

## MEDIA, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN ETHIOPIA: LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM LARGEST DEMOCRACIES

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### Abstract

*In a democracy free media, which is often referred as free press is believed to be the guardian of the public and it is a means to serve public interest. It is also thought that the media is the harbinger of democracy by upholding citizens' rights and, as a result, free media is taken as the litmus paper for democracy. At the same time, media has been considered as the promoter of national development. Therefore, media, democracy and development are thought to be inseparable where the existence of free media and its journalistic practice implicates the presence of democracy and becomes a building block of development of a given country. The media practice in one hand and its role in democracy and development of Ethiopia on the other have been in a constant debate. So the study aimed at examining the condition in which the media has functioned along with the political dynamics of the nation. For the study, the methods used include data from primary source and reviewing of documents from secondary data. Besides, both qualitative and quantitative data were analysed. In order to indicate the overall working situation of the media in the nation comparative analysis was made by taking the experiences of the largest democracies. Finally, it was found out that though there have been some improvements in the media practice of the country, the entire practice of the media has been hampered by political, professional and technical problems.*

**Key words:** media freedom, politics, development, democracy,

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## 1. Introduction

In a democracy free media, which is often referred as free press is believed to be the guardian of the public and it is a means to serve public interest. It is also thought that the media is the watchdog of citizens' rights and, as a result, free media is taken as the litmus paper for democracy. Therefore, journalism and democracy are quite inseparable where the existence of free media and its journalistic practice implicates the presence of democracy in a given country. Currently, there are about 192 countries that claim to be democratic states in the world. In any form of democracy journalism/ media is considered to be an icon for democracy, Beetham (2006), but the ownership styles do vary. Steel (2009) views media as one of the major organs of a government. Steel states about media as the fourth estate—the so-called watchdog role of the press since the 17th century.

Mass Media's role in economic and democratic development is quite central. Wilbur Schramm, for example, wrote an often cited text called *Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in Developing Countries (1964)*. Moreover, Everett Rogers - *Diffusion of Innovations* in 1962 play a major role in the diffusion of new ideas and innovations. Journalism's role in politics is further epitomized by Lucien Pye (1963) in the work entitled *Journalism Role in Political Development* who tried to deal upon radio role for literacy as opinion leaders. Walter Rostow in *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto (1960)* the poor nations have to move up the ladder of five stages and the media should work to foster change being a catalyst. This ranges from first stage, *traditional society*, preconditions for *takeoff* like political stability (second stage), *sustained economic growth* (third stage), *maturity* (fourth stage) to the highest stage- *modernization* as witnessed by mass consumption and high rates of GDP, Murthy(2006). McQuail (1994:34) also says "Mass media were a potential force for a new kind of cohesion, able to connect scattered individuals in a shared national, city and local experience". Media, therefore, become the harbinger of democratic politics and of social reform movements.

Moreover, Lerner found out that mass media growth is one of the three phases of democratic development: literacy, urbanization and media (Moemeka, 1994). Media role can be seen from two angles in democracy, that is, from constructive role and divisive role, Nigussie (2011). Moreover, various roles of media (McQuail, 1994:4) are enumerated as media has a great role in binding society together, giving leadership to the public, helping to establish the 'public

sphere', disseminating technical knowhow, encouraging individual change and mobility, spreading democracy, promoting consumer demand, aid literacy, education, health, population control and so on

Generally, the power of the media is unarguably so great. Media has become a forum for public discussion and debate. It plays a major part in the democratic culture as culture becomes at the heart of contemporary debates about identity, social cohesion, and the development of a knowledge-based economy.

### 1. 1 Brief Overview of Ethiopian Media Industry

The modern printing machine was to be brought to Ethiopia together with Japan by European Catholic missionaries around 1550 from Portugal despite the refusal of the then king according to Verghese (2007) may most probably be related to internal opposition and the bloodshed resulted from the conversion to Catholicism. The ship which brought the machine was compelled to stay at the sea and later followed by the death of the crew leader at the place called Goa, which is the west part of India (Murthy 1997). Incidentally, that marked the historical moment for the beginning of print media in India. In fact, the Ethiopian early media can be traced back to the time of writings on parchment, and later to modern media at the time of the arrival of printing machines and emerging of some publications at formers ports of Ethiopia, Nigussie(2011). Mekasha (2007:29), however, as far as modern media is concerned said "Modern media in Ethiopia was born when a missionary called Father Marie Bernand began publishing a weekly newspaper, *La Semaine d'Ethiopie* in French and Amharic in 1888. Father Bernand and the publisher was sent to France for further education in printing. On his return, Father Bernand trained typographers in order to enable them to operate modern machineries. Andreas Kavadias, a Greek businessman published *Aemiro*, a four page weekly, and distributed it in Addis Ababa". This "handwritten paper by Blatha Gebre Egziabher is taken as the first in the history of country's print media", Tadesse (2007:11). Later, some other newspapers emerged in relation to Italy interest to occupy Ethiopia. Italy established an Amharic published newspaper, *Yeter Wore* (War News) for propagating Italian fascist news in 1915, Ellene, Mesfin and Alemayehu (2003). The imperial government of Haileslassie is the time in which a number of newspapers came into existence. Menelik's attempt to modernize the country was further strengthened by Haileselesie. As part of his endeavor, the press in this regime has grown to

better position. However, the monarchical system was characterized as oppressive as few of the royal classes were privileged over the tenants who pay tributes.

