

The Role of Mass Media in Promoting Government Responsiveness in Ethiopia: Challenges and the way forward

Tesfay Gebremeskel ¹

Abstract

The Purpose of this study was to assess the roles of selected public and private mass media in promoting government responsiveness and the challenges faced when they disseminated information related to government responsiveness. The study was conducted in four selected public and private media sectors. Ana broadcasting corporate and reporter newspaper from private, and Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation and Addis Zemen newspaper from publicly owned media institutions. The study employed qualitative and quantitative research approach. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaire and qualitative data were collected through in-depth interview. Stratified multi stage sampling followed by proportional and random sampling techniques was used to select the 179 survey journalists and purposive sampling technique was applied to select interviewee. The study revealed that media in Ethiopia play their own role in bringing a variety of government responsiveness issues to the attention of the public and the government. The roles of the Ethiopian media as a watch dog and a civic forum role failed in the range of low level while the agenda setting role was found at a moderate level. The challenges faced the media in reporting government responsiveness in Ethiopia is associated with political, institutional, legal, skill and capacity of the journalists.

Key Words: good governance, responsiveness, agenda setting, watchdog, civic forum

1. Introduction

Mass media has been considered as one of the most powerful agents in making public institutions more responsive to their customers with whom they interact. It can ensure the voices in a nation can be counted, good governance can flourish, and generally, democratic governance can be realized. Independent, free and pluralistic media are central to good governance in democracies that are young and old. Free media can ensure transparency, accountability and the rule of law; promote participation in public and political discourse, and contribute to alleviate poverty. An independent media sector draws its power from the community it serves and in

¹Researcher, Research and publication coordination Office, Ethiopian Civil Service University, E-mail:

tesfay.ethiopia@yahoo.com

© 2018 Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU)

ISSN 2519-5255(print) ISSN 2957-9104(online)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

return empowers that community to be full a partner in the democratic process (UNESCO, 2009).

The media serve as a conduit between the citizen and the government by disseminating timely information. Citizens demand transparent, relevant and timely information about how governments work, what governments do and the efficiency and effectiveness of the government in performing their duties. On the other hand, disclosing government information also beneficial to the government for enhancing openness, transparency and public participation in decision-making process that can assist in developing citizen trust in government actions and maintaining a civil and democratic society (Glenn, 1990). From this one can say that, putting into effect the good governance principles, for instance, transparency openness, public participation depends largely on the degree of public's access to government information (Cloete & Auriacombe 2008). The government of Ethiopia provided legal guarantee in the constitution as well as different proclamations so as to play its role freely and responsibly. In the 1995 FDRE constitution, article 29, sub-article 4 stipulated that *"in the interest of the free flow of information, ideas and opinions which are essential to the functioning of a democratic order, the press shall, as an institution, enjoy legal protection to ensure its operational independence and its capacity to entertain diverse opinions.* and the freedom of the mass media and access to information proclamation also stated *"to encourage and promote public participation, public empowerment, to foster a culture of transparency, accountability and efficiency in the functions of public bodies and to encourage and promote good governance.*(Proclamation No.590/2008, Art.11(3).

Even though the government of Ethiopia strived to enhance the practice of good governance by taking several measures such as the Civil Service Reform and Justice System Reform, lack of good governance, corruption and maladministration practices remained challenges to the country. The government underscores that "the root cause of all-round crises in the country is lack of good governance (Mekdes, 2011).

Different forms of media, whether private or publicly owned, are responsible for covering issues of good governance and imparting relevant information on the issues to the public. In this regard, Norris (2006) argues that: "The channels of the news media can function to promote government transparency, accountability and public scrutiny of decision makers in power by highlighting policy failures maladministration by public officials, corruption in the judiciary, and scandals in the corporate sector." (2006).

The general objective of this study is to assess the role of mass media in promoting government responsiveness in Ethiopia and analyze the challenges they faced when reporting on good governance. To this end, this study attempts to answer: -how strongly are cooperated the media houses and public bodies for maintaining responsive government in Ethiopia? What are the achievements of the media to alleviate lack of good governance and maladministration in government offices? What are the bottlenecks facing the media in promoting responsive government? What are the legal frameworks that govern the media in enabling a conducive environment for the media to play their roles independently in promoting responsive government?

2. Literature Survey

2.1 The Concept of Government Responsiveness

Good governance requires that government organizations and processes strive to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable time frame work. Responsiveness involves the responding of the government to the grievances, needs and aspirations of the citizens within a given time (UNESCO, 2005). Besides, Responsiveness" necessitates how the government carries out its duties in responding to the demands and rights of its citizens. On the other hand, the aim government responsiveness is to do the right things for the citizens and delivery of services in line with the desires and needs of the public.

Responsiveness implies that organizations respond to their stakeholders within an appropriate time framework. Meehan and Dawson (2002) underlined that responsiveness is about getting it "fast and right" service from government institutions. Government responsiveness also involves the degree to which government acknowledges to citizens" needs in the implementation of policies (Saltzstein, 1992).

As Sara and Robert (2008) stated that the crucial feature of democratic government is the continued responsiveness of the government to the preferences of the citizens. The responsiveness of the government is assessed in terms of government official"s ability to listen the needs and voice of citizens, easy access of service users" complaints", and the potential of the government decision to reflect the need of the society.

