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Freedom of the Press Under FDRE: The Challenges of Constitutionalism

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Abstract

Freedom of the press is the bed rock for flourishing of democracy usually it is considered as the fourth branch of government. Freedom of the press is now universally recognized as an essential ingredient of a durable and fully democratic order. It is white and black; the test of democracy is rely on freedom of criticism. That is why the Ethiopia's Constitution and several laws stipulated various press related rights to protect freedom of expression and freedom of the press such as the right to hold opinions without interference; the right to freedom of expression without any interference; freedom of the press and other mass media including the prohibition of any form of censorship; and access to information of public interest among other rights. The government maintains that it is protecting press freedom through the Press Law and points out that it has not banned any publication. However, in practice the government act against not only press law but also the provision of the constitution. The government simply introduce the liberal law of the press as a Cover for Restricting Media. The treatment of writers, journalists, and bloggers are the critical human rights issues now a days in the country, including a lack of press freedom, arbitrary detention, an inability to access government information, suppression of peaceful association and assembly, and restrictive laws and policies regarding the internet and digital. Hence, the main aim of this study is to examine historical development of press and freedom of press in Ethiopia predominantly the implementation of press freedom under FDRE in light of constitutionalism and press law and its role for the realization of good governance and democratic process, and examine the systematic and democratic constraints of the freedom of the press since the adoption of FDRE constitution.

Keywords: Press, Freedom of the press, and Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

Press can be defined as all the media of mass communication. However, the Writer widely focus on the printing media, it is because of their old age in foundation. There are various types of presses in different countries; because of the countries' socio-political structure, relative degree of urbanization and resource availability (Schramm, 1963). Freedom of the press requires freedom to seek, receive and impart information to the public. The mission of press will properly

complete when the press freedom enables free people to keep in touch with one another with their leaders and with important events. Because of this, freedom of press is an absolute prerequisite for democratic society. It is possible for the press to create opportunity for citizens to express their own views, learn from one another, engage in discussion and deliberation read, quest political candidate (Rodney, 1992).

In democratic system, the action or omission of the government must be subjected to the presses

and public opinions. In such system, the government derives its power from the consent of the people. So it is mainly through freedom of press and accesses to information the member of the society are able to oversee the conduct of their elected representatives. However, in Ethiopia during Haile Selassie and Mengistu regime; the media was entirely state controlled with no private or public service media as stated in the article of African media development interactive (Gebre Medhine,2009). This means that there is no independent media and there is also strong pre-publication and dissemination censorship on the media organization.

With the passage of time, freedom of press recognized in Ethiopia stated with the 1955 revised constitution was adopted and it was the first legal framework, which introduced the principle of press freedom in Ethiopia. Dergue also come up with press freedom in 1987. But the regime known for banning private press and only allow its own press as well. The FDRE was recognized freedom of press under article 29(1) following with the adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human right instruments (FDRE Proc. No. 34/1992).

Similarly with freedom of press, the state of freedom of expression in Ethiopia is a two decades old phenomenon. It has changed dramatically since 1991. A country that had a few governmental media outlets has come to provide its population diverse print and electronic outlets. Freedom of Expression was affirmed in the Transition Period Charter adopted on June 1991 by the Transitional conference attended by representatives of almost all political parties, trade unions and other associations, including public figures (Rebqa, 2013).

However, the development of the press as an important democratic institution in Ethiopia is not yet without problem. Besides, press as an institution and legal recognition of the right, there are several controversies over the freedom of the press. In most developing countries like Ethiopia, presses like mass media and newspaper

organization are government controlled. The playing ground for the media are set out by the government. Despite these facts, freedom of press is a precondition for achieving a true democracy. In a country where there is no press freedom, there is no democracy. The problem of freedom press in Ethiopia arises from out of two major challenges. *Firstly*, the concept of the term freedom of the press is vague that there is no precise set of rule that fix the extent of liberty which guarantee the liberty of the press and limit government intervention over its freedom. *Secondly*, the freedom of the press is challenged by the absence of democracy and democratic system. In Ethiopia, the problem of the press is critical issue of constitutional and legal constraints over its freedom as well as political and systematic problems of democracy (Rebqa, 2013). Therefore, this paper will examine the systematic and democratic constraints of the press since the adoption of FDRE constitution.

