

Global Media Journal
African Edition
2012 Vol 6 (2)

STATE-OWNED MEDIA AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN ERITREA: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

C. S. H. N. Murthy

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses various dimensions of a complex situation arising out of the conflict between the media and the state, and the raging conflict between the general perception of democracy and the Eritrean government's perception of it. This is within the context of a fast developing global village of which all African states will be members one day. Eritrea, though liberated in 1991 from Ethiopian rule, shares many characteristics of other dictatorial regimes in the neighboring countries. The state-run electronic and print media, centralized economy, lack of a parliamentary election process, independent judiciary, and suppression of fundamental rights, especially the freedom of expression, mark the dictatorial character of the regime in Eritrea in contrast to the accepted conventions of democracy in the West. The Eritrean government promotes a democratic model in which democratization is sought through education. Achieving democratization is limited to holding regular elections to local bodies at grass-root level. By the Government's not holding elections to its Parliament, the present policies of governance have not only turned deviant from its own once highly avowed and publicized macro-policy and the Constitution, but also have become vulnerable to mounting criticism. The present study, supported by a survey of the opinion of a random sample of people via mobile as well as Internet channels by means of open-ended questions, offers a snapshot of the growing desire of the people for full implementation of the Constitution, a liberalized economy and the free media, which their counterparts enjoy in many European countries.

Key words: *democratization, macro-policy, liberalization, fundamental rights, freedom of expression, state media, Eritrean Constitution.*

I. Introduction

Eritrea is one of the tiny countries in what is called the 'horn of Africa' and also one of the sub-Saharan countries. However, its history and its formation as an independent state in 1993 have been unique and inspiring to many. In fact, legend has it that the leader of the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE), Velupillai Prabhakaran (who is dead now, and the LTTE is

almost a closed chapter), drew much inspiration from the Eritrean armed struggle in his fight for a separate *eelam* (state) from Sri Lanka way back in the 1970s. Indeed there were many similarities between the struggles of LTTE against Sri Lanka and the EPLF against Ethiopia, and they constitute an interesting subject for analysis which, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

The present paper is about how Eritrea has driven itself into a number of controversial and complex situations by denying what it promised its people at the time of the formation of the state in terms of the primary institutions of governance, e.g. a fully fledged independent legislature, a judiciary and the fourth estate (the media). The paper examines, against a brief background of Eritrea's historical and cultural development, how the problems of its people were compounded due to its centralized economy and the restrictions on its media. Both of these aspects deprived the people of the right to a livelihood (due to the unavailability of new job openings in the private sector) and the right to information (to discern and discriminate which of the government activities were right and which were wrong). The study also ponders the outcomes of the alternative model of democratization and the partial opening up of access to global information technologies by the state of Eritrea.

II. Statement of the Problem

Immediately after independence, the veteran warriors and the senior citizens of the state formed the Constituent Assembly (1993-1995) and drafted two major documents for an egalitarian governance of Eritrea, namely the macro-policy and the Constitution. As part of implementing the objectives enshrined in these two documents, the Eritrean government, headed by President Isaias Afewerki (who has held the highest office in the country since its liberation, and who is also a veteran freedom fighter who led the nation to emancipation from Ethiopia),

was supposed to hold elections to the National Assembly in 1997 but could not carry out the task due to Ethiopian aggression towards part of Eritrea (Amanuel, Estfamos, Kifle, & Bo, 2002). Subsequently the elections were scheduled to be held in 2001 but were again deferred, as 20% of the population of Eritrea is still under Ethiopian occupation and is subject to settlement by the boundary-dispute-settlement commission appointed by the UN.

Meanwhile, the state has cracked down on all forms of media and arrested several journalists. In the place of private media the state established its own media, filling up their contents with messages of imminent aggression either from Sudan or from Ethiopia, both being border nations of this tiny state.

Again, when the elections were scheduled around 2010-11, Yemane Gebremeskel, the President's Chief of Staff, assured the people that an independent election commission would hold elections of representatives to the National Assembly (CIA Report, 2012). However, no elections have been held to date. At the same time, the state has allowed the secondary apparatuses of democratization such as the internet and mobile phones, which have allowed the people of Eritrea to connect with global citizens including their own kith and kin elsewhere. All these incongruent and conflicting measures have sent confusing signals of democracy and development to both Eritrea's people and the world at large. The present study revolves round these issues and endeavors to analyze them in detail.

III. Theoretical Framework

The paper, therefore, discusses the above statement of the problem in the wake of the conflict arising between the general perception of democracy and the democracy the President of Eritrea has believed in for over two decades. The popular Western democratic theories stipulate a universal suffrage (Greenberg, 1987a, p.173; Greenberg, 1987b, p. 81ff) as a condition for

terming a nation 'democratic' in character and in 'dispensation or governance.' Such a democratic system calls for an independent judiciary and an electoral commission besides a fully fledged parliament. It also assures freedom of expression to all its citizens as a fundamental right supported by independent media.

However, the term 'democratic' has assumed over centuries wider connotations and has been variously interpreted in various parts of the planet. For instance, the democracy in Pakistan is military driven, whereas democracy in the Middle East is driven by either monarchy or oligarchy. Many African states have offered divergent interpretations of the term 'democracy'.

The definition of 'democracy', according to the Eritrean government, is enlightenment and awareness of national consciousness, responsibilities and duties to the state through education. The government also believes that 'democratization' through elections or universal suffrage is necessary/enough up to electing representatives to local bodies at grass root level for the purpose of meeting the requirements of self-governance. It closely resembles Latin American communication and democratic practices as propounded by Paulo Freire and Beltran (Canizalez, 2011) though one would find upon a deeper study a number of deviations from them. For instance, 'democratization theory' strongly favors non-commercial, apolitical and non-bureaucratic media as a precondition for true democratic order and development. In the case of Eritrea the media remained under state control.

According to Paulo Freire (1970), democratization stems from the universalization of education and access (p. 77). In the words of Freire (2004), "education makes sense because women and men learn that through learning they can make and remake themselves, because women and men are able to take responsibility for themselves as beings capable of knowing — of knowing that they know and knowing that they don't" (p. 15). These ideas have been the part

of the philosophies of thinkers like John Dewey (1897, pp. 77-80) who considered education as an instrument of social change. Education is basic to democratization and the right to communication. Most of the Latin American nations have found that monopolistic media and media-manipulated democratization have been major hurdles for the equitable growth and development of smaller nations (Canizalez, 2011, p. 6).

Within this framework the paper discusses issues such as: (a) how the state of Eritrea continued to be in conflict with the free and independent media; (b) how through its own state-run media, both print and electronic, the people of Eritrea have been constantly subject to Laswellian messages of aggression (The Magic Bullet Theory) from Sudan or Ethiopia; (c) how liberalization and economic reforms are still elusive to the people of Eritrea; (d) how people began to look for a more democratic Eritrea with free media and an independent judiciary.

The paper also discusses the changes that have been creeping into the consciousness of the people over a decade and a half, especially as regards the youth of Eritrea, with the introduction of secondary instruments of democratization such as mobiles and the Internet.

The paper posits that with access to the global networks provided by the Internet and mobile phones, the Eritrean government willy nilly opened the flood gates for rapid sensitization of its youth and people, especially women (who were once a strong force supporting the President of Eritrea in leading the nation to liberation from Ethiopian rule), to the need for embracing the fruits of liberalization and globalization.

IV. History of the Topic

Eritrea became an independent country on May 24, 1993, only a decade and a half after a protracted armed struggle lasting over 30 years against the federal rule of the state of Ethiopia (Roy, 1990; Cliffe & Davidson, 1988). It is situated on the most north eastern border of Africa,

adjoining the Red Sea. Its population is about 5 million people distributed across a vast expanse of what is known geographically as a most uneven terrain. It is divided into upper highlands and lower western and eastern lands (Figures 1 to 4 show Eritrean physical, geographical, and political features and population densities). It is also known as ‘the horn of Africa.’

