

FEBRUARY 2003 • BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS  
COUNTRY STRATEGY ETHIOPIA 2003–2007

## Survey of Culture and Media

# Ethiopia



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# Executive Summary

## **1. The Cultural Sector**

Music and dance in Ethiopia are as old as the nation. The inborn love for music and dance has found expression in various ceremonies and rituals. From the time of Yared (6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) who composed hymns and invented a notation system consisting of syllabic letters, carved signs, dots and dashes. Church music and religious dance have become subjects of intensive study and practice by deacons.

But it is the folk music and dance, which has from time immemorial become part and parcel of the life of the common man in Ethiopia. For Ethiopians, music and dance are something that always encourages them to participate.

Modern music is a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia. The first modern orchestra in the country is the Imperial BodyGuard, which was formed in 1945. Following this, other orchestras were established and continued to perform to the public.

With regard to music education, the Yared Music School, the only school in the country, was opened in 1966 with the aim of training professional musicians and music teachers. The school currently has shortage of recent books, modern musical instruments, spare parts and lack of skill upgrading training.

In Ethiopia, painting on parchment, wood and even canvas is an old tradition. Churches and monasteries have their walls covered with paintings and make use of icons and beautifully decorated manuscripts that are many centuries old. It is only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the growth of Addis Ababa as the capital and the increasing number of foreigners in the town that a market for secular paintings has developed.

Many artists had to study abroad because there was no school where contemporary art was taught. However, in 1957 the Fine Arts School was founded. Both Yared Music School and Fine Arts School are currently integrated with the Addis Ababa University and have upgraded their courses to a degree level.

Ethiopian literature, like that of all nations, goes back to the first faltering words spoken by an Ethiopian. However, leaving these early beginnings aside, one can divide the literary expressions of the nation into oral literature, classical literature of Geez and modern literature.

The oral literature of Ethiopia is as diverse as the eighty languages spoken in the country. A great deal has yet to be done to collect and catalogue folk tales, proverbs, riddles and poems.

The body of Geez literature contains many works, which were translated from Syriac, Arabic, Christian, Greek and Hebrew. The main themes of these works are theology, philosophy, history, astronomy, and other political and social issues.

Although the first Amharic written literature goes back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is in the 50s and 60s that modern literary works were produced.

With regard to film, although cinema houses were established during the time of Emperor Menelik, the industry has not yet developed. There were, of course, Ethiopians who made some documentary and few feature films. Foreigners also produced few feature films. However, due to the huge investment film making required, the Ethiopian Film Corporation, which was established in 1986, could not manage to produce feature films.

In Ethiopia, theatre in the modern sense is a recent phenomenon. The advent of modern drama coincides with the development of modern school system. Students staged the first modern play in Ethiopia at the Menelik II School in 1914. Moreover, a play entitled *Fabula* (Comedy of Animals), written by Dejazmatch Tekle Hawariat, was banned by the then government officials.

Later on, skilled dramatists such as Yoftahie Nigussie and Melaku Begosew wrote several plays. The establishment of the Hager Fiker Theatre, the Ethiopian National Theatre and others also contributed to the development of theatre in the country. The series of theatrical productions staged at the Ethiopian National Theatre were by far modern in style compared to the ones performed earlier.

Very recently, the Children and Youth Theatre was also opened in Addis Ababa in 1988. In addition to the state owned theatre houses, there are also private and party affiliated theatre companies. The establishment of these companies helps amateur and professional actors and playwrights to stage their works.

From the survey made on some sectors of the arts in Ethiopia, we understand that it is less than a century since the arts in the modern sense of their practice and organization began. Particularly, institutions concerned with activities in the arts were established from 1930 onwards. Though the institutions are young, the fact that they were not able to partially fulfill the need of the society and bring about a substantial change in the development of the arts is largely due to the neglect that the sector suffered.

Ethiopia, one of the oldest nations in the world, is blessed with natural and cultural heritage. Archaeological evidence shows that the discoveries of ancient hominids in Ethiopia indicate that the nation is the original home of mankind. Ethiopia's immense historical wealth embodied in the unique monumental rock-hewn churches and stelae as well as other ancient monuments and buildings and its unique writing script also have great potential for tourist attraction. Despite its huge tourism potential, the tourism industry to date did not make any visible impact on the economic development of the country due to various constraints.

Although attempts are made to restore some of the cultural heritage of the country, the conditions of all historic monuments and sites have deteriorated so much that they need immediate attention.

The rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, for example, have cracked in many places, and the rainwater penetrating through the roofs and walls has increased the damage. The roofs, walls, and pillars of other churches and monasteries as well as mosques are currently suffering extensive damage because of wind and water erosion. As a result, the parchment books, ethnographic and ecclesiastical objects are exposed to destruction.

In order to safeguard these important cultural heritages, an integrated preservation program is needed. The program should include restoration works and production of local professionals that can carry out the necessary maintenance work on a permanent basis.

On the other hand, almost all of the country's movable works of arts that are in the hands of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church are not well kept. They are either placed one on top of the other in ill ventilated stores infested with termites and other insects, or constantly touched and rubbed by unclean hands. The stores have no theft-proof locks and are vulnerable to fire and other natural and man-made calamities. The storekeepers of these valuable works of art are underpaid and so are easily tempted by fortune seeking tourists. As a result, there is now a big out-flow from the country of cultural properties through illegal means. The remaining ones are either kept in such strict and inaccessible ways that no one is allowed to do research or inventory or just admire them.

The National Museum of the country possesses very interesting and valuable cultural properties in its store. But due to lack of space and trained manpower, it is unable to display even one quarter of what it has. There is no art gallery or other type of museum specialized in different cultural fields and readily available to tourists and Ethiopians. Therefore, museums should be developed and maintained as guardians of Ethiopia's cultural heritage. They should also be viewed as essential educational asset and tool as well as tourist attractions.

Handicraft is also one tangible expression of Ethiopia's age-old culture, a commodity that has become an important component of the tourism industry in the developing world. The handicrafts of Ethiopia reflect the special character of the country and its peoples. However, the recent development of local industries and importation of consumer goods have started to replace handicraft products because the former are practical, fashionable, lighter and often less expensive. Therefore, there is a need to encourage the creativity of these craftsmen to open for them a more diverse market through training and promotion of handicraft products.

Generally, the human resources of the culture sector in Ethiopia must receive greater international attention. The current human capacity problems are largely due to inexperience, and not to lack of potential and capability. Training and the transfer of technical knowledge are, therefore, priorities within the culture sector.

## 2. The Media Sector

After a brief history of the development of newspaper and magazines in Ethiopia, which began in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the survey looks at the EPRDF period and the emergence of freedom of the press with the adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights in 1991. Today the government print media publishes dailies and weeklies in four languages: Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Arabic and English. These carry news and editorial articles focusing mainly on governmental issues. They also have pages dedicated to social issues, the democratization process and weekly women's page.

The private press emerged even before the Press Law No.34/1992 was issued, and the survey traces the development of the private press in its efforts to mature and promote democracy and human rights. Some of the constraints of the publishers and journalists, the lack of responsibility of some of the tabloids due to lack of education and experience and being unmindful of the Code of Ethics, exposed them to become victims of the sweeping articles of the Press Law such as those contained in Article 10 (a-d).

The survey also looks at the Legal Framework related to the Press Law, which states that 'Freedom of the Press is recognized and respected in Ethiopia', and also points out some of the flaws of this proclamation. One is that this legislation does not include issues such as professional competence as well as financial capability to invest in the publishing of newspapers. Another is the large amount of money required to renew a license, which has forced some of the tabloids to close down. The high bail money and the constant arrests and imprisonment without charge of journalists, are some of the issues, which have become impediments to the proper development of the private print media sector. Although clearly stated in the Press Law that the press should have access to information and the right to disseminate information, the survey points out that government officials including the Prime Minister's Office, do not respect this. Another restricting article of the Press Law is Article 4 (14), which points out those criminal offences and civil damages laid out in the 1957 and 1959 Penal and Civil Codes, which contain extremely restrictive articles.

The electronic media in Ethiopia at present is the sole domain of the state. After a brief history of the development of the Voice of Ethiopia (Radio) and a method of how listening habits were formed in the country, the survey looks at the contents of programs and the different national and international languages. The national languages include Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Afari, Agnuaak, Nuer, Somali and Tigrigna, and the external service broadcasts in English, French and Arabic. The broadcast media in the country are Radio Ethiopia (both National and External Services), FM Addis, Radio Fana, Ethiopian Television (ETV) and the Educational Media Agency (EMA).

The regional radio and TV established with the assistance of Sida in the Amhara National Regional State, and the community radio, Radio Sidama, funded by Irish Aid, are included in the survey. The objectives of both focus on rural development and agricultural development and target farmers and entrepreneurs. They also work to create awareness about harmful traditional practices (HTPs), promoting the empower-



ment of women. In addition they air educational programs on environment, health etc.

The section on Broadcasting Law, Proclamation No. 178/1999 issued to provide government the systematic management of broadcasting services has not been put in practice yet. Many enterprising individuals and groups have requested for permits to establish their own broadcasting stations, such as television, radio and FM. However, most have abandoned their plans due to delays in getting the permit. The Addis Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), however, with plans to establish its own broadcasting station with the assistance of the BBC and VOA has the entire infrastructure in place and is waiting for authorization.

In the section on News Agencies, the survey looks at the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) Walta Information Center (WIC), and International News Agencies and Correspondents. Both ENA and WIC are enterprises and disseminate news and news materials concerning Ethiopia and the world to their customers. ENA was established in 1942, and a brief outline of its history is included. At present, a Board of Directors with the Vice-Minister of Information as Chairperson governs it; some members of the House of Peoples' Representatives are also members of this Board. A board too runs WIC. The International News Agencies such as Reuters, Associated Press, Agence France Press (AFP), United Press International (UPI), Spanish News Agency, Qatar News Agency and others are included. Resident correspondents and Ethiopian stringers also send out news, stories, and feature to the BBC, VOA, Deutch Welle, RFI, and others.

The section on Professional Associations states that there are four media associations, including the one established by the government. However, the survey focuses more on the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists' Association (EFJA). This association has membership only from the private press and became legal after operating for over seven years.

The many constraints and government pressure it did not succumb under such as arbitrary arrests, high bail money, imprisonment and lack of medication in prisons, which has caused the death of a few, are pointed out. Today, according to the president of the association, three journalists are in prison and 47 cases are pending in the Federal High Court, and quiet a number have fled the country.

Among the professional associations mentioned is the Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA), which is the only association with membership from both state and private media. As such it is the only one, though limited to women journalists, that is trying to narrow the gap between the professionals.

Some of the constraints faced by the media sector in Ethiopia are listed in the last section of the survey. Lack of training and education for members of the private press is a serious problem still affecting many journalists. There is no department of journalism in the Addis Ababa University, however some courses are given. The newly established Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute, under the Ministry of Information gives a two-year diploma in all sectors of journalism but gives priority of attendance to its own employees. Private educational institutions such as Unity College give a two-year diploma course. The short-

term training given to 120 journalists on the job, which was sponsored by the Austrian, Swiss and British Embassies and included some journalists from the regions was very practical.

The biggest constraint for the development of the media and that of democracy, human rights and freedom of expression is the relationship between the state and private media. In order to smoothen this and make the two sectors partners in development, various suggestions are given. One is that Proclamation No. 34/1992 – the Press Law – should be revisited and articles such as Article 10, with sweeping sub articles, which give reason for arresting journalists under many pretexts should be reconsidered.

A Code of Ethics has been promulgated and endorsed by the EFJA Congress but not by all journalists of the country. This should be endorsed in some kind of forum, which could be sponsored by Sida. Eventually, the private press journalists association wants to set up a council, which will be responsible to look at cases of journalists instead of taking them to the legal court system. This council has yet to be established.

Training in all aspects of media, journalism, management of a media establishment and managing distribution and circulation etc. is needed. The survey points out that all these could be subjects of seminars and workshops which could be a means of creating interaction between those involved in the media, hence bringing them closer. This has been seen to be the case in the training course mentioned above and given at the British Council.

The survey also mentions that brain drain is a problem amongst journalists going out of the country for further training. The Government has already started giving initiatives for Ethiopians living and studying abroad such as tax-free privileges for equipment and vehicles.

Lack of adequate resources and material has forced the closure of many private newspaper establishments. Hence, may be material assistance could also be considered.

Nine recommendations are listed at the end of this survey. For future study, it is suggested to carry out an audience survey, which is lacking. This survey should include the listening, watching and reading habits of the society by regions, sex, education, age, employment, activity, etc. and will be of tremendous use in future for further studies as well as to point out the impact of programs and newspapers on the society.

# Part one: Culture

## **1.1. Background**

In the history of Ethiopia, the first step of organizing the cultural sector in a modern manner began recently. The Ethiopian Antiquities Administration was opened in 1953. Following this, museums, theater houses, art school, music school, and few libraries located in different parts of the country were also opened. Later, the National Academy of Amharic Language, presently known as Ethiopian Languages Research Center, was established in 1972.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs was established at the end of 1975, and brought together the various cultural establishments, which hitherto were operating separately. This Ministry, later renamed as the Ministry of Culture and Sports Affairs by Proclamation No. 127/77, has undergone a number of organizational changes until 2000. The change made in accordance with Proclamation No.258/76 to reorganize the cultural sector under a separate ministry was an attempt as a result of which culture secured a relatively better attention. The Ministry has undergone another structural change with the establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) of the Derg regime, which once again brought culture and sports together. Immediately after the fall of the Derg, the ministry was once again reorganized by Proclamation No. 4/1995 as Ministry of Information and Culture. Recently, it is restructured as Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture. The recurrent changes made in such a short period of time indicate that there had not been a thorough study before putting the changes into practice.

In general, the sector was left in an ambiguous situation and the cultural establishments were thus unable to create a healthy trend of development in their respective domains of activities. The following brief review of the history of each sub-sector gives a general picture by highlighting the achievements gained, and the problems encountered.

## **1.2. Fine Arts**

The fine arts constitute one class of human activities that include aesthetic practices such as music, theater, literature, painting, sculpture, dance, cinema, etc., by means of which mankind could express his happiness, sorrow, hope, wish, philosophy, beliefs, outlook, etc., and

which belong to the category of spiritual culture. In the next few pages, we will discuss each category of the fine arts.

### *1.2.1. Music and Dance*

Ethiopia has a rich musical heritage with a marked character of its own. The range of different types of music is extensive, running from the highly refined chants of the clergy, through melodious sentimental love songs, to the harsh squeals of the warriors' songs.

Ethiopian church music is said to have had its beginnings with Saint Yared, who lived in the sixth century. Yared is believed to have invented the notation system still in use, created the three modes or moods used in the liturgy, and composed the entire body of liturgical music.