2.2 Relation of Mass Media and Government Responsiveness

Media play a key role in communicating to the public what happens around the world. It helps state and citizen to communicate each other. For government to make responsible, accountable and effective, citizen need to communicate their perspectives through the media (Philo, 2008). Besides, media also act as a feedback mechanism where the public are given the opportunity to bring their plight to the notice of the State. Often times than not the media do this through various media campaigns that serve to remind the State of their obligations to the public. The vigilance and capacity of the media are particularly important in tracking the availability and accessibility of services to various segments of the public. (UNESCO, 2005)

A free and plural media promote the responsiveness of the government. Mass media not only reporting issues concerned to the society but also exposes problems seen in the public. Mass media has the power to bring public issues to the public and government attention in order to create pressure for the government to respond rapidly (DFID, 2008).

The role of media has become extremely critical for smooth functioning of government and ensuring good governance. The importance of the media is to make officials aware of the public"s discontents and allowing governments to rectify their errors. Since then, the press has been widely proclaimed as the "Fourth Estate, "a co-equal branch of government that provides the check and balance without which governments cannot be effective (Stephen, 2004). Media has a huge role in ensuring a responsible government. According to Norris (2009), the media has three key roles in contributing to good governance in general and responsiveness in particular. These are watchdog, civic forum and agenda setter roles.

2.2.1 Media as a Watchdog Role

One of the vital functions of the media is to check the activities of the government on behalf of citizens. As a „watchdog“ role, media can play an important role to promote transparency, accountability, and public scrutiny of decision-makers, by highlighting policy failures, maladministration by public officials, corruption in the judiciary, and scandals in the corporate sector. Investigative journalism can open the government’s secret records to external scrutiny and critical evaluation, and hold authorities answerable for their actions (Norris, 2006). In sum, the watchdog role requires the media to monitor the performance of the government and protect the public interest from incompetence, corruption and maladministration.

2.2.2 Media as a Civic Forum

The second important role of media is to function as a civic forum for political debate, facilitating informed electoral choices and actions. The critical role of the media in this case is to mediate between the state and citizens through the debates and discussions about the major issues of the day and informing people about the stand of their leaders on such issues. By publicizing information, the media are also making public services more responsive to the people. Media also making people to vigilant on political developments in the world and helping to stimulate debate drawing attention to all social evils including the institutional failures, corruption, inefficiency and illegal activities. (Norris, 2006)

2.2.3 Media as Agenda Setter

The term agenda setting means media effects succinctly when they said the media don’t tell people what to think but rather what think about. This has come to be called agenda setting (Vivian, 2005). The media play an important role by setting an agenda to the government and the public. The media set an agenda on social problems such as corruption and lack of good governance.

Therefore, the three important roles mentioned above promote good governance by facilitating government responsiveness, transparency, accountability, checking of the abuse of power, strengthening the public sphere and highlighting policy failures, maladministration, scandal and corruption by decision-makers within both the public and private domain.

2.3 Mass Media and Good Governance in Ethiopia

Mass media can play a significant role to inform the publics about the plans and practices of the government in order to develop the culture of transparency and accountability. By taking this into account, the current government of Ethiopia provided guarantee for press freedom in the 1995 FDRE constitution and other proclamations.

The 1992 press proclamation, under the EPRDF led government was the first press proclamation in the history of the country that provides press freedom. As reflected in the preamble, the press proclamations meant to enable the press play its role by providing favorable conditions under which the press could operate freely and responsibly.

“...free press, not only provides a forum for citizens to freely express their opinions but also plays a preeminent role in protection of individual and peoples’ rights and the development of a democratic culture as well as in affording citizens the opportunity to form a balanced views on various topical issues and to forward their opinions on the directions and opinions of government.”(Press Proclamation No. 34/1992).

Article 19 of this proclamation also declared that “government officials shall have the duty to cooperate with the press in furtherance of the principle that the people have the right to know about the operations of government and the accountability of government officials.” Press Proclamation No. 34/1992.

Following the issuance of the press proclamation, a larger number of both daily and weekly newspapers and other press products were flourished. (Shemelis, 2000, p. 9). This resulted in the expansion of media’s role in covering certain issues of the public and the government policies and practices in their air time and space.

In the 1995 FDRE constitution, the right to freedom of the press, among other things, was safeguarded by the law. Article 29 sub-articles 4 of this constitution declared that

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

Freedom of the mass media and access to information Proclamation No.590/2008, Art. 11(3) also stated the role of media in governance as follows:

“To encourage and promote public participation, public empowerment, to foster a culture of transparency, accountability and efficiency in the functions of public bodies and to encourage and promote good governance.”

The importance of a free press in enhancing transparency and providing the public with the means of holding the executive accountable cannot be overemphasized. Although Ethiopia is committed to press freedom as enshrined in its constitution, the challenge is to ensure that the press operates freely (ibid)

In Ethiopia, the measure of good governance (accountability, transparency, rule of law, efficiency and effectiveness, consensus oriented, participation, and equity and inclusiveness) are almost ignored in practice (Oertel, 2004). However, the issues of good governance need to be practiced by the government.

However, whether the media are playing their role effectively remains a subject of scholarly debate on different issues that signifies the practice of good governance and issues or values of good governance. This may be evident from the study by Yonas (2009) which revealed that both the state- and privately-owned media in Ethiopia had failed to give prominence coverage to democratic values and good governance. Hence, mass media can play a significant role to inform the publics about the plans and practices of the government in order to develop the culture of transparency and accountability.