2.1. General Overview of Press and Freedom of Press

2.1.1. Definition of Press and Freedom of Press

According to Black's law dictionary Press can be "all the media of mass communication" (Scramm, 1963). Press freedoms also defined in different materials by different scholars' differently but have similar connotations. That is freedom of press is the right to print and publish materials without government intervention (Black's law dictionary, 2001:450). On the same connotation world book of encyclopedia defined freedom of press as: the right to publish facts ideas, and or opinions without interference from the government or private group and also this right extends to radio, television and motion of pictures as well as printed materials (World Book of Encyclopedia,2001).

The workable definition of freedom of the press is "the right of publishing books, pamphlets, newspapers, or periodicals without restraint or censorship subject only to the existing laws against libel, sedition, and indecency or freedom

of the press means that any idea can reach everybody without hindrance from the powerful". According to Scram that he quoted from hocking freedom of press composed of

1. **Freedom For (positive freedom)** - needs the positive intervention of government for the realization of the press. In other words, without the assistance or helps of the government, the freedom of the press is nonsense.
2. **Freedom from** – indicates ‘negative liberty’ that is free from external force from external influence equivalently to leave the individual free to work out his or her own futurity. On the other side, ‘freedom for’-states a positive liberty and implies the presence of the necessary implementation to achieve a certain goal.

Freedom of press not only includes free from external force intervention in order to do what one’s potential is allow but also it has a supportive aspects that it need necessary help for the discharge of such fundamental right. Freedom of press also defined as freedom against scrutiny from the low or any action that can be taken by any branch of the government for the purpose of preventing or stifling just criticism or muzzling public opinion (Patrick, 1998).

In general, all definition stated above regarding on freedom of press thus have similar concepts that is it allows press free from restriction on printing broad casting media, newspaper etc.by the government and guarantee special protection for such rights and also it recognize freedom of press is fundamental right for individual to express their own opinion idea freely with the absence of government intervention.

2.2. Index of Freedom of the press

As an international statistics ranged from 2011–2012 revealed, the countries in which freedom of press was the most free and least were ranked as follow : Finland, Norway and Germany, followed by Estonia, Netherlands, Austria, Iceland, and Luxembourg. The country with the least degree of

press freedom was Eritrea, followed by North Korea, Turkmenistan, Syria, Iran, and China. With respect to governmental information, any government may distinguish which materials are public or protected from disclosure to the public based on classification of information as sensitive, classified or secret and being otherwise protected from disclosure due to relevance of the information to protecting the national interest. Many governments are also subject to sunshine laws or freedom of information legislation that are used to define the realm of national interest (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_the_press#).

In Ethiopia, Press freedom comes post 1991, though a start in exercise of the right has not developed well mainly due to the government interference, loophole in the law, and lack of professionalism in the part of the press. This study tries to see and appraise the press freedom and practice in accordance with the theories; values, ethics and press with compared the consideration of “press law” and its implementation. This study, therefore, tries to show how the current press freedom is emerged and developing with the constraints and impacts of government interference and individuals’ /institutional/ violation of the freedom (Habtamu, 2012; Kalewongel, 2007).

2.3. Freedom of Press as a freedom of Expression and Freedom of information

Freedom of information is an aspect of freedom of expression that is freedom of information is part and parcel of freedom of expression. In a democracy society, freedom of expression-which is itself part of intellectual liberty is taken as a bulwark and fundamental prerequisite of democracy and of the exercise of other right as well (Halsinger, 2006).