The scenic beauty of the country and the rich cultural background inspire song and melody among the people. On the hills and meadows, the shepherd plays on his *washint* (flute) plaintive tunes about his long-separated beloved, and down in the field the farmer sings praise to the Lord for a bountiful harvest. Dancing and singing are necessary concomitants of festivals and religious processions. Music is there at every occasion...birth, marriage and even death.

Special events have their own special types of music associated with them, and sometimes even their own special instruments. There are wedding songs, harvest songs, and funeral songs. At the end of the long rainy season in September, Ethiopian New Year is celebrated. The landscape is covered with wild yellow daisies and there are special song and dance performed by young girls carrying bouquets of freshly picked flowers.

Song and dance are not merely limited to strictly festive occasions like weddings and feasts. Almost all working activities have songs to go with them, which make them more pleasant. Thus, there are songs for coffee picking, cotton picking, planting, weaving – the list could be extended considerably. And there are songs with dance to be performed afterwards, with the dance mimicking the actions of the job just finished. Then there are songs, which give the travelers on caravan's strength to continue their long treks through the mountainous countryside and lowland desert. In folk songs, everyone participates – men, women and children. Even if there is a special performer singled out, the rest of the group surrounds him/her and claps and dances, joining in with the chorus.

Religious festivals, along with other feasts and weddings, provide ideal occasions for folk dance in Ethiopia. A great deal of the color in the *Timket* (Epiphany) ceremonies comes from the dancing done by the great crowds of people gathered together to observe the occasion. After the ceremony proper, the crowd breaks up into smaller groups and sings and dances for much of the day. There is great diversity of folk songs and dances, as one would expect in a country with so distinct geographical, ethnic and cultural variations.

Regarding modern music, it is only in the twentieth century that western music and instruments have made any real impact on Ethiopia. Although there were undoubtedly foreign instruments in the country, it was the formation of military bands that gave the impetus necessary for the adaptation of these new instruments to Ethiopian music.

It is the coming of forty Armenians to Ethiopia around 1922 that marked the beginning of modern music in this country. Most of these Armenians were musicians, and they had composed the music of the parade on the occasion of the coronation of Ras Teferi Mekonen in 1930. The group continued to play modern music in Teferi Mekonen and Menelik II schools until 1935.

After the Italian occupation, the first musical orchestra was formed in 1945 within the Imperial Bodyguard. Following this, the Ground Force, the Police Force and Haile Selassie I Theater established their own musical orchestras and continued to perform to the public. Although the bands were formed for strictly military purposes, the music they played became very popular with civilians. The Imperial Bodyguard in particular deserves a large part of the credit for introducing to the Ethiopian public the new instruments and style of music.

With regard to music education, a certain Polish director gave a course to about forty students in 1945. Many students were also learning music inside the Addis Ababa University campus from 1962-1965. The present day Yared Music School was opened and began its work in 1966. The school was built by the Bulgarian government and named “*Yared*” after the famous Ethiopian saint who composed Ethiopian sacred chants and music notes. The school aims at training professional musicians and music teachers and promoting cultural exchanges with foreign countries and artists. At the same time, the training given at the school attempts to impart social prestige to the profession and create among the people a taste for Ethiopian music and artistic expressions. The training that the school could render to students outside Addis Ababa is very limited. Some of the constraints of Yared Music School are shortage of recent publications/books, shortage of modern musical instruments and spare parts and skill- upgrading trainings. Two years ago, the school was integrated with Addis Ababa University, under the Ministry of Education, and started teaching courses at a degree level.

The mushrooming of amateur music groups, beyond the role they played to introduce modern music widely, did not have a significant contribution towards the development of the art. Apart from this, few students were sent abroad for higher training. Commercial activity in music, in the form of cassette recording, has also been widely promoted. The sector is still suffering from the lack of skilled manpower, copyright and other such problems.

### *1.2.2. Arts*

The introduction of Christianity to Ethiopia in the 4th century A.D. has enabled the country to have a long history in the art of painting. The illuminated religious books and mural arts in a number of churches confirm this. The earliest known paintings are manuscript illuminations dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and it is possible that the art of painting goes back beyond that date, since even the earliest examples show all of the typical characteristics of Ethiopian painting. For centuries manuscript painting along with calligraphy was taught in monasteries. But it is believed that the earliest illuminators were simply decorating the manuscripts that they had been assigned to copy.

At all times in Ethiopian paintings, the content of the picture is predominant and the purpose is to illustrate the story. Church decorations, which in Ethiopia are second in importance to manuscript illumination are another medium used in Ethiopian artistic expression. Some murals go back to the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, but very few churches survived from devastations of the religious war in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Quite a large number of church murals are secular in nature in that they are paintings of emperors and other important personalities, as well as battles and similar historic events. Later on, paintings on different themes such as hunting, wars, dressing styles of patriots and the historical journey of Queen Sheba to Israel began to be on sale for tourists as well as to Ethiopians.

The beginning of modern education in the country has contributed to the gradual change in the styles of traditional paintings and the transfer of the skill from parents to children. In this regard, the incorporation of painting into the school curriculum and the beginning of offering courses to students above grade four since 1931 had a significant role. The Department of Fine Arts was opened under the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts in 1940 to follow-up and facilitate this activity.

The return of young Ethiopian painters who were trained abroad late in the 1940s, brought about a meaningful change in Ethiopian painting. The Addis Ababa Fine Art School, which is now serving as a national institution, was also established in 1957. It could be said that the foundation for the development of modern painting had been laid down in 1957 and in the years up until 1974.

In relative terms, it is possible to produce many young artists in the coming years. The arts of painting and sculpture, like all other types of art, can be used to promote the interests of the society. The canvases, posters, logos, banners, and other related works that will be hanged and posted on the walls of different places and squares, can promote education, and health care, facilitate the democratization process and the development of the country in different aspects. Government and donors are expected to support the Art School carry out its duties more effectively and extend its teaching and learning to support the development of the country.

The training that the school could render to students outside Addis Ababa was very limited. Recently the school has been integrated with Addis Ababa University, under the Ministry of Education, and has started teaching courses at a degree level.

The painters, as it used to be, are not able to sell their works and get the benefit thereof. This is, of course, attributed to the lack of the capacity to buy on the part of the general public and the absence of the tradition of purchasing paintings for the sake of appreciation and preservation. Thus, the majority of the painters, one could even say all of them, are not encouraged to devoting their time in developing their art.

### *1.2.3. Literature*

The history of Ethiopian literature goes as far back as the 4th century A.D. However, apart from those poems written on the heroic deeds of King Amda-Tsion, King Zera Yacob, and King Yisachak in the 14th C.,

secular literature was not known until the 19th century. Amharic has since the 19<sup>th</sup> century been used for literary purposes. It has been called *Lisane Negest*, (Language of Kings). Theological writings have been produced and especially Ethiopic texts are widely commented upon. Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a translation of the Bible was made in Amharic. About 1865, the first secular Amharic book by Aleqa Zeneb, who later without following the pattern of previous court chroniclers wrote the chronicle of Theodros, wholly in Amharic, has also wrote *Meshafê Chewata Segawi Wê Menfessawi*, (The Book of Talks on Body and Soul).

The development of Amharic literature is closely related to the development of printing in Ethiopia. It appears that the first book to be printed in Ethiopic, the Psalms of David, was published in Rome in 1513.

The first major Amharic work of literature was that of Afework Gebre-Yesus, *Lib Woled Tarik* (Fictional Story) printed in 1908. That really marks the birth of Amharic literature as we think of it today. This Amharic novel was the first not only in an Ethiopian language but also in an African language. Following this, and up until the period of the Italian occupation, a considerable number of literary works, mostly dealing with moral issues, were written by Ethiopian writers.

Among other contemporaries of Afework who directly or indirectly contributed to Amharic literature are Negadras Gebre Hiwot Baykedagn, Dr. Workineh Martin, Fitawrari Tekle Hawariat and Blatten Getta Hiruy Wolde Selassie. Hiruy became the leading Amharic writer, especially notable for allegorical compositions such as *Wodaje Libe*, (My Beloved, My Heart), and *Addis Alem*, (New World). He also wrote biographies, biblical stories and several other works.

Although it is impossible to say that this condition had been totally changed after independence, there were literary works such as *Endewotach Kerech*, *Almot'hum Beyye Alwashem* (I Won't Lie by Saying that I Am not Dead), and others that deal with social problems, apparently caused by the invasion. However, evaluated from the point of view of literary techniques, most of these were lacking.

Works of outstanding caliber and excellent writing techniques in the different literary genres (novel, short story, essay, poetry, play, etc.,) began to appear very recently in the 1950s. *Fikr Eske Mekabir* (Love unto the Grave), *Adefris* (name of the hero), *Keadmas Bashager* (Beyond the Horizon), *Meskerm* (name of the first month in Ethiopian calendar) and *Yegitim Gubaye* (Synod of Poems) could be cited as examples of the quality of the literature of the period.

The time between 1957 and 1974 was a period when works as the ones mentioned above and others of extremely strong contents such as *Aliwoledim* (I Will Not Be Born) came out. However, in spite of the quality seen, the number of published works and the size of readers was not that satisfactory. The main reasons were the absence of publishing enterprises, the fact that the number of literate people was so little and the obstacle caused by strong censorship.

The change in the social system that took place in 1974 has brought previously banned works such as *Esat Woy Abeba* (Fire or Flower) and *Berekete Mergem* (A Gift of Curse), into print. These works were closed inside the boxes of their authors due to the obstacles created by censor-

ship. However, as the press freedom was short lived (only for 6 months) the literary activity that began in good spirit soon lost its vigor.

In spite of this, the establishment of the Ethiopian Book Enterprise by an individual in 1977 followed by Kuraz Publishing House which was established by the state in 1978 with the objective of importing and distributing ideological books were significant contributions to the country's literary activity. Kuraz was also engaged in the publication and distribution of literary works and other texts.

Following this, the literacy campaign launched in 1979 has contributed in increasing the number of readers in the country. In addition, the mass media has also played a significant role in stepping-up the number of writers and readers. Radio programs such as "The World of Books", "An Evening in the Arts" and others introduced literature to the general public. The Amharic daily newspaper, Addis Zemen, through its cultural page, widely publicized the art of criticism. However, censorship continued to be a major obstacle. Hence, apart from the limited progress it was able to score, the literature of the country did not develop, as it should.

The current free market economic policy however, has highly inflated the cost of printing. The inflation problem, as it could seriously affect the development of literature in the country, needs to be resolved. Thus, there is an urgent need to give due attention to the development of literature by supporting authors' and writers' associations so that they carry out their duties more effectively.

#### *1.2.3.1. Children's Literature*

Regarding the background of children's literature two aspects can be considered. The first aspect concerns with the tradition of telling stories to children like any other society has long been existed among the different nations and nationalities in Ethiopia. Elder people or parents have been narrating tales around the fireplace in a house or at any place where it is convenient to both narrators and listeners.

When people prepare books to teaching alphabets to children they include tales. In addition collections of tales were published both translated from foreign sources and domestic narratives.

The other aspect of children's books in Ethiopia is that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church which are written in Geez language. The church has been schooling children to enable them to give church service by means of different religious texts. These are religious texts intended to be read by all the followers of the Orthodox Church, hence, texts were not written originally for children.

The publication of children's books in Amharic was started in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But it was originally intended as a teaching text for children and it had been used for a long time. However, the format and contents were not properly designed to fit the psychological and intellectual capacity of the children.

There are children's books translated from foreign languages. But most of the (foreign) languages into Amharic do not reflect the culture, tradition and thinking patterns of the society. They do not nurture the coming generation nor impart fundamental skills and know how. Russian children's books translated into Amharic are efficient evidence of this.



### *1.2.3.2. Oral Literature*

Studies on Ethiopian oral literature began with the work of H. Ludolf (1698). Following him the collaborative efforts of Ethiopian and foreign scholars and the sole endeavors of both Ethiopian and expatriate researchers have played significant roles in the study of Ethiopian oral literature.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, both Ethiopian and expatriates prepared grammar books as well as dictionaries for the purpose of teaching languages. These are the early contributions to the preservation and study of oral literature in Ethiopia. Moreover, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ethiopians residing in the country began collecting and publishing oral literary materials in book form. Scholars such as Alemayehu Moges, Seifu Metaferia and Fekade Azeze have also significantly contributed to the study of oral literature in the country. As Fekade (2000) notes, the senior essays of the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature, the MA Theses in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature and the works of the Oral Literature Department of the then Academy of Ethiopian Languages have contributed a lot to the study of oral literature in Ethiopia.

In 1977, the Department of Oral Literature was established under the then Academy of Ethiopian Languages and has been dealing with the diverse oral literary forms of Ethiopian languages. Since 1997, the Department has been integrated with Addis Ababa University as a unit in the Ethiopian Languages Research Center. Researchers of the Center encounter many problems in executing their fieldworks and archiving the oral literary forms collected from the field.

Niqiya Oral Literature Associations was established in 2002 with the major objectives to collect, analyze, classify and publish different oral literary materials of various nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. Moreover, the association collects different oral literature genres using video and audiocassettes so as to preserve the culture of Ethiopian society without distortion and omission.

### *1.2.4. The Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature*

In 1958, Addis Ababa University, the then University College of Addis Ababa, launched a two-year composite major program of Amharic and English, with the primary intention of training high school teachers of these languages. The first group of students who joined the program has selected among those who had completed their second year college education. During the following year, the program was lightly modified in a manner that allowed the next group of third year students to major in either of these languages. Thus students started specializing in Amharic beginning in 1959. For the first two years part-time lecturers taught all the courses offered in the Amharic program. After the first batch graduated in 1960, the University employed for the first time one full-time lecturer to co-ordinate all the Amharic courses and teach most of them.

The Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature was established in 1962 under the Faculty of Arts. Since that time, it has been revising its curriculum responding to what it considered to be the man-

power needs of the country. The last major review was made in 1986 as per the decision of the Academic Commission of the Institute of Language Studies.

The Department has more than 40 years of experience in training and educating qualified Amharic teachers for high schools and colleges. As it is stated in the revised curriculum of the Department (2001), it has continued offering courses with the main objectives of:

- producing qualified Amharic teachers at undergraduate level.
- training writers, critics, public relations officers, journalists, translators, etc.
- conducting research on the various languages of Ethiopia
- training researchers in the field of folklore of the various nations and nationalities of Ethiopia.

However, the Department gives only two courses on journalism, two on translation and one on oral literature, which are considered not sufficient to equip the students with the respective disciplines.

#### *1.2.5. Film*

Film is considered as the highest form of the technology of arts in our era. This art was first introduced to Ethiopia during the reign of Emperor Menelik II, and this was not long after the beginning of the film industry. Later, the first cinema hall called *Seytan Bet* (House of the Devil) was opened in the year 1923. Until 1974, there were many cinema halls in the country.