3 Methodology

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Hence, mixed research design was taken as the most appropriate because mixing the two methods is suitable for the purpose of triangulation in researches (Cohen, 2000).

3.2 Population, Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The population of this study was drawn from journalists who have been working on media houses and various government institutions who are closely working with media and issues of good governance.

In order to select an appropriate sampling unit from the media stratified multi-stage sampling followed by proportional and then simple random sampling technique was employed. Samuel, Campbell and e.tal (2004) stated that stratified multi-stage sampling is an efficient sampling method which combines the techniques of stratified sampling based on grouping units into strata and then using a hierarchical structure of units within each stratum. Based on this sampling method, the media was grouped into public and private media. Each of them was also further stratified into newspaper, radio and television. In order to determine the sample size on the role of media in promoting good governance in Ethiopia, the following formula was used.

The Cochran formula is:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

- n_0 is the required sample size
- e is the desired level of precision
- p is the (estimated) proportion of the implementation of access to information law
- q is $1 - p$.
- The z -value is found in a Z table.

The maximum proportion, $p = 0.5$, the level of confidence 95%, and at least 5%+or- precision. A 95 % confidence level gives us Z values of 1.96, per the normal tables; thus,

$$n = ((1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)) / (0.05)^2 = 179$$

Table 3.1: Summary of Journalists' Population and Sample

| Media | Population | Sample | Tv Amharic service | Radio Amharic service | news paper |
|-------------|------------|--------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| ETV | 570 | 114 | 77 | 37 | - |
| FBC | 250 | 50 | 31 | 19 | - |
| Addis Zemen | 40 | 8 | - | - | 8 |
| Reporter | 37 | 7 | - | - | 7 |
| Total | 897 | 179 | 108 | 56 | 15 |

Source: own Survey, 2018

As shown in the table 1, a sample of 114 from ETV News, 50 from Fana broadcasting corporate, 8 from Addis zemen, 7 from Reporter were selected for his study.

After the multi-stage sampling techniques, proportional sampling method (20%) was used to determine the number of journalists in each of the media houses to be selected. Finally; random sampling was used to select the final respondents which would give equal opportunity of selection for the population.

So a random sample of 179 journalists (57 from private media and 122 from public media) was our target population that could be enough to ensure the confidence levels what the researcher needed.

The other population comprises the government officials who have a direct connection with media and journalists. Based on purposive sampling, an interview was conducted with representatives from Government Communication Affairs Office, Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, federal Ombudsman commission and 3 journalists who are working on good governance were taking part in the study.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. First, the researcher was reviewed literatures related to the research works to put light on the research issue. Then, selected participants were filling in questionnaires designed based on the research objectives and interviews also conducted with selected respondents.

3.4 Data Analysis

The research data was analyzed in a mixed way. Hence, first, the quantitative data was analyzed by using SPSS and the findings were presented on tables and charts. Concurrently, the qualitative interview data coded and grouped on the basis of the research objective themes was analyzed and interpreted.

4 Results and Discussions

There were two sets of respondents who were targeted during the study. These were randomly selected members of the journalist who answered the main questionnaire and interviews. Government officials who are directly related their roles with media were also responded to the in-depth interviews.

4.2 Respondents Profile

Of the 179 respondents who were fill in the questionnaires, 94 were male representing 52.5% while 85 were female respondents representing 47.5% of the total number of the respondents. The age of respondents has been divided in to four age groups i.e: - below 25; between 26 to 30 years; between 31 to 35 years; between 36 to 40 and lastly above 41 years of age. More than half of the respondents (54%) fell within the age range from 26 to 30 years of age; followed by respondents aged under 25 years who made up of 24% of the respondents while the age group 31-35 formed 20%; the age group 36-40 contributed 2%.

As can be observed from the above table 2, majority (86%) of the respondents have first degree, followed by 14% of the respondents who have second degree and above. Regarding the job category of the respondents, 46% 14% and 13% of the respondents selected for the study are failed at the designation of reporter, editor and deputy editor in their media

houses respectively. Only 10% of the respondents are senior reporter, followed by 8% editor-in chief and 8% senior producer. This implies that majority of the respondents have been selected on the designation of reporters so as to get the correct view of the respondents regarding the role of media in promoting good governance in their respective media houses. Majority (42%) of the respondents have an experience between 6 to 10 years followed by 33% who have less than 5 years" experience. Only 25% of the respondents ranging their job experience from 11 to 15 and above 16 years.

Table 4.2: Respondents' profile

| Table 12: Respondents Profile | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|--|--|--|---------------------------|--|--|--|--------------|--|--|--|--|--|------------|--|--|--|
| Respondents Profile(percent) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sex | | Age | | | | Educational Qualification | | | | Job Category | | | | | | Experience | | | |
| 47.5 | Male | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 52.5 | Female | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | <25 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 54.2 | 26-30 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19.6 | 36-40 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.2 | >46 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - | Certificate | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - | Diploma | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 86 | First Degree | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | 2 nd degree and above | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 46 | Reporter | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Senior | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Editor | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13.4 | Deputy editor | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8.4 | Editor-in chief | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.8 | Senior Producer | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 33 | <5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 41.9 | 5-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12.8 | 11-15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12.3 | >15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Source: Own survey, 2018

4.3 Types of Media

Media can be grouped either by ownership or by the mechanical device they used. The ownership of media is an important factor for the independence and integrity of the media. Media outlets that are reporting on good governance issues strongly influenced or compromising the neutrality of their stories on the basis of their ownership.