The population density is about 29 per square kilometer, the villages being located on the slopes of rugged hills and scattered quite far from one another, thus making ordinary human transport a most formidable task. Most of the people are dependent on agriculture and pastoralism with only 10% out of 36% of arable land being under cultivation. This land is again mostly monsoon dependent, though the government has constructed a number of check dams and small reservoirs in the last five years to prevent the draining of the monsoon rain water down the hills (Amanuel et al., 2002). However, the per capita income is less than 200 USD per annum, thus putting Eritrea on the map of the most aid-dependent and diaspora-dependent countries in the world (see Tables 1-6).

Writing about the transition from the early militant form to a new political ethos and democratic governance, Connell (2005), the author of many books and articles on Eritrea, observed that early in 1994 the EPLF (Eritrean Peoples’ Liberation Front) changed its name to the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) and confirmed its former commander, Isaias Afwerki, as the head of the re-christened political movement and the interim President of the new country in what was represented as a four-year transition to democratic governance. Over the next three years, the PFDJ established new state institutions, including executive, legislative, and judicial branches presiding over a three-tiered administration (national, regional, local), a streamlined civil service, professional armed forces, and new police and security forces. However, no other political parties were permitted. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

were sharply curtailed, and there was no independent press until 1997 when print media - but not broadcast media - were allowed to publish under a strict new press law.

Between 1995 and 1997, a Constitution commission, whose members were named by the President, oversaw a national education campaign on democratic values and options for governance that drew tens of thousands of Eritreans at home and abroad into a dialogue over the nation's political future. The finished document was ratified at a national conference in May 1997. However, the President has declined to implement the Constitution ever since, citing tensions with Eritrea's neighbors with which the country has experienced a continuing cycle of violent confrontations.

This has perhaps marked the beginning of the confrontation between the print media and the President, who did not concede the holding of elections to Parliament as agreed earlier in 1997, citing the tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The media did not take this lightly. There was aggressive criticism of the President and his political comrades for blatant violations of the promises the PFDJ had made earlier. As a reaction to the criticism, the President ordered the closure of the press and the arrest of the journalists who ran such reports in the print media.

Though the war with Ethiopia ended and a UN peace-keeping mission entered the scene to prevent recurrent conflicts between the two warring states in petty border dispute (related to the invasion of Badme by Ethiopia, which was resisted by Eritrea), the war has triggered a behind-the-scenes power struggle among PFDJ leaders regarding the President's conduct of the war, his hard-line approach to peace negotiations, and his resistance to democratization.

These disagreements among the leaders of the PFDJ came into the lime light in the spring of 2001, through both the private press and the Internet, following the President's outright refusal to summon the party's Central Council or the National Assembly. The President indulged in

behind-the-scenes machinations to garner clandestine support from his party cadres and leaders in closed-door PFDJ sessions held in January and August 2001. He gradually began to distance his critics and ordered a systematic crackdown on all public dissent (Connell, 2005).

Connell wrote that '[o]n September 18 and 19, 2001, the government arrested 11 of 15 top government officials and former liberation movement leaders - the Group of 15, or G-15 - who had signed a petition that charged the President with illegally suppressing debate and called for the implementation of the Constitution and the democratization of the political arena.

Ever since, the government has been indulging in an arresting spree of numerous people trying to mediate on behalf of the detainees such as journalists, mid-level officials, merchants, businessmen, young people resisting conscription, and church leaders and parishioners associated with minority Christian denominations, among others. Whereas some were held for short periods and discharged, others - like the G-15 and the journalists - have been held indefinitely with no charges leveled and no visitors allowed. However, no execution has been heard of, which is a sign of hope of a return of democracy to this tiny state one day (Connell, 2005).

The actions of the President have resulted in a transformation of the issues into complex ones:

- a. Firstly, the country has been under one-man rule, that of the President whose authority cannot be now questioned in any manner.
- b. There has been only one party, the PFDJ, apparently with no opposition party being in a position to contest or challenge it.
- c. Many of his former colleagues of the EPLF dissented from him and moved out quietly to form different parties which were banned by the government. As a result, some of these parties were operating from exile as militant organizations to throw out the President.

d. Some of these exiled parties (which formed after the split from EPLF) such as EDP (Eritrean Democratic Party) called for a non-violent transition from the present rule to democratic and political governance.

e. There are no private media of any kind. The BBC report (2012) said that Eritrea is the only African country virtually without any private press.

The authority of President Afwerki is total today with virtually no form of opposition, neither media nor political opponent to offer a constructive dialogue or criticism. The initial adversarial role of the press in exposing the internal bickering of the PFDJ/EPLF has brought the Eritrean media at once to the brink of repression from which the media have not recovered during half a decade (Connell, 2005).

V. Evidence of Repression

Commenting on the state of freedom of speech, expression and media, Freedom House wrote in its report (2008) that the situation of the Eritrean press further deteriorated in 2006 with government restrictions on foreign reporters traveling within the country as in Zimbabwe.

Though the Eritrean Constitution, as approved on May 23, 1997 offered every citizen freedom of expression and assured the freedom of press, a ban has been imposed on the independent press since September 2001. It resulted in the development of a harsh environment for both the media and journalists. The world's highest number of journalists (report of Reporters without Borders, 2009) is reportedly behind bars without their whereabouts being known, even to their families or the Red Cross. Nor have they been formally charged in any court of law, though there is a very well established judicial – civil as well as criminal - system of justice in Eritrea. Lately, three European jurists referred the case of imprisoned Swedish-Eritrean journalist, Dawit Issac, who turned 48 on October 27, 2012 to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights in

Gambia. It is pertinent to mention here that three journalists, Dawit Habtemichael, Mattewos Habteab and Wedi Itay, who were serving jail terms for longer periods have already passed away according to reports of the Reporters without Borders (2009).

The common refrain one hears from the President as well as the government authorities as to why such arrests of journalists have been made in such a drastic manner is that these arrested journalists have been acting as spies for foreign countries and are, therefore, a threat to national security. At the same time, the government sources failed to provide any substantial evidence to the satisfaction of international fraternity or to its own High Court which is working at the heart of Asmara.

The Government stipulates that all material on Eritrea meant for publication must be subject to scrutiny by the Eritrean Government. Even the handful of international journalists permitted to operate from Asmara often complains of being harassed and threatened by the security personnel in Eritrea. In 2006, the government of Eritrea prohibited foreign journalists from traveling outside Asmara, the capital. The restrictions were imposed after Eritrea expelled several international aid groups that had provided food assistance in the countryside. An article in the *Economist* noted that ‘the expulsions may be one way of muzzling reports of any impending human disaster (Freedom House Report, 2010). The Freedom House Report (2007) thus rated Eritrea as a country without Freedom of the Press, and a country with a score of over 94, which according to its methodology is a poor measure on its democratic index. The detailed position of print, electronic and other media, besides a brief content analysis of these media, is given here for the appreciation of the readers.

VI. Review of Existing Media

A. Print Media

There is a handful of print media papers published by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Whereas the *Eritrea Profile* is published twice a week in English, *Haddas Eritrea*, *Geled*, and *Trigta* etc are published in Tigrinya, which is spoken by the majority of the people in Eritrea. *Al Hadisa*, an Arabic paper, and *Haddas Eritrea* (a native Tigrinya paper) are published daily. *Eritrea Haddas* is published in Tigre and *L Asmarino* is published in Italian. The details of these print media and their frequency and target groups are given in Table 8.

Though these papers are published by the government, it is very difficult to determine their circulation as there is no independent agency to evaluate the circulation of each paper as is the norm in a democratic set up. Even from the government side, there is no effort to see how accessible their own print media are to the people of Eritrea. The advertising in these papers is also very little.