However, due to the nationalization of all cinema houses by the government in 1974, the number of cinema houses, instead of showing progress, has gradually decreased. As a result, their number today does not exceed 20. Even these cinema houses, more often than not, are closed. This is due to not only to the decrease in the number of film importers and distributors, but also to the absence of the supply of good quality films and other related problems. As a result, a great number of the youth are nowadays compelled to go to video shops that are opened in different corners of cities and towns to see films that could have negative impacts on their physical and psychological well being.

The production of film in Ethiopia began during the reign of Haile Selassie I with a film on his coronation. Following this, documentary films on different issues featuring historical sites, developmental activities etc. were produced. As the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I was replaced by the military dictatorship of the Derg, a film entitled “Harvest Three Thousand Years,” which features the bitterness of the life of the peasantry under the feudal system was produced by Haile Gerima, a renowned Ethiopian film director. There were also films produced by Ethiopians such as *Guma* (Vendeta), and *Hirut*. Following this, the Film Production Section, established under the Ministry of Culture and Sports Affairs, produced another film entitled “3002”.

The Ethiopian film industry that focused on the production of documentary films continued with the establishment of the Ethiopian Film Center in 1978. The center was then replaced by the Ethiopian Film Corporation, which was established by proclamation No.306/1986 (7).

These institutes were able to produce 27 documentaries all together. Apart from these documentaries two feature films entitled *Behiywet Zuria*, and *Aster* were produced. In contrast to the period covered, however, very little was achieved. This was particularly the effect of the divorce of the sector from private investment after the 1974 revolution.

As the sector could not be profitable in developing countries such as Ethiopia, the number of investors that would join the sector and the amount of capital they could invest in it are not expected to be high in a short period of time. In addition to encouraging private investors the government is thus expected to play a significant role in the production of films. In view of the important role that films could play in educating and entertaining the society as well as their significant place in the life of modern society, the task has to be taken seriously.

#### 1.2.6. Theatre

Research on the development of Ethiopian theatre suggests that it is very likely that plays were performed in the country during Axumite period. The word “theatre” exists in Ge’ez and archaeological evidence indicates that Greek was spoken in the Axumite court.

With the advent of Christianity in the country, the pagan theatre would have been closed down. And as it was in Europe, passion plays developed as part of church ceremonies. Every Easter the pageant of the passion was performed throughout Christian Ethiopia. In fact, the church, with its costumes and props, the clerical vestments, multi-colored umbrellas, the dances of the clergy, the prayer sticks and drums and sistra, was an arena for the highest theatrical development in Ethiopia.

There were also other forms of traditional theatre in the country, such as the different kinds of dance-drama, *fukera* (war songs), and even the institution of the *azmaris* (wandering minstrels) and *arehos* (wandering singers) who, as paid professionals, may have been the first Ethiopian actors.

In Ethiopia, plays in the modern sense are a recent phenomenon. The advent of modern drama coincides with the development of modern school system. Students presented the first modern play in Ethiopia at the Menelik II School in 1914. There is no record of what the play was about or who wrote it. However, at about the same time the first modern play in Amharic was produced. Written by Fitawrari Tekle Hawariat, who was born in 1881 and had studied in Russia and France, the play was entitled *Fabula* (Comedy of Animals), and was based on La Fontaine’s Fables. As a satire of contemporary Ethiopian administration, the play was banned along with all other theatrical performances until the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1930. Studies indicate that theatrical activity, after being forgotten for years, was restarted on the eve of the Italian invasion. It could be said that most theatre shows presented at this time were related to the impending war and aimed at mobilizing the people to defend the country’s independence. In 1935 the Ethiopian National Patriotic Association (*Hager Fiker*) was founded. Before the building was erected, plays intended to arouse patriotic feelings were performed in the open-air at Menelik II Square.

It was during this time that Yoftahe Nigusse wrote and produced

*Afajeshign* (You Made Me Quarrel), an allegorical play forewarning the dangers awaiting Ethiopia. Written in verse with songs and dance, *Afajeshign* has several memorable scenes of lamentation, which reflect Yoftahe's considerable poetic talents.

Yoftahe Nigusse was not the only playwright in the pre-war years. Though less well known, Melaku Begosew wrote several plays during this period. Captain Nalbandian's *Gonderew Gebre Mariam* (Adventures of Gebre Mariam of Gondar) was presented in 1933 at the Menelik II School.

After the war, the Association resumed activities centered on further uniting the people and assisting national development. It was felt that the theatre was an excellent medium for enlightening the public. The Hager Fiker Theatre, beginning a tradition of popular theatre, which is still being carried on, put on regular plays.

In 1947 the Addis Ababa City Hall formed a committee headed by Yoftahe Nigusse to start a theatrical group. After Yoftahe's untimely death, Afework Adafre, Captain Nalbandian and Tesfaye Tesemma carried on the work, and before long they were presenting plays at the City Hall.

This ushered in a period of great activity in the theatrical field with the then Prime Minister Bitwoded Mekonen Endalkatchew's *Yedem Dimts* (Echo of Blood) in 1948, his *Salsawi Dawit* (David the Third) in 1951, Woizero Senedu Gebru's *Yelibe Metshaf* (Book of My Heart) in 1949.

1950 saw the production of Dejazmatch Girmatchew Tekle Hawariat's *Theodros*, based on the life of the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century emperor. This stirring historical play has already become a classic in Ethiopian drama. Kebede Mikael also came up with several plays during this period. In 1947 his *Yetinbit Ketero* (Appointment with Destiny) appeared. Two years later came *Ato Belayneh*, which one critic calls the Amharic "Faust." In 1954, came his translation of "Romeo and Juliet."

In 1955, the Haile Selassie I Theatre (now Ethiopian National Theatre) was inaugurated on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Emperor's Coronation. The inaugural play was *Dawitna Orion* (David and Orion) written by Ras Bitwoded Mekonnen Endalkatchew. Also presented at the theatre for the Jubilee celebrations was Kebede Mikael's *Hannibal*.

The series of theatrical shows presented following the opening of the Ethiopian National Theatre were by far modern in their styles compared to the ones performed earlier. The stagecraft, the lighting, costumes and make-ups were advanced enough to draw the appreciation of the people. The themes entertained by the theatre shows performed in the years between 1961-1974 were closer to the social life of the people, rather than being historical and religious, and thus could be taken as an advancement in the development of the art.

During this time, Tsegaye Gebre Medhin's plays *Yeshoh Aklil* (A Crown of Thorns), *Yekermo Sew* (A Man of Tomorrow) and *Petros Yatchin Seat* (Petros on that Hour) and his translations of Shakespeare's "Othello", "Macbeth" and "Hamlet" were staged. Mengistu Lemma also wrote stage comedies that display an astute satirical sense, pungent irony and a thorough knowledge of traditional Ethiopia. His two stage plays, *Telfo Bekise* (Marriage by Abduction) and *Yalacha Gabitcha* (The Marriage of

Unequals) have been very successful at making Ethiopian audiences laugh at themselves.

Tesfaye Gessesse, Abate Mekuria, Awlachew Dejenie, Tesfaye Sahilu, Asnakech Worku, Wogayehu Nigatu and Debebe Eshetu are also important figures that have contributed significantly to the development of Ethiopian theatre.

In 1974 and thereafter, the art of theater was spread not only in Addis Ababa, but also in other towns in the country. During this time, most of the plays were agit-props. In the years that followed and up until 1991, the government's censorship became a serious hindrance to the development of theater. The area still suffers from lack of training and equipment such as sound system, lighting, video and still cameras, overhead and slide projectors, photocopy and fax machines, computer, printer, scanner, amplifiers, tape recorders and vehicles.

The National Theater of Ethiopia, which is one of the five theaters in the country, is itself lacking the capacity that should go with its name. It is unable to meet the expectations to portray the genuine and unadulterated artistic life of the various nations and nationalities of the country, and to create a forum whereby nationalities could learn, appreciate and respect each other's arts. In relation to the multifaceted commitment made to strengthen the activities of the Regional States, the fact that this theater is not organized with the capacity necessary to provide artists coming from different regions with short term training in dancing, acting, stage craft, and other such skills is worth considering. In addition, that most capitals of the National Regional States do not have institutions for the arts is a serious set back and an indicator as to how the importance of the sector to development is overlooked.

The Theater Arts Department of the Addis Ababa University was opened in 1978, and has been producing the necessary skilled manpower. This has been an enormous contribution to the development of the art. The graduates of the Department have been employed by various governmental and non-governmental organizations both at the federal and regional levels. The Department, however, with its very limited budget could not have important materials and technical equipment such as lighting and sound systems, computers, printers, scanners, etc. The fact that the Department's auditorium at Amist Kilo is serving as a conference center has affected the teaching and learning process.

#### *1.2.6.1. Children and Youth Theatre*

The Children and Youth Theatre, the first of its kind in the country, was opened in August 1988 at Arat Kilo in the former Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) Hall. There was, of course, a section under the Ministry of Culture that dealt with children's festivals and annual competitions of creative works such as painting, poetry and short story. Moreover, most of the professional theatres in Addis also used to produce children's plays until the opening of the Children and Youth Theatre. At the beginning, almost all the plays staged were translations or adaptations of European plays and folktales.

This theatre was highly supported by the Japanese Government with modern audiovisual equipment, film projectors, amplifiers and tape

recorders. UNICEF has also donated a minibus to the theatre. Few plays on HIV/AIDS and prostitution were also produced in co-operation with Radda Barna, UNICEF and the American Embassy in Ethiopia.

Little attention is, however, given to the theatre. It has only 300 seats, which creates many disappointments from the audience and their parents. There are only few professionals working in the theatre yet they are not fully engaged due to shortage of funds. To upgrade their skills, they need short and long term training and study tours.

#### *1.2.6.2. Mekuria Theatre Studio and Entertainment (MTSE)*

Mekuria Theatre Studio and Entertainment (MTSE) was registered as a private limited company in 1998 with an office in Addis Ababa. The company has stated that its objectives and goals are to create social awareness about Human Rights, Child Rights, Gender Equality, HIV/AIDS and other relevant social issues to effect behavioral and attitudinal changes at the grass root level.

The method used is by forming a network of peer groups in different regions of the country (Addis Ababa, Debre Berhan, Nazreth, Dessie, Bahir Dar, Dire Dawa, Awassa, Gondar) who are easily accessible, self sustaining and know the problems and needs of their community and are enthusiastic to entertain and educate so as to bring social change.

The company organizes workshops on playwriting, acting, directing, forum theatre and puppet theatre and arranges seminars on theatre, creative methods, child psychology, and literature. It also trains amateur theatre clubs and students. The training given to clubs and students, which are the backbone for disseminating information to the grass root levels, helps them to create their own theatre in their own language basing on their culture. The plays covered social issues such as HIV/AIDS, causes of divorce, adolescence sexuality, abduction and other harmful traditional practices affecting women and girls.

Supported by Sida, the company in collaboration with circus groups organizes theatre festivals in different regions of the country every year. Currently, the company has collaborated with East African Theatre Institute (EATI) of which it is one of the founders, through cultural cooperation and exchange between Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia.

Though Mekuria Theatre Studio and Entertainment is indebted for the donation by Sida, which enabled the company carry out its duties more effectively in the last few years, it looks for more funds and assistance to build its capacity.

#### *1.2.6.3. Candle Theatre House*

Candle Theatre, a private theatre enterprise that was opened in 1991, has been staging many plays in Addis Ababa. The enterprise comprises largely amateur actors and few professionals. In addition to original plays, the enterprise has also performed translations from European theatre such as the one by Goldoni produced in cooperation with the Italian Cultural Institute. According to the general manager of the enterprise, so many young talents have gone through a series of productions whereby they have acquired performance skills through on the job training.

The founder of the enterprise currently works as the Deputy Director of the Russian Center for Science and Culture. The center allows him the use of its theatre hall with minimal charges. Besides regularly staging plays for adults, recently a play for children has been inaugurated. Every Saturday Candle Theatre performs plays for children in Addis Ababa and serves as an alternative to the Children and Youth Theatre.

Regarding funds, the manager discloses that they have requested for financial assistance from numerous Ethiopian business community and members of the international community, but have not received encouraging responses from any of them. As a result, the activities of Candle Theatre House are affected due to shortage of funds for production costs and advertisements. The main source of income of the Theatre House is from performances the manager himself stages in the Russian Center for Science and Culture.

#### *1.2.6.4. Mega Creative Arts Center*

Mega Creative Arts Center, a Party-affiliated company, was opened in 1992. The company has major objectives such as promoting artistic works, producing videocassettes, audiocassettes, stage, radio, and television plays. It also organizes artistic contests to encourage people in the arts, and provides technical assistance to amateur actors and playwrights.

In addition, the company organizes open-air grand musical shows and festivals on different social problems such as HIV/AIDS and development issues. It has also sponsored the publication of a bi-monthly magazine, which focuses on art and literature. The company operates in the old house of *Seytan Bet* (The House of the Devil), the first cinema house in the country located near Theodros Square. Mega is the only company, which has its own amphi theatre and studio. Problems that affect the activities of the company are shortage of funds for the production of creative works, and shortage of skilled manpower. Mega Creative Arts Center plans to establish its own Board of Directors.

The enactment of the Press Law, which is one of the significant measures taken since 1991, is believed to have a fundamental role in the development of the arts. The establishment of private theaters and theater enterprises, and the beginning of writing plays in the languages of the different nations and nationalities is an encouraging step. Nevertheless, the sector is still facing high taxes and shortage of skilled manpower.

On the other hand, the high tax imposed on the works of art has brought about the following impediments to the development of art in Ethiopia.

- compelling institutions to concentrate more on seeking their profit has minimizing cost of production rather than working towards better quality;
- hindering the production of original and indigenous works of art that could have helped in forming a national identity;
- depriving the capacity of producing research-based works on new literary trends;
- increasing the entrance fee of musical and theatrical shows as well as the cost of printing which have become major factors in divorcing art from the society.

### **1.3. Amateur Groups**

With regard to amateurism in the arts, the activities seen today in schools, Urban Dwellers Associations (*Kebeles*), and in other places are believed to have started along with the introduction of modern education in the country. The inclusion of some of the arts in the curriculum has contributed to the formation of clubs in schools. That is believed to be the reason that art activities until the year 1974 were spread mainly in schools.

In the post 1974 period, Derg spread amateur clubs throughout the country with the aim of widely introducing its objectives. Lalibela, Gishe Abay, Fassiledes, Goh Misrak and other cultural groups, though they failed to continue, had been able to reach a semi-professional status. Relatively, those amateur art groups organized before 1991, though not organized in the manner that they can produce their art without interference, had no problems of materials and places of performance.

After 1991 too, the process of organizing amateur artist groups continued in different parts of the country, and these are opening up chances for artists to exercise their creative talent without interference. Today, in different regions, including Addis Ababa, there are many private clubs organized voluntarily and some have officially registered in their respective regions. However, most of them are suffering from lack of equipments and place of performance and training. In general, such is the history of amateurism through which most of the popular professionals of this country have passed. This also shows the significant role of amateurism in the development of arts in the country.