Therefore, freedom of expression and information is an indispensable ingredient of democracy particularly in modern democracy where direct is conducted, so people have to be given the right to express their feeling and opinions. Freedom of

expression creates a situation where by the public debates discussion on issues of public matter and express to the government what it wants to be done. The government also benefited from this free debate and discussion because that makes it be aware of what its subjects are about and to responds to the needs and desires of its public accordingly. Freedom of expression and information can serve as a weapon for minority interests. As long as individual are entitled to voice their disagreement with the majority group views and try to find public support those majority groupviews cannot claim an exclusive position in the political process which is destined to bring about decisions based on consensus or compromise is reached (Gene, 1998).The free-flow of information as a result of recognition of press freedom has myriad function in general:

Firstly, information is necessary to make rational judgment. This means that meaning full and democratic decision making on one hand and public ability realistically to perceive and respond to the world on the other hand requires widespread of availability of information of general interest (Gene, 1998). Secondly, freedom of information is considered as ‘the key to world peace’ and its totalitarian system because the evils of propaganda will highly decrease if the concerned people is given all the information necessary to evaluate it for itself (Ibid).

3. The History of Press in Ethiopia

The origin of the press as formal institution in Ethiopia dates back to the period of the reign of Emperor Menelik. Since 1990 modern press such as regular publication of new papers began. The first new paper publication has come in to existence in 1902 under the name called ‘*Amero*’. This easily initiatives further grow to reach in to what has been termed the new era of press in Ethiopia in the past Italian invasion period.

In the past liberation period, several weekly and daily publications of news and newspapers emerged. In 1941, the Amharic newspapers of “Addis Zemen” become weekly publications of

news. Later, since 1957, it becomes a daily publication. The emergence of the institutions of the press, the media and the printing of publications such as newspapers and magazines across the changing historical period up to present is a question of deeper investigation of the phenomena at each epoch.

When we back to the imperial period the press and Freedom of press was highly restricted and hardly guaranteed. It was characterized by exclusive control of the giant monarchical government and also suffers with censorship as well as restroom. Compared to the 1931 constitution, the 1955 revised constitution incorporated the provision that legitimize the Freedom of press within the wider freedom of expression. Yet the right was also subject to a constitutional restriction that the exercise of the freedom of expression is under condition that could not endanger public order and the right of others or the masses.

During the military regime which assumed to power in 1974, the regimes come up with press law. However, the regime was known for banning private press and only allowed its own press and printing presses to operate. The Dergue was also took a very strict of censorship that until its down full. The already existing media only disseminate government ideology and propaganda under the centralized control of party. As compared to emperor regime, the Dergue totally banned private presses and have had very strict censorship and nationalization of privately owned mass media for instance radio (Getahun,1993).

After demise of the military regime in 1991, the press and its freedom has shown remarkable change. During the transitional government, the government has taken significant measures that ensure the freedom and development of the press. The most important one is the promulgation of the freedom of press which includes the right of expression without restriction and censorship. In addition, a press law is also for the first time codified. This changes in the legal and institutional sphere resulted for the proliferation of private press in the country.

Soon after the formation of the transitional government of Ethiopia (TGE) 1992 and later the federal democratic of Ethiopia in 1995, the press and its freedom is recognized as one of the institutions that could ensure democracy and the democratic right of people in the country. As such, the new EPRDF led government has come up with various institutional provisions and embodiments that sought to ensure the freedom of the press as well as its growth as a popular and viable institution of democracy and the building of a democratic society and culture.

In this regard, the transitional government under its Proclamation number 341 /1992 declared the first press. According to the proclamation, the press is considered as a basic precondition of democracy in the country. As a result, the Proclamation insures its freedom and independence. All forms of censorship and restrictions are legally prohibited. All people have the right to expression in any media of their choice. The proclamation further underlines the necessity for multiple sources of information including the private press (FDRE, Proc. No. 341 /1992).

Accordingly, its guarantee is that any individual can form a private press institution and perform all the legitimate and responsible activities of press. The freedom of the press is also incorporated in the FDRE constitution and further detailed by the press law.