### 1.1.1 The Media in Haile Selassie's Period

The monarchical government of Hialesellasi used the media for satisfying its imperial crown. There were some major developments in the media industry of the nation, however. According to Ellene, Mesfin and Alemayehu (2003) Emperor' Haile Selassie I establishment of the first printing press came into being in 1923 by the name, *Berhanena Selam* (Light and Peace) Printing Press. The first radio station was also started during this time and was able to broadcast in 1935, but some interruption with Italian invasion; short wave transmission in 1941, and later Radio Gospel came into being, Tadesse (2007). The print media *Addis Zemen* (New Era), appeared in Amharic on May 5th, 1941 and later in 1942, The Press and Information Department was established under the then Ministry of Pen. In the same year *Sendek Alamachin* (Our Flag) appeared in Amharic and Arabic, and the *Negarit Gazeta* appeared in Amharic and English. In the following year *The Ethiopian Herald* was started as a weekly English newspaper in 1943. There had been different publications during the imperial time and the press had relatively increased at least in number, but only served the wishes of the monarchical government, Birhane (2006) and Gudeta(2008) .

### 1.1.2 The Media in the Derg Period

The socialist military regime which came in the demise of the imperial regime of Emperor Hailesellasi was told for its dictatorial government. It was purely authoritarian and everything was under its control. Moreover, from its socialistic orientation it declared command economy where the government was the only actor in the political, economic and business affairs, Birhane (2006) and Getachew (2003). The radio and newspapers during the imperial time came under the close control of the Derge, and Radio Gospel was closed during this time, Tadesse (2007). The Derg used to have *Meskerem*, *Serto Ader* (The Proletariat) and few other print media, and also continued to publish the already existing ones: *Addis Zemene* and *The Ethiopian Herald*. Later, Radio Ethiopia had continued to be the only state media, and then television was started during this regime around 1964, Tadesse (2007) and Getachew(2003).

### 1.1.3 The Media in EPRDF Period

As the current government is concerned, the press in Ethiopia has been put in the constitutional frame for the first time in the country. Article 29 of the Constitution delineates the freedom the

press and censorship is prohibited, *The Constitution* (1995). The coming of the EPRDF marked two forms of ownership, that is, government and private for the first time in the history of the nation. The private press has substantially appeared for the first time ever (Nigussie, 2010; Gudeta, 2007, and Getachew 2003). Two types of ownership styles were introduced for the first time. That means, more than ever, a relatively many private newspapers have emerged and the press/media industry has enjoyed a relatively better time, Abbink (2006). There have been legal enactments such as 1992 Press Proclamations, 2007 Access to Media Information and Broadcasting Proclamations that have defined the legal ground in which the media in Ethiopian functions, Nigussie (2011), Getachew (2003).

### 1.2 . Statement of the Problem

This study is aimed at analyzing the media industry challenges and examining some lessons to be drawn from some of the largest democracies in the world in carrying out journalistic practices. There have been debates in Ethiopia like elsewhere about the applicability of freedom of media on one hand and the practice of journalism in the country on the other. There have been debates about development journalism in Ethiopia since it is argued that it may restrain the freedom of media in the nation. Thus, the study aims at looking how the media industry has carried out its functions in Ethiopia. In the meantime it attempts to compare the practices and challenges in the journalistic practices in other democracies. Based on the above arguments the present study would attempt to answer the following basic questions:

- What are the roles of media in development and democracy in a society like Ethiopia?
- Is there any relationship between development journalism and democracy?
- What are the common challenges and prospects of media industries in the world and what lessons can Ethiopia draw?
- What are the challenges of the media industry in the path to democratizing Ethiopia?
- Is development journalism relevant to Ethiopian development and democratic setup?

### 1.3 Objectives

The general objective of the present study is to examine the media industry challenges and prospects in Ethiopia towards building the developmental democratic state. The specific objectives of the study are:

- To analyze the different experiences of development journalism in different democracies
- To examine the relationship between development journalism and democracy
- To sketch out the place or the practices of journalism in some democracies in the world
- To draw some lessons to Ethiopia from the practice of development journalism in other democracies
- To indicate some challenges and prospects in carrying out journalism practices in Ethiopia

### 2. Methods

Secondary data was used for data collection and document review was applied as method of analysis. The data obtained were interpreted and analyzed qualitatively. Some quantitative data were also used about the news coverage pattern in Ethiopia. The journalistic practices in largest democracies particularly India, Philippines and Indonesia, USA, Canada and South Africa were examined so as to indicate how journalism should be practiced in the Ethiopian context. Besides, quantitative data was also used as a method of analysis. Some comparative analysis was also made among notable and largest democracies

