Chapter-I

Media in India: Raj to Swaraj

CHAPTER-I
MEDIA IN INDIA: RAJ TO SWARAJ

"A well informed citizenry is the foundation of our democracy, then newspaper must be saved."

– Thomas Jefferson

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The media in India have a long history, even longer than the history of modern representative democracy in India, spanning from the colonial past in the second half of the 18th century to the present one as 'the largest functioning democracy'in the 21st century. A more than two and quarter century old media started its historic journey as a private enterprise owned by an Englishman during the British East India Company's regime, and gradually, despite all odes, grew and developed both as private and regime's institutions disseminating news and views in the notice of then colonial subjects to the free people of democratic India. The print media, the first in the family of the mass media, since beginning remained primarily in the hands of private individuals or groups, however, the broadcast and telecast media which came into existence very late, and have had its origin separately in first and second halves of the twentieth century, particularly the former during the British raj, and the latter in independent India, from its inception to until the inauguration of the policy of neo-liberal agenda of economic liberalization, remained under the control of regime.Distinguished media personality and editor of a national daily English newspaper, The Hindu, N. Ram wrote: "There are two major media traditions in modern India- the older tradition of a diverse, pluralistic and relatively independent press and the younger tradition of the manipulated and misused broadcasting media, state- controlled radio and television" (Ram, 2000:241). Though the demand to end the monopoly of

government over broadcast and telecast media was there for long, this could not be a reality till the paradigm shift arrived in the governmental economic policy of the Union government in the early 1990s. The policy of liberalization, which is generally observed as the policy of the state to withdraw from economic activities and to leave it in the hands of private individuals and corporations in a free market economy, was considered as the product of internal and external economic compulsions in early nineties, and part of globalization package of IMF and World Bank, that inaugurated a new chapter in the history of the mass media in India. As a result, number of path breaking changes took place in the structures and functioning of government controlled media as well as private sector owned media: end of monopoly of state over electronic media, relative autonomy to state controlled electronic media, increasing privatization in the area of electronic media, cut throat competition among media organizations, commercialization and marketization of the media, shifting focus of contents from common man to middle and higher classes, and from rural India to urban and metropolitan India. These phenomenal changes have critical implications for the functioning of the Indian democratic polity.

This chapter, however, deals at length with the media's origin, growth, role, and legal and constitutional environment in which it have been working since the days of the British Raj to the various democratically elected governments of the single party dominance of Congress party in Swaraj. The study in this chapter ends with the proclamation of national emergency during the Prime Ministership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1975 on 25th-26th June.

1.2 INDIAN MEDIA: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

The media in general was originated on Indian soil in the last quarter of the 18th century during the East India Company's rule. However, its alien character did not change before the beginning of the Bengal Renaissance in the first half of the 19th century. Modern India's historian, Bipan Chandra observes: "Almost from

the beginning of the 19th century, politically conscious Indians had attracted to modern civil rights, especially the freedom of the Press" (Chandra, 1989:102). The emergence of the indigenous character of the print media, therefore, was directly associated with the socio-religious reform movements, generally known as 'Bengal Renaissance'or 'Nineteenth Century Indian Renaissance' (Bandyopadhyay, 2004: 151), followed by India's struggle for national liberation. Referring to this transformation in his famous book, titled as 'The Press in India: A New History', G.N.S. Raghavan writes: "The emergence of the Indian press, properly so called, was at once the product and a stimulant of the process of national regeneration that began in the 19th century.The attainment of political independence in 1947 was a landmark in this process of regeneration" (Raghavan, 1994:1). N. Ram also expressed the similar view about the evolution of the press. He writes: "The Indian press is two centuries old and its strengths have largely been shaped by its historical experience and association with the freedom struggle and movements for social emancipation, reform and amelioration" (Ram, 2000:241). The first newspaper in India was published as late as in 1780. It was in the language of the colonizer, English and the person who was credited, as the founder of the first newspaper was an English man. Praveen Swami recalls the historic moment: "A weekly political and commercial paper, open to all, but influenced by none, read the masthead of James Augustus Hickey's two sheet Bengal Gazette, which commenced publications in Kolkata on 29 January 1780" (Swami 2007:176). Since then, despite inhibiting factors like low literacy, poverty, poor purchasing power, and lack of proper transportation and communication facilities and of course, an existence of a colonial state, the Press in India has come a long way. Taking note of the historical transformation of the print media from an individual's effort to the culmination of it into a vibrant fourth estate in free India, Praveen Swami observes: "In the two centuries since, India's mass media has succeeded in establishing itself as one of the most powerful institutions in the world's largest democracy" (Swami, 2007:177).