With regard to the living standard of art professionals, most of them are impoverished. They are low paid and do not get medical and life insurance that are supposed to be commensurate with the service they give. What makes the artist's profession different from other professions is that it requires talent more than formal education. The salary scale of artists, however, does not effect their specialty. Not having a well-established Prize Trust, that would initiate artists for more creative endeavor, is also a shortcoming wanting serious consideration. Such a prize trust could be sponsored either by private entrepreneurs, the State or NGO's.

The first prize trust that ever existed in Ethiopia was the Haile Selassie I Prize Trust, which was founded in 1962. This trust, which only lasted until 1974, played a significant role by offering different prizes to prominent artists, thereby encouraging the promotion of the sector. After this trust ceased to exist, The Ethiopian Fine Arts and Mass Media Prize Trust came forward to substitute it and is trying to encourage writers, painters, musicians, artists and journalists. This Trust was founded in August 1997 and held its first prize ceremony in 1999, and the second in 2002. Although the Trust has the objective of creating a sense of professional competition, which helps to develop art and mass media, it has financial constraints.

### **1.4. Circus Groups**

There are many circus groups in such as Circus Ethiopia, Circus Addis Ababa (which consists of Circus School, Street Children Program and Performing Group), Circus Tigray, Circus Bahir Dar, Circus Jimma, Molier Theatre and Circus Group at Awassa.



These groups prepare different shows including traditional and modern music, drama and circus performances. The groups mainly focus on creating youth centers in order to help young people to a meaning full way of passing their time, and at the same time making them an asset to society. They open their own cultural centers in order to provide different shows and training to strengthen and support the establishment for the groups within their area. The circus groups also deal with different social issues, particularly HIV/AIDS, harmful traditional practices and street life, incorporating different performing styles such as acting, music and dance. They work jointly with government both at Federal and Regional levels, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Regional and zonal administrations, regional development associations and international organizations support most of the circus groups.

### **1.5. Professional Associations**

Professional associations in the field of art and literature were very active during the Derg time. They were supported by the government and had contacts with other associations in the then socialist countries. In return, the government used to control the professional associations, and the members were not beneficiaries. As a result, after the downfall of the Derg, almost all the professional associations were disbanded.

Currently, two of the professional associations, namely the Ethiopian Writers' Association and the Ethiopian Music Professionals' Association have their offices, but they are not doing a lot. The Ethiopian Performing Artists Union and Ethiopian Artists' Association do not even have offices.

Painters were able to participate in different associations formed by themselves, such as the Dimension Group, Paint Group, Women Friends Association, etc., and got the chance to produce works that reflect their beliefs.

So, there is a need to support and reorganize these associations in order to serve their respective members in building their capacity and protecting their rights and contribute to the development of the sector.

### **1.6. Authority for the Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritages**

At the national level, cultural heritages management, which incorporated research, conservation and preservation, was begun in the 60s. The Authority was re-established by proclamation No. 209/2000, as Authority for the Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritages. It is put under the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture. To date, about 40,000 heritages are identified and registered out of which seven are registered in UNESCO's list of World Heritages. Though the Authority has been mainly financed by the Ethiopian government, a few international donors such as UNESCO, the European Union and NORAD have funded significantly for the restoration and preservation of cultural heritages. Public awareness creation programs have been carried out and, as a result, an estimated number of 500,000 people are believed to have benefited from the programs. In addition, the discoveries of Lucy and A. Ramidus, 3.5 and 4.4 million of years of age respectively were major breakthrough in palaeontological research worldwide.

Nevertheless the fact that:

- no significant international and diplomatic campaign was launched (though the recent efforts put into returning the Axum obelisk which was taken by the Italians and is now standing in Rome is an encouraging step) to repatriate all valuable heritages taken by missionaries, travelers and diplomats, as well as those purchased and appropriated by individuals and the countless heritages looted in time of war and found in the museums of Europe and North America. For example, the historical and cultural heritages looted from the Makdala royal archives by the British army that came to battle with Emperor Tewodros in 1868 amount to one thousand parchment books and these are still found in the different museums of Great Britain.
- a reliable and effective controlling mechanism is not yet developed to safeguard the heritages from further damage and looting;
- the country is short of professional and financial resources to conserve the eleven rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, the castles of Gondar, the Mertula Mariam church, the rock-hewn churches of Tigray, the stelae found scattered all over southern Ethiopia and other valuable heritages that are left exposed to weathering and all sorts of natural and man made damages;
- the researches in physical and cultural anthropology which are being carried out in different parts of the country are not given due attention;
- the findings of palaeontological and archaeological researches, though they have won to the country an international recognition and contributed to the promotion of tourism and add to the country's wealth of heritages, are not used to generate economic benefits through producing slide films, casts, post cards and books;
- alongside the situations mentioned, in view of the effort needed to preserve the country's heritages for the coming generations and to enhance the development of the tourism industry, though the country has an estimated number of one million unique and precious cultural, historical and natural heritages, only forty thousand of these are registered so far. The innumerable heritages of the country are not properly organized and classified in kind, quantity and distribution, in order to create appropriate mechanisms to protect, preserve, inspect and pass them to future generations;
- even though the country, internationally known as a museum of nationalities, is home to over eighty nations and nationalities which have their own distinct culture, history and language, an ethnographic museum where the cultures of the various nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia could be proportionally represented is not yet established. Although not well organized, the Jinka Ethnographic Museum, which was established very recently, can be considered as a good beginning.
- even though educational programs on the basics of heritages, their significance and methods of preservation are given to five hundred thousand people, out of the estimated sixty two million total population, an awareness creation program involving popular participation is yet to be developed;

- there is no interdepartmental network between the different institutions (The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, religious institutions and Tourism Commission) which are housing, conserving, and preserving the heritages and those institutions benefiting from these heritages, has hindered the protection and inspection of the heritages;
- institutions which carry out construction works such as the Ministry of Housing and Town Development, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Ethiopian Road Construction Authority, etc. do not seem to realize the importance of considering cultural impact assessment programs, and are causing immeasurable damage to the country's heritages. For example, the Gedeb Asasa pre-historical site, which was believed to be one of the world's most important sites, is buried for good due to the construction of Melka Wakana Hydro Electric Plant. The houses of Ligaba Tasew, which had a historic significance in the study of the history of the capital, are also demolished during the construction of the Sheraton Addis;
- there is no official standardization system set to determine the kinds and levels of heritages which would have enabled the undertaking of a planned activity. In addition, the absence of enough conservatories and laboratories for the conservation and preservation of heritages is noted;

Considering the quantity and quality of historical, cultural and natural heritages of the country, the finance allocated and skilled manpower available to the development of the sector is very limited.

### **1.7. Cultural Activities in the Regions**

Different bureaus that deal with cultural activities were established in the Regions starting from 1992, a year the decentralization process took place. In some regions the cultural sector is attached with tourism and information. Other regions have put it with education and sports.

Regarding the construction of the cultural centers, museums and libraries, there are promising developments in some regions. Nearly 20 public libraries are constructed in Tigray and Amhara Regions alone. Museums and cultural centers were also built in Amhara, Tigray, Afar and Benishangul Gumuz Regions. The Dessie Museum in Amhara, the Axum Archeological Museum in Tigray, the Aba Jiffar Museum in Jimma (Oromia), the Addis Ababa and Entoto Museums in Addis Ababa, were established during the Derg period, and have contributed in housing and preserving many cultural heritages of the country. Most of the regional bureaus of culture have experts who graduated from the Addis Ababa University in theatre and literature. These experts train and organize amateur actors and writers and give technical support to young talents.

One very important achievement in the field of culture is the foundation of the Tigray School of Fine Arts in Tigray National State. The school was opened under the auspices of the Cultural Association of Tigray (CAT). The school trains young people who have talents in a three-year diploma program, and it has got the accreditation from the Ministry of Education. Art festivals have also become very popular in the regions,

and they serve to enhance the creative insights of professionals and amateurs. The one organized in Dire Dawa by five neighboring national regions, namely Somali, Oromia, Harari, Dire Dawa and Afar, was the first of its kind since 1991. It was a grand festival where different ethnic groups performed their own traditional dances and music. They had also displayed some of their costumes, props and cultural musical instruments.

The Amhara Regional Bureau of Culture, Tourism and Information has also been organizing art and literary competitions every year and festivals every two years, where over a hundred people participate from all zonal administrations.

Generally speaking the cultural sector is not a priority sector. As a result, it does not get much attention from regional administrations, and the budget allocated to these bureaus is very limited. There are no training opportunities given to people working in the cultural sector.

### **1.8. Handicrafts**

It was in the 1930s that the economic significance of handicraft and its role in the social services first drew the attention of Ethiopian government. That was when an institutional activity in the sector began. With the aim of training young Ethiopians in modern handicraft works, the Ministry of Education opened the first handicraft school, Haile Sellassie I Handicraft School, in the Kolfe area in Addis Ababa, in 1941. In the following year, Empress Mennen opened another vocational school with the aim of training students in handicrafts for sale. These two schools were later amalgamated and renamed as Empress Menen Handicraft School. It was this school that laid the foundation for the present DAHSI (Development Agency for Handicraft and Small Scale Industry).

The Agency has undergone a series of structural changes in the last fifty years of its history. However, the changes that followed the proclamation issued to organize artisans and farmers into Producers and Service Cooperative Associations in 1965 and the new structure put into effect from 1995 onwards, whose proclamation is expected to be promulgated soon, are among the major structural changes.

Ever since the establishment of this institution, it has made a considerable contribution, though insufficiently, to the sector by training many young people and helping them to use their skills as the means of their livelihood. An attempt was also made to introduce handicraft skills from abroad to local professionals and in return, introducing the local art to the world. In this regard, the contributions of the Agarfa Farmers' Training Institute, the various adult training centers working under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and the Ethiopian Tourist Trading Corporation are worth mentioning.

However, in relation to the degree and amount of service that the sector is offering to the public, serious attention is not given to promote and extend the service as a properly recognized profession. The following are among the major shortcomings that affect the sector:

- no serious measure was taken so far to create a sense of respect for handicraft professionals;
- no significant effort was made to assist handicraft professionals to develop their creativity;

- no satisfactory campaign was initiated to create awareness on the role that the sector has in developing tourism industry and in building up the national economy;
- a reliable market analysis was not made and so far no emporium is open in and outside the country;
- the role of women in the production of handicraft items (i.e. in the making of various garments, tools, ornaments, baskets, cosmetic materials, and other such furniture), which shows the kind of attachment women have to the art is not yet well assessed in light of their general status of being economically dependent;
- strong measures are not taken to further consolidate the sector institutionally and to provide it with skilled manpower, finance and other such necessary conditions.

### **1.9. Cultural Exchange And Cooperation**

Cultural exchange and cooperation, in the modern sense of its applications, began in Ethiopia in the 1930s. The first agreement was the one signed with the government of Italy. Similar agreements were signed with different countries since then. However, until 1974, the country had no ministry that was named to officially assume the responsibility of conducting such affairs.

Ever since the establishment of the Ministry of Culture and Sports Affairs, which was the responsible body for cultural matters, a series of agreements have been made with different countries. As the foreign policy of the Derg was founded on the basis of the doctrine of “Proletarian Internationalism,” most cultural agreements made until 1991 were with socialist countries.

Ethiopia has signed cultural agreements with about 30 countries to date and is a fee-paying member of no less than 10 continental and international cultural organizations including UNESCO. The agreements and the membership has given the country an opportunity to be introduced with the cultures of the peoples of the various nations, nationalities and peoples of the outside world. These relationships have also enabled Ethiopia to secure training and study tours for Ethiopian professionals. In addition, the country received consultation, technical and financial assistance for the conservation and preservation of cultural heritages, for the development and promotion of libraries, archives, the film industry, theatre, music, dance and many other fields in the sector. However,

- the number of countries with which cultural agreements have been signed with is limited to about thirty;
- cultural attaches are not opened in the Ethiopian Embassies found in many of the countries with which Ethiopia has wide cultural exchanges and from which the country could benefit;
- the country is unable to let its professionals working in the sector participate in and gain experience from international gatherings, as well as to widely introduce the cultures of the various nations, nationalities and peoples of the country due to financial constraints;
- due effort was not made to create a favorable situation that would encourage developed countries to open their own cultural centers in

- the different parts of the country, and thus create a better opportunity to learn from others;
- cultural shows coming from other countries are not presented in the different parts of the country;
  - a mechanism is not developed to check whether the contents and types of the cultural shows of other countries do interest the peoples of Ethiopia or not;
  - a well-integrated working relationship is not established with the cultural institutes of other countries found in Ethiopia.

### **1.10. International Cultural Institutes**

Although most of their activities are limited to Addis Ababa, international cultural institutes such as the German (Goethe) Cultural Institute, the Italian Cultural Institute, the Russian (Pushkin) Center for Science and Culture, the Alliance Ethio-Francaise and the British Council have been playing a significant role the development of the cultural sector of this country.

The services they are rendering include organizing different discussion forums on culture, supporting art exhibitions, sponsoring musical and film shows, and providing library services and the teaching of their respective languages. These cultural institutes do not however have, a well-integrated working relationship with concerned local cultural organizations.

In the main fields of culture briefly reviewed above, an attempt is made to indicate the activities made and the immense difficulties of the cultural sector. In the next part of this study we will examine the development and status of the media sector.

# Part two: The Media Sector

## 2.1. The Print Media

### 2.1.1. Background

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, missionaries and trade representatives had set up weekly and monthly papers in French. *Le Semaine d'Ethiopie* (The Ethiopian Weekly) appeared in French in 1905.

The Ethiopian press began at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the weekly *Aemero* (Intelligence), appeared in 24 hand written copies in 1902.

With the aid of mimeograph machines, *Aemero* had a weekly circulation of over two hundred copies until it ceased publication in 1916. Revived in 1924, the paper appeared weekly for several years. Before that, in 1923, Emperor Haile Selassie I had established the first printing press, *Berhanena Selam* (Light and Peace) Printing Press. This was during Empress Zewditu's reign when he was Regent and known as Ras Teferi.

Right after this printing press, still the largest printing press in the country, was established, the first official Amharic newspaper, also called *Berhanena Selam* appeared in print. This was the first newspaper that served as a forum for the few young educated Ethiopians of that period.

At the start of the First World War, in 1914, *Ye'Tor Were* (War News), appeared in Amharic, and *Le Courier d'Ethiopie*: (The Ethiopian Messenger) in French; in 1917, *Goha Tsebah* (The Dawn) was published in Amharic.