### 3. Analysis of Media Industry towards Development and Democracy in Ethiopia

#### 3.1 Media Industry Situations in Largest Democracies

The demand for new approach to development in the developing world has necessitated for new sort of communication or journalism, that is, development communication/journalism. The concept of development against the notion of the old paradigm of development originated in relation to the notion of developmental state theory. According Caldentey new development path has been sought in relation with Japanese economic model in post world war II, that is, developmental state (2009:27) that “refers to a state that intervenes and guides the direction and pace of economic development”. This has brought a new form of journalism that has been often referred differently as public, civic or development journalism in different parts of the planet. Eric (2009:10), for example, mentions “Civic journalism initiatives were widely practiced in the mid-60s, albeit informally, by journalists in developing agrarian-based nations such as

Philippines and Indonesia”, referred to as development journalism. The concept of development Journalism was mentioned in writers’ training course in Manila in August 1968. Development journalism has been seen from development news perspective - information tailored to educate the people, to enhance the living conditions of the poor and building communities. According to Gunaratne (1996) a 1964 seminar convened by the East West Center in Honolulu formalized the concept development journalism. Later, journalists got prominence in the field because of their inevitable role in mediated communication

### Indian Experience

Ram (2000) states that there is a strong link between the history of India and its media. It is also mentioned that the media has helped the new independent nation to get “political and social emancipation from imperialist thralldom and oppression” (*Ibid*: 242). The origin and development of the Indian media has been attributed to “the seriousness, relevance, and public-spirited orientation”. This has gradually brought the notion of development journalism. According to Murthy (2006) Gandhi was the first to practice development reporting. That time onwards there have been development in the media industry in India. However, Ravi (2007) argues that India’s media freedom is a lot ahead because the freedom of the media from government control has been much achieved as it is incomplete for the broadcast media have not been placed on an equal constitutional and legal footing like the print media, which has been owned by independent bodies. Although it is stated that the freedom of the press is a fundamental right, it is not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution of India. The only freedom it has been enjoying is from the judicial interpretations that base on Article 19 of the Constitution. It is discussed that the media in India has played a significant role in the development and democratic process of the country. Today, mainly television has been given special attention for speeding up national development. He believed that technology can help set a national agenda for “implementing schemes of economic and social development.....it is of particular significance for population living in isolated rural countries”, *Ibid* (2007: 29). Ravi, nevertheless, criticizes that the government’s strong hold of the broadcast media “has been more or less toeing a centralized form of communication” where AIR (All India Radio) for example is centrally controlled starting from during its initial days formulation in Delhi. Much of the criticism has been made as it never even considered the regional variations.

### Indonesian Experience

The pioneers of development journalism were Indonesia and the Philippines, McPhail (2009). After independence Indonesian politics and media was at the cross road to choose for one language for a divided and newly independent Indonesia, the fourth most populous nation in the world with nearly 250 million and over 13,000 islands, stretching along the equator between Southeast Asia and Australia with estimated of 600 languages, Paauw, (2009). This was, in fact, a real challenge where Dutch and Javanese were dominant, and Malay the local language was spoken only by about 5% at that time. The need for such a choice in Indonesia became apparent in the first decades of the twentieth century, where nationalism grew and Indonesians began looking to the future and an end to more than three centuries of Dutch colonial rule. There were Dutch, which was the language of the largest ethnic group, Javanese; and the historic lingua franca of the archipelago, Malay with different status, *Ibid*.

Farid, (2006) describes that after the independence, the nation was ruled by a military regime. Following the coup aborted in 1965, there was an organized military massacre of more than half of a million of Indonesians, and hundreds and thousands of citizens were remained under bar. The Killing and suffering of millions by the then government of Communist party sympathizers until replaced by Suharto regime in 1965-1966 and ruled until 1998, millions Indonesian marks the political turmoil in the nation at the time. It was stated that the killing was sate violence, but Farid, argues it is the bureaucratic and institutionalized. There were killings of six army generals and a lieutenant. There was blood bath of the time is argued to be related to the previously maligned and harmed sections of the society took their plunge. However, according to Oetama (2005) Indonesia's political situation has much changed in post- Suharto period. Irwansyah (2011) discusses that Indonesia has gone through a lot of political, economic and social changes. Particularly, the drastic liberalization (*Reformation*) starting 1998 has brought the closure of powerful Ministry of Information followed by the introduction of new laws and presidential decrees designed towards media freedom in the intention to avoid censorship. There has been significant moves towards access to acquiring publication permits, increase in the numbers of regional and community media, consolidation in the media, and for the birth of media mogul and conglomerates, Irwansyah (2011). There was a national state owned television station called TVRI and nine privately-owned stations. Besides, there were more than



28 television stations in regions. There is one national radio station known as RRI. There were more than 200 newspapers and there are many dailies. However, most of media grew at the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta

Eric (2009) says “development journalism was practiced in ... Indonesia” and was equivalently used for the concept of civic journalism developed in the mid-60s by journalists in US and elsewhere. Journalism was used as a means to foster the development of the nation where the government had much control over it. Actually the first Press Council of Indonesia was founded in 1968 as an advisory body to the government. But the press council was given the task of assisting the government in the development of the national press and the minister of information is the chair of the council. It can be labeled to be developmental journalism instead of development journalism. Though representatives of press organisations and experts in journalism were members of the council, its main function was for the government to exercise control over the press. On the other hand, Peters [u.d] says “the Indonesian Press Council has a lot of advantages and journalists in the countries of South-East Asia rightly look to Indonesia as a possible model to copy”, p.6 after Indonesia has followed the path to democracy from the authoritarian government of the past. Finally, Hadiz (2004) explains the broadcast media mainly has played a more prominent role in Indonesian politics and development.