Therefore, the historiography of the mass media can't be separated from the political history of India's freedom struggle. A.E. Charlton's observation, "Newspaper history in India is inextricably tangled with political history" (Charlton, 1953: 3), validates the points.

1.3 MEDIA IN INDIA: EARLY EVOLUTION

The history of the press in India coincided with early reformation and liberation struggle of modern times. The print media came to India during the period of British East India Company's rule. The Indian Press has been a private, commercial enterprise from the days of its pioneers. Today, individuals, media organizations, joint stock companies, many industrial and commercial ventures, constitute the rest. About two and quarter centuries ago, from a small beginning, newspapers in India have come a long way. In number, diversity, variety, size, and reach, the newspapers in India compare to the best anywhere in the world. It is a well known fact that printing press had come into existence more than a century before the establishment of newspapers in India. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Henry Mills had already ventured a printing establishment at Bombay. Printing press establishments were first brought to India in the 16th century by Christian missionaries for publishing evangelical literature. The presence of Christian missionaries increased along with growing numbers of European traders and soldiers. In Madras too, there were flourishing printing organizations around 1772. Sir Charles Wilkins, the father of typography in India, had already inaugurated a new era through the foundation of a government printing press in Calcutta. The press establishments were installed at Bombay in 1674, at Madras in 1772, and at Calcutta in 1779. But the Company's officials did not encourage the publication of newspapers. The newspapers could not, however, be established in India till 1780. Why this powerful vehicle of public opinion remained neglected for such a long time is a moot question. Though the backwardness of India, the lack of proper means of communication, poverty and

illiteracy, were among many other structural reasons for this neglect and delay, nevertheless the presence of a colonial rule having an objective to sustain, and further expand its political control over the remaining territory and people by means of coercion can't be undermined for the negligence of the emerging powerful means of communication.

HICKY'S
BENGAL GAZETTE;
OR THE ORIGINAL
Calcutta General Advertiser.

A Weekly Political and Commercial Paper, Open to all Parties, but influenced by None,

59 From Saturday March 3d to Saturday March 10th 1781. No. VII

James Augustus Hicky, the founder of India's first newspaper, started the Calcutta General Advertiser, also known as Hicky's Bengal Gazette, on January 29, 1780. The journal claimed to be impartial. It proclaimed itself under the masthead, as "A weekly political and commercial paper open to all parties but influenced by none." However, the journal in fact carried on a partisan campaign against Warren Hastings, the then Governor General and his friend Eliyan Impey, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Hicky's Gazette would lampoon Impey as 'Pool Bundy' (pul in Hindustani means bridge) in an obvious reference to a contract for maintaining bridges, which the Chief Justice had secured for a relative (Raghavan, 1994:3).

The newspapers of the late eighteenth century were of interest to the British residents only. They reported news about the developments in England and the East India Company. Thus, they were largely a Whiteman's affairs. Their

circulation did not exceed a few hundred. There were no Press laws and hardly any freedom during those days. Even so, the pioneers ventured for freedom, however limited that was. It is interesting to note that the first newspapers were started by the former employees of the Company often having grievances against it. Beginnings were also made in reporting on social issues, letters to editors, advertisements and fashion notes. Thus, the Hickey and his newspaper were pioneers in both Press freedom and scurrilous writing (Swami, 2007:177).

It was believed that Hickey could not have carried on his campaign against the Governor-General without the backing of a powerful patron in the administration. However, the company decided against any freedom to the first newspaper. As a result, the type-sets of Hickey's Press were seized and his journal was suppressed in 1782 after Philip Francis decided to leave India (Raghavan, 1994:3). This might be considered as the first censorship of the Press in India, even as Hickey protested against this arbitrary harassment without avail, and he was imprisoned as well as fined INR 5000 which bankrupted the first newspaper (Swami, 2007:177). Nevertheless, "Hickey's publication, despite its limited reach and significance, flags the transition from these precapitalist institutions to the moden media" (Swami, 2007:177). Since then the relationship between the statewhether colonial or subsequent independent, and the media in general and print media in particular, has been full of many ups and downs. The Bengal Gazette and the India Gazette were followed by the Calcutsta Gazette which subsequently became the government's "medium for making its general orders" (Charlton, 1953: 3). The Madras Mail (Courier 1785), The Bombay Herald (1789), and The Courier (1790) along with many other rivals in Madras represented the metropolitan voice of India and its people. Newspapers were mostly run in those days for the European officers working in India, and the editors were mostly those who had grievances against the Company and had left its service. The personalize, socially parochial and interest oriented newspapers failed to impress upon the small educated native Indians. As a matter of fact, the papers were "useless vehicles of local

information of any value; they were filled with indecorous attacks upon private life and ignorant censures of public measures" and run by those who had neither literary pretension nor their circulation exceeded a hundred or two hundred copies.