Table 4.3: Types of Media

| Types of Media | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------|-------|
| Based on Ownership | | Based on Mechanical device | | |
| Public Media | Private Media | News Paper | Television | Radio |
| 68.16 | 31.84 | 8.38 | 61.45 | 30.17 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

For the purpose of the study, the sample of 179 respondents has been selected from two privately owned and two publicly run media houses so as to find out their roles in promoting good governance in Ethiopia and also to identify if there is a difference between private and public media in good governance stories report. The above table shows that majority (68%) of the respondent are selected from publicly run media and the rest 32% are from privately owned media.

Table 3 revealed that 61.5% of the respondents were selected from television followed by 30% from radio and 8.4% respondents from newspaper.

4.4 Cooperation between Media and Government

Table 4.4: Cooperation between Media and Executive Bodies

| Cooperation between media and government in promoting Good governance is a cooperative one. | Parameters | | |
|---|------------|-----------|-----|
| | Yes | Sometimes | No |
| | 13.97% | 12.63% | 73% |

Source: Own survey, 2018

In responding to the question “Do you think that the cooperation between journalist and Public bodies in promoting good governance is a cooperative one?” 73% of the respondents responded that journalists’ relationship with government is conflict based. While 14% claimed that there is a cooperating based relationship between media and government and roughly the same proportion (14%) said government are sometimes cooperative one to the journalistic work of the journalists. One can observed from the above figure, the number of journalists who have a conflicting based relationship with government was more than the number of those who have a cooperating based relationship with public bodies.

Both conflicting and cooperating based relationship between media and government affected the free flow of information on promoting good governance either positively or negatively. If the relationship between journalists and public bodies are conflict based over the exchange of information on promoting good governance, the journalists didn’t get enough and reliable information from the government and the government information don’t get coverage by the media and vice versa if their relationship is positive and a cooperative one.

Table 4.5: Media Ownership Cross Tabulation on Media Cooperation with government

| Activities | parameters | Media ownership (%) | | Total (%) |
|---|------------|---------------------|---------|-----------|
| | | public | private | |
| Do you think that the cooperation between journalist and Public bodies in promoting good governance is a cooperative one? | yes | 36 | 0 | 24.58 |
| | sometimes | 10.65 | 12.3 | 11.2 |
| | no | 53.27 | 87.7 | 64 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

The researcher also examined if the type of media ownership has its own role on the type of relationship between media and government. According to the table below, (88%) private media and 54% of public media respondents responded that they don’t have a cooperative relationship with the government. 36% of public media journalists have a good relationship with the government.

Table 4.6: Media Ownership by Group of Statistics

| Activities | media ownership | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|-----------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Cooperation between journalist and government in promoting good governance is a cooperative one | public | 122 | 2.17 | .933 | .084 |
| | private | 57 | 2.88 | .331 | .044 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

Results from the above table also indicated that journalists who have been working in public media scored (M=2.17, SD=0.933) which is less than journalists working in private media (M=2.88, SD=0.331).

Results shown from the table below independent samples t test revealed that the F value for Levene's test is 219.267 with a Sig. (p) value of .000 ($p < .001$). Due to the Significance value is less than our alpha of .05 ($p < .05$), we can conclude that there is a significant difference between the private and public media in terms of their cooperation with the government in promoting good governance.

Table 4.7: Independent Samples T test on Media relationship with Executive Bodies

| | | Levene's Test for | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|------|------------------------------|-------|---------------|------------|------------|----------------|-------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tail) | Mean Diff. | Std. Error | 95% Confidence | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Cooperation between journalist and Public bodies in promoting good governance is a cooperative. | Equal variances assumed | 219.2 | .000 | -5.5 | 177 | .000 | -.705 | .127 | -.956 | -.454 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -7.4 | 168.5 | .000 | -.705 | .095 | -.893 | -.517 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

4.4.1 Levels of Interaction between media and law enforcement authorities

Media and law enforcement authorities have a common interest with different roles on good governance issues. Journalists who are engaged in investigative journalism and law enforcement authorities who engaged in criminal proceeding have a common mission: to expose and bring justice for abuses of power for private gain. In this case media reporting is an essential source of detection in corruption cases for law enforcement authorities to conduct internal investigations.

Table 4.8: Level of Interaction between media and law enforcement authorities

| | Dissatisfied | Moderately satisfied | Satisfied | I don't know |
|---|--------------|----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Levels of Interaction between media and law enforcement authorities | 59.78 | 24.58 | 8.9 | 6.7 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

Answering to the second question "There level of interaction between media and law enforcement authorities in relation to the issues of good governance promotion"; the vast majority of the respondents(60%) considered their interaction with law enforcement authorities are dissatisfied and 24% of the respondents are moderately satisfied and 9% satisfied and the rest 7% don't know their level of interaction with law enforcement authorities.

In addition to the respondent's response by questionnaires, interview with journalists working in EBC and Ombudsman commission officials also used for the purpose of cross justification on the level of relationship between media and law enforcement authorities.

One of the interviewees stated that:

“We have very poor communication with law enforcement authorities. We are not happy by the action of the law enforcement authorities because prosecutors didn’t start prosecution as well as bring the corrupted officials to justice following our investigation’s report. So, our investigation is fruitless.”