### **American Experience**

American media has been often considered as the most advanced form in the world. Most of the media scholastic and research practices have been greatly influenced the function and notion of media in the planet. American media, may be, like elsewhere in the advanced democracies has been driven mostly by libertarian theory of the media, Graber (1989). In other words, apart from the other theories such as authoritarian, social responsibility and soviet socialist western media particularly US seem to be based on the ideal of libertarian model. This normative theory assumes free press as an essential component of free and rational society. The Federal Communication Commission has been also based on this theoretical foundation.

There are, however, elements in which the US media has seemed to be governed by social responsibility theory, which later became the breeding ground for the coinage of the concept public journalism. According to Lambeth (1986) the first systematic theory of a socially responsible press was presented by Commission on Freedom of the Press, headed by Robert M.

Hutchins in 1947. The Hutchins Commission's report was based on the notions that media must provide a 'truthful, comprehensive account events in a context which gives them meaning. In addition, it should become forum for the exchange of comment and criticism, become representative for the constituent groups of American society and to present and spell out the goals and values of society; and to give full access to the day's intelligence. The goal was to promote multiculturalism and pluralism as core values of the nation's democracy. However, the freedom of the press in the multicultural and democratic context of America has been far from straightforward meaning given to it. American media practice is usually considered as it enjoys a complete freedom and upholds the traditional notions of Jeffersonian and DeToqueville's equality and fraternity, Griffin(1999). However, the media industry has been working in a constant battle for domination and maintaining the social status quo rather than addressing the marginalized sections of Americans. Benson (2005:5) described this by mentioning the words of Jackie Greene view who was a manager at *USA Today*, that "more should have been reported about people who were left out of the dot-com economic bounce. Little trickled down to the poorest among us". The poor, the black, the Hispanic, the Asian and the immigrants have been systematically denied in the "safe haven" of America. the multi-faceted There has been "multicultural' movement to a simple demand for proportionate representation" . It is indicated that the percentage of 'people of color' of the total American population increased from 19 percent to nearly 30 percent. The number of newspaper journalists of color has slightly increased from 4 percent to 12 percent, and with 20 percent of television workforce, but less than 10 percent of editorial management positions are held by minority white journalists. The gate keeping and information selection seems to be hampered as the consequence of the less proportional representation of the minorities. Benson (2005:7) mentions an instance that "1997 study sponsored by the National Association of Hispanic Journalists found that only 112 out of 12,000 national television network news stories focused on 'Latinos' or 'Latino issues', and 64 percent of this coverage was about crime, affirmative action and immigration". Cobbina (2008) states that the media has been constructing moral panics, which makes some section of the society to retreat in fear for making pressure on the government to "do something." The moral panic is built upon, stylized and stereotyped by the mass media as some sections of the society are threats to societal values and interests. Coleman (2011:337) further explicitly states that "the media negatively stereotype certain ethnic and racial groups,' with blacks especially affected".

This is because the media has been monopolized by the dominants who controlled much of the information share, Benson (2005). Though there are many media outlets in US, majority of them, may be, have limited power in influencing their nation's agenda and become development agent. One can be an egalitarian thinker, may be, taking CNN and NBC in US, which have wider acceptance over the other broadcast media in the nation. The media outputs have been commodified. This is resulted in media commercialization, which has, in turn, led to low cultural quality and commodification of culture, exploitation of weaker consumers and propaganda for consumerism, McQuail (1994:107). In response to this, Haas (2003:617) states that "public journalism originated in the US in the late 1980s and early 1990s", and can be equated to developmental journalism in the developing nations of Asia and Africa. It is based on the notion that journalism and democracy are fundamentally intertwined. Journalism is committed to active and meaningful citizen participation. Journalism/media has been thought to be the harbinger of democracy. However, there has been decline in citizen participation in the civic affairs of local communities. This later necessitated the call for public journalism in the US to promote public participation. Eric (2009:10) says civic journalism has come into picture in America in the mid 1990s. It was the move towards redefining the activities of the media in the US to be "re-engage the media with the community in the news-making process". Graber (1989:3) states that "The media often serve as attitude and behavior models. In the process of image creation, the media indicate which views and behaviors are acceptable and even praiseworthy in a given society and which are unacceptable or outside the mainstream". Graber explains the various limitations in media freedom though the American media is governed by the rule of the people. There is no equal time rule among parties. Major parties obtain more time, where the minorities obtained little chance in getting so. This was commonly observed Carter's time election contest. The Federal Communication commission only facilitated for "Carter-Ford and Crater-Reagan debates" permitted to be staged as regular news. Public meetings were equally covered with the equal use of media time, but not subject to "equal time rule" among parties. The media were not compelled to provide equal time for all parties or individuals, *Ibid* (1989:115).