1.4 INDIANIZATION OF MASS MEDIA

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, considered as the father of liberalism in India as well as fouder of modern India (Bandyopadhyay, 2004:151). A multi-lingual, social and religious reformer and champion of civilrights and freedom of press, he himself started many newspapers as the carrier of liberal and rational ideas.It was in order to counter the attacks on Indian religions which some of the journals carried and to assert national self-respect that the first truly Indian newspapers were established by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the initiator of India's renaissance in the modern period. Raghavan considers him as the father of the Indian press (Raghavan, 1994:8). He was the first to advocate many of the reforms which were to be demanded in subsequent decades by leaders of the nationalist movement, such as equality before the law and separation of the judiciary from the executive and the freedom of the press along with many other civil liberties (Raghavan, 1994:12). Aknowledging the contribution of Rammohan Roy for the cause of freedom of the press in the first quarter of the 19th century during Company's rule, historian Bipan Chadra said that as early as 1824, he had protested against a regulation restricting the freedom of the press. In a memorandam to the Supreme Court, he said that every good ruler 'will be anxious to afford every individual the readiest means of bringing to his notice whatever may require his interference. To secure this important object, the unrestricted liberty of publication is the only effectual means that can be employed' (Natrajan, 1955:15). Roy's contemporary, Lord William Bentinck, a relatively liberal Governor General, supported Indian efforts at reforms and, as a result, by 1830 there were 33 English language and 16 Indian language publications in

operation.In subsequent decades, many more nationalist newspapers and magazines appeared. The seven-year administration of Lord William Cavendish Bentinck (1829-1835) is remembered in Indian history as the first liberal and progressive administration which India had experienced since the arrival of the British on the Indian soil (Mass Media, 2001:3). The first half of the nineteenth century was marked by strict government regulations and the fight against them and the multiplication of newspapers especially in Indian languages. Besides the Englishmen, who were mostly former employees of the East India Company and had grudges against the Company, there were a few who were genuinely interested in journalism and concerned about freedom of the Press. More importantly, many old Indian elite became editors and publishers. The number of newspapers increased not only in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, but in other parts of the country as well. However, their circulation was still small, not exceeding three thousand. Even so, these newspapers became vehicles of social reforms, information and contacts. Their significance in the affairs of society was recognized by Rev. Long in his report in 1859 following the rebellion of 1857, the first war of independence. The Press contributed little to the outbreak of the rebellion. However, according to Rev. Long had the East India Company kept a watch on the writing in the language newspapers they would have got advance warning about the rebellion and may perhaps had taken appropriate measures. During the period from 1825 to 1857, the Indian Press was relatively free from interference from the government on account of the liberal outlook of Lord Bentick and others. Also it was at this time that elementary education spread and English was made the medium of instruction and secular education was promoted. (Mass Media, 2001:5).

As newspapers became widely available, they acted as a harbinger of modernity, contributing to the construction of a national identity. Despite very low literacy and strict Press laws introduced by successive British colonial administrations, the Press played a key role in the nationalist movement, even if its pioneers came

from a small westernized, educated elite. Such was Ram Mohan Roy, a versatile Bengali intellectual who established the nationalist Press in India in the early 1820s by starting three reformist publications–the Brahmanical Magazine in English, the Sambad Kaumudi in Bengali, and the Mirat-ul-Akhbar in Persian. (Karkhanis, 1981:35)

At the same time, at the other end of the country, Fardoonji Murzban launched the Bombay Samachar in 1822, which is still in existence as a Gujarati daily. As politician he saw the obvious advantage of having newspapers published in Indian languages.