After four years of transitional period, the FDRE government is formed by the FDRE constitution in 1995. The constitution as supreme law of the land incorporates, among other things, provisions that ensure fundamental rights and freedoms. Freedom of the press, as a fundamental democratic right of the people, is incorporated in various articles. In addition, freedom of the press and its democratic and legal implementation is provided in different other legal instruments.

The constitutional provision of the freedom of press in the FDRE is incorporated under the broad provision that guarantees the freedom of expression and the freedom of the media. The

Constitution declared under Article 29 “Right of Thought, Opinion and Expression”:

- (1). everyone has the right to hold opinions without interference.
- (2). everyone has the right to freedom of expression without any interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice.
- (3). Freedom of the press and other mass media and freedom of artistic creativity is guaranteed. Freedom of the press shall specifically include the following elements: (a) Prohibition of any form of censorship. (b) Access to information of public interest.

To this end, in the interest of the free flow of information, ideas and opinions which are essential to the functioning of democratic order, the press shall as an institution enjoy legal protection to entertain diverse opinions. In addition to this, Art 29(7) clearly states that “violating the legal limitation in exercising the rights may be held liable under the law.

The proclamation number, 590 Art 1(4) also puts clearly as freedom of the mass media is constitutionally guaranteed. Censorship in any form is prohibited--- and under Art 1(2) states legal restriction of freedom of the mass media as, restrictions on the freedom of the mass media shall only be made by laws issued in accordance with the constitution; and unless and otherwise stipulated by expressed provisions of laws enacted in accordance with the above article. Administrative measures that impair freedom of the mass media are forbidden.

With regard to access to information and freedom of expression in the proclamation Art 3(1), all persons have the right to seek, obtain and communicate any information held by public bodies. In an action for defamation through the mass media the court may award having regard to the seriousness of the moral damage, compensation up to 1000,000 birr having regard to the seriousness of the damage, is the legal

liability of the media owner which is clearly stated under article 5(2) of proclamation number 590/2008.

3.1. The Overall Nature of the Press in Ethiopia

The media and press coverage in Ethiopia has certain identifiable characterizing features. The first one is that both printed and non-printed press and media sources have asymmetrical distribution. The press and the media as important source of information and medium are predominantly government owned and concerned within few urban centers. In this regard printed press and radio, where the private press institution has relatively better engagement, has unevenly distributed between urban and rural area. The vast majority of the magazines and newspaper have limited out reach.

It covers the needs of only few urban populations with major cities of country, primarily Addis Ababa. This is uneven distribution towards few populations and the people in rural area, also more or less similar to no printed media source. The private sectors which have some involvement in the ownership of radio broad casting tend to concentrate in the capital Addis Ababa.

The vast majority of the population is thus relies on the government and community owned radio broad casting for access to information, if not denied access information at all. This asymmetrical and uneven distribution of media and press publication is even worse in television broad casting. The private sector is totally absent in TV broad casting. The problem of uneven distribution and asymmetrical share of printed and non-printed press several. Among other thing, the low level of private press institution which is also associated with low economic and technological factors is worth mentioning.

The high cost of printing materials for publication distribution is also another challenge aggravated by the absence of government subsidy for papers and printing materials which discourage the development of the private press both existing and emerging (Sendek News March, 2003). In

addition to these, the low level of technological progress which is cited as the absence of private TV broad casting organization in the country another obstacle. Moreover, the press in Ethiopia is also characterized by low quality and biased information content. The quality of the contents of the printed and non-printed media sources are often criticize as poor which lacks to reflect the social and democratic needs of the people. Besides, the press is often criticized as biased which lacks independence and creditability.