### Canadian Experience

Canada introduced and passed ingenious public policies, undertaken various royal commission, for indigenous media. This was because the US television was available over the Canadian air, many cities in Canada particularly Halifax, Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver got US media coverage. McPhail (1994:191). Canadian media and particularly the electronic media work to build Canadian identity from the American media domination that can be regarded as act of development journalism, but has been leveled as public journalism. The media programmes were meant to be “predominantly Canadian” which is aimed to “contribute to shared national consciousness and identity”, Benson and Powers (2011:21). CBC’s revenues about 64 percent came from government appropriations in 2008. The emphasis was made on national orientation to protect Canada from American domination in information and cultural affairs. There is racialization of crime associating to phrases like "cultural deviance," "Jamaican or Black crime“, Fhenry and TatoR(2000). The media seems to create a sense of moral panic on the minorities and assumes the status quo on one hand, and driven by corporate interests. The linking of race and crime by the media becomes a wake-up call to all Canadians, and especially politicians, to re-evaluate their ideas about authority, control and public policy. Mahtani (2001:2) says “Despite what we would like to believe, Canadian media is not fair, democratic nor objective in nature”. This implies that there are tendencies in which the media serve only certain interest of the “dominants”. It is also mentioned that this was because “Media images of Canadian minorities are not just random panoply of representations”. However, according to Mahtani “The media has the power to choose which images of minorities dominate the public domain”. It is well argued that “Canadian media continue to broadcast negative and stereotypical images that only serve to demean minority Canadians”.

### Mexican Experience

Rubenstein (2001:1) says “The Battle for Mexican Media.... is within Mexico to improvements in Mexican media technology and to a learning process on the part of the Mexican state”. There are instances in which the nation’s media has been influenced by a more nuanced version of cultural imperialism, where audiences do not learn from mass media, but influenced by “automatically what owners desired” from the growing media pressure from the advanced nations. The economic growth in the advanced countries did not yield growth in the poorer nations. Rather the less advanced nations became dependent on the advanced nations.

Theoretically, according to Higareda (2009:306) the Mexican media is expected to “encourage diversity, access for civil society, a more public service approach to content, civic journalism, a balanced coverage of perspectives of civil society and the promotion of reasoned debates within and between civil society and public authorities”. The media in Mexico has the ownership system of public and commercial. However, the ownership in broadcasting media has been concentrated on few hands, Higareda(2009) called “Media mogul”, Media giants.

The major obstacles to democracy in Mexico, such as social and economic inequalities, patronage and a weak rule of law, constitute also obstacles to this deliberative development of the Mexican media. The negative consequences of the excessive market approach to the Mexican media are according to Higerda (2011): a) The deepening of inequalities in resources, opportunities and capabilities between Mexicans as regards political participation through the media, b) The alienation of civil society from politics, c) Conflicting interests between the owners of the media and the community as a whole and d) The broadcasting of programmes that do not contribute to the deliberative culture of citizens, but disseminate social values that are destructive of democracy. According to Higerda the media in Mexico has been seen as an industry, rather than a public service. This means, the media does not consider its activity as an activity in the public interest. Consequently, the structural conditions in the country have paved the way for “a culture of patronage and clientelism within the Mexican media and in conjunction with the weakness of the rule of law”, *Ibid* (2011:329). In Mexico there are two opposite tendencies of the Media. There is more evidence of civic journalism within the broadcast media on the one hand, and the opposite wave of violence against assertive journalists who have denounced the activities of criminal organizations and their collusion with some public authorities. The media, however, generally have improved the quality of their political reporting and analysis and “The state media are prohibited from commercially developing of their services”, *Ibid* (2011:316)

### **South African Experience**

South African media also upholds to the notion of development journalism. The media, however, has been compelled to work in the prevailing racial tension in the country, Corene de Wet(2001) Generally, however, development journalism has been sought in the country to address the development of the nation. South African media cover much of development news and stories related to development questions like mining and industry, Banda (2006). Besides,

health issues have got attention in the media, which of course, demonstrates the practice of development journalism in the country. For example, HIV was the major health challenge in the nation. The media, however, has been compelled to work in the prevailing racial tension in the country, Corene de Wet (2001). There is racial tension even today and cultural domination of the local people by the western capitalism. The media, consequently, has been obligated to sustain the existing racial rift and the social stratification.