1.5 WOMEN IN PRINT MEDIA

Prior to 1831, the Press in India was exclusively masculine in character. Women had not associated themselves with it till then. Emma Roberts, daughter of Captain William Roberts, who came to India in 1828, became a pioneer by introducing feminine grace into the world of Indian journalism. In 1831, she went to Calcutta, and wrote for the Oriental Observer, a weekly newspaper established at Calcutta in 1827. Towards the close of 1830, the Oriental Observer made the following announcement for readers: On May 5, 1829, Robert Montgomery Martin received a license from the Government to start his weekly, Bengal Herald. It was published by Samuel Smith and company at the Bengal Hurkaru Press, Calcutta. Ram Mohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, Nilrattan Haldar and Rajkissen Singh were its proprietors. (HPOC, 1829:116)

An organ of Indian liberal opinion, the Bengal Herald advocated radical reforms, both in Hinduism and the society. The first number of the daily Harkaru appeared on 29th April 1819. The interests and resource of several catcutta journals have from time to time merged in Harkaru. Between 1831 to 1833, 19 new Indian languages and English newspapers began publication. During this period in Bombay, there began publication of the Mumbai Vartaman (1830), the Jam-e-Jamshed (1831), the Mumbai Samachar (1832), and the Bombay Durpan (1832),

all owned and edited by Indians, and the Bengal Hurkaru, which began to adopt a liberal policy under the editorship of James Sutherland, published a statement on 30th June 1836 which is of interest both for the light it throws on Dwarkanath's munificence and the emergence of India's first daily newspaper (Raghavan, 1994:38). And the first Hindi daily, Samachar Sudha Varshan, began in 1854. Soon other newspapers came into existence in Calcutta and Madras: the Calcutta Gazette, the Bengal Journal, the Oriental Magazine, the Madras Courier and the Indian Gazette, which enjoyed governmental patronage including free postal circulation and advertisements (Karkhanis, 1981:18).

1.6 EARLY REGULATION

With the passage of time and increasing importance of the print media as a powerful means of communication in addressing administrative reforms as well as even the social and other problems that the Indian society was facing owing to prevailing superstitions and ignorance, the newspapers came under the fire of colonial ruler. With the Press growing more vocal and admonishing Governors of their duties and warning them furiously of their faults, the East India Company issued the Amherst circular in 1826 prohibiting the servants of the Company from having connections with the Press in any way. However, Sir Charles Metcalfe, who succeeded Lord William Bentinck, and his Law member, Lord Macaulay introduced a new phase in the history of Indian Press by bringing in an act in 1835 which repealed the laws circumscribing the liberty of the Press. Then came the first war of independence of 1857. The Government felt jittery about the complaints of inflammatory writings in the press. Therefore, an immediate consequence of the Uprising for the Indian press was a Regulation which came to be known as the Gagging Act. Promalgated by the Governor-General, Lord Canning, on 13th June 1857, it imposed in the whole of India the adam regulations enforced in Bengal in 1823. The Lord Elphinstone clearly expessing his anger agint the press observed : " …a despotic form of government is, indeed, the only

one suitable to the state of the country, It follows that if the unrestricted liberty of the press is incompatible with this form of government, and with the continuence of our rule in this country , it must be curtailed" (Raghavan, 1994:19). The fact is that East India Company had gone in 1858 but the anti-press attitudes prevailed during the British Empire. As a result, nearly two decades after under the British Empire came the notorious Vernacular Press Act, 1878, which discriminated against one section of the Indian Press. The Government again showed its ruthlessness by making prosecution easier in respect of "sedition and defamation". The Press, not being under the direct control of the then regime, put up a brave fight in its heroic effort to promote the cause of independence. Many editors, particularly of the vernacular Press, defied censorship regulations to keep the nation informed of the freedom movement.

1.7 MEDIA AS THE VEHICLE OF NATIONAL AWAKENING

The media in India had a clear cut role to play in the nation's struggle for freedom. The impulse of national awaking generated by Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal soon spread to other parts of India. It resulted, by the mid 19th century, in the formation of British Indian Associations by educated Indians in the presidency cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras as well as citizens'forums in some other large towns like Midnapore in Bengal and Poona in Maharashtra. These associations urged step towards representative government and sent petitions to the British parliament for a less expensive and more responsive administration in India.

The Press, not being under the direct control of the then regime, put up a brave fight in its heroic effort to promote the cause of independence. Many editors, particularly of the vernacular Press, defied censorship regulations to keep the nation informed of the freedom movement.