3.2 Implementation of Freedom of Press in Light with Constitutionalism and press law

The current government, Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), is concerned, the freedom of press in Ethiopia has been put in the constitutional frame for the first time in the nation's history (Nigussie, 2011). The constitutionalization of the freedom of the press is a good step forward in the democratization process of the country. Ethiopia's Constitution and several laws stipulated various press related rights to protect freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Article 29 of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution provides citizens of Ethiopia the right to hold opinions, thoughts, and free expressions. Specifically, Article 29 protects freedom of expression without interference, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information (FDRE, Art.29). It also affords freedom of the press and mass media by ensuring the opportunity for access to information of interest to the public and prohibiting censorship (ibid). The preamble of the Mass Media and Freedom of Information Proclamation as it was passed by the House of People's Representatives also declares that "the proclamation removes all obstacles that were impediments to the operation of the media in Ethiopia (Mushtaq, 2008).

Although the aforementioned press related provision is stipulated in the FDRE constitution and press law, the Ethiopia government has continued to threaten, prosecute, and imprison writers and journalists (International Committee to

Protect Journalist Report, 2013). The ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has used its tight grip on all three branches of government to restrict information and limit the freedom and growth of the independent press. The government has arbitrarily imposed restrictions on the distribution of broadcast and print licenses, the content and editorial position of news outlets, the freedom of movement of journalists, the accreditation of international journalists, and domestic access to international broadcasts and Internet content (ibid). The EPRDF has also used the publicly-subsidized state media, private news outlets under party patronage, federal and regional security services, and officials to intimidate independent journalists. Journalists face frequent summons by the police, interrogations, and criminal prosecutions for reporting on sensitive issues such as allegations of human rights abuses or criticism of government authorities. Journalists are prosecuted under punitive and poorly defined statutes in the penal code and anti-terrorism legislation, often over content published several years earlier. Independent journalists attempting to investigate allegations of human rights abuses in various parts of the country face restrictions and intimidation by local authorities. Many journalist who are the eye and ear of the public is arbitral detained without fair trial in the name of anti-terrorism law. Due to the deep rooted violation of freedom of press, many writers, journalist and bloggers are either arbitral detained and entered into jail or exiled from their country. However, the poor implementation of freedom of press related provision is not emanate from vacuum, but it is the product of administrative, constitutional, political and legality related constraints.

3.3. Constraints and challenges of Freedom of the press

3.3.1. Constitutional and legal challenges

Even though freedom of press is so fundamental rights of people that helps the rest of other right to

exist and stand by two legs and also it was recognized by the constitution in different period with different regime, it face so many challenges on its journey. Freedom of press does not mean that unlimited freedom or absolute freedom. The word Freedom is not clear cut, it is vague term. The extent of liberty granted for of the press in the constitution is not fixed. That is, it is difficult to draw boundaries to the term Freedom. Because of this many government including Ethiopian government have taken control of the press to use it in their own interests. The wide restrictions which have a power to suppress freedom of press are imposed by government. This is because of the extent and limits of this freedom are not clear. And such limitation may have the potential to circumscribe or endangered this fundamental right of the press.

The constitutional guaranteed freedom of the press under Art 29 but it is incompatible in practice with constitution under different legal provision government puts imposition of high censorship and publication. Unlike the constitution, press the law requires media to have license and registration by ministry of information. In fact this condition is so vital to make private presses that are registered under ministry of information. However, the process of getting this license and registration is so bureaucratic that hinder the proliferation of privet press. In addition the legal proclamation laws of the press retain harsh criminal penalties including imprisonment for practicing journalists without license and transgress or contravened the provision.

For instance, in action for defamation through the mass media the court may award having regarded to the seriousness of the moral damage, compensation up to 1000,000 birr having regarded to the seriousness of the damage, is the legal liability of the media owner which is clearly stated under article 5(2) of proclamation number 590/2008. In this case when we see the magnitude of the punishment up on misbehavior of private owner are not equivalent to the practical potential

of the private owners, i.e. the punishment level is beyond the capacity of the private owners, unfortunately, journalists once made a default they are subjected to which punishment is beyond to their capital especially in Ethiopia practical situation. This moment, journalist prefer to leave their works engaging in these sector and the newly potential private owner were also reluctant to enter in this filed due to fear of these disproportional or imbalanced punishment for once default. This legal provision is a systematic ways of eliminating private press and it is a bottle neck for the development of the press. The provision also puts legal limitation in ordered to protect public interest reputation and honor of individual, but in these cases the provision says nothing regarding on” what public “does mean because of lack of clear boundary for the term public and at what extend it shall be referred and it in open to debate.