### 3.2 Challenges of the Media Industry in the World

First, the rift between the establishment of a New International Communication Order (NIIO or NWICO) has differentiated the journalists of the world in two camps: the Western-style journalists who advocate western style of gathering and dissemination of information, and the Second and Third World journalists who feel the need to have varying amounts of government input in the news reporting process, Ogan (1980). Second, the failure of the dominant paradigm of development, or modernization led to new paradigm of development which has subsequently brought different models of development, created strong debate between the south and north starting the 1970s and 1980s (Murthy, 2006). Third, the urge for local knowledge and self help development efforts as a catch up mechanism to the rest of the world in , Ozawa (2010) has led to new stream of thought in the south. Particularly, there has been a call for government to be dominant supplier of development, which in fact, touches upon all gamut of life including media and communication. Participatory development and communication, which focuses on public participation in development and government affairs has become the discourse of most governments today, Murthy (2006). Fourth, the Cultural imperialism which led the dominant nations shape the culture of weaker groups, or nations has been major challenges of world media industry. Fifth, western powers dominate the poorer southern hemisphere with trends of globalization, and the Electronic colonialism (Globalization) left the reliance of the poor on American and western communication technologies. This has subsequently impacted global markets and cultures and brought, media imperialism that has led to domination of the media by a select few groups and the impact it has on weaker factions.

### 3.3 Prospects and Challenges of Media Industry in Ethiopia

The functioning of mass media should be geared towards strengthening democracy in Ethiopia. The media should be one of the major actors in the process of nation building. It should work for the enrichment of the ideals of democracy to meet the realm of national development in the

most sustainable manner by securing peace and stability. The media in Ethiopia has been governed by the press proclamation no. 34 of 1992. The issue of press was never a subject of discussion before the advent of this proclamation. Being opposed to the policy of previous governments, this proclamation in its Art. 3 (2) has completely banned censorship of the press and any restrictions of a similar nature. The freedom of the media in Ethiopia is cherished in the Constitution of Ethiopia(1995) and it has given a good leap towards having an independent media though some limitations have been observed in the practices of the industry. Due to termination of censorship, publication of press products became free and carried on subject to the conditions laid down in the press law. Ethiopian broadcasting services, radio and television transmitting, is regulated by the "Broadcasting proclamation no. 178 of the year 1999 (Proc. No. 178/99). The Proclamation under Art. 4 establishes "The Ethiopian Broadcasting Agency" whose accountability are made directly responsible to to the House of Peoples Representative than to any executive body of the government in order to avoid any power imbalance in leadership.

Apart from the above strengths some of the Gudeta (2008:9) found out that the media “were not functioning in line with recognized journalistic standards”. There has been a north-south dichotomy in the press. This has emanated from the political hangover of the past and self censorship of journalists, Birhane (2006) and Getachew(2003). On the other hand, Abbink (2006) states that there is no doubt that post-1991 Ethiopia saw noteworthy political change and public philosophy of democracy emerged. But Abbink argues that the journalistic practice is still closely controlled. There need for independent press council or organization in Ethiopia like in Mexico, Philippines, or India, US or Canada. In fact, recently we have witnessed the formation of Media board, but the private press/media needs to be governed along with government by an independent body. Lack of trained personnel in the field and constraints of resources is one of the major challenges of the media industry in Ethiopia. For instance, *Survey of Culture and Media* (2000: 31) says

*Of 25 editors and reporters interviewed, 58.6% were 12th grade graduates, 7.2% were holders of a college diploma, 5.2% had a first degree (and one with a master's degree), and 2.5% had pursued a two-to-three-years education in one or another of the vocational schools, institutes or colleges [in] the country. The rest (4%) were not willing to specify their educational qualifications*

One of the major challenges of the media in Ethiopia is following of the Azmari style (, Birhane 2003; Nigussie, 2014) where the press simply praises only the owners interest instead of serving the public interest. Besides, there is a tendency of journalistic self censorship, Skerdal (2009) which affects the healthy functioning of the media. At the same time the private media has become a divisive instrument (Nigussie, 2011) instead of paying an integral role (McQuial, 1994). The media should promote the diversity in the nation unlike the racializing of the media in Canada and even in US or South Africa, Gudeta (2008). Moreover, the electronic colonization(globalization) and cultural imperialism has been major challenge like elsewhere(globalization has its pros and cons with Social Media, for example.

The media in the nation has become less critical about development efforts- of media personnel Ethiopia may follow the path of Mexico and India where the media should strengthen its emerging democracy by exposing social ills. The media needs to be critical about the development efforts by exposing maladministration and corruption (Nigussie, 2011). The coverage pattern does not follow the journalistic standards like proximity, balance, timeliness. The following table demonstrates the degree of fairness in covering various issues in government.

The Coverage pattern of three national dailies was analyzed using quantitative analysis. As in the following tables F denotes favourable news, whereas as N is for neutral and U for unfavourable news. Besides, W refers to Woreda, Z for zonal, R for regional, N for national, C for continental (Africa) and I for international news coverage.

S.No.	Categories	Balance	L	Z	R	N	C	I	Total
1	Democratic issues	F	51	23	45	111	20	2	252
		N	5	2	5	22	29	37	100
		U	2	-	1	6	23	17	49
2	Development	F	90	65	76	123	13	4	371
		N	18	12	11	23	19	22	105
		U	1	-	-	-	10	3	14
3	Eco& Finance	F	22	13	18	29	2	0	84
		N	9	5	3	9	12	14	52
		U	-	-	-	-	5	16	21

Table 1. Balance of Coverage of Addis Zemene Newspaper



Source: Own data (2010)

According to the above table, Addis Zemen had more focus on favorable news whereas it is less critical as indicated in the table. Among the 12 categories identified by Nigussie (2011) development issues were the most favored news items from any other types of news followed by democratic issues. This is also similar to the Ethiopian Herald as in table 2.