The anti-British uprising of 1857, largely confined to upper India, did not spring from the forward- looking impulse generated by Ram Mohan Roy. The revolt

was fuelled by a variety of grievances: the anger of the Indian sepoy in the East India Company's forces at the racial discrimination. Newspapers published in Indian languages reflected and strengthened popular sentiment. Jagdhish Prasad Chaturvedi writes: " It was 1857 itself that payam-e-Azadi started publication in Hindi and Urdu, calling upon the people to fight against the British. The paper was soon confiscated and anyone found with a copy of the paper was prosecuted for sedition. Again, the first Hindi Daily, Samachar Sudhavarshan and two newspapers in Urdu and Persian respectively, Doorbeen and Sultan-ul-Akhbar, faced trial in 1857 for having published a firman by Bahadur Shah Zafer urging the people to drive the British out of India (Raghavan, 1994:47).

The post-1857 period witnessed more strict regulations especially for the vernacular Press. Despite this, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, what came to be known as a nationalist press. Among the more notable publications were Rast Goftar, edited by Dadabhai Naoroji, and Shome Prakash in Bengali founded in 1858 by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. From the beginning, the British administration watched the growth of the Indian Press with displeasure. Until the 1860s, the Indian Press had no perceptible influence within the country; it developed very slowly with the single exception of Bengal. With the political appearance of a new group of Indian liberals during the 1860s, the development of political and especially reform-minded journalism was apparent. Political journalism in India is traced to 1861 when the Indian Councils Act empowered to nominate distinguished Indians to the legislature. Public opinion was greatly stirred by this reform which enabled Indians to be associated with the government in some form for the first time. Many of the great newspapers which flourish even today were established in this period, such as Surendranath Banerjee's Bengalee, 1868 Motilal Ghosh's, Harishchandra Mukherjee's Hindu Patriot, Keshab Chandra Sen's Indian Mirror, Sishir Kumar Ghosh's Amrit Bazar Patrika 1868, and Aurobinbo Ghosh's Bande Mataram. The Times of India was established in 1861, The Pioneer in 1867, the Madras Mail in 1868, The

Statesman in 1875, The Hindu in 1878. WhileTheStatesman voiced the English ruler's voice, The Hindu became the beacon of patriotism in south India. The Hindu was founded in Madras as to counter to the Madras Mail. However, people were not satisfied with mere nomination to legislatures. Further, the Press became more critical of the government and its administration. (Kuppuswamy, 1984:137).

There were nationalist echoes from other linguistic regional provinces. Bengal, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Punjab and United Provinces, produced dailies in regional languages. Hindi and Urdu dailies were largely instrumental in voicing the view-points and aspirations of both Hindus and Muslims of the Northern provinces. As communalism and religious intolerance increased before and after partition, Urdu remained primarily the language of Muslim, as Pakistan chose this language as its lingua franca. After partition, the cause of Urdu and its newspapers, suffered a setback as Hindu reactionaries began to recognize the association of Urdu with Islam and Pakistan. The influence of Indian language newspapers had grown so much by 1870 that they were perceived as a threat by the colonial administration, which led to the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, aimed at silencing any attempts by the Indian language Press to criticise the government. G. Subramaniam Iyer and Kasturi Ranga Iyenger through The Hindu (1878) and together with several other Tamil journalists, built up a strong south Indian Press which played a vital role in the independence movement that begun soon thereafter. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of the great leaders of national awakening, started two weeklies in 1880, Kesari in Marathi and Mahratta in English. Tilak used the Press, as no one else did before him, for his campaigns against the British government and its legislation. The developments in South India were also important (Lohmann, 1971:89). S. Natarajan observed "The Press in India had become the instrument of politics", in his History of the Press in India. (Natarajan, 1962:152) With the Indian people's urge for freedom growing like wildfire, more and more intellectuals among public men turned journalists and used their pen as a sword to fight the alien administration. Mahadev Govind Ranade's writings in

Indu Prakash and Bal Gangadhar Tilak's powerful salvos in Mahratta and Kesari and Sisir Kumar Ghose's indictments of the white rules in Amrita Bazar Patrika were notable. N. Ram acknowled that the birth of Amrita Bazar Patrika in 1868 was as the beginning of the history of the nationalist press in India (Ram, 2000:242). It was a tribute to journalist-leaders of that era that the first editor of The Hindu had been given the privilege to move the very first resolution of the first session of the Indian National Congress (Mass Media, 1989:4).

In a leading article in Kesari on January 4, 1881, Tilak compared the newspapers with night watchmen keeping executive officers in fear of public opinion. Further, he expected the newspapers to help bring about improvement in social conditions of the people by exposing what was evil and harmful. Alongside the social and economic reforms, Tilak emphasised political emancipation. This was the reason he was tried in 1908 for writing articles containing alleged incitement to rebellion and was awarded the harsh sentence of six years at Mandalay in Berma. There were many other nationalist journalists like Gopal Krishan Gokhale who championed the cause of social and political awakening. Several prominent personalities during the following period left their stamp on the journalistic development throughout the country.