From 1923–1936, Ethiopia had six publications: *Aithiopicos Kosmos* (Ethiopian World) in Greek in 1925; *L'Ethiopie Commerciale* in French in 1932, *Atbia Kokab* (The Morning Star) in Amharic in 1934, and from 1934–1936, *Ye-Ethiopia Demts* (Voice of Ethiopia) in Amharic. *Ye-Ethiopia Demts* was silenced by the Italian aggression on Ethiopia and was re-issued in 1958.

In the three decades after liberation, between 1941–1974, a number of legal measures that encouraged the growth of the print media in Ethiopia were taken. The major ones among these, according to Shimelis Bónsa (2000: 16) were:

the decrees of 1942 and 1944, the Revised Constitution of 1955, the Penal Code of 1957, the draft constitution which was presented to the country's highest constitutional assembly in July 1974 (Hamle 30, 1966 E.C.) and

a decree, which was published in Addis Zemen in March 1975 (Megabit 18, 1967 E.C.).

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1941 *Addis Zemen* (New Era), appeared in Amharic. In 1942, The Press and Information Department was established under the then Ministry of Pen, and *Sendek Alamachin* (Our Flag) appeared in Amharic and Arabic, and the *Negarit Gazeta* appeared in Amharic and English. A year later in 1943, the English language *The Ethiopian Herald* was started as a weekly. This newspaper and *Addis Zemen* became dailies at the end of 1958, and are still being published by the Ministry of Information. Following this, *Ye-Ethiopia Demts* re-emerged in 1958. Another newspaper, *Ye-Eritrea Demts* (The Voice of Eritrea) published by the Ethio-Eritrean Unionist Association, was launched in Amharic and Tigrinya. Two monthly papers, *Ethiopian Review*, in English and *Berhanena Selam* in Amharic, were published in 1946. In 1947, three Amharic and one English paper appeared. These were *Zena Bete Kristyan* (News of Churches), *Nuro BeZeday* (Living Wisely), *Tekle Haimanot* (Saint Tekle Haimanot) and *The Daily News Bulletin* in English.

Three years later, in 1950, *Alemena Tebeb* (The World and Wisdom), in Amharic, and *Progres Economique* in Amharic and French were published. In 1952, *L’Ethiopie d’Aujourd’hui* (Ethiopia Today) started to come out in Amharic and French. The Amharic counterpart of the English *Daily News Bulletin* also came into the scene around this time. Others, the most noted of which is *Yezareyitu Etyopia* (Ethiopia Today), appeared in 1952.

During this post-liberation period, several quarterly and yearly departmental journals and publications, such as those of the State Bank of Ethiopia, Ministry of Education, Commerce and Industry etc. also appeared. Magazines too were published during this period. Some of these monthly magazines were: *The Ethiopian Mirror* (English), *Menen* (one each in English and Amharic) *Addis Reporter* (English) and others published by the Ministry of Information and *Tewahedo* (Ethiopian Orthodox Church), *Berhan* (Ethiopian Evangelical Church), and others, *Azeb* published by the Ethiopian Women Welfare Association (EWWA), and *Ethiopia Observer* published in Ethiopia and Britain and edited by Sylvia Pankhurst.

In all, between 1941–1974, 14 newspapers and magazines were published in Amharic and other national languages and 13 others came out in English and other foreign languages such as Italian and French. Most of these magazines and newspapers ceased to be published during the previous Derg period, while others, mostly publications of government institutions and ministries, continued to appear.

In the first two or three years of the Derg regime, there were promises and hope of freedom of the press. Dialogues between opposing political groups were seen in print and electronic media, and journalists became extremely open and critical of the government. Relevant national issues such as democracy, land tenure and the form of government the country should have etc. were openly discussed in the public print media. That period, which Ethiopian journalists refer to, as “the golden days of Ethiopian journalism” was unfortunately short lived.

At this time, magazines, such as *Tseday* (Spring) which covered social and political issues, which did not last for long; and *Goh* (Dawn) which had been circulating for some time within a limited number of readers



appeared. However, *Goh* was declared counter-revolutionary and banned. The Censor Department of the Ministry of Information and National Guidance, which had been in existence since 1972, was reinforced and given more power in 1977. As stated by Mairegu Bezabih (2000:129), “the Derg took over total control of the media by assigning its cadres to supervise the day-to-day operation of the journalists working in the state print and electronic media.”

### 2.1.2. *The EPRDF Period*

The landmark event in the history of print media in Ethiopia began after the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power in May 1991. EPRDF soon declared the adoption of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its’ Charter, and freedom of the press and speech. The Censor Department of the Ministry of Information was abolished and hopes for democratization and freedom of expression emerged again. For the first time in Ethiopia’s long history, the private sector became involved in the media field with confidence.

Besides this positive development, the government also announced that the state media would give time and space for different political parties to carry on free discussions and inform the public about their views. This was, however, limited to the periods of election campaign. Both the print and electronic state media disseminated the government’s policy most of the time. Mairegu Bezabih writes (2000:132):

As was the case in the past, the state-owned media became simply the propaganda machinery of the new government, launching violent verbal attacks on those political or ethnic groups that are ill favored by the ruling circle. This unprofessional and unethical campaign against those who hold opinions that are incongruent with those of the government has undermined the credibility of the state media and put into question the seriousness of the so-called democratization program of the government.

Today, the relationship between the government and private press has become, to say the least, strained.

### 2.1.3. *Government Print Media*

At present, daily and weekly newspapers in Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Arabic and English are published under the Ministry of Information’s Ethiopian Press Agency. The main objective of these government publications is to disseminate news, information and editorial materials. They also carry either full page or two columns of educational, health, cultural and women’s issues weekly.

The Press Agency publishes a monthly magazine called *Zemen* (Era) on political, social and current issues and includes arguments concerning opposition politics and different national issues.

The Press and Information Department also publishes a quarterly magazine called *Merewa*. Most government institutions and ministries also publish different magazines that mainly focus on their activities.

#### 2.1.4. *Private Print Media*

Before the Press Law was passed, some 50 monthly magazines, such as *Tseday* (Spring), *Hibri*, *Ifoyta* (Relief), *Tobiya* and *Ruh* (Soul), appeared on the scene. The first weekly newspaper, *Eyeta* (Point of View), appeared in 1992 (*Yekatit* 1984 E.C.) nearly a year after EPRDF took over control. The publisher of the paper was Paulos Publishing House, owned and run by Getachew Paulos. This tabloid circulated 50,000 copies per week when it started; but when a critical political event occurred, circulation would rise to 70,000. The owner was accused at different times of defamation and creating political instability, and was fined Birr 13,000 at one time and Birr 2,000 at another. According to Ato Getachew Paulos, this treatment along with other persecutions was so discouraging that he closed down the paper in 1993.

Other tabloids like *Addis Dimts* (New Voice) and *Addis Tribune*, Amharic and English weeklies respectively, came into existence during this period. The late Tamerat Bekele was owner, publisher and editor-in-chief of both. Soon over 20 private newspapers appeared. For Addis Ababans, purchasing the maiden issues of magazines and newspapers became the fashion.

#### 2. 1.5. *Constraints*

The Press Law, Proclamation No. 34/1992, should be revised. But even more restricting to most is the lack of capital for establishing newspapers and the low number of the reading audience. The per capita income of Ethiopia is calculated to be around US \$100 per year. According to UNESCO, 70% of the population has an average annual income of less than US\$100.

An annual subscription to a daily newspaper may exceed 10% of an individual's per capita income. The choice may sometimes be between buying a meal or a newspaper. Because of the constraints that the private press is faced with, the price is now rising from Eth. Birr 1.00 to 2.00 per copy, and this development has forced tabloids to be printed in lesser number. In this connection, veteran journalist Negash Gebre Mariam (April 2002) says:

One of the peculiar characteristics of a newspaper is that cost of production is almost invariably higher than selling price. Especially in this country where production, printing, and distribution cost all add up to make its production cost very high, price increase is justifiable. Unfortunately, in our country this cost cannot be supported or compensated by selling space for advertising. But, advertising itself is the product of a market economy and is the characteristic of an industrialized society.

At present, most tabloids are sold at Birr 1.00. However, according to the President of the Ethiopian Free Journalists' Association (EFJA), a weekly eight-page newspaper (the size of most tabloids of the private press) should not be marketed for less than Birr 2.00, as this will not even cover the printing cost. However, since the reading public has not accepted the additional Birr 0.25 price increase, which might have made a difference, most of these papers operate at a loss. So the financial con-

straints affect both the publishers and the readers. Income from advertisements does assist the financial constraints to some extent. (Sample of Et'op monthly expenditure attached)

Many private newspapers do not have the capital investment or the financial capacity to print better quality papers, because they can hardly pay their office rent, salaries of staff, expenses incurred on the use of computer, fax, telephone, etc. Most cannot even afford to pay for the services of news agencies to obtain news and information. In this regard, the Economic Commission for Africa is to be commended as it has facilitated a Media Center where some 20 computers, a printer, a telephone, and an Internet connection have been made available for state, private and international journalists that are accredited by the ECA.

However, lack of trained journalists is the biggest drawback in the development of both the state and private print media. Contents of programs would have been better and more meaningful, and the standard of the tabloids and newspapers currently being published would have been better, had the educational status of most journalists been higher. According to a study made by Shimelis Bensa (2000: 31):

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

To some extent, the motives for launching a newspaper have also become a drawback. In interviews conducted with some 70 journalists by Shimelis Bensa, it appeared that most embark upon publishing tabloids not for the love of the profession nor to disseminate information and knowledge and to build democracy and social development, but rather to make profit and at the same time oppose some of the policies of the government. With such narrow objectives, the profession itself suffers and some of the tabloids have lost credibility.

The lack of infrastructure for the distribution of newspapers is a hindrance to the majority. The more established newspaper publishers with financial stability, such as *The Reporter* and *Tobiya* have a network and also have a circulation manager. The majority, however, cannot afford such a luxury and are forced to rely on a few established individuals or groups who end up having a strong influence on the owners of the paper and its circulation size.

In most other cases, boys, the unemployed youth and men (a few girls in *Megenagna* area) are vendors of newspapers which they buy from the publishers at less Birr 0.20 and sell them around well known locations in the capital such as Piazza, Arat Kilo, Ledeta, Merkato, Megenagna, etc. for Birr 1.00. The number of papers that are not sold will be the loss of the vendor. And this discourages many and they give up, but others take their place. In few instances, the vendors may be given the papers on credit. This system, according to vendors interviewed, has created the awareness of what type of tabloids are popular in which area of the city. For example, sport and romance type tabloids are apparently popular in

the Merkato area. Vendors also make a little money from customers who may pay them 0.10 cents for spot reading.

Distribution to the different regions of the country is another matter. Most regional cities do not receive any private newspapers mainly, because there is an undeclared restriction imposed by the government. As a result, many regional towns do not have access to the tabloids of the private press. Although this has improved more recently, previously public transport vehicles, if at any checkpoint were seen to be carrying newspapers from the private press in their trunks, had them confiscated. In many regional towns, if government employees are seen reading a private newspaper they were harassed and or labeled as opposition party group members.

The case of ACPAK publishing (*Tobiya* monthly magazine and a weekly newspaper) is different, because not only do they mail their publications to subscribers in twenty-three towns within Ethiopia, but also to Ethiopian subscribers in the USA, Canada, Europe, Australia and Asia. Their complaint is the increase in the price of postage stamps. Another newspaper, which is also established as ACPAK is the weekly Reporter (both Amharic and English).

#### 2.1.6. *The Legal Framework*

Even before the promulgation of the Press Law in 1992, tabloids had engulfed Addis Ababa on the basis of the Transitional Government's Charter, and operated without any censorship.

Article 3 (1) of the Proclamation, which provides freedom for the press states: "Freedom of the Press is recognized and respected in Ethiopia". In the same proclamation, Article 5 Sub-article 1 states that "Any person who is an Ethiopian national may, singly or jointly with other persons having Ethiopian nationality, carry on any press activity."

To achieve this, there are five requirements listed under Article 7 of the Press Law. However, the legislation does not include issues such as professional competence, and financial capability to invest in the publishing industry. This has made it easy for any person to engage in the newspaper publishing business, and this in some cases has discredited the profession and the tabloids in general. In 1999, the Mass Media License Registration and Control Department in the Ministry of Culture and Information came out with a regulation that newspaper publishers can apply for a license or get a renewal only if they can produce evidence of a bank deposit of Eth. Birr 10,000. As a result, EFJA claims that ten tabloids had to close down because of inability to meet this demand.

Part three of the Proclamation deals with the *Right of Press to Have Access to, and to Disseminate Information*. However, this is a major issue that has many constraints. Government officials, except very few, are reluctant to give information or interviews and this includes to journalists of the state media. Ministries and government institutions usually report their meetings with foreign delegations, but do not give sufficient information about the details of the discussion, even to the state media. Ministries and department heads do not also usually give interviews without first consulting the minister concerned or their superiors.

When the Prime Minister holds a press conference, private press journalists are neither informed nor allowed to participate.

The repercussions of this exclusion for the country are obvious, particularly in areas of foreign relations. Even international correspondents and journalists, who have no time to wait to get an interview, or a reaction to an event from an Ethiopian official, face this problem. This shortcoming was observed during the Ethio-Eritrea conflict, with all the damaging effects of silence, particularly as Eritrea was readily giving information to foreign correspondents. Currently the private sector too has become secretive and is reluctant to give information to the private press, the reason being that they have lost confidence in the accurate reporting of the tabloids. Concerning the exclusion of journalists of the private press from the press conferences given by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Information has informed us that inviting some of the journalists to press conferences has already started. He however, said that this will be based on their merits.

Other articles of interest in the Press Law include *Responsibilities of the Press, Keeping a Record of Authors, Taking of Lawful Measures and Penalty and Jurisdiction*. Article 4 No. 14, *Responsibilities of Press*, is interesting because it points out that criminal offences and/or civil damages shall be as laid down in the Penal Code and the Civil Code of Ethiopia. These Codes are those of 1957 and 1958 respectively, when freedom of the press was very restrictive. As a result, many complications with repercussions on journalists of the private press have occurred in the last ten years (Proclamation No. 34/1992 attached).

## **2.2. Electronic Media**

### *2.2.1. Brief History of the Development of The Voice of Ethiopia (VOE).*

Radio Addis Ababa The Voice of Ethiopia, currently known only as The Voice of Ethiopia started its services in 1935 with one KW short wave transmitter. The government subsequently destroyed this when the Italians captured Addis Ababa. After liberation, a transmitting station on Jimma Road fitted with 7.5-kilowatt short wave equipment was restored. This transmitter was left behind by the Italians.

In 1960, two 10 KW short wave transmitters were installed, and in 1961 one KW medium wave transmitter was set up at Akaki for listeners in Addis Ababa. In the last ten years transmission equipment have been installed in different regions, and quality of broadcasts have improved. The Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation is responsible for the maintenance and running of all transmitters.