4.4.2 Accessing government information on lack of good governance

Table 4.9: Accessing government information on lack of good governance

| Activities | Yes | Sometimes | No | I don’t know |
|---|------|-----------|-------|--------------|
| Accessing government information on lack of good governance | 10.6 | 18.99 | 57.54 | 12.85 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

57.5% of the journalists not considered the public bodies as a credible source of information where lack of governance has shown in a given office. The results from the surveyed journalists revealed that in times of bad governance the public bodies do not offer them the necessary information. One of the interviewees supported the above data:

“Though we are claiming that the government is a credible source of information, in a time of lack of good governance which is happened in a given government office, the respective office didn’t provide us the required information that help us to expose corrupt officials. During the media reporting on lack of good governance, the respective offices are biased towards the interest of their organization who is serving for instead of the interest of the public at large.

4.4.3 The government treated public and private media equally when they report on good governance issues

Table 4.10: Public and private media treatment by government

| Activities | Yes | Sometimes | No | I don’t know |
|---|-------|-----------|-------|--------------|
| The public bodies treated public and private media equally when they report on good governance issues | 37.99 | 12.85 | 31.84 | 17.32 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

The above table revealed that 38% of the surveyed journalists considered government treated private and public media equally during reporting stories on good governance while 32% of them said government do not treat public and private media equally.

Table 4.11: Level of Treatment to Public and Private Media by Government

| Activities | Parameters | media ownership | | Total |
|--|--------------|-----------------|---------|-------|
| | | public | private | |
| The government treated private and public media equally when they report about good governance | yes | 54.09 | 3.5 | 37.98 |
| | sometimes | 13.93 | 10.52 | 12.84 |
| | no | 16.39 | 64.91 | 31.84 |
| | I don't know | 15.59 | 21.05 | 17.34 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

As shown in the above table, there is a significant difference on the level of government treatment to public and private media when they gather stories on good governance issues. 54% of the public media journalist said government treated public and private media equally while 65% of private media journalists said there was no equal treatment by the government. Only 3.5% of journalists working in privately owned media said government treated private and public media equally. One of the interviewee views on this issue is presented below.

“During press conference, press briefing and interview with government officials, public media take advantage over the private ones in accessing and receiving information from government officials.”

Table 4.12: Journalists level of manipulation by the government

| Activities | Yes | Sometimes | No | I don't know |
|---|-------|-----------|-------|--------------|
| Journalists level of manipulation by the government when they report on problems of good governance | 45.81 | 26.82 | 12.85 | 14.53 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

Surveyed journalists are requested if they are manipulated by public bodies when they reported on lack of good governance so far. From the responses, it was noted that a large deal of them (46%) feel that public bodies manipulate the media for their own purpose. While 26% of the respondents tend to adopt the manipulation by government bodies happened sometimes. One of the interviewees shared his experience on how corrupted officials manipulated media:

“The media house has accepted a complaint on the delayed road construction from the one region. Following this complaint, the media outlet sent a media team to do an investigative report on the delayed road construction. However, the managers of the project bribing the reporter in order to buy positive coverage and avoid negative coverage on the status of the construction. Then, the journalist didn't write any negative reports on the status of the construction and the positive story were televised. The beneficiaries of the project watched false stories were televised. Consequently, the beneficiaries of the road sparked protest over the media houses for broadcasting misleading information.”

4.4.4 Status of Ethiopian Media Role in promoting good governance

Media has been playing a great role in promoting good governance through disseminating information. The disseminated information helps the public to critically debate on the issues of good governance. To do so, independent and strong media within a country is important to improve all aspects of good governance. The media allow for ongoing checks and assessments by the population on the activities of the government and assist in bringing public concerns and voices into the open by providing a platform for discussion.

In the process of good governance promotion media can serve a lot by mediating the government and the public. The mediation can be explained through three roles. According to Norris and Odugbemi (2009), these are agenda setting, gate keeping and watchdog role of the media. The table below revealed that the role of Ethiopian media acting as a civic forum and agenda setter roles in promoting good governance was failed in the range of moderate level (Mean=2.81 and 2.99 and median=3.00) respectively while the watch dog role of the media is low (Mean=1.96 and median=2.00)

Table 4.13: Roles of Media in Promoting Good Governance

| Roles | Percent | Very low | Low | Moderate | High | Very High | Mean | Median |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Act as a civic forum | 100 | 11.2 | 33 | 26.8 | 21.8 | 7.3 | 2.81 | 3.00 |
| Act as an agenda-setter | 100 | 8.9 | 20.1 | 41.9 | 20.7 | 8.4 | 2.99 | 3.00 |
| Serve as a watchdog | 100 | 35.2 | 38 | 23.5 | 2.8 | 0.6 | 1.96 | 2.00 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

The table above shows that 33% of the surveyed journalists responded that Ethiopian media found at lower stage in terms of acting as a public sphere for public discussion on the issues of good governance. While 27% of the respondents responded media as a civic forum was found at a moderate and 22% at higher level.

Another important function of the media is setting the agenda for public discussion. The media also creates public awareness on certain core issues that affect the society. It has the role to shape opinion of the public concerning events taking place in the society.

The above table shows that 42% of the respondents responded the role of Ethiopian media as agenda setter is rated moderate level while 21% rated higher and 20% lower level.

The interviewee supported this data:

“Most of the time the Ethiopian media in assists the public to know the good governance problems in Ethiopia but sometimes manipulated by the politicians for their own gain. They used the media not to solve the problem of good governance in the country but to shape the public opinion based on the interest of the politicians. The core issues on the media depend on their vital interests concerning certain politicians and socio-economic issues that should be presented to the public.”

