that are related to broadcast courses taught in previous semesters. Students are expected to produce professional radio and television programs and documentaries. Up on completion of the course students will be able to skilfully manipulate audio and video equipments in addition to preparing media scripts for broadcast media outlets.

**Course Title: Amharic advanced writing skills**

**Course Rationale:**

Amharic is the national language of Ethiopia. This course is needed to equip students with the necessary skills of writing using the language.

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to teach students writing in Amharic at a higher level. Up on completion of the course students will be able to effectively communicate through writing in Amharic.

**Course Title: Tigrigna advanced writing skills**

**Course Rationale:**

Mekelle University is located in Tigray regional state. One of the missions of the university is serving the community which is found around the area. Tigrigna is the language of the area where the university is located. Therefore, this course is designed to help students write effectively in the language and address the needs of the society. However, the course will be given as an elective one. Only students who elect the course will take it.

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to teach students writing in Tigrigna at a higher level. Up on completion of the course students will be able to effectively communicate through writing in Tigrigna.

## Declaration

This thesis is my original work. It has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been acknowledged.

Woldegiorgis Ghebrehiwot    Date: \_\_\_\_\_    Signature: \_\_\_\_\_