### *2.2.2. How Listening Habit is Formed*

In the 50's, when people were eager to listen to the radio but did not own such a device, a curious thing occurred. Large crowds of Ethiopians congregate at various squares, and around monuments and listened to horn speakers (public address systems) which broadcast the daily radio programs. A document of the Ministry of Information (1966:18) states that:

These speakers were installed beginning from 1955 in central squares in Asmara, Gondar, Dessie, Debre Markos, Dire Dawa, Harar, Jimma, Nekemte, Assela, Yirgalem and Makalle. In 1957, Gore and Jijiga were added. The purpose of these was to re-broadcast programs.

In Addis Ababa, similar equipment was placed in various squares, and one of these was the Abune Petros Square near the studios and offices of The Voice of Ethiopia. In these spots, sitting or standing people heard the news, informative talks, music and entertainment.

In 1963, two 100 KW short wave transmitters were installed enabling people in the different regions to listen to The Voice of Ethiopia (Radio Ethiopia today). At the same time, microwave systems to relay programs from the main studio in Addis Ababa to Asmara and Harar were put in place.

Gradually, The Voice of Ethiopia developed and with its short wave transmitters started international broadcasts to West and North-West Africa and Europe (in French and English), North Africa and the Middle East (in Arabic) and East and Central Africa (in Swahili). However, the International Service of The Voice of Ethiopia was short lived because it was discontinued.

In Ethiopia, radio is the best means of disseminating information. According to the latest figures of the International Literary Institute (ILI) (source: Internet) 64% (more than 19 million) of the adult population of Ethiopia is illiterate. ILI reports that there are just 4 television sets for every 1,000 people in the country and most are in Addis Ababa and other urban areas. But at the same time, there are 193 radios per 1,000 people, which makes radio the most widely used source of information in the country. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of radio sets particularly in rural areas where men, who consider radio as their most precious possessions, will not leave it for the wife and children to listen to, but will carry it with them wherever they go. Or they will lock it up in a box or cupboard.

Today, Radio Ethiopia has two services: The National Service and the External or International Service.

### *2.2.3. The National Service of Radio Ethiopia*

Programs are broadcast daily (for 172 hours a week) by the National Service in nine languages: Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Tigrigna, Somali, Afari, Harari, Agnuak, Nuer and English. The programs are aired in the 31, 41, and 49 meter bands or 9705, 7110 and 5990 kHz SW and in the 345, 350, 438 meter bands or 873, 8555 and 684 KHz MW. Excluding Amharic, each language segment has a daily one-hour slot, the exception being Afaan Oromo, which broadcast for two-and-a-half hours. Harari programs are transmitted from the studios in Harar; and Agnuak and Nuer language broadcasts are prepared and transmitted from the Metu studios of Radio Ethiopia.

Radio Ethiopia also broadcasts 30-minute long English programs from Monday to Friday on the National Service frequencies from 1:30– 2 pm. local time. Most of the language desks of the National Service have,

other than news and current affairs, interviews related to civic societies and democratization, regular weekly programs focusing on women, children, youth, arts and culture, sports, music, plays, and agriculture.

#### 2.2.4. *The External Service of Radio Ethiopia*

On March 12<sup>th</sup> 1977, the Derg nationalized the former Radio Voice of the Gospel, which was owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation since 1963. This station was re-named The External Service of Radio Ethiopia and programs have been transmitted daily to East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and Western Europe in English, French, and Arabic.

Afar and Somali language programs of the National Service are also re-broadcast in the frequencies of this external service. The contents of these programs include current affairs and news, educational and informational programs and programs that introduce Ethiopia's culture and history. Only the English language has a weekly *Women's Forum* program. The French Desk often suffers from lack of French speaking journalists.

The meter bands used by the External Service include 25 meter band or 11,800 kHz, 31 meter band or 9560 kHz; 41 meter band or 7165 kHz; and 303 meter band or 989 kHz MW.

#### 2.2.5. *Regional Radio and TV*

**Radio:** The first regional radio and TV station in the country started in the Amhara Region when The National Regional State's Culture, Tourism and Information Bureau began its transmission on 8th of May, 1997 after a trial program of 30 minutes for about two months. The Voice of Amhara National Region is situated in Bahr Dar, and is assisted by Radio Sweden's Media Development Office. The programs have been supported by Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) since its inception. Sida's support to the media sector is part of its rural development program in the Amhara National Regional State. This component included the purchase of modern studio equipment, the training of journalists and technical staff, study tours and long-term training programs. The station is equipped with modern analogue and digital equipment. Programs are presented live, and transmitted daily on AM 594 kHz and covers the western part of the region. It is based on the Swedish experience of 'Public Service Radio' and the target audience is the rural population.

The station has recently started transmitting on FM from 9.00am to 11:00am. The programs at present are mostly entertainment and sometimes focus on social issues.

**TV:** For some time now, the Amhara Regional State's TV station has been producing 30-minute programs using professional BetaCam cameras and editing facilities. These programs have been transmitted on ETV from its station in Addis Ababa for the last two years.

The objective of both Radio and TV programs (including video films) is to emphasize:

- agricultural development through regular services targeted at reaching the farmers.
- enhancing entrepreneurship as part of the rural support Business

Advisory and Market Information System, with daily radio programs that provide information on current market prices, of credits and credit systems.

- creating awareness to rural women covering topics related to the situation and issues of women with educational, information advise and support. These programs are produced by women for women.
- promoting the natural, cultural and historical heritages of the region.

*Voice of Tigray*: broadcasts in SW and MW over 50 hours weekly in Tigrigna and has recently included the Afari Language. The objectives are more or less similar to that of the Amhara National Radio.

#### 2.2.6. *Radio Fana*

Radio Fana, established in 1994, is Party-affiliated and broadcasts programs in four languages: Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Afari and Somali. The broadcasts are aired three times a day, for a total of 60 hours per week on medium wave (1080 kHz) and on short wave (6210 KHZ, 44 MB and 6940 KHZ 49 MB). The majority of the programs are devoted to peace, democratization and development. These pertain to health, education, women and children's issues and market price analysis. Programs also deal with investment, agriculture and industrial activities in the country. Radio Fana's entertainment programs are popular and have earned wide listeners support.

#### 2.2.7. *FM Addis*

FM Addis, which started transmission in the year 2000 and broadcasts 17 ½ hours daily is under the Ethiopian Radio. FM Addis has large audience participation with listeners through call-ins by telephone and many discussions on social issues are aired.

- There are about 7–8 organizations transmitting their own programs using the FM station. They pay to the Ethiopian Radio, and get income from advertisements.
- The transmission has area coverage of up to 125 km radius and includes Shashemene, Nazreth, Fitcha and Selalie.
- Plans are underway to include new programs based on audience opinion.

#### 2.2.8. *Community Radio*

A community radio, probably the first of its kind, is Sidama Radio. It is one of the components of the Irish Aid-funded Sidama Development Program. It started out as an autonomous project in 1997, but currently is under the supervision of the Zonal Education Department. Sidama Radio, according to the program officer of the Embassy of Ireland, aims to improve the quality of education for the Sidama people through radio programs, which are transmitted in Sidama language six hours daily, divided into half-hour slots and cover a range of issues relevant to the people in the area. The objectives of the this station are:

- creating awareness in the community on harmful traditional practices, particularly those affecting women,



- promoting education to empower women,
- educating the community on HIV/AIDS prevention and control,
- promoting the concept of natural resources conservation at the community level, and the use of modern technology. This is done in collaboration with the Zonal Agricultural Department,
- updating farmers on current market prices and
- promoting health and hygiene education in collaboration with the Zonal Health Department.

All the staff working in the station are from Sidama, and have been given training by experts from Ireland. The community radio reaches all the people of Sidama, and impact assessment is scheduled to be carried out in the near future.

### 2.2.9. *The Ethiopian Television Service (ETV)*

Television service was first introduced to Ethiopia in November 1964, on the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> OAU Head of States meeting and to commemorate Emperor Haile Selassie's 33<sup>rd</sup> Coronation Anniversary. During this inauguration, the Emperor appeared on the screen and in his speech explained that this was one of the results of Ethiopia's effort to spread knowledge and information among the people (Ministry of Information, 1966:25).

ETV was under the Ministry of Information and began operation with only one transmitter, its studios and offices located in the Municipality Building. Thomson Television International, a British firm trained the technical staff and installed the equipment. Today, ETV operates from its own building and with the use of fairly modern, but not altogether digital equipment, and 26 transmitters located all over the country covering 47.7% of the total area of Ethiopia.

According to the Deputy Manager we interviewed, ETV is considering phasing out its analogue studio and upgrading it to digital, but does not have the technical know-how yet. Regarding this problem, a project is in the process of being worked out with the British Council.

Most of ETV's management being former journalists who have been upgraded, they may not be capable for proper technical and TV station management. The other problem faced by ETV is that out of many program producers who have been sent abroad for further training, only one returned. Apparently, the brain drain has also attacked the broadcasting media. Therefore, in future, the plan is to bring trainers here rather than send trainees out of the country.

In addition, it is felt that ETV's present structure is not conducive to its growth, and studies are being conducted to convert it to an autonomous public station, rather than keep it under state control. The disadvantages of being state controlled are many, and some are obvious. Not only do state-owned media have to abide by the policies of the government, but also more importantly, the program producers do not have the confidence to make critical programs. In this regard, an exception has been made for one program called *Aynatchen*, (a program that investigates government institutions and reports its findings). According to the Deputy Manager of ETV, the producers of this program are

guaranteed that government officials will not harass them, nor will they lose their jobs.

ETV broadcasts in four languages: Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Tigrigna, and English all transmitted on one and the same channel which has caused some difficulty. Since all languages use the same source, there is repetition. And as most people watch TV during all the time of broadcast, it is obvious that the only difference is the language, particularly with news coverage, and this has made it uninteresting. ETV is now considering how in the future the different regional language broadcasts, such as Tigrigna and Afaan Oromo, can be transmitted and targeted to that specific region, and become more locally centered. During events that are nationwide, there will be possibilities to connect to ETV.

This project, having been approved by the government, may be implemented in the future. The Minister of Information has also indicated that sometime in the far future, the regions of the Federal State may have their own channels. To date, the Southern Region has nearly completed building its studios and the Amhara, Addis Ababa and Oromia Regions are transmitting their productions on ETV.

Currently ETV transmits 56 hours per week, in all the languages it uses. The Amharic programs, other than current affairs and news, include women's, youth and children's programs. Agriculture and development issues, including reports from the regions, police program (usually reports of crimes that have taken place in the country), historical sites of Ethiopia and sport and magazine programs are regular productions. There are also drama and entertainment programs. The drama programs have become popular and usually focus on social and bureaucratic problems. Sometimes, legal issues are presented. On Sunday mornings, there is a program from Parliament, which is a broadcast of earlier recorded meetings and discussion in progress.

The Tigrigna programs are more or less the same, the exception being a program called *Tigray This Week*. 14.8% of the transmission time is allocated to Tigrigna programs.

The Afaan Oromo program also presents *Oromia This Week*. However, this service is different in that it also broadcasts a weekly Primary Health/Public Opinion program. Afaan Oromo programs take up 14.8% of the total airtime.

The English programs include weekly local interview productions such as '*Close-up*', '*Meet ETV*' and sometimes a special program. These locally produced English programs take up 7% of the total airtime. The rest of the time, 33.3% of the weekly airtime, is allocated to foreign films including documentary ones on environment, education, and items from Vis-news, Contact, UK Today and Japan video topics. The majority of airtime, however, is used for soap opera, detective and comedy series (Leykun Berhanu, 1997).

Regarding the staff of ETV, journalists must have a BA in Theatre and/or Literature (Amharic or English) from the Institute of Language Studies of the AAU. Previously, however, this was not a requirement. Therefore, those employed earlier are now enrolled at the Educational Mass Media Training Institute (EMMTI) to upgrade their qualifications. There is a standing practice by which 12–14 employees take this course every two years, and continue to work during weekends. Of the total

563 staff working in ETV, 16%, that is 62 males and 28 females, are in production. From the total number of employees, 345 are male and 218 female.

ETV also gets assistance in capacity building. The Royal Netherlands Embassy offers regular three-month courses to professional staff. Israel has been assisting in the training of professionals by giving short courses locally. This includes training of technical staff in areas such as lighting, editing and camera use. France and England have also assisted in capacity building. However, there is a dire need for training in maintenance of equipment. There is no support given to ETV, financial or otherwise, from international donors and NGOs. An exception to this is UNFPA, which gave a Land Cruiser some six years ago during the preparations for a co-production.

A recent phenomenon is the introduction of a second channel, which transmits the TV Africa series. Unfortunately, some of the shows consist of cheap soap operas that propagate violence and sex. Concerning this, and not only because the audience has voiced their reservations, but also because such films have negative impacts on the society, the management is reconsidering to overrun some of TV Africa's programs. Films are expensive and if a good standard film is required, it could cost up to US\$3,000. ETV now pays around US\$600 for each feature film, a rate provided for Africa. The other problem is that ETV does not have any employee who is knowledgeable about international films to make the selection. However, ETV is ready to fund any locally produced series of films and plays that can bring about positive social change.

Filming and transmitting some of the stage plays being performed at the theatre halls in Addis Ababa has actually begun and is very popular. According to the Deputy Manager, last year, ETV allocated about one million Birr for this project, and some 700 plays were submitted. Unfortunately, only 15 of these were up to the required standard.

There are plans to make ETV an autonomous media institution, and towards this end, according to the Deputy Manager of ETV, at present the station covers 75-80% of its running costs from advertisements. This amounts to Birr 32 million per year and the government provides the rest.

### **2.3. Advertisements**

According to the Broadcast Law, ETV can utilize 12 minutes per one hour of airtime for commercials, and these should not be inserted within programs that have 20 minutes or less duration. Inserting commercials between films or shows is not common in Ethiopia. However, 24-30 minutes of only commercials are aired every day, right after the news. Sometimes, particularly during holidays and when popular programs such as drama are transmitted, commercials do go beyond the allotted 24-30 minutes, the reason being the assumption that there will be more audience during such occasions. Unfortunately, this could not be ascertained due to lack of research regarding habits of TV audiences.

Ethiopian Television and Radio Ethiopia, as state media, used to be run by the Ministry of Information and Culture. More recently, however, both have been restructured to fall under the direct control of the House

of Representatives (Parliament's) Media Committee which is chaired by the Minister of Information.

#### **2.4. The Educational Media Agency (EMA)**

The Educational Media Agency of the Ministry of Education runs radio and television production studios regionally and at its headquarters in Addis Ababa. EMA pays Ethiopian Television to transmit its programs. It produces in its own studios educational and development related radio and television programs. It also develops and disseminates materials for multimedia channels for regional target groups using local languages. The Agency is well known for its creative approaches to programming and renders support services to both government and NGOs in interpersonal communications skills, and helps to establish multimedia resource centers at regional, zonal and *woreda* levels.