The third most important role of media is acting as a public watchdog in reporting scandals and immoral behavior. It exposes violations and scandals conducted by government officials. Without media criticism, an attempt to promote good governance is not successful. All the media under this study have their own programs on good governance. Fana Broadcasting

Corporate under its program *tegaz nekash* and ETV news under *Aynachen* have been broadcasting more programs on lack of good governance. Reporter and Addis Zemen also criticize the government weakness on good governance by publishing different good governance problems in their own different columns. The table above shows that 38% and 35 % of the respondents responded that watch dog role of the media are found at low and very low stage respectively.

4.5 Factors Affecting the Role of Media in Promoting Good Governance

There are some critical issues that affect the role of Ethiopian media in promoting good governance. The factors that affect the role of media can be categorized in to three parts; political and legal factors; institutional and capacity challenges.

4.5.1 Political and Legal Factors

In order to promote good governance by media fair legal frameworks that are protected the right of the media and the journalists is required and enforced by the government. Here, four items were presented to the subject to evaluate whether the law is guaranteeing the freedom of the media and how the law is implemented on the ground.

Table 4.14: Political and Legal Challenges

| Political and Legal factors affecting report on good governance | % | Strongly dis agree | dis agree | neutral | agree | Strongly agree | Mean | Median |
|---|-----|--------------------|-----------|---------|-------|----------------|------|--------|
| In principle, FDRE Constitution provided guarantee for Journalists to report on areas of governance problem. | 100 | 2.8 | 4.5 | 16.8 | 52 | 24 | 3.9 | 4 |
| Freedom of the mass media and access to information proclamation enables media to play its role in promoting good governance effectively. | 100 | 5.6 | 7.3 | 41.9 | 44.7 | 0.6 | 3.27 | 3 |
| The constitution or other basic laws contain provisions designed to protect freedom of the press and of expression are fully enforced | 100 | 19.6 | 54.7 | 20.7 | 3.9 | 1.1 | 2 | 2 |
| media are polarized along political ideology when they report on good governance issues | 100 | 1.7 | 6.1 | 24.6 | 59.2 | 8.4 | 3.66 | 4.00 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

Accordingly, answering to the first question, “in principle, FDRE Constitution provided guarantee for journalists to report on areas of governance problem” 52% of the respondents responded to agree, 24% disagree and 17% rated to neutral level. For the second question “freedom of the mass media and access to information proclamation enables media to play its role in promoting good governance effectively.” The data shows that 48% agree and 42% rated neutral level while 7% and 6% rated agree and disagree respectively.

Responding to the third question 55% and 20% the surveyed respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively on the constitution or other basic laws contain provisions designed to protect freedom of the press and of expression are fully enforced. While around 3% are rated above neutral level.

Answering to the last question “media are polarized along political ideology when they report on good governance issues” 59% of the respondents agreed media is polarized along political ideologies while 25% rated neutral level regarding the media polarization along political ideologies.

As can be observed from the above data, though both the constitution and freedom of the mass media and access to government information create conducive environment for the media to play their role in promoting good governance, the constitution and other laws were not enforced.

The media is also polarized along political ideologies. The private media is tended to liberal paradigm while the public media tended to developmental model paradigm. The private media which is producing contents which is highly critical to the government and the public media are pro-government. One of my key informants stated that:

“The public media appreciate all activities of the government while the private media criticize the activities of the government. Both the private and public media journalists’ do not care for the profession rather to the interest of their owners. Due to this ideological and financial problem, neutral, ethical and balanced media houses are unlikely to live in our country.”

4.5.2 Institutional Challenges When Reported on Good Governance

Another main challenge faced the media in carrying out their responsibility is associated with the issue of media institution. An independent media institution provides the most effective check on governmental power and activity.

Answering to the first question “media enjoy editorial independence when they reported on governance problems” 34% of the respondents disagree to media enjoy full independence when they reported on the issues related to good governance. Unless the media is editorially independent, it cannot create an informed citizen that is more prepared to hold public bodies accountable as well as to actively participate in decision making process of the government.

Regarding to the second question “the culture of self-censorship is highly placed in media houses” 33% of the respondents responded the culture of self-censorship is moderately affected the role of the media in promoting good governance. This effect one of the interviewees stated that:

“Journalists most of the times significantly limited their investigative reporting due to over censor themselves for fear of reprisals from the editors, the media owner, the government and corrupted officials.”

Table 4.15: Institutional Challenges

| Institutional challenges when reported on good governance | % | Strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | Strongly agree | Mean | median |
|---|----------|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|
| The media enjoy editorial independence when they reported about governance problems | 100 | 12.8 | 34.1 | 17.9 | 26.8 | 8.4 | 2.84 | 3.0 |
| The culture of self-censorship is highly placed in media houses | 100 | 3.9 | 19.6 | 33 | 29.1 | 14.5 | 3.3 | 3.0 |
| journalists are united in protesting abuses against the press and have willingness to cover attacks against their colleagues | 100 | 44.7 | 33.5 | 17.3 | 2.8 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 2.0 |
| Press associations have played an important role in monitoring, protesting and raising public outrage against attacks on journalists. | 100 | 59.2 | 22.3 | 13.4 | 3.9 | 1.1 | 1.7 | 1.0 |
| Media ownership affects media stands on issues of good governance | 100 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 24 | 53.6 | 20.7 | 3.9 | 4.0 |
| Media is under the influence of sponsorship when reported on issues of good governance | 100 | 18.4 | 30.2 | 15.6 | 15.6 | 20.0 | 2.9 | 3.0 |
| Journalists judge good governance issues to cover by themselves | 100 | 10.6 | 41.9 | 22.9 | 20.9 | 3.9 | 2.65 | 2.0 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