Even the journalists working for these print media organizations are kept under surveillance and constantly monitored by the security agencies as to their movements and contacts (Freedom in the World, 2010).

As for the contents, the majority of this deals with the development programs unveiled by the President and his cabinet, and stories of conspiracies being hatched from time to time by Ethiopia and Sudan. Illegal immigrants migrating into Eritrea from across the borders of Ethiopia and Sudan are treated as threats to the security of Eritrea. The print media also publish the government versions of the UN peace keeping mission's partial role in favor of Ethiopia, and the failure of the international community to do justice to Eritrea by declaring that Ethiopia was an aggressor in respect of Ethiopia's invasion into Badme, a border town which is essential to

Eritrea both in terms of mineral resources and its strategic location. However, the regional-language editions have exhibited some qualities of market-driven journalism by publishing special bulletins to cater to the needs of the youth preparing for board-level examinations as well as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or ELTS (English Language Testing Service). They also offered notes to students on science, social studies and mathematics.

B. Radio

Though there are three Radio stations, the major one which caters to all the nine tribal entities of Eritrea is *Dimtsi Afash* ('Voice of People') that runs on medium (AM) as well as short waves (SW). The other two radio stations are *Radio Zara* and *Radio Bana*. The *Radio Zara* is part of an FM network. The *Radio Bana* is exclusively meant for educational programs (English learning in spoken and written forms), entertainment for the youth in the form of western as well as folk music, and for promotion of excellence among teachers in primary education. It broadcasts in five languages. Unlike the *Dimtsi Afash* the *Bana radio* operates for limited hours each day.

Most of the mainstream radio programs broadcast patriotic songs and dramas produced by the EPLF and its pre-independence coalition partners during war with Ethiopia. Some western music programs are also broadcast. Some science programs concerning health, nutrition, women and child welfare, HIV and AIDS are also very frequently aired in the formats of song, drama, and discussions, etc. The entire news produced on the radio *Dimtsi Afash* is full of information directed against Ethiopia or Sudan, constantly hyping the threat from these countries to the State of Eritrea. The messages emerging from the newscasts and news magazines of this radio revolve round evoking national and patriotic feelings among the youth and adults in order to protect the country and keep them always prepared for a war. Thus, a war psychosis is being constantly generated among the youth and the adults of Eritrea.

C. Television

There is only one *Eri TV* which caters to all the languages of the people of Eritrea. However, recently the government announced establishing *Eri TV2*. With that the earlier channel became *Eri TV1*. As of now, most of these television channels have demonstrated the same agenda as that of print media and the radio. Visuals add to the content, but the spirit is the same: that of evoking nationalistic and patriotic feelings, and promoting a scientific temper among the people. Entertainment in the form of western films, songs, and music albums, and western instrumental music, etc is being beamed. Sports in Africa and Europe are shown in agreement with European channels. The channel runs round the clock.

D. Other Media

Since independence, the country has been aiming at establishing telephone and other forms of satellite connectivity in the whole of Eritrea. However, since the country has twice had to face wars with its neighbors, it has suffered severe financial strain. As a result, the growth and development of telephone landlines fifteen years after independence have not been very impressive.

1. Telephones (Landlines)

Most of the landline phone connections were available only in Asmara, the capital of the State of Eritrea. Approximately 58000 (CIA Report, 2012) landline phone connections were made available by 2011. The entire country, except the zones of Nakfa, Afabet and Asseb, is connected by landlines. Soon these are also likely to be connected.

2. Mobile Connection

Introduced in 2005, mobile connectivity has picked up faster than the provision of landlines. There are approximately 241, 900 (CIA Report, 2012) mobile connections as of 2011. One

report says that the government has achieved about 80% of its targeted mobile connectivity. Increased mobile connectivity is a good sign of increased democratization and an enhanced open market economy (Murthy & Kishore, 2009). As mobile service offers a number of functions faster than the landlines, the youth especially are attracted to it.

3. Internet Connectivity

There are now four service providers for the Internet, and approximately 200,000 people use it as of 2008 (CIA Report, 2012). Most of the users are boys and girls. Very rarely does one see adults above 35-40 visiting Internet cafes. The whole of Asmara is dependent on Internet cafés for personal and business use.

The Internet is combined with mobile services though very few among the youth preferred the service as it was just being introduced around 2005. Furthermore, the cost of the mobiles and the payment for connection are very high. The youth of Asmara are uniquely endowed with a good level of media literacy and actively participate in chats, e-mails, and social networking such as Facebook, Twitter, Orkut, etc. They spend long hours on the Internet though it is very costly in Asmara. Though visiting pornography sites is prohibited under Eritrean cyber laws, the youth frequently visit these sites and leave viruses on the systems which do not have efficient anti-virus protection. Consequently, one often finds the systems crashing and the users keep hopping from one café to another café to do their surfing.

Sometimes, servers become slow due to the small bandwidth allotted to the Internet, and one has to wait a long time before the system gets connected to a particular website. Most of the youth can be found visiting the sites through which the government has barred the flow of information into the state. Many wish to express their views on government policies, but as all the Internet systems and the messages that flow through them are subject to strict surveillance by

the government server, many desist from passing mails through the server. Alternatively, they send the messages live in chats, or leave the messages on the desktop in a huff/anguish.

VII. President's New Model of Democratization

The report of the grim state of the media and democratization in Eritrea by the Freedom House and the Reporters without Borders is in contrast to the ideology of the President. His government believes in the transformation of society through education, and election to local bodies for effective delivery of self-governance at the grass root level. His government also believes that the democratization of the state is possible without manipulative media and the manipulated or imported expressions of monopolistic media imposed by the west. The President has used the government media effectively to promote health and educational programs among women and girls so that there is support from the 50% of the population who are actively involved in building the nation's economy. The incidence of AIDS/HIV among Eritrean women and girls is insignificant and of the lowest as compared to other nations in Africa (e.g. South Africa, Swaziland, etc) and elsewhere (CIA Report, 2012). One reason for this remarkable success in a free-sex Eritrea state is the extensive coverage of HIV/AIDS eradication programs by radio and television.

A. Holding Elections Regularly to Zonal and Regional Bodies of Administration

During the present author's two year stay in Eritrea (2003-2005), the President held elections to all the regional bodies. In one of the pamphlets distributed during the election, both the President on behalf of the government of Eritrea and the independent election commission of Eritrea sought to explain that the 'concept of democracy need not be always an American model.' According to official sources that refused to be identified, 'the world long ago rejected

the American model as a 'standard model of democracy.' They argued that the Parliamentary elections and the election to the office of President need not be a condition of democratization.

Both in the Ministry of Education and elsewhere such as banks and judicial organizations, many expressed the opinion that the primary aim of democracy as conceived by the West is to deliver to the people the fruits of government policies and programs, and the President of Eritrea, by holding elections at the zonal level, is precisely aiming to achieve it. The elections were non-party based though multiple candidates contested the seats in the local governance. The election propaganda was without much fanfare or involvement of electronic media or other instruments of propaganda such as posters and papers, etc. Moreover, the participation of women was very high both as voters and contestants.

Connell (2005) recorded the holding of elections at the zonal level in his report 'Countries at Cross Roads'. He wrote:

Over the past decade, Eritrea has conducted regional and local elections with balloting open to men and women of all religious and ethnic backgrounds, but no forms of new political organization have been permitted, including independent parties and even caucuses within the PFDJ. Nor has the state permitted the formation of politically oriented civil society groups, think tanks, policy organizations, or other independent NGOs. All voting for local public office has been conducted in town-meeting-style sessions presided over by PFDJ cadres. Thus, organizational sectarianism, not ethnic or religious affiliation, has set the parameters for Eritrea's highly constrained political discourse ... Nor does the government permit campaigns.