Legitimate Constraints

Freedom of press does not mean that the press is free from any formof restrictions or responsibility. Rather it is a freedom which can be abused and which is subordinate to the greater right, which can be limited for the purpose of protecting violation of other rights. Freedom of press is accordingly be subjected to legal limitation when certain social interest is demanded. In the exercise of this right, press cannot act in promoting the interest of the public and respecting the rights of citizen, it is forced to render liable as provided by law. Therefore, freedom of press is in fact not absolute right in general. Legal constraints of press freedom which is provided by international law may be restricted only under certain known conditions.

1. Freedom of press is limited only when it is determined by law so there should be a provision of law which requires the limitation of the right. Therefore, the liberty of exercising this right cannot be restricted if there is no law which orders the restriction.

2. To limit the right of press there should be a list of purpose such as protecting national security, maintain public order, protecting public health and moral and protecting the right of reputation as well as honor and dignity of others (ICCPR, Art 19 (3). And by restricting such right, government able to protect the general public interest and the right of government to defend and respect itself.
3. The third condition requires certain necessity-means even measures are needed to be taken to protect legitimate interest; the restriction must be proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued and need relevant and sufficient reasons.
4. That constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence are prohibited. In Ethiopia also Freedom of press can be limited on the ground stated by law for instance on FDRE Art 29(6) i.e Freedom of press can be limited only through law which are guided by the principle that freedom of expression and information cannot be limited on account of view expressed. The researcher understand from this article that the press right cannot be limited for its content or for the effect the publication bring to the readers but only limited legally when it affect the wellbeing of the youth.

Illegitimate Constraints

Unlike legal constraints of Freedom of press, illegitimate constraints limit Freedom of press simply without only provided law that requires limited this right. Illegitimate constraints can restrict in the absence of law that ordered the restriction. In this type of restriction of freedom of press any publication may be limited or banned no matter how they produced well for the public. In addition to this, there is also high level of censorship, prior restraint and lack those professionals’ access from necessary information. In the case of illegitimate constraints government

take administrative measures to restrict this right, for example most journalists were punished in payment of fines or dismissal from this job for publication issues which may raise challenge to the government in power but not the security of the state (Getahun, 1993:34). Illegitimate constraints does not allowed access to information and free from censorship because government officials' limit these rights by extends its right beyond the limitation boundary imposed by the constitution, by abusing the right, by maintain the public interest and state security as premises.

Political Challenges

Ethiopian political environment particularly following the 1997 national election was not smooth and comfort for press right. Because of political up heavily (disorder) government dramatically close and minimize private Medias by assuming those Media aggravate the moment political instability.

As a result, the government has been banned a number of pro-opposition website and the reporter without border news said that the Ethiopian government have been fighting their grip on news and information now a day Ethiopia has join the list of sub Saharan countries that are keeping a close eyes on the media and are trying to control or influence editorial policies. Due to their intolerance the authorities are done everything they can to stifle critical impulse of journalists and to make life difficult the private media (Reporter without border, 2000).

In addition to this, during that time and a going now it is difficult to find a private owned newspaper which publicize political issues in the country, rather it is only found private press which deals about social issues are allowed to continue their publication. If one private press publicize a new paper having a content of expose wrong doing of the government, such press will live under threat and forced to fly abroad (Gene, 1998). At the end of the 1997 election, more journalist were imprisoning in Ethiopia than in any other African countries (Gene, 1998).