Another interviewee also shared what he faced from the editorial board after he did his investigative reporting on condominium housing in Addis Ababa:

“We did an investigative report on the condominium housing in Addis Ababa. The report was presented to the editorial board for reprisals. When the head of the editorial board watch the problems in the condominium housing such as the housing conditions are not considered decent; chronic lack of infrastructure; sewerage system was dysfunctional (water pipes are rusting); green areas and parking areas being used as garbage disposal lots; houses rented out for night club; chat houses...; After the editorial board see the investigative report they decided that though this report reflect the problems of condominium housing in Addis Ababa clearly, politically it's consequence is not good. Due to political reason, the editorial board not allowing to aired the investigative report”

From this, one can conclude that media houses are not editorially independent to inform governance problems to the public. They judge reporting of good governance on the interest of the government rather than the interest of the public at large.

Media ownership affects media stands on issues of good governance. Media independence is guaranteed if media organizations are financially viable, free from intervention of media owners and the state, and if operating in a competitive environment.

The surveyed journalists were also asked if media stands on issues of good governance affect their role in promoting good governance and 54% and 21% of the respondents respectively agree and strongly agree to media ownership affects their stands on issues of good governance.

The table below indicated that 61% of the surveyed private media and 50% of public media agree to the media ownership influence on issues of good governance report. 29% of the surveyed journalist strongly agree while 35% of private media respondents rated to neutral level of influence.

Table 4.16: Media Ownership Influence on Media Stands on God Governance

| | | Media ownership affects media stands on issues of good governance | | | | | Total |
|-----------------|---------|---|-----------|---------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | | strongly dis agree | dis agree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | |
| media ownership | public | 1.6 | 0.8 | 18.8 | 50 | 28.8 | 100 |
| | private | 0 | 0 | 35.1 | 61.4 | 3.5 | 100 |
| Total | | 1.1 | 0.6 | 24 | 53.6 | 20.7 | 100 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

4.5.3 Sponsorship influence on Media stands on issues of good governance

The surveyed journalists were also asked if media is under the influence of sponsorship when reported on issues of good governance and 30% and 18% of the respondents dis agree and strongly disagree to the influence of sponsorship to the media role on promoting good governance. However, the data indicated that a differences observed on the influence of sponsorship on public and private media. 61% and 39% of the surveyed private media journalists strongly agree and agree respectively on the influence of sponsorship on media reports on good governance promotion while 44% and 27% of the surveyed public media journalists dis agree and strongly disagree to the influence of sponsorship to the media role in promoting good governance. Then we can conclude that Private media is highly influenced by the sponsors than the public media.

Table 4.17: Sponsorship Influence on Media Stands on issues of Good Governance Report

| | | Media is under the influence of sponsorship when reported on issues of good governance (%) | | | | | Total |
|-----------------|---------|--|-----------|---------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | | strongly dis agree | dis agree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | |
| media ownership | public | 27 | 44 | 23 | 5 | 1 | 100 |
| | private | 0 | 0 | 0 | 38.6 | 61.4 | 100 |
| Total | | 18.4 | 30.2 | 15.6 | 15.6 | 20.2 | 100 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

59% of the respondents strongly disagree and 22% disagree on the role of press associations in monitoring, protesting and raising public outrage against attacks on journalists.

4.5.4 Capacity and Skill Challenges

In order journalists to do an investigative report on lack of good governance effectively, they should have deepened understanding of good governance problems. Journalists' professional skills and capacity is important to investigate corruption, mal-administration and mis-management cases.

The surveyed journalists were questioned whether they have taken a specific training on ways of promoting good governance. 37% rated neutral level and 33% agree and 23% disagree to taking specific training on good governance issues.

The respondents also requested if “the capacity of the journalists in reporting good governance issues have been reinforced/ improved/ by training. The surveyed journalist responded that 40% and 34% rated neutral and disagree respectively to the capacity of the journalist’s capacity was improved by training.

Answering to “journalists are fully aware of the key governance problems”59% rated agrees, 19% strongly agree while 16% rated neutral level and the rest below neutral level.

The above data indicated that journalists’ lack of specific training on promoting good governance is a challenge for the journalists to do an investigative report.

Answering to the third question 32% of the respondents disagree on Journalists have good knowledge and capacity to report effectively on governance problems while 28% rated neutral level and around 37% rated above neutral level and 3% strongly disagree in responding to the journalists have good knowledge and capacity to report effectively on governance problems.