However, Connell (2005) forgot to mention the public validation and satisfaction with such electoral practices which the author of this paper observed in his survey of the views of citizens and important officials in the Ministry and in the banks.

Though the macro-policy (1994) promised a fully fledged election for the National Assembly, which of course did not happen, it clearly upheld the democratic principles of its article 7, which is also repeated in the preamble. Both the public and the officials have somehow chosen not to raise their voices against the undemocratic actions of Afwerki.

Two things count here for the purpose of analysis. Firstly, the personal life style of Afwerki is so exemplary and simple that no one who encounters him dare question his policies or his traits as a leader. He lives a simple life, eats *ingera* (the common food of Eritreans) and stays in the government officials' camp, not in his President's palace. Secondly, on occasions like Independence Day, he leads the grand march mingling with the people and dancing with them from his palace to the grounds where he unfurls the national flag. Still, fear of repression and imprisonment due to increased surveillance by the government could be reasons why the people choose to be silent regarding the implementation of macro-policy and the Constitution.

B. Democratization through Education: A Different Approach to Democracy by PFDJ

Since independence, the emphasis of the President has been on giving impetus to education. Even during the pre-independence struggle, Isaias Afwerki had designed a number of training programs for participating women and girls, which indeed worked out very well in sustaining interest in the long drawn struggle against Ethiopia. (Murthy, 2004; Murthy, 2006 a & b).

After independence, the government came up with a number of innovative documents in keeping with the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative to boost the educational programs in Eritrea. Rapid Transformation of the Eritrean Educational System (2002), Education Sector

Development Program (Draft Copy 2003 & Final Copy 2004), Education Sector Improvement Project (2003), Eritrea Education and Training Sector Note No. 24448-ERI (2002), A World Bank and MOE Document, Eritrea National Education Policy (2003), Eritrea-Education Sector-Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2003), and Eritrea-National Education Gender Policy and Strategic Framework of Action (2004) are just a few documents which were the bases for the programs initiated by the President. Apparently, the programs were a great success. The government has also geared itself up to develop the educational programs into vocational and other professional programs at every level so that trained manpower can immediately seek employment in the market (Rapid Transformation of the Eritrean Educational System, 2002).

In the first decade of post-independence, enrolments at the elementary level more than doubled from 150,000 students in 1991-1992 to 360,000 in 2002-2003. Enrolments at middle school more than tripled from 28,000 to 87,000 students. High school enrolments increased by two and half times from 28,000 to 73,000 students. This increase coincided with the increase in the number of elementary and middle schools, which rose from 273 in 1991-1992 to 747 in 2001-2002. Consequently, the number of secondary schools went up from 19 in 1991-1992 to 44 in 2001-2002. Parallel to this development, the government focused on increasing the number of technical schools from 1 in 1991-1992 to 10 in 2001-2002. This expansion in volume and growth resulted in heavy demand for teachers, whose recruitment during this period went up from 4,504 in 1991-2001 to 10, 456 by 2001-2002 (Eritrea: Basic Education Statistics, 2001).

By the years 2002-2003, the supply and demand position of teachers (see Tables 6 and 7) as well as students' needs were better understood, and in response to this analysis, the government of Eritrea called upon the Indian government to send its teachers for initial training of Eritrean teachers and students (World Education Forum, 2001).

With the World Bank and the UNDP aid, the teachers from India entered Asmara University, the Eritrean Institute of Technology at Mayineffe, and other important institutes of agriculture and contributed greatly to the learning experience of Eritrean youth. The Eritrean government used radio and television for enhancing the educational programs. The genesis of *Radio Bana* is in this framework of conceptual thinking and action. Despite the above mentioned progress, Eritrea continues to face challenges that relate to access, equity, quality and relevance, besides internal wastage.

C. Gender Development in Keeping with Millennium Development Goals

The President right from the days of heading the EPLF till its conversion to the PFDJ has always given prominence to the role of women and girls in all spheres of party activity. This tiny state has many girls and women working as bar girls, Internet café supervisors, grocery store managers and vendors, government bus drivers and electrical engineers. They perform all the tasks that men perform (Eritrea, 2004). Unlike the other sub-Saharan states, Eritrea is better placed in providing a very respectable and dignified role for the women folk who thus contribute towards nation building and reconstruction.

Knowingly or unknowingly, the President expanded the knowledge horizons of his country's youth who began to realize and understand the world at large. This has led to a greater urge among the youth for democratization, free media and freedom of expression. Such an urge manifestly resulted in the greater use of Internet and mobile services through which the students and youth began to express their desire for a greater freedom of expression.

VIII. The Desire and Demand for Greater Freedom of Expression and a Media Role in the Democratization of Eritrea: An Online Survey of the Youth of Eritrea

During the two years of the author's stay (2003-2005) in Asmara, the author conducted an online survey using a random sample of available e-mail identities and mobile phone numbers to elicit the views of Eritrean youth studying in Asmara University and at the Eritrean Institute of Technology. The author sent the students an open-ended questionnaire in English. Most of the youth in Eritrean educational institutions have a fair knowledge of English, and some also speak Tigrinya and Amharic fluently.

The questionnaire consisted of questions mainly concerning their vision, aspirations and ambitions in life besides their views on the present and future of their country (See Annexure I). It also contained some personal questions ranging from their intentions to get married and their ambitions to lead married lives in Eritrea. Questions were also raised as to whether they were happy with the present state of political affairs, governance, freedom of expression, employment, etc.

Since there is stringent surveillance of messages passing through the national server connecting all Internet cafes in Asmara, the author sent the questionnaire as a word document through an e-mail attachment attached to newly generated e-mail identities generated then and there. The author gave one e-mail identity while sending and sought a response through some other e-mail identity to protect his privacy and that of the individuals responding. The answers elicited by mails, chats, and messages have been compared with the replies given by some officials in the media and government in one to one interviews. Thus, a triangulation has been achieved in the study to eliminate subjectivity.

A. Live Chats and Messenger Services

The e-mail identities were obtained first through the chats or messenger services of the youth and adults. Then, they were randomly asked to express themselves regarding the questions sent through the e-mail attachment as a questionnaire. The process was repeated several times until a satisfactory percentage of sample responses emerged. Most of them preferred to respond in broken English or in single liners through the chats and messengers rather than by giving elaborate answers to the open-ended questions.

Over a two year period, the author contacted nearly 150 e-mail identities in random fashion. After returning from Asmara, the author still contacted some youths and adults in Eritrea through his Orkut social networking site where he had registered them earlier. The author got satisfactory responses from nearly 110 people.

B. Mobile Phone and Direct Discussion

Some feared to send any messages over the Internet or by mobile but invited the author by mobile phone or Internet to come to a nearby cafe for a direct discussion in which a batch of youth, two or three boys together with their girl friends, participated at length.

IX. Analysis of the Results

For the purpose of the analysis of the results of the survey - both online and mobile -and for the convenience of discussion, the author divided the broad answers into two categories, namely suppressed desires and demand for free media and democratic governance that cares for them.

The answers revealed their inner urges and mind sets caused by prolonged repression and lack of freedom of expression. They clearly spelt out their need to have an independent media to convey their views to the government on the issues which are deeply affecting them.

A. The Suppressed Desires of the Youth and Adults due to the Lack of Freedom of Expression

1. Discontinuation of Compulsory National Service

Most of the youth would like the government to immediately stop forcing them to go for compulsory national service. They also wish, that if national service is inevitable, it should be limited to a year rather than an indefinite period as is practised now. Furthermore, there should not be an insistence on continuation of education after national service, as many of them feel that after prolonged training in national service, they are not interested in further studies.

2. The Desire to Marry their Girl-Friends and Settle down for the Short Time They Expect to Live

Due to the continuous war psychosis hyped by the government-run print and electronic media, the youth of the country have arrived at the feeling that they do not have long to live due to impending war. Therefore, for the short time they expect to live they need to enjoy everything especially the love and sex from their partners.