As the freedom movement gained momentum, the Press in India grew and expanded to keep pace with it. Particularly during the period from 1907 to 1914 during which the Government experimented with the dual policy of introducing political reforms and repressive measures, there was increasing consciousness in the country which helped create a more conducive climate for starting new newspapers with national bias. The Leader in Allahabad and the Bombay Chronicle in Bombay were the two papers founded by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and Sir Phirozeshah Mehta. Sir C.Y. Chintamani and B.G. Hornima were editors of these papers (Mass Media, 2001:4-5)

The Indian national Press was the backbone of the freedom struggle from the end of the eighteenth century. Its historical importance is linked to the awareness of public opinion which touched the patriotic nerve in the country. The building up of the Indian public opinion against foreign rule required the use of vernacular languages. Apart from the development of daily newspapers, periodical journalism also registered consistent growth. G. A. Natesan's Indian Review, Sachidananda Sinha's Hindustan Review, Ramananda Chatterjee's Modern Review and Tej Bahadur Sapru's Twentieth Century were some of the periodicals which gave a new sense of direction to journalistic writing in India (Mass Media, 2001:5).

As nationalism evolved so did the idea that the freedom of the Press was a basic right to be cherished and fought for. Indian industrialists started their own newspapers with a clear anti-colonial stance. Most nationalist leaders were involved in activist, campaigning journalism, none more than Mahatma Gandhi, who realised the importance of the written word and used Gujarati, his mother-tongue, as well as English, to spread the message of freedom. Writing in Young India in 1920, he defended the right of newspapers to protest against Press laws:

"The stoppage of the circulation of potent ideas that may destroy the Government or compel repentance will be the least among the weapons in its armoury. We must, therefore, devise methods of circulating our ideas unless and until the whole Press becomes fearless, defies consequences and publishes ideas, even when it is in disagreement with them, just for the purpose of securing its freedom " (Gandhi, 1970: 59).

From the early part of the 20th century till independence in 1947, Mahatma Gandhi influenced developments in the country including the evolution of the Press. His two weeklies, Young India and Harijan became the powerful vehicle of the freedom movement. He wrote with passion and his writings were simple,

clear and powerful. According to Gandhiji, the newspapers have three main objectives:

1. To understand the popular feelings and give them expression.
2. To arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments.
3. To fearlessly expose defects in public life.

Gandhi was a great journalist and his weeklies were probably the greatest weeklies the world has known. Gandhi sustained his weeklies on subscriptions as no advertisements were published. Their circulation as at no stage impressive, but their readership was large and the impact was phenomenal. Through mass line of the followers within the Congress party and of those engaged in constructive works, the weeklies propagated widely Gandhi's ideas and philosophy among the masses. His weeklies served as the vehicle for his views on various developments in the country and his line of approach to the struggle for national liberation. Nationalism and the demand for independence were not new, but Gandhi provided a new impetus to the freedom struggle. A large number of other prominent leaders engaged in the freedom struggle were also eminent journalists and they derived inspiration from Gandhi. During this period, journalism, especially the nationalist Press, was more of a mission, rather than being merely a vocation, and the role of Press was to awaken the masses socially and politically. Politics after Broadcasting during Colonial Period and the course of National Struggle One remarkable fact, which emerges from the early history of All India Radio (AIR) must be noted and pondered over. AIR got its name, its administrative structure and programme pattern between 1937 and 1940 when India was part of the British Empire. It came into being under imperial auspices, in a form suitable for a colony. Contrary to expectation, after six decades during which vast political, economic and social changes have taken place in the world, and in India, two important changes which occurred are noteworthy. At first, a phenomenal increase in the number of its installations; and secondly, radio is undergoing (part)

privatization exercise similar to television. There can be one or more of three explanations for this phenomenon; the first would credit our former rulers with extraordinary foresight and understanding of broadcasting; the second would reveal our lack of initiative and our incapacity to create organizations appropriate to our needs; and the third would expose the government's decision to retain, for reason of expediency, vestiges of our colonial heritage which were neither democratic nor "progressive" (Asani, 1985:56).

There are some who believe that the influence of broadcasting has been grossly exaggerated and that its achievements can be attributed at least in part to other influences. After all, they say, broadcasting must develop against the background of a society's social and cultural evolution and is affected by this even more than it affects society. But most people still maintain that broadcasting can and does substantially contribute to the well-being of society, although few would now go so far as the early enthusiasts who dreamed that it could revolutionise public opinion, develop or transform public taste, and make its influence felt in very segment of personal and public life.