#### **2.5. Broadcast Law and Private Broadcast Stations**

In spite of freedom of information and the Press Law, the Broadcasting Law has not been implemented, and not a single non-governmental radio or TV station exists in the country. Ever since the proclamation of freedom of expression in Ethiopia some applications have been submitted to the government regarding the setting up of broadcast stations. Unfortunately, nearly all have cancelled their projects because of delay in getting license. However, at present the most outstanding and promising one is the Addis Broadcasting Company (ABC), which is ready to take off having trained radio journalists and established offices and digital studios with the technical assistance of BBC and VOA. According to the Minister of Information, licenses will be given to private broadcasters only after the government has established the Broadcasting Agency. The groundwork has been completed, and staff have been employed for the Agency, and it would become operational soon. (See also Interview of the Minister of Information with *The Sun* attached).

The Broadcasting Proclamation No.178/1999 regulates the state-owned radio and TV transmission. This proclamation under Article 4 states: The Ethiopian Broadcast Agency's accountability is directly to the office of the Prime Minister rather than to the Ministry of Information. The Agency, according to Article 7 (2) of the Proclamation, has the power to issue, suspend and cancel broadcasting service licenses.

In Part Five Article 37 (10) it states that every licensee, when required by an employee of the Agency who is duly authorized to ensure and inspect the implementation of the provisions of these proclamation, shall allow him to investigate the broadcasting station and provide him with the required documents.

(See Proclamation No.178/1999 *A Proclamation to Provide for the Systematic Management of Broadcasting Service* – attached.)

#### **2.6. Gender and Media**

Regardless of the fact that in Ethiopia a young female radio producer appeared on the media scene beginning from 1941, the number of professional women in the media is not very encouraging. Like in most

countries, women are under-represented and mis-represented in the media in this country.

- Under-represented: According to statistics compiled by SELMA, a women's Communications & Information Consultancy, some 24 months ago, in government owned radio stations, out of 586 in five regional states, only 199 were women. From these, only 48 were active in program production. This includes all the different language broadcasts of Radio Ethiopia.
- Mis-represented: Because the portrayals of women in the media, particularly in radio and TV dramas, including advertisements, plays being staged in our theatre halls, films both on ETV and the different cinema halls and videos, as well as a host of other means of dissemination of information including the print are often being represented as sex symbols and/or brainless individuals. Both male and female journalists need to be given awareness concerning the dangers of this type of social mis-representation.
- Radio Fana employs 124 persons, and only 43 are women, 16 working in production. Looking at professional association, e.g. EFJA, from the 158 members only 13 are women. Even looking at training and education, women and girls are under-represented. For example, out of the 124 first graduates of the Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute (EMMTI) only 38 were girls.

The media needs more qualified women, who also have awareness of the gender issue, which will make them capable of bringing about positive social change. This is definitely one of the constraints that have to be overcome in order to build a free and democratic society.

## **2.7. News Agencies**

**The Ethiopian News Agency (ENA):** It was established in 1942 as a government news service under the Ministry of Pen. It closed down in 1947, due to budget constraints and re-appeared seven years later in 1954 with one editor and two reporters as staff. During this period, the international news receiving section was not part of the Agency, but responsible to the minister. In 1965, the international news-receiving desk was formed with branches in various regions of the country to disseminate information to the newspapers of that time and to the radio station. According to ENA (2000:3):

In 1967, ENA acquired a radiotelephone and mobile radio communications connecting Addis Ababa with Harrar and Asmara, with technical assistance obtained from Japanese Government. A major turning point in ENA's more than half a century of history was reached in 1968 when the government for the first time allocated an annual budget of Birr 587,167. The number of regular staff had by then reached 122.

On June 7, 1968, the first proclamation providing for the establishment of the Ethiopian News Agency was issued. In July 1994, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) restructured ENA and a law was enacted with objectives and responsibilities clearly stated. TGE endorsed

Ethiopian News Agency Establishment Proclamation No. 115/1995 on May 13, 1997 and the preamble reads: “Whereas it is necessary to provide for the organizational and operational autonomy of government-owned mass media with a view to ensuring the free expression of opinions and views among the population in accordance with the constitution.”

According to Article 4, ENA’s function is to gather and distribute balanced and accurate news and news material concerning Ethiopia and the rest of the world in accordance with media policies, laws and directives.

Structurally, a Board, currently chaired by the Vice Minister of Information, with most members from the House of Peoples’ Representatives runs the Agency. The Board’s powers and duties are:

- ensuring the implementation of a media policy, laws and directives;
- promoting news coverage throughout the country; facilitate the establishment of organs of the Agency within and outside the nation; and
- monitoring the prompt dispatch of up to date information to government organizations, public media and others (ENA 2000:9).

In 2001, ENA had 120 journalists (thirty-two senior reporters) engaged in the gathering, writing and editing of news in all of Ethiopia’s regions through 37 branch offices. ENA has four News Desks, including the Addis Ababa Desk and the Regional Desk, which oversee news coverage of development in all the Regional States. There is also the Foreign Languages Desk.

Other services include a 24-hour world market reports, audiovisual service and a quarterly bulletin with news analysis and commentary. Through an agreement signed in 1997 with the SIDUS Systems Inc., a Canadian computer manufacturing company, ENA has modernized its operations with a total cost of US\$663,395.

**Walta Information Center (WIC):** It is a Party-affiliated information and news agency that was established in 1994, and focuses on development related news and information coverage throughout the regional states. WIC has over thirty different stations all over Ethiopia that send in information on a daily basis, even from the remotest areas of the country. WIC also produces audio reports for radio broadcasts and makes available current market price information from different regions. WIC, located in Addis Ababa, also has a Photo Archive Service so that supporting pictures are made available with news reports, or special events photographed, if needed, by the client. WIC’s library is also a good resource center for media related information and for conducting research. Walta Information Center publishes a weekly Main News Review of development in all the National Regional States.

**International News Agencies and Correspondents:** Some international news agencies like the Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), Reuters (including TV), Xinhua (a Chinese agency), Qatar News Agency, Spanish News Agency, Al Hayat and Agance France Press (AFP) and a few others are active in Ethiopia.

Resident correspondents and Ethiopian stringers and correspondents also file news and stories from Ethiopia. The stations include the British

Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Voice of America (VOA), Voice of Germany (DW), Radio France International (RFI both English and French) and others.

## **2.8. Professional Associations**

At present, there are four professional associations for people working in the media. These are: The Ethiopian Journalists Association (EJA), The Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFJA) and The Ethiopian Women Media Association (EWMA), and the Foreign Correspondents Association (FCA).

**The Ethiopian Journalists Association (EJA):** Members of EJA are employees of the Federal and Regional state media establishments and include both male and female journalists. EJA was founded thirty years ago but does not seem to be active at present.

**The Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFJA):** Both male and female journalists in the private media established EFJA. Four years later, the association published, in the form of a small booklet, the Professional Code of Ethics, which was endorsed by the General Congress of EFJA in December 1998. This includes also the International Declaration of Principles on Conduct of Journalists, which was amended by the 18<sup>th</sup> International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) World Congress in Helsinki in June 1986. Some quotes from the booklet include:

- Respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist
- In pursuance of this duty, the journalists shall at all times defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection of news, and of the right of fair comment and critics.
- The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.
- The journalist shall use only fair methods to obtain news, photographs, and documents.
- The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origin.

EFJA is a member of the International Freedom of Expressions and Exchange and the International Press Institute, and is recognized internationally and has even won some awards, it was given legal status by the Ministry of Justice seven years after it had become operational in March 2000.

According to the president of the Association, the private press has not had the opportunity to develop due to numerous constraints.

The main one is said to be the government, which continues to arrest journalists from the private press unconstitutionally, and illegally detaining them in prison for 3–7 months under the pretence that they are being examined. The president asserts that due to this type of harsh treatment,

there are today 38 journalists living in exile; three journalists are in prison; 47 have pending cases in the Federal High Court; and a few have died while in detention due to lack of medication and treatment. Most journalists are jailed because they cannot afford to pay the huge amount of money fixed for bail (usually Birr 10,000).

The private press is seen as an adversary of the government and the ruling party, to the extent that even vendors of these papers are sometimes harassed. This is mainly due to the charges directed against the private print media as being 'opposition press' or as disseminating only the opinions of the private publishers or individuals of various political parties.

There are many printing presses in Addis Ababa, but only two have the equipment (wave machine) to print newspapers, and the government owns both. It is when seen against this background that the 100% increase in the cost of printing has been perceived as an indirect pressure against the private press. According to the president of the EFJA, when this was announced, the private tabloids did not appear for one week as a protest to the rising cost of printing. Donors and the international community may have also been made aware of this when the private tabloids went on strike and not a single paper came out for a whole week. The Association also appealed to the Parliament and to the Prime Minister concerning the soaring printing cost and high increase in the price of paper.

We were told by EFJA's president that presently, the clash between government and the private (print) media has become extremely dangerous, because the private press journalists have now been accused of having aligned themselves not only with the opposition parties as in the past, but also with Shaabia, the ruling party in Eritrea.

According to the Minister of Information however, a better partnership is planned for the future and the Press Law will be revised and improved in partnership with the private press journalists sometimes in July 2002. The aim is to forge a better relationship between members of the state and private press journalists.

**The Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA):** Ten journalists formed the Ethiopian Media Women Forum on November 16, 1997. With the aim of serving and enhancing the needs of media women, this forum became the nucleus that gave birth to the association. EMWA is the only professional association in the country, that is trying to narrow the gap between private and state media in that, membership includes government and private media employees and professionals as well as public relations officers. The association was registered with the Ministry of Justice in May 1999 as the Ethiopian Media Women Association with the following objectives:

- To raise the professional skill of EMWA members;
- To advocate for women's rights;
- To improve the image of women in the media;
- To network with media and other professional associations and organizations locally, regionally, and internationally.

Training being one of EMWA's main objectives, with the assistance of Fredrech Hurbert Foundation, it has sent five professionals to various



African countries for training and/or attendance of workshop at different times, and all have returned to their country.

The Royal Netherlands Embassy has put in a tremendous effort to make EMWA a reality and help establish the Forum of Ethiopian Media Women. When EMWA was officially recognized as an Association, it was the Netherlands Embassy that assisted in sponsoring a workshop to establish the association, elect the Board members and register new members.

Panos Ethiopia is the strongest supporter of EMWA. Ever since the project “End Violence Against Women” started in November 2001, it is still going on in collaboration with Panos Ethiopia, and the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA). At present, Panos has provided EMWA with a fully furnished office for use within its premises. A few months ago, EMWA has moved office to another area and the rent is being covered by Panos Ethiopia. Today, the membership of EMWA is 149 and a member has recently been nominated as an Advisory Committee Member of the African Women Media Committee.

**Foreign Correspondents Association (FCA):** The FCA consists of resident correspondents for the BBC, VOA, DW and others. Membership includes not only journalists and Ethiopian correspondents for international broadcasts but also information attaches of Embassies and the Information Officer of the ECA. Today membership stands at twenty-two.

## 2.9. Training and Workshops

The lack of training and education is one of the main constraints of the private press. Private press establishments are not in most cases manned by qualified and experienced journalists, which is a serious problem still affecting most of the private papers. The absence of institutions for training of journalists is in part responsible, blocking the chance for the acquisition of skilled manpower in this particular area. Some journalism schools and colleges have recently appeared on the scene.

- Only three years ago, the Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute (EMMTI) began offering a two-year diploma program in Print, Radio and Television Journalism. However, this institute gives priority to employees of the state run media. Even if the private press journalists were given a quota, there was no one to cover their subsistence fees, so they could not utilize this quota which has now been cancelled. The fact that it has no boarding facilities also makes it difficult for students who may come from different regions. At present, there are 152 regular students, out of which 41 are girls. Night students enrolled are 150, and 48 of these are girls. As mentioned above out of the 124 first graduates, only 38 were girls.
- Unity College is a private college and gives a two-year diploma for Basic Journalism Course. The course includes print and broadcast, focusing mainly on radio. At present, Unity College does not own its own studios, and therefore has to rent studios from private enterprises.
- Intermediate courses sponsored by the Austrian, Swiss and British Embassies. With this project, journalists on the job were given training during weekends at the British Council from February 2001 up to April 2002. A total of 198 journalists were given crash courses during

the weekends. Forty-four of them were from Bahir Dar, and sponsored by the British Embassy. An interesting outcome of these courses was that though at the beginning of each session journalists of the state media and the private press did not mix, by the end of the course most had become friends and the artificial border between them was broken. Out of the total 198 journalists trained during the course, only 48 were women.

- Various institutions and international organizations give one or half-a-day workshops for example such as the Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development (EIIPD), which gave a half-day workshop to, selected groups in the media sector, on the theme “The role of the Media in Expediting Development”. This was one of its’ forums on Good Governance and Citizenship Responsibility and Accountability. One such seminar focused on the role the media can play in the promotion and sustenance of democracy, economic development and peace in the country.
- The German Cultural Institute gave a five days workshop on The Role of Media and Journalism in Modern Democratic Society from 23-27<sup>th</sup> April 2001 which was conducted by Dr. Reinhold Meyer, Director of Africa, Near and Middle East Department of the Deutsche Welle in Cologne, Germany, and others.
- As mentioned earlier ETV employees have regular training for both technical and production staff. These are given by the Royal Netherlands Embassy (3 months regular courses), Israel Embassy, and the French and British Embassies.

# Part three:

# Conclusion and Recommendations

## **3.1. The Cultural Sector**

Cultural heritages are evidence of the material and spiritual lives of peoples. It follows then that preserving and conserving the cultural heritages of a country is like preserving the existence of the peoples of that particular country. Even though Ethiopia has a variety of unique and precious cultural heritages, it was only by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that it was able to draw the first international attention in archaeological research.

Even though some governmental measures have recently been taken to promote the cultural sector, they fell short of creating a proper understanding of the concept of culture. Instead, these measures were limited to organizing few narrowly envisaged cultural establishments. In relation to the modern political, economic and social establishments and enterprises created in the country, these cultural establishments came very late and this indicates the low consideration that was given to the sector. This low consideration hindered the sector from contributing its part in the development program of the country.

Considering the varied cultures of so many nations and nationalities, the number of cultural establishments available is so small to render sufficient service to the public. For example, there are two private and five state owned theaters to date (all of them located in the capital) to serve, though insufficiently, only 3% of the total population. The capacity of other cultural establishments is even less. The fact that these establishments are organized under different offices has prevented them from rendering a meaningful contribution to the enhancement of the culture of the country's nations and nationalities.

Organizing the activities of the arts in a modern way and providing formal training in some of them has begun recently. Most types of the arts, however, are not new to Ethiopia. Rather, they have passed through so many years to develop into the state they are found today.