3. Their Insistence on a Free Life after National Service

The youth and the adults of both sexes feel that they should be left free after a term of national service. It must be left to their discretion whether to live in the country or go abroad. Many of them feel that their kith and kin abroad can provide them with reasonable employment, and a life abroad would offer them the peace they need to settle down.

4. No Interest in Education

Most of them expressed anguish about being forced to take up formal education after several years of spending life in military service. Education at this stage does not interest them any more. They get sleepy in classes and do not understand what they are taught. Again, classes contain mixed age groups, which is also demoralizing.

B. The Demand for Free Media and Democratic Governance that Cares for the Youth and Adults

1. The Demand for the Restoration of Free Media

Most of the youth feel that they do not have an outlet to air their views about the issues that are impacting on their lives. They do not have prospects of earning a high income. Even after earning a good degree from the Eritrean Institute of Technology or Asmara University (of course now closed) they have to languish in Eritrea in search of suitable employment or be content with the low salary offered by small-scale establishments. Otherwise, they must accept a government assignment at low pay. The idea of pursuing education with no prospects demoralizes them. They want to have an outlet to air these views through an independent media to make the government and the policy-makers hear their grievances. The liberalization of radio waves and the auctioning of frequencies area-wise to the private sector would help establish FM Radio and TV in many parts of Eritrea. Given the wide linguistic and ethnic differences, the state of Eritrea could look forward to offer space for private FMs and TVs to cater to the local groups within a radius of 60-80 kms.

2. The Demand for Democratic Governance and Deregulation of Licensing Policy

Most of the youth and adults were of the view that their country has abundant resources. Due to severe restrictions and the military nature of the regime with the restriction of freedom of expression and media that this implies, no multi-national corporate sector is coming forward to establish industry in Eritrea. As long as democratic governance is not restored, the fear of being arbitrarily arrested discourages foreign investors. The government is not in a position to establish big industries for generations of employment for want of capital. Therefore, despite its natural resources, and minerals, and the sea ports of Massawa and Asseb, the country is not in a position to exploit its advantages. Eritrea is very close to the nations of the European Union. Due to the availability of cheap semi-skilled and skilled labor, the states of the EU have much scope in

Eritrea to establish heavy and small industries at low cost, the country being accessible by road, air and sea.

3. The War Psychosis Should Be Stopped Immediately via Media Outlets

Most of the people who responded to the questionnaire did not believe that there was a possibility of a war. For a decade, there has been no war. Still the war-psychosis hype in the print media has continued even though the war with Ethiopia over a border issue ended in 2002. Even so the print media try to engage the public in a debate of a possible war. A large percentage of the youth in Eritrea died in the successive struggles both before and after independence. Many became physically handicapped. Moreover, most of the youth said that border disputes are common in every continent. That should not be the reason for the shutting down of independent private media, which has almost blacked out the information passing through the veins of the nation. There is no way for the people to know who is who and what is what. There is no independent body to monitor the elections to elect the representatives. There are no free and fair trials as promised by the Eritrean Constitution.

4. A Free Economy and Free Media Should Be the Future of Eritrea

To generate a feel-good factor about Eritrea, there is a need to create a conducive and positive environment. A free media is a first step in that direction. Cases of third-world countries like India, Bangladesh, and South Korea were often cited in responses. It was asked how a free economy and free media helped India to become an economic force in the last two decades despite the recession engulfing Europe and the US.

X. Critical Discussion

From the above analysis and discussion based on the responses of the Eritrean youth and adults, together with those of anonymous officials in media and government, it is clear that there is a growing desire to be globalized and be at par with the nearby nations of Europe. Though many applaud Afwerki for his valor, leadership and courage in waging a battle against the powerful Ethiopian regime backed by the then USSR, there is a feeling that he did not live up to the promises he made to the National Constituent Assembly before being elected as a temporary head of state.

The people with whom the author interacted clearly did not like to attribute any motives to President Afwerki. In many ways, they clearly held him as a venerable leader even today. They said proudly that this President would come and dance in public with the ordinary citizens on Independence Day. They expressed high regard for the simple life their President leads, and there are many who believe that he is not corrupt.

Many officials of the Ministry, with whom the author worked closely for two years, lead an honest life free of corruption. The people as well their government appeared to be very friendly and honest without betraying any trace of corruption. Consequently, the present author does not agree totally with Connell (2005) who reported rampant corruption in the service sector. At the same time, the author is in agreement with the methodology adopted by Freedom House and Reporters without Borders in rating Eritrea as a country with the least freedom of expression and the least free media.

Eritreans do not believe the reports of journalists that the PFDJ has many political personalities who have amassed ill-gotten wealth. They only wish to say that President Awferki should immediately implement the Constitution approved in 1997 and hold elections. They also demand that he should allow a free and independent media and judiciary to allow public scrutiny

of any allegation against him or his political comrades. Such a process would immediately help restore the image of Eritrea in the larger view of the world.

Whatever may be the success of the President's new model of democratization differing from the accepted popular western models, which include free media and freedom of expression, there is a need for the President to reject his subjective thinking on the role of media and freedom of expression. To the persistent questions from overseas and from the US and the UK as to why Afwerki is not releasing the arrested journalists, businessmen and officials, and as to why he is not allowing a free economy and free media, the President's replies are highly reflective of a conservative communist mindset, a form of mindset which he inherited from China. However, China despite being a vast and populous country with a strong base both in agriculture and industry, nevertheless opened up a number of channels for a private market economy and became a place for US marketing even so its media track-record is still bad.

At the same time, there is no point in unilaterally blaming President Afwerki. Eritrea as a small nation in the making also suffers from a number of natural disadvantages common to small nations. Apart from the imposition of western views by the US and the UK, there are some native perceptions that one should be critical of while studying the democratic process and its limitations in Eritrea.

Eritrea is a tiny state with more space and less population (29 persons per square kilometer). It is a small state struggling for its survival against much bigger nations like Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia, which have a track-record as aggressors. At the same time, both culturally and economically Eritrea is a country with a high volume of resources. The resources that it has along its Red Sea coast and the two major sea ports offer a high GDP to the nation. If these

resources are not properly guarded by the army, there is a danger of attack from its powerful neighbors, especially Sudan and Ethiopia.

The porous borders and the free pastoral life of the Eritreans allow free migration across the borders. If total democratization of Eritrea happens in accord with the accepted norms of the West, Eritrea may lose much of its youth to migration to the nearby states of the European Union, and the country may be filled with European youth and men who might marry Eritrean women and girls leading to the destruction of cultural diversity and ethnicity. So far, Eritrea has succeeded in keeping its rich cultural and ethnic identity despite centuries of alien rule. However, it is a story prior to globalization. Globalization has brought daunting challenges, destroying cultural diversities and ushering in homogeneity.

At present, Eritrea is an aid-dependent nation and suffers from a terrible insecurity complex which leads to fears that even the NGOs, in the name of distributing aid, may spy on Eritrea's strategic locations and make it vulnerable to Ethiopia and Sudan. Thus, the negative and the communist mindset coupled with an insecurity complex might make comprehensible President Afwerki's resort to his present approach, even it means ignoring the legitimate aspirations of the people. Though one cannot at present definitely say that his model has not worked out well, one can at least confidently state that his model is not complete without free media and freedom of expression.

XI. Conclusion

The present study presents a snapshot of its findings based on an online survey of the opinions of the youth and adults of Eritrea as well as interviews and discussions (with officials who refused to be openly acknowledged). The study was meant to find out the opinions of the people of Eritrea as to their own government, media, economy and globalization.