1.8 TOWARDS A FREE PRESS

During the struggle for Independence, journalists and political writers became important carriers of dynamism in the process of socio-political change (Lohmann, 1971:92). The goal of journalism was to assist in the objective of gaining freedom for India. Indian journalism after independence acquired a low profile after having contributed considerably to India's fight for freedom. "The Indian newspaper have every reason to be proud of the part they have played in the great constitutional change and of the good influence they have exercised on Indian opinion" (Naire, 1971:717).

During the period 1939-1945, there was little or no journalistic activity because of World War II. Two years after the war ended, the country became free. The historic role of the Press in the fight for India's freedom came to a close, winning

glowing tributes from many the world over including Lord Listowell, the last Secretary of State for India. Addressing a gathering of Indian journalists in London on 18 July1947, shortly after the Indian Independence Bill received the assent of the King, the Lord said "The Indian newspapers have every reason to be proud of the part they have played in the great constitutional change and of the good influence they have exercised on Indian opinion" (Mass Media, 1989:7). It is necessary to pause here for a little while and see the growth of the language Press in India prior to independence. The language Press wielded considerable influence on the people and made a significant contribution to our freedom struggle by awakening the masses.

1.9 POST-INDIPENDENCE PERIOD AND PRESS

India's experience over the post-independence years has demonstrated the need, if a free press is to flourish, not only for a constitutional guarantee of press freedom but, equally, for those in authority to honour the spirit of the constitution and not merely go by it's latter. The importance of the second requirement is illustrated by the difference in the fortunes of the press during the prime Ministorship of Jawaharlal Nehru (Raghavan, 1994:48). In free India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister and a leading personality of the freedom struggle, contributed substantially in shaping the Press. And the growth of the Press in India since independence has been consistent and healthy. As long as the Press suffered from political and physical limitations, it could not be equal to its responsibilities and when there was free growth, there appeared certain unhealthy trends also. In 1947 political independence came to a country that was socially and economically divided into hundreds of groups.Most of these groups, especially the upper class, upper middle class and to a great extent the lower class had come under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian national Congress (INC). The social problems are compounded by the general illiteracy prevailing in the country and the specific illiteracy of women and children.Three -

fourth of women in certain states of India are ignorant and illiterate. These states strike against the very spirit of democracy.During Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister (1947-1964), Indian media seemed to follow the democratic agenda. Most newspapers, even those owing allegiance to extreme political parties, believed that the multi-party system of government had taken a firm root in the country and a free Press was integral to its success. Unlike most other developing countries, the Government in India tolerated criticism on the editorial pages of national Press.This tolerance gave Indian journalists – mostly coming from an urban middle-class milieu – high professional standards and a space to engage in critical debates on socio-political and economic issues (Ram, 1990:54). Once the goal of independence was achieved, the Press was called upon to play a different role. The thrust was changed from the goal of independence to the goal of information for national development (Raghavan, 1994:45).

1.10 REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

In 1951, the government felt that there was a need to introduce a Press Bill which would be free from the objectionable features of the 1931 Act and be in consonance with the constitution of free India. Though the Indian constitution does not expressly guarantee freedom of the press, the Supreme Court has held in successive judgments that freedom of the press is covered by, and is an essential part of, freedom of expression, which is guaranteed by article 19.

An ardent votary of the freedom of the Press, he fully appreciated the role of a free Press in a democratic government based upon universal adult franchise. After Independence, the restrictive regulations were either done away with or suitably modified and codified to meet the urges of a free Press in a free country. Jawaharlal Nehru’s passing will make a difference to the climate and texture of freedom in which the Indian Press will operate in the coming decade. Nehru had the liberalism of the Victorian Age and the forward-looking humanism of the Social Democrats of the 1930s. His conception of the Press was moulded by the