Ethiopia is home of various nations and nationalities possessing a rich traditional music and dancing. Be that as it may, modern music, which was educating and entertaining the society on different social issues, becomes a typical tool for political agitation. With this aim, there was almost no urban dwellers' associations (Kebele) that did not organize an amateur musical troupe. However, musical recording in addition to the

suppression of the declared censorship was also obliged to include songs that promote the aims and interests of the government. After the fall of the Derg, as it would to the other sectors, the Press Law brings about a meaningful difference to the development of music in the country.

Regarding the art of painting and sculpture, Ethiopia has many young and senior artists with commendable talents. This could be seen from the various art exhibitions held in the capital. So, it is not the talent or potential that is affecting the sector, but the exposure and financial constraints.

It is important to note that the cultural sector was denied due attention from the government and the people who are directly concerned. Thus, it has become necessary to thoroughly study and investigate the problems of the sector to date, and take practical measures that would bear fruit. Some of these measures could be:

- the heritages, history, art, handicrafts and folk art (tales, proverbs, popular poetry, dance, songs, etc.,) of the peoples of Ethiopia should be collected, registered, analyzed, preserved and given equal recognition and right to develop;
- create favorable situations that would enable all citizens to participate in cultural and creative activities and satisfy their spiritual needs, get leisure, and freely express their ideas;
- sufficient publicity and promotional works should be done to popularize both children's and adults' books and attract a wide range of readership;
- seminars and workshops should be organized and serve a broader range of participants who need encouragement to release their creative potentials;
- financial assistance should be given to train authors, translators, editors, graphic artists, actors, directors, researchers and musicians in institutions of higher learning both at home and abroad;
- appeal to NGOs, and international organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, EU, to the production and distribution of children's books;
- the research on oral literature would definitely be data oriented, and fieldwork becomes a natural component of such work. The researcher has to go out to very remote areas where the languages are spoken, and collect primary data. The field areas are usually without electricity, drinking water, public transport, and medical facilities. In this context, the Ethiopian Languages Research Center needs to equip itself with necessary field equipment such as tents, first aid kits, and vehicles, so that it can carry out its duties more effectively. Moreover, study tours about field methods and archiving of oral literature are essential for oral literature researchers in the Center;
- the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature has planned to open a joint postgraduate program in folklore, which is urgently needed to be supported;
- supporting cultural associations and cultural centers such as Niqiya Oral Literature Association and Cultural Center of the Addis Ababa University is recommendable for the development of Ethiopian culture;

- besides donating books on oral literature, funding for selecting, editing and publishing the M.A. theses conducted on oral literature and submitted to the School of Graduates Studies of Addis Ababa University helps to alleviate shortage of books on oral literature that both the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature and Department of Foreign Languages and Literature have encountered;
- a strong national museum with the capacity of housing the heritages resulting from archeological research, which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view, should be established;
- abolish indolence, misconduct, the deep-rooted prejudice against women, chauvinism, and problems related to family planning and reproductive health, harmful traditional practices that are deterrent to development and progress;
- ward-off all practices that violate the human rights of citizens, cause mental and physical damage, media productions and press outputs that would negatively affect the welfare of the youth, all forms of acculturation; instead, promote national, continental and international cooperation on the basis of the equality of all cultures and for everyone's mutual benefit;
- literary works should be developed in such a way that they contribute to combat harmful traditional practices that affect the health and growth of children;
- in Ethiopia, the way traditional villages or indigenous houses are built are different from other countries. For most people, architectural heritages are considered to be only palaces and churches. Because of this, the houses of the people all over the country do not get due attention and hardly last a generation. Moreover the houses of Ligaba Tasew were demolished for the construction of a hotel. These traditional houses portray the culture of the people in a much better way than modern cities and buildings designed by local, as well as foreign professionals. In Ethiopia, the influence of foreigners on architecture was minimal up to the twentieth century. Since the 1950s, however, architectural influence became dramatic and many traditional houses built locally are on the verge of collapse. Therefore, their cultural, historical, and aesthetic values, which are very important, should be thoroughly studied and preserved;
- language is a social tool that is used by people to express their ideas and feelings and which enable them to communicate with one another. It is the most complex and abstract thing that mankind has ever created and upon which has demonstrated his outstanding creative ability. Apart from its significant role as the means of conducting all kinds of social life, and pass knowledge, experiences and spiritual cultures, etc. through generations, language is also the main medium of thinking. Language is the principal mark of the identity of the people that speak it and the center of their social, economic and cultural activities. Despite the fact that the country has many languages that are not studied and developed their own writing system, a full-scale linguistic study that could lay the foundation should be launched;

- Ethiopia is the only African nation with its own script and a history of ancient literary heritage, making it one of the countries of the ancient civilized world. In this long period of literary activity the country was able to accumulate ancient written materials in the fields of history, culture, philosophy, arts, law, religion, astronomy and astrology, traditional medicine, and related literatures with enduring value. A day-to-day training of oneself, short term training and in general a life long training that could develop knowledge is acquired through a systematic use of libraries, archives and documentation institutions. The values of information that are acquired from libraries, archives and documentation are diverse. They are basic sources for all kinds of planning and execution of development strategies, or in manifesting the national identity, unity and cultural promotion of a given society. Hence, this area needs a thorough study;
- much has been said by the media about creative works being looted and put on market both within and outside the country. Violation of copyright and plagiarism are becoming the order of the day and thus demoralizing artists, particularly in the field of music. Therefore, it is essential that for creative works to flourish and to speed up cultural development, a copyright law has to be put into effect;
- professional associations should be reorganized and be free to work without any political, social and economic influences, so that they can serve to create favorable conditions for professionals to be rightful beneficiaries of their creative works.

### 3.2. The Media Sector

There is no formal **education** for young Ethiopian aspiring journalists in government educational institutes. There is no faculty or department of journalism within the Addis Ababa University or any other university in the country. Only a few courses are given in the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature. However, under the Ministry of Information, the Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute (EMMTI) has become operational three years ago, but gives priority to government employees, and the Unity College, a private college, gives a two-year diploma in Basic Journalism training (See under Training and Workshops). The private press particularly is not in most cases manned by **qualified and experienced journalists**, which is a serious problem still affecting most of the private papers. The private press should be staffed with properly educated journalists, or at least by those with professional background. Such persons could discharge their duties with responsibility in order to win the confidence of the reading public and that of the government, which is complaining about the work of the private press.

**The Proclamation No. 34/1992** – The Press Law, welcomed with enthusiasm as a sign of democracy and freedom of expression, became in practice one of the main instruments of controlling the private press, due to many prohibitive and sweeping articles that it contains. Because of its lack of clarity, it has exposed journalists for imprisonment besides financial penalty. Examples are, Part Four, Article 10 (a–c) that states:

- a) any criminal offence against the safety of the State or of the administration established in accordance with the Charter or of the national defense force;

- b) any defamation or false accusation against any individual, nation/nationality, people or organization;
- c) any criminal instigation of one nationality against another or incitement of conflict between peoples; and
- d) any agitation for war.

Another restricting factor of the Press Law is that it was promulgated on the basis of articles enclosed in the 1957 Penal Code and the 1959 Civil Code, which contain extremely restrictive articles that have been observed to reinforce and make the Press Law even more complex and unfair. Journalists have been charged and persecuted for publishing 'false' news, inaccurate and irresponsible reporting. However, journalists also have been arrested by various law enforcing bodies in violation of the law of the country as well as the constitution and been detained for months without being charged. This is against Article 17 (2) of the FDRE constitution.

Bail money ranges from Birr 2,000–50,000. In violation of Article 20 (2, 3) of the Press Law, a publisher, editor and reporter have been charged and detained when only the editor should have been charged. In such cases of collective arrest, the bail money could go to above Birr 250,000. Whenever cash is not available, as is the case often, resident houses, and/or work permits and automobiles have been used to bail journalists out of prison. The government was accused of extending freedom of the press without first establishing the regulatory bodies, and the private press in town is accused of lacking the ability of handling its freedom (Shemelis Bonsa: 2000).

**Relationship of State and Private Media** is another constraint. The government and private media are here to promote the social and economic well being of the Ethiopian people, and have shared interests and responsibilities and should learn to work in harmony and partnership.

The private press is a social institution in democracy and as such reporting of governmental activities places it at the top of the government's agenda. However due to shortcomings, such as lack of education and others mentioned in the survey, the relationship between the press and government has become very strenuous and antagonistic. The media too are not representing and protecting the interests of the public, but also, if not mainly, are dealing as independent business enterprises. A democratic society can operate on a harmonious basis only if the citizens possess information, which will enable them to co-operate and to participate in the functioning of government in an enlightened manner.

**Code of Ethics and a Council:** Although a Code of Ethics has been endorsed by EFJA, this has yet to be discussed and endorsed by all journalists in the country. Differences, whatever their roots, between journalists should be thrashed out so that they can concentrate on their profession and establish a form where they can discuss common issues such as the Code of Ethics. If this can be worked out, then it will be worth establishing a Council (*The Sun, 2002*).

**Lack of Media Personnel:** Most media establishments, both state and private, need management personnel. Technical and maintenance staff, particularly for the new digital equipment, is also needed; the engineers that are knowledgeable are not sufficient in number any more

as they cannot manage the new technology that is becoming widespread. Professionals, qualified journalists in the different sectors of the media such as radio, TV and print are wanting. ETV claims to have need for a person versed in the film industry for selection and purchasing of feature and soap opera films.

**Brain Drain:** One of the biggest hurdles to the further training of journalists, and as such, the development of the media sector in the country is the fact that journalists who are being sent abroad for training do not return home. Both the private and government media sector have been victims of this phenomenon.

Lack of adequate resources and **Financial Constraints:** The media industry has since 1991 been found to be unprofitable and dangerous for the business community and investors. Limited literacy rate as well as government interventions have discouraged many such as Paulos Publishers. Because of this lack of investing in the print media, the fledgling press suffers from financial constraints, which is a major handicap. The lack of adequate resources, both financial and material, prevents the private press from running its business efficiently and under favorable conditions. Some of these include: the sudden price increase in paper, printing cost and other items. The lack of funds to hire staff dealing with circulation and the need to establish networks for distribution also have an effect on the work of the private media.

## Recommendations

1. **Training**, aimed at the marginalized (women & private press) is needed in all sectors of the media. In fact training in journalism is the biggest requirement where assistance can be given to both state and private media personnel, short-term and long-term courses.
2. The Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature has planned to open a BA program in journalism in the future, which is very essential for the development of the media sector, and needs to be supported.
3. Government officials should be encouraged to re-visit the **Press Law Proclamation** No. 34/1992 as well as some restrictive by-laws that have hindered the development of freedom of speech and creativity in the country.
4. **Workshops and seminars** could be conducted for officials of the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture and legal institutions and relevant personnel in order to create awareness of the damages caused to the private media, freedom of expression, and eventually the democratization process due to the Press Law.
5. **Access to Information**, though mentioned as the duty of all in the Press Law, government officials still refuse to open their doors to the private press. Official conferences, briefings and press conferences, including those given by the Prime Minister, should be made accessible to the private press as they are to the state media. The Press Law, as long as it exists, should also apply to government institutions. This could also be a subject worth considering for a workshop or seminar.



6. The **price increase** of printing press, paper and postage stamps (for a few publications) as well as tax and levy has hindered the development of the private press.
7. The 10,000 Birr annual **license renewal fee** is a huge burden, which has forced the closure of newspaper publications. It is not included in the Press Law and should be abolished.
8. There is need for **audience survey** first to find out about the impact of contents on the audience, and secondly concerning the listening, watching and reading habits of the society by sex, education, age, activity, etc.
9. **Assistance** with material support and training to the different professional associations on how to build and sustain professional association would be very beneficial.
10. Publishers are in dire need of training to set up a Press Media Publishing Office, including knowledge of how to manage the **circulation and distribution** of newspapers. This could also be a subject for a workshop.
11. Closer relationship of the state and private media should be encouraged and has, according to the Minister of Information, begun. In this regard, assistance to enhance and make this practical as soon as possible by sponsoring functions in which both government and private media persons can participate in, such as the above mentioned and other workshops and seminars may expedite matters and create a partnership.
12. **Access to radio**, particularly for women, needs attention. Innovative ideas are needed to provide means of access to information to rural women in particular. Workshops or discussion forums could be organized to discuss this topic. Providing cheap radio sets to rural women, who may have no means to purchase one, may also do a lot of good to accessing information by rural women.

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### **Persons Contacted during the Study**

1. Abate Mekuria (Ato): Veteran Theatre Director and General Manager of Mekuria Theatre Studio and Entertainment (M.T.S.E)
2. Abebe Feleke (Ato): Section Head, FM Addis, Ethiopian Radio
3. Ahmed Adem (Ato): Acting Director, Ethiopian National Archive and Library Agency
4. Almaz Dejenie (Ms.): Manager of Sales and Audiovisual at AKPAC Publishing and Advertising Agency.
5. Assefa Argaw (Ato): General Manager of the Ethiopian National Theatre.
6. Assefa Bekele (Ato): Deputy Manager of the Ethiopian Television (ETV)
7. Ayalneh Mulat (Ato): Playwright, Owner and Manager of Candle Theatre House, Deputy Director of the Russian Center for Science and Culture.
8. Azeb Kebede (Ms.): Team Leader of Theatre and Music, Children and Youth Theatre
9. Bekele Abebaw (Ato): Head, Department of Culture, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture
10. Bereket Simon (H.E. Ato): Minister of Information
11. Dejenie Tilahun (Ato): Program Director, Ethiopian Radio
12. Getachew Paulos (Ato): Ex-publisher of *Eyeta* Newspaper, Author and Poet
13. Hadish Kasu (Ato): General Manager, Ethiopian News Agency
14. Jara Hailemariam (Ato): General Manager, Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage.
15. Kesete Abreha (Ato): General Manager, Children and Youth Theatre
16. Kifle Mulat (Ato): Editor in Chief, EthioNews and President of the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFJA)
17. Mamitu Yilma (Ms.) General Manager, National Museum of Ethiopia
18. Negash Gebremariam (Ato): Veteran Journalist and Winner of the Life Time Award for Journalism in Ethiopia.
19. Rachel Mekuria (Ms.) Gender and Development Officer at The British Council
20. Sehin Teferra (Ms.): Program Officer Embassy of Ireland

21. Sisay Negussu(Ato): Author, Winner of the Long Service Award for Literature, General Secretary, Ethiopian Writers Association.
22. Solomon Eshete (Ato): Head, Department of Inventory and Controlling of Cultural Heritages.
23. Solomon Lulu (Ato): Composer, Director of Yared Music School
24. Teklie Tesfa Lidet (Ato): Marketing Manager, Mega Creative Arts Center
25. Woldu Yimsel(Ato): General Manager, Radio Fana
26. Zenebwork Welde Gebriel (Ms.): Team Leader, Department of Archive.
27. Akalu Welde Mariam (Ato): Head of Department Archives, Ethiopian National Archive and Library Agency



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