Table 4.18: Capacity and skills challenges

| S/ N | Capacity and Skill Challenges | % | Strongly dis agree | dis agree | neutral | agree | Strongly agree | Mean | Median |
|---------|--|-----|-----------------------|--------------|---------|-------|-------------------|------|--------|
| 1 | Journalists have undertaken specific training on ways of promoting good governance | 100 | 4.5 | 22.9 | 36.9 | 33 | 2.8 | 3.07 | 3.00 |
| 2 | The capacity of the journalists in reporting good governance issues have been reinforced/improved/ by training | 100 | 11.2 | 34.1 | 40.2 | 11.7 | 2.8 | 2.61 | 3.00 |
| 3 | Journalists are fully aware of the key governance problems | 100 | 3.9 | 2.2 | 15.6 | 59.2 | 19 | 3.87 | 4.00 |
| 4 | Journalists have good knowledge and capacity to report effectively on governance problems | 100 | 2.8 | 32.4 | 27.9 | 22.3 | 14.5 | 3.13 | 3.00 |

Source: Own survey, 2018

As can be observed from the above table 4.9, the majority of the respondents have responded to the items related to the capacity and skills of journalists in promoting good governance. Though a slight difference exists among the respondents to the capacity and skills of journalists in reporting good governance, their response is more or less neutral level. The mean and median of the question one, two and four revolving is at around three (neutral level) while the mean and median of the third question is at around 4(agreed level)

5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of this study it can be concluded that majority (73%) of the surveyed journalists have a conflicting based relationship with the government in promoting good governance in Ethiopia. This conflicting based relationship affected the exchange of information in promoting good governance. However, the cooperation between media and government has also affected by the type of media ownership. Public media cooperation with the government outweighs private media.

As far as the level of communication and interaction between media and law enforcement authorities were also unsatisfactory though both media and law enforcement authorities have their own goals in exposing wrong doing of the government and bring justice for those who abused power for private gain.

The findings also depicted that media reporting on lack of governance also adversely influenced and manipulated by public bodies through bribery. Sometimes the corrupted officials bribing journalists in order to buy positive coverage and avoid negative coverage on the wrong doing of corrupted officials.

Access to government information regarding lack of good governance in a specific office was also extremely hard. However, media used different tools to gather information on lack of good governance. The most important source of news on lack of good governance is customers' comments followed by social networking news and democratic institutions report respectively. Concerning the role of media (civic forum, agenda setter and watch dog roles) in promoting good governance indicated that acting as a civic forum and agenda setter roles in promoting good governance was failed in the moderate level while the watch dog role of the media is below the moderate level. Despite the media in Ethiopia play its own role in bringing a variety of good governance concerns to public and government attention, the media have faced various challenges related to journalists' capacity and skills; institutional, political and legal challenges. This challenges in its turn caused large failure on the part of the media to adequately investigate wrong doings of the government and provide informative coverage on the wrongdoing of government.

5.3 Recommendation

The recommendations listed below are made based on the major findings of the study and the conclusion presented above.

- Media and government should work together and strengthen their cooperation in order to expose wrongdoings of the government and promote good governance.
- Since any kinds of external intervention reduce the power and independence of the media to probe and expose wrong-doing of officials, media should remain free and operating according to the roles specified in the constitution and other laws.
- The law enforcement authorities should strengthen their level of communication with media and start enquiry on the wrongdoer officials based on the evidence given by investigative journalists.
- Journalists use their discretion to operate within the parameters of law and regulation since the influence of media owner and media management has been directly influenced the autonomy of journalists in exposing wrongdoer officials.
- Journalists should capacitate their capacity and skills in promoting good governance.

References

- Cloete, F. and Auriacombe, C.J. (2008). Counter-productive impact of freedom of access to information-related legislation on good governance outcomes in South Africa. *Journal of South African Law*, 3:449–463.
- Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, (eds.). (2000). *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed.). Taylor and Francis Group. London and New York.
- Deane, J. (2016). Media and Governance. Professional Development Reading Pack No. 39
- DFID (2008). Media and Good Governance. May 2008. A DFID policy Briefing practice paper
- Glenn, A. D. (1990). Democracy and technology. *The Social Studies*, 215-217.
- Mekdes Taye (2011). Analysis of the efficacy of good governance issues coverage on zami 90.7 fm radio, yegazetegnoch kib terepeza" program
- Meehan, S., Dawson, C.: Customer Responsiveness: Getting it Fast and Right through Impatience and Intolerance. *Business Strategy Review* 13, 26–37 (2002)
- Norris, P. (2006). The Role of the Press in Promoting Democratization, Good Governance, and Human Development
- Norris, P. & Odugbemi, S. (2009). Do the News Media Act as Watchdogs, Agenda-setters and Gatekeepers?
- Oertel (2004). Governance Profile of Ethiopia.
- Philo, G. (2008). Active audiences and the construction of public knowledge. *Journalism Studies*, 9(4), 535-544. .
- Saltzstein, Grace Hall. 1992. Bureaucratic responsiveness: Conceptual issues and current research. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 2(1): 63–88.
- Samuel Kotz, Campbell B. Read, N. Balakrishnan, Brani Vidakovic, Norman L. Johnson (2004). *Encyclopedia of Statistical Science*.
- Sara B. Hobol and Robert Klemmensen (2008). Government Responsiveness and Political Competition in Comparative Perspective. *Journal of Comparative political Studies* 41(3):309-337(2008)
- UNESCO. (2005). Media and Good Governance.
- UNESCO. (2009). Freedom of Expression, Access to Information and Empowerment of People. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. France.
- Vivian, J. (2005). *The Media of Mass Communication*, United States of America
- Yonas Tafese. (2009). Coverage of Democratic Issues in Addis Neger and Addis Zemen. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.

Laws and Proclamations

- FDRE 1995 constitution
- Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation 590/2008
- Press Proclamation No. 34/1992