S.No.	Categories	Balance	W	Z	R	N	C	I	Total
1	Democratic Issues	F	178	-	95	150	8	2	433
		N	13	-	8	15	-	23	59
		U	20	-	1	11	17	3	52
2	Development	F	187	148	121	109	-	2	567
		N	34	13	14	14	1	11	87
		U	7	5	1	5	3	5	26
3	Economy & Finance	F	42	35	23	40	2	4	146
		N	6	3	4	7	-	16	36
		U	4	-	1	2	1	13	21

Table 2. Table 1. Balance of Coverage of the Ethiopian Herald

Source: Own data (2010)

On the contrary, The Daily Monitor has less favourable stories about democratic issues or development. The coverage of the news was more attributed to national, continental and international news unlike the two government news. Sport is also the other most important news story followed by democratic issues and development. This is also observed in table 3 below.

S.No.	Categories	Balance	L	Z	R	N	C	I	Total
1.	Democracy	1	-	2	2	9	21	17	51
		2	2	-	1	16	56	58	133
		3	3	-	-	13	251	50	317
2.	Development	1	13	7	8	18	10	15	71
		2	1	-	2	11	19	35	68
		3	1	-	-	6	41	39	87
3.	Eco& Finance	1	1	1	2	12	12	18	46
		2	1	-	1	3	10	43	58
		3	-	-	-	2	27	99	128
4.	International Affairs	1	-	-	2	38	78	62	180
		2	-	-	-	6	103	179	288
		3	-	-	-	4	46	131	181
5.	Sport	1	1	-	-	9	27	162	199
		2	1	-	-	2	41	242	286
		3	1	-	-	5	31	133	170

Table 3. Balance of Coverage of The Daily Monitor

Source: Own data (2010)

The media according to the above tables 1 and 2 cover news mainly of democratic issues such as ruling party, opposition party, good governance and so on, followed by development news which include news such as health, education, electricity, road and transport, water, construction and housing. Most of the news are favorable (Positive news) whereas only small proportion of the news by the in the government media has become critical about development efforts, but the private media, the Daily Monitor is more critical in covering news than the government. There seems to a sharp contrast in the coverage pattern of government and private media in Ethiopia.

### 3.4 Lessons Drawn from Largest Democracies

The media industry in the world has followed different contexts based on the system of government that exist in the respective countries. Most governments of democracies have followed different media stages or systems along with the changes in their political systems.

Ethiopian can take the development journalism route which was considered as civic journalism like in US, Canada, India and Philippines or its equivalent public journalism as it was advocated in Mexico, Canada or the US in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Haas (2003:617). Furthermore, the Ethiopian media must be guided with building Ethiopian identity like the “Canadian media and particularly the electronic media work to build Canadian identity from the American media domination”, McPhail (1994:191). Some may argue the Ethiopian media does not really serve the democratic path. Though there are challenges in the media industry as seen above, the media industry is a growing one with the growth in democracy. Even in the so called matured democracy like in Canada “Despite what we would like to believe, Canadian media is not fair, democratic nor objective in nature” Mahtani (2001:2) says and also the US media has seemed to serve the interests of the dominant.

The Ethiopian society is not divided by serious racial relations unlike in US, Canada and South Africa. It is not also divided by serious caste problem, which is a serious challenge in India. It is not geographically and linguistically fragmented like that of Indonesia. In Ethiopia though there are ethnic variations, it has been proved in the nation’s history that it did not create such big tensions because of strong social and cultural bond in the country. In Ethiopia, though there are many linguistically varied groups, it has not been a major source of tension unlike in the other parts of the world. The media which work in professional ways in such context can easily sustain democracy and peace. The Ethiopian media does not own its complete freedom like in India for political or some other reasons. Ravi (2007) says India’s media has obtained freedom, but the freedom is “incomplete” for the broadcast media has not been placed on an equal constitutional and legal footing like the print media as the electronic media has been owned by government only. This might be related to the level of the media practices and the political maturity of parties or political players in the nations.

In Indonesia, however, the print media mainly got complete independence, and the electronic media is owned both the government, public and private media. According to Irwansyah (2011) Indonesia has gone through a lot of political, economic and social changes. Much of the structural changes in Indonesia since the 1960s has seemed to Ethiopia, the path to democracy and the giving media independence has been really promising in Indonesia than Ethiopia and so Ethiopia could learn a lot from it. The quantity of the daily news newspapers is huge where according to Hadiz (2004) after the Reformasi the number of print media has shoot up

considerably from 289 dailies in the end of 1990s to 1,600 dailies in the beginning of 2005. Ethiopia currently seems to have only two or three dailies and so it is likely to argue that the print media is still in its infancy stage though lots of good achievements have been obtained in the current government. Though today the number of newspapers is decreasing in the west along with the shift in media and high literacy level, it is growing in Asia, may be also in Africa in connection with the growth in literacy level, Ram (2011).