Administrative and technical Challenges

In Ethiopia, there is no clear and simple procedure for the press and members of public to request information and have no implementing guidelines for the use in deciding whether or not release information in the hand of government. As a result, the process of obtaining the desire information is difficult and subjected to administrable arbitrary decision making.

So one challenge of press is that government official is not voluntary to give information concerning to their office what the journalists needed. Ethiopians media including both private and state owned media lack technical capacity of modern media administration or management and lack specialization skills is also another challenge of freedom of the press. The other administrative challenge is with regard to the high price or cost of the printing press. This condition aggravated due to the absence of government subsidy for papers and materials which discourage the development of the private press. And also the problem arises with regarded to prices setting of printing press. The government officials make the prices of printing press without consulting the concerned bodies' i.e private owners and the public in general are ignore from decision making these leads to resentment on the side of private owners.

Democratic Challenges

It is obvious that Ethiopian democracy is in an infant stage resulted in a weak participation and sluggish growth of private press private newspapers and institution. Any opposition activities, editors of the private press and leaders of labor organizations who continued to challenge the governments' monopolization of political space were systematically targeted through harassment and repeated detentions (Gene, 1998: 24).

The other challenges rise due to lack of real democracy in Ethiopia, press institutions are organized traditionally and week professional managed. There is also no sound media education

and training practitioners; media are not an organ of the masses and reliable source of information. Their editorial quality is low and their influences to the public are also very limited (Hassen and Markos, 2007).

Since media is managed traditionally and by unprofessional personnel's most of Ethiopian media are not accountable to what they do rather they insult anybody whatever they need and they are not committed to the welcome criticism raise up on them. Journalists also use public news air time unethically and unfairly for their own sake. Those press both state and private owned lack trust among the people; they mislead people by providing invalid information that motivates people to do evil acts. Due to the sluggish development of democracy in Ethiopia private owners and people consider or equate politics with electric current that flows in a thinly copper wires, once it catch it damage the blood vessels, likewise politics also do the same so that people become reluctant to enjoy in these rights.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Freedom of the press means the right to print and publish without any illegitimate restriction from the state or any public authority. Freedom of the press, despite the degree of freedom traced back historically as a modern institutional from during Emperor Menelik period and it has been shaped and more developed at the time Emperor Haile Selassie I, Particularly after the Italian occupation and onwards him. The press freedom in Ethiopia passed more than a century with full of storms and stresses and serious violations. The journalist has been under a tremendous pressure from the beginning of Haile Selassie and the military regime. In those regime freedoms of press were highly characterized as more censorships serve the government only to disseminate his propaganda, prohibiting of private owners.

The Ethiopia press entered in to a new environment after the over through of Dergue regime in 1991. The first press law was promulgated in 1992 by the transitional

government. The censorship and any form of related constraints of the press of freedom were abolished. In 1995, when FDRE constitution adopted freedom were expression and information exhaustively included in the constitution under Art 29. Beginning from there period with the abolishing of government interference ultimately, many newspaper and magazine were increasingly mushroomed. But, this does mean that all subtle or indirect forms of influence over the press sector should come to totally an end. Regardless of the above cumulative deterrence of freedom of the press, it plays a vital role in increasing shape and reflecting the public opinion at large, press promotes peace, maintain order safe and rights and freedom of citizen, fight injustice, it helps to promote democratization and good governance and play an effective role in the decision making process. The media as important sources of information is predominantly concentrated in few urban centers, this uneven distribution of newspaper and magazine neglect the vast majority of the people in rural areas.

Though such right is recognized by the constitution as fundamental right, the extent of liberty granted for the press in the constitution is not fixed. It is difficult to draw boundary to the term freedom so that government taken control of press to use it for its own interest. Private press right also challenges politically due to the existence of instability, private press is not allowed to engage in. Private owner were not technically trained and profession on the sector. Administratively, with regarded to, the price of printing enterprise and license permission was so length and non-participant. As a result, many private owners ignore themselves in engaging in this sector.

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