Though the President was not directly attacked by anyone, and was admired for many of the virtues he demonstrates as a leader, there is a frequent refrain requesting immediate implementation of the Constitution, restoration of freedom of expression, and free media under article 19 of the Constitution, besides the holding of elections for the National Assembly without delay. People also expressed their views in favor of opening up a free-market economy and opined that freedom of the media and expression perhaps would attract foreign investors who would restore the image of Eritrea to what it was in its once glorious past.

The study also discusses the democratic model of Eritrea vis à vis the popular western perception of democracy. While rejecting the western concept of democratization the President has ushered in his own model, which in part resembles Paulo Friere and Beltran's model, by resorting to alternative spheres with emphasis on other parameters such as education and the transformation of women and children through mediated messages by the state-run print and electronic media. When these spheres greatly expanded the imagination and knowledge of the youth and the adults over a decade's period, they began to raise a number of questions as to why and for what purpose they should study further unless the President spells out how this can benefit them on the long run. The growing awareness among the youth has resulted, according to the author's findings, in a higher use of the Internet and mobile phones, which were the only outlets to expression.

The study further focuses on the challenges the human resources and cultural limitations posed to the President in his attempts to hold together this culturally diverse country surrounded as it is by such bigger neighbors as Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia.

References

- Amanuel, N., Estfamos, B., Kifle, G., & Bo, T. (2002). *Soil and water conservation manual for Eritrea* (Technical Handbook No. 29) US: RELMA.
- BBC news report. (2012). *Eritrea country profile*. Retrieved August 29, 2012, from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1070813.stm
- Canizalez, A. (2011). Milestones of communication and democracy in Latin American thought. *Journal of Latin American Communication Research*, 1(1), 1-18.
- CIA report. (2012). *The World Factbook*. Retrieved August 29, 2012, from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html>
- Cliffe, L., & Davidson, B. (1988). *The long struggle of Eritrea*. US: Red Sea Press Inc.
- Connell, D. (2005). *Countries at the cross-roads*. [Freedomhouse. Country Report on Eritrea] Retrieved August 29, 2012, from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/modules/publications/ccr/modPrintVersion.cfm?edition=2&ccrpage=8&ccrcountry=85>
- Dewey, J. (1897). My pedagogic creed. *School Journal*, 54, 77-80.
- Draft copy to Donor's Round Table (December 15, 2003). *Education Sector Development Program*. Government of Eritrea. Asmara: MOE.
- Eritrea. (2001). *Basic education statistics 2000/01*. Government of Eritrea. Asmara: MOE.
- Eritrea. (2003). *Education sector-interim poverty reduction strategy paper*. Government of Eritrea. Asmara: MOE.
- Eritrea Education and Training Sector Note No. 24448-ERI. (2002). *A world bank and MOE document*. US: World Bank

- Eritrea National Education Policy. (2003). *A ministry of education's policy document*. Government of Eritrea. Asmara: MOE
- Freedom in the World. Sub-scores. (2010). *Freedom House Report*. Retrieved August 29, 2012, from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=553>
- Freedom on the Net: A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media. (2009). *Freedom House Report*. Retrieved August 29, 2012, from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=383&report=79>
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (2004). *Pedagogy of indignation*. Boulder: Paradigm.
- Greenberg, D. (1987 a). *The Sudbury Valley school experience, subtleties of a democratic school*. Retrieved August 22, 2012, from http://books.google.co.in/books?id=-UMqvLEcH0wC&pg=PA173&dq=Universal+suffrage+the+sudbury+valley+school+experience&cd=1&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Greenberg, D. (1987 b). *The Sudbury Valley school experience. Back to basic of political basics*. Retrieved August 22, 2012, from http://www.sudval.com/05_underlyingideas.html#09. p.81ff.
- Macro-policy. (1994). *Major policy document of government of Eritrea*. Asmara: Government of Eritrea.
- Murthy, C.S.H.N. (September 4, 2004). Combating illiteracy for sustainable development. *Eritrea Profile, 11*, p. 31.
- Murthy, C.S.H.N. (2006 a). Designing media and ICT strategies for the rapid educational transformation in Eritrea: *Jl. Adult and Continuing Education, 12*(1), 45-75.

- Murthy, C.S.H.N. (2006 b). Designing the course and curricula for the teacher development. Open school and vocational education through media education in Eritrea. *Educational Media International* (Routledge), 43(2), 181-196.
- Murthy, C.S.H.N. & Kishore, D. (2009). SMS Messages: A Multiplier of Media Economy and Index of Democratization. *IMS Manthan: The Journal of Innovations*. 4(1). p 9-16.
- Press Freedom Declines in Sub-Saharan Africa, Particularly in Horn and East Africa. (2007). *Freedom House report*. Retrieved August 29, 2012, from http://www.freedomhouse.org/printer_friendly.cfm?page=70&release=499
- Rapid Transformation of the Eritrean Educational System .(2002). *A ministry of education policy document*. . Asmara: Ministry of Education, Government of Eritrea.
- A Report of Ministry of Education. (2003). *Education sector improvement project*. Government of Eritrea. Asmara: MOE.
- A Report of Ministry of Education. (2004). *Education sector development program - draft*. Government of Eritrea. Asmara: MOE.
- Reporters without Borders. (2009). *Press freedom index*. Retrieved August 29, 2012, from <http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2009,1001.html> & <http://en.rsf.org/eritrea.html>
- Roy, P. (1990). *Eritrea: Even the stones are burning*. US: Red Sea Press Inc.
- World Education Forum. (2001). *Education for all 2000 assessment: Thematic studies—Applying new technologies and cost effective delivery systems in basic education*. Paris: UNESCO.

Appendix I

Open-Ended Questionnaire

1. What is your goal regarding your career?
2. How do you visualize your country's future?
3. What are your life ambitions (ambitions related to your entire family)?
4. What do you feel that you need most at this time in your life?
5. How do you view the kind of economic and living conditions that you and your country are facing at this time?
6. How are your family's financial needs met?
7. Did you go for national service (military service) any time?
8. Do you like to go for national service?
9. How are you treated at the national service?
10. Are you happy with the facilities at the national service?
11. Are you having a continued education or education with breaks?
12. How do you rate yourself about your education?
13. How are you feeling about the present system of learning under Indian teachers?
14. Are you happy with the quality of teaching?
15. Are you interested in the classroom experience that you are part of now?
16. How about your personal relationships with your family members?
17. Do you feel that you need a girlfriend to maintain?
18. Are you happy with the state of affairs in your country?
19. Are you afraid of war breaking out any time in the near future?
20. Has anyone among your kith and kin died/been crippled in the war?

21. Would you like to stay in Eritrea after you finish your education?
22. Would you like to serve your country further?
23. Do you like the present government and its discipline?
24. Do you feel you are free to express your views about the government/governance?
25. Do you feel that you will have fair chances of employment and recognition in your country after finishing your education?
26. What is your opinion on the status of the media? Are you happy with the existing media, its programmes/content?

Appendix II

Tables and Maps

A. Tables

Table 1

Eritrea Economic and Social Sector Performance Indicators

Eritrea: Demographic Indicators Estimated for 2000 to 2020

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Population in millions	4.10	4.60 (12%)	5.10 (24%)	5.60 (37%)	6.20 (51%)
(% of increase)					
Population growth rate (%)	2.3	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.6
Population by age groups ('000s)					
0-4	730	760	810	870	930
5-9	610	710	740	800	860
10-14	520	600	700	740	790
	1,860	2,070	2,250	2,410	2,570
Subtotal					
15-19	420	510	590	690	730
20-64	1,710	1,530	3,950	2,630	3,100
65+	110	120	140	170	198
Total	4,100	4,650	5,220	4,880	6,610
Dependency ration %*	100	97	91	81	74
Dependents under 15 group %	90	88	81	72	65
Women of childbearing age (15-49)	21%	23%	24%	25%	26%
Labor force participation (15-60)	50%	51%	53%	55%	58%

Note. *Dependency ration is the population under 15 and over 64 divided by the 15-64 age group population.