The institutional change is also important for developing the media industry. Irwansyah (2011) states that there is a swift change in Indonesia in 1998 by liquidating the powerful Ministry of Information towards media freedom in the intention to avoid censorship. Perhaps, this seems to be the case in Ethiopia along with demolishing of the former Ministry of Information. However, there is a great need to establish strong body which works on communication towards enhancing the development of the nation like that of Indian government which established a Sub-committee on Communication for development of communication for better India, Ram (2000). It should not be highly commercial unlike the US where “The American news media have always been highly commercial”, Benson(2005:9). Ethiopian electronic media has not grown and much ahead to a robust level. So there is a need to learn from India and Indonesia. Ram (2011) indicates that television households in India were estimated to 141 million, with 116 million of them served by cable and 26 million by direct-to-home television in 2011. Moreover, it is also stated that internet use and broadband access are growing rapidly which is next to China which has 500 million internet users with 100 million internet users in the same year. Though no concrete data is available, Ethiopian broadcast situation is much behind where there is only a national radio, one non government radio ( Radio Fana), about 9 or few more regional FMs, some commercial FMs in the capital, some community radios or FMs like that of Jimma, Yirgalem, Hawassa, and may be few others. The internet users are growing, but limited to the capital city and few regional cities. Consequently, the number of users among 15-20% urbanities and educated citizens of the total population of the nation seems to be low. However, in China the figure is about 30% where as it is around 10% in India. Ethiopia can also draw many lessons from Indonesia. According to Irwansyah (2011) there is a national state owned television station called TVRI and nine national and privately-owned television stations. Besides, there are more than 28 television stations in regions. There is one national radio station known as RRI. There are more than 200 newspapers and there are many dailies. However, most

of media grow at the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta, with population 9,580,000 people. There has been a growth in the use of internet and there are more than 100 known internet sites.

#### 4. Conclusion

The path to democracy and development in less developed countries like Ethiopia necessitate development oriented journalism, that is, development journalism. The role of the media industry in the development and democratic process of the nation has been underlined in the Press Proclamation no. 34 (1992) and Broadcasting Proclamation (1999) though there are some debates about the extent in which the freedom of media can be guaranteed and also about the government's degree of tolerance. On the other hand, the Constitution of Ethiopia (1995) as a Supreme law of the land in its Articles 2 and 3 states about the freedom of media and the abolition of censorship as part of the democratic process. Moreover, the role of the media in speeding up the development efforts and the democratic process of the country have been emphasized in the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) 2010/11-2014/15. These all have been fertile grounds towards having an independent media that can become development agent, and enhance the flourishing of democracy. In fact, the Constitution of Ethiopia and other documents have given due place for the freedom of media as it can play a pivotal role in the development and democratic building of the nation. For instance, the Government Communication Affairs Office (2012:110) in the book entitled *Be'Ethiopia Ye'Democracy Ginbata Gudayoch* states that "The media is expected to play greater historical role in creating the needed common national belief and attitude". The media should play an active role in the positive development of the country, and democratizing Ethiopia. This is because media is thought to be the harbinger of democracy and the guardian of the people. Being "a check on state" as propounded by liberal theory, Curran (2007:27) or I would like to say it "watchdogism" is not sufficient to Ethiopian media practice. Like in India and Indonesia it should be part of the government's efforts to development, should be part of the public interest in spite of being driven by commercial interest like in the US. If the media is only guided by commercial interest, the media output would be commodified and lead to cultural imperialism or the electronic colonialism like in. In post modern era, one should not as such simply be advocate of Western values. It is known that the commercialization of the media and the commodification of media outputs have worried the western society as the media seem to be run by corporate interest rather than promoting public interest/social responsibility. So the media

in Ethiopia should be framed in the condition in which the government strikes the balance between the extremes.

Ethiopian media should be governed from the notion of free and rational society, i.e., democracy. The government, however, may not tolerate a freedom of the press that serves to divide the country and to open the floodgates of criticism that harms the public like in The First Amendment to the United States Constitution ratified in 1791, United States Bureau of International Information Programs (2010). This is what both the private and government media in Ethiopia should uphold, that is, what development journalism can be about. Ethiopian media must play an active role in enhancing the country's development and promoting democracy. Our media I argue need to build our identity from the western domination, as Canadian media worked for Canadian identity. That is what development journalism should be about. This is what democracy is, and that is what media should work for. The western notion of public or civic journalism seems to have similar perspective with development journalism in Asia and Africa.

Finally, it should be noted that an independent media council like in India, Mexico, or Indonesia, or Communication Commission like in US or elsewhere should be established in Ethiopia for the free practice of media and to promote media's self regulation. The media practitioners must be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills of journalism. The media practice should also follow journalistic principles such as objective, balance, truthfulness and proximity. Moreover, the media access and the freedom of mass media should be truly practiced as there have been instances in which some public officials become shy in providing public information of public interest.

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