From "Education for all 2000 assessment. Thematic studies: Applying new technologies and cost effective delivery systems in basic education." World Education Forum. Paris: UNESCO, 2001. Reprinted with permission.

Table 2***Eritrea Key Economic Indicators 1993-2001***

	1993 1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	1998 2001
Real GDP growth (%)	4.9	3.9	-1.5	-10.9	9.1	0.2
Inflation (% change, end of year)	9.1	9	10.6	26.8	7.7	13.5
Gross national savings/GDP (%)	39.4	12.0	13.7	19.1	21.1	16.5
Income per capita*	200	207.6	191.7	173.8	175.0	187
Government expenditure/GDP (%)	63.5	81.8	99.6	101.4	78.1	90.2
Government domestic debt (net)/GDP (%)	34.3	63.4	98.8	127.5	105.9	98.9
Net donor support/GDP (%)	12.3	17.3	27.1	24.3	33.7	25.6

Note. From “IMF, World Bank Database,” 2001. Reprinted with permission.

Table 3***Break up of Eritrean Government and Donor Contribution***

Eritrea Government and Donor Contribution to Education and Training Expenditure (US\$m), 1993-2000								
Year	Spending on Basic and Secondary Education				University of Asmara			
	Total Spending US\$m	Capital Spending US\$m	Donors' Contribution US\$m	Donor Contribution % of Total Spending	% of Capital Spending	Total Spending US\$m	Donors' Contribution US\$m	% Donors' Contribution
1993	10.8	2.5	2.5	23.1	100.0	0.9	0.3	32
1998	33.9	9.3	7.1	20.9	76.3	3.6	1.7	46
1999	34.9	13.4	9.7	27.8	72.4	4.2	2.3	56
2000	26.8	8.3	7.1	26.5	85.5	3.5	1.8	51

Note. World Bank Document No. 24448-ERI-A-2002⁴.
From “Eritrea Education and Training Sector.”

Table 4*Macroeconomic Consequences of the War (1998-2000)*

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1993-1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	1998-2001
Income per capita*	NA	NA	180	200	220	200	207.6	191.7	173.8	175.0	187
Government expenditure/GDP (%)	61.8	59.3	69.2	65.9	55.4	63.5	81.8	99.6	101.4	78.1	90.2
Government domestic debt (net)/GDP (%)	NA	NA	NA	NA	34.3	34.3	63.4	98.8	127.5	105.9	98.9
External public debt/GDP (%)	0.5	4.8	5.7	6.2	11.7	7.9	19.8	39.8	51.7	60.9	43.1
Private transfer/GDP (%)	40.5	56.7	37.6	38.9	54.6	43.7	34.7	36.9	32.2	26.5	32.6
Net donor support/GDP (%)	17.6	21.4	13.8	13.8	12.4	13.3	17.3	27.1	24.3	33.7	25.6

Note. From “Education for all 2000 assessment. Thematic studies: Applying new technologies and cost effective delivery systems in basic education.” World Education Forum. Paris: UNESCO, 2001. Reprinted with permission.

Table 5*Comparative Aggregate Government Expenditure in Percent of GDP (1997-2001)*

	1993	1998	1999	2000	2001
Eritea ¹	61.8	81.8	99.6	101.4	78.1
Ethiopia ²	19.6	30.6	33.0	31.2	29.1
Uganda ³	18.6	19.0	20.5	21.1	19.6
Rwanda ⁴	23.9	18.9	19.7	18.9	21.4

Note. The superscripts represent the order in which these countries are cited in the report.

From “Education for all 2000 assessment. Thematic studies: Applying new technologies and cost effective delivery systems in basic education.” World Education Forum. Paris: UNESCO, 2001. Reprinted with permission.

Table 6***Eritrean Millennium Development Goal Indicators (To be achieved by 2010-2015)***

Eritrea's millennium development goal indicators	Current	Target
Poverty rate (% of population below \$1/day)	53%	22%
Net primary enrollment rate (grades 1-5)	38%	100%
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	61	34*
Child mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	94	52
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	85-72	Equal*
% Births attended by skilled health personnel	29%	90%
Use of contraception – any method (men)	NA	NA
Use of contraception – any method (women)	8%	25*
% of population with access to an improved water source	7%	75%

Note. *The target is inconsistent in various documents, thus requiring confirmation of the actual figures.

From “Education for all 2000 assessment. Thematic studies: Applying new technologies and cost effective delivery systems in basic education.” World Education Forum. Paris: UNESCO, 2001. Reprinted with permission.

Table 7***Demand and Supply Affecting the Access, Equity, Quality and Relevance***

Effects of Demand	Effects of Supply
Poverty to meet educational costs	Lack of qualified teachers and trained school managers affecting the performance
Child labor at home	Incompatibility of the curriculum to the nation's and society's needs
Child labor outside earning wages	Delayed delivery of textbooks
Parents' disinterest in children education	Delay in the revision of the curriculum for all levels (which is now in progress)
Distance of school from home/village	Overcrowded schools and class rooms and running in shifts
Social, religious and cultural barriers and beliefs such as early marriages for girls, that girls are inferior to boys and religious and ethical restrictions on girls' movements, etc.	Teacher pupil ratio and overload of work for teachers
Costs of the present education	Inefficient use of school calendar and delay in meeting the schedule tasks
Imposition of national service	Lack of alternatives to conventional education

Note. From "Education for all 2000 assessment. Thematic studies: Applying new technologies and cost effective delivery systems in basic education." World Education Forum. Paris: UNESCO, 2001. Reprinted with permission.

Table 8*Showing Different Forms of Media in Eritrea*

Type of Media	Title of Media	Language of Media	Periodicity	Ownership
Print	<i>Al-Hadisa</i>	Arabic	Daily	Government of Eritrea
	<i>Haddas Eritrea</i>	Tigrinya	Daily	Government of Eritrea
	<i>Eritrea Profile</i>	English	Twice weekly (Wed. & Sat.)	Government of Eritrea
	<i>Eritrea Haddas</i>	Tigrinya	Weekly (Wed.)	Government of Eritrea
	<i>L'Asmarino</i>	Italian	Weekly	Government of Eritrea
	<i>Geled</i>	Tigrinya	Weekly youth paper	Government of Eritrea
	<i>Tirigta</i>	Tigrinya	Weekly youth paper	Owned by PFDJ
Radio	<i>Dimtsi Hafash</i>	All nine languages	Daily	Government of Eritrea
	<i>Radio Zara</i>	Tigrinya	Daily	Government of Eritrea
	<i>Radio Bana</i> (Educational broadcast)	In five languages	Daily	Government of Eritrea
<i>EriTV1 and EriTV2</i>	--	Four languages	Daily	Government of Eritrea

B. Maps



Figure 1. Eritrea: Natural earth. From “World Trade Press,” 2012. (Google Maps) Reprinted with permission.



Figure 2. Eritrea: Physical features. From “World Trade Press,” 2012. (Google Maps) Reprinted with permission.

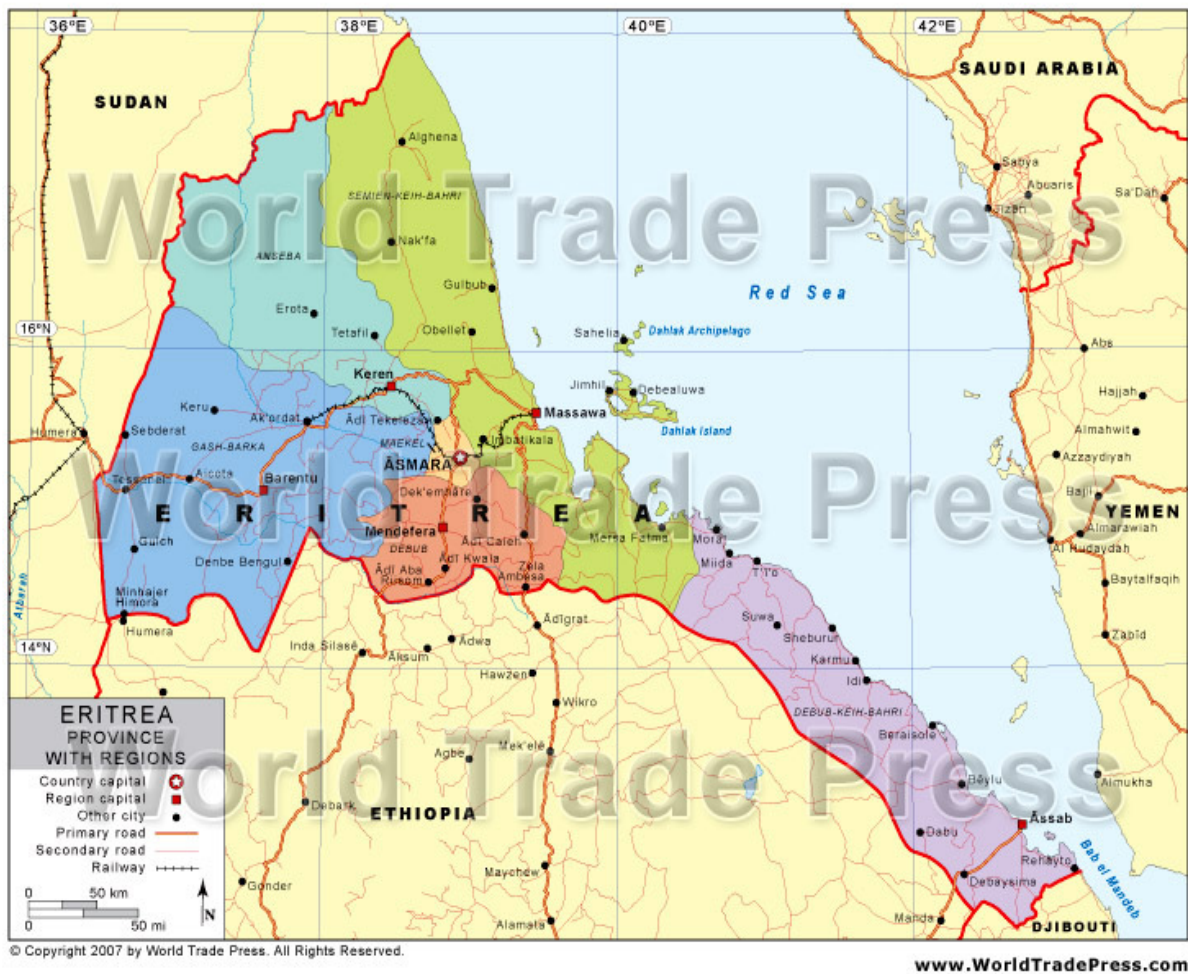


Figure 3. Eritrea: Political landscape. From “World Trade Press,” 2012. (Google Maps) Reprinted with permission.

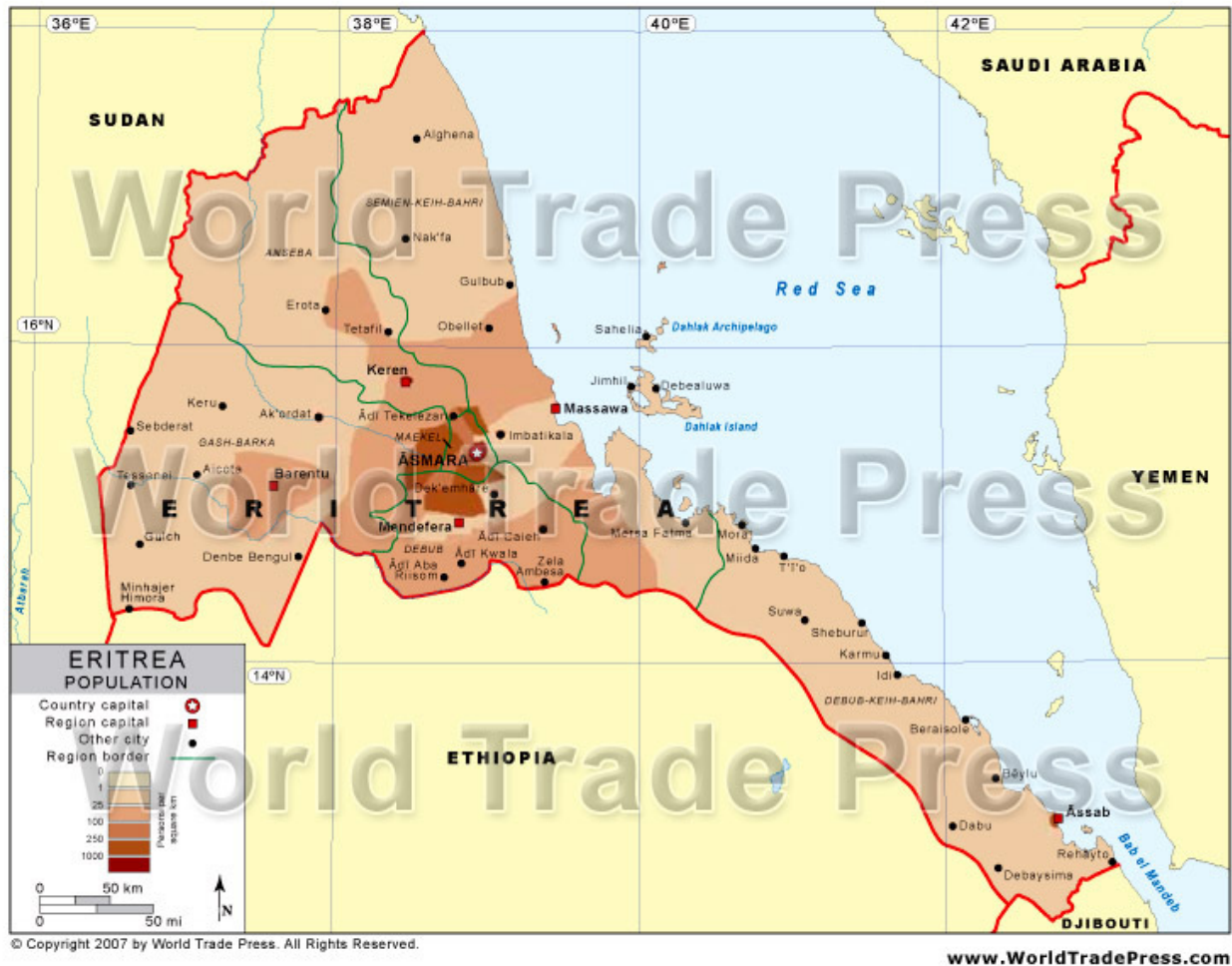


Figure 4. Eritrea: Population densities – religion-wise. From “World Trade Press,” 2012. (Google Maps) Reprinted with permission.

Author's Biography

C. S. H. N. Murthy, Ph.D.

Dr. Murthy teaches film and television production/studies and conducts research in film, television and general media studies. He worked in the Department of Adult and Media Education, Ministry of Education in Asmara, Eritrea, from 2003 to 2005. He had several publications in leading international journals. Dr. Murthy is a member of international editorial boards of reputed international journals, e.g. *Asia Pacific Media Educator* (Sage, New Delhi), *Communication Studies* (Routledge), and the *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* (Europe).

Address:

Professor in Mass Communication and Journalism
Department of Mass Communication and Journalism
Tezpur University,
Napaam, Assam,
784 028 India

Email: cshnmurthy@yahoo.co.in

Phone: (91-3712) 267007

Mobile: (+91) 9435507589.