liberal, quality Press of Britain and he was always willing to judge the Indian Press by those standards. There were things about the Press he did not like but he was willing to concede that the Press had the right even to be carping.The relationship between Press and society is an unfamiliar one (as even countries with a most advanced Press have come to realise), and the climate of the Press is influenced by the opinion, which political leaders have about it. There is no accepted form or principal of access to news in India, and access is a precondition of freedom. In the case of government news in India, there is not adequate recognition of the people's right to know (Sarkar, 1967:15). The Indian Constitution guarantees the 'freedom of thought and expression" to all its citizens which means freedom to publish newspapers, under Article 19 (1) (a). However, certain restraints are imperative in the exercise of the freedom. Article 19 (2) of the constitution provides for only such restrictions as are reasonable and are in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of the country, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to offence. "Freedom of thought and expression" is part of the Preamble to the Constitution thereby guaranteeing this to all citizens as a fundamental right. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was of the view that "I would rather have a completely free Press, with all dangers involved in the wrong use of that freedom than a suppressed or regulated Press. " Although there is no special provision in the Constitution specially dealing with the Press, the interpretation of the Constitution have been so as to give right to citizens to publish what he chooses without obtaining any prior permission from any authority subject only to the responsibility before the law of the land for what he chooses to publish. The important acts relevant to the freedom of the Press are: (i) Registration of Books Act 1867; (ii) Defence of India Act 1962; Sections 124A, 505 and 295 (A) of Indian Penal Code; and Section 5 of the Indian Telegraph Act 1855 and Section 26 of the Indian Post Act, 1885; and Harmful Publication Act 1956. Be that as it may, the Press in India not only champions the cause of freedom of expression

and speech, it also in the process zealously guards its own freedom. Even after independence, the legacy of anti-colonialism continued to influence Indian media. India inherited from the British the combination of a private Press and a government-controlled broadcasting system. Given the diversity of the Press, it was critically aware and, by and large, acted as a Fourth Estate in a fledgling democracy, while the electronic media was used for what came to be known as 'nation-building.' In a vast, geographically and culturally diverse country with 16 official languages and more than 800 dialects, and great disparity in the levels of development, national media had a crucial role to play to develop a sense of Indianness.

1.11 THE PRESS COUNCIL

The first Press Commission recommended the setting up of a Press Council ' to safe guard the freedom of the press' and 'to encourage the growth of the sence of responsibility and public service among all those engaged in the profession of journalism' (Sarkar, 1984:191). The Press Council Act was passed by the Parliament in 1965 and the Press Council was set up on 4th July, 1966. However, the Press Council was made the victim of emergency and the Press Council Act, 1965 was repealed with effect from 1st January, 1976. The reason was cited to abolish the Press Council that it was not able to carry the functions to achieve the ojects for which the Council was established (Sarkar, 1984:191).

1.12 ELECTION, POLITICS AND PRESS: NEHRU ERA

At the time of independence, enough journals were owned by the Indians and enough Indians were exposed to good journalism so that there was a very small vacuum as the remaining British-owned papers passed into Indian hands. But after independence, the crusading, anti-British, nationalist Press assumed, by and large, a supportive attitude towards the State. A typical congenial relationship between the Press and the state continued to govern the nature of Indian

journalism. Even today, it is the most important forum for the expression of public opinion.

The Press in India was until recently the only medium not under the direct control of government and in a position to evaluate critically the implications of national policies. The Indian Press is almost entirely privately owned and has been free in all the decades since 1947, except for an interregnum of nineteen months, between June 1975 and January 1977, when Indira Gandhi, as a prime minister, imposed the internal emergency and, among other things, suspended Press freedom. The post-independence Press was originally sympathetic to the government. It offered cautious support to the government's efforts at building the nation. The government appointed the 1952 and 1978 Press Commissions to inquire into the Press laws and other developments affecting the Press and its operations. State attitudes towards the Press in the post-independence period varied somewhat between the large, metropolitan Press and the provincial Press.

Independence marked a turning point in the growth of Indian Press and political campaigning techniques. It brought to a close the era of journalism as a mission and the media was left free to become a business or industry. Although a large number of newspapers in India were founded during the independence movement, often by small, independent organizations or trusts, a proves of economic consolidation from the 1950s onwards led to a steeply stratified structure of ownership and control. In the early 1950s two-thirds of the English dailies and two-fifths of the Indian-language papers were limited to the bigger towns. The pattern is not different today.

The establishment of the first Press Commissions in October 1952 continued the search for the proper role for government in the Press of a free country and brought with it a cynical irony. The composition of the Press Commission illustrated the English-language dominance of the industry and the readiness of the post-independence elite to believe that creating a department of government or

passing a law would achieve an end. The first Press Commission (1952-54) inquired into several areas affecting the functions of the Press: the working conditions of journalists, freedom of Press, newsprint supply, censorship and journalistic conduct (Mehta, 1992:23). The Commission, which submitted its report in 1954 had observed 'the most obvious instance of bias that the bulk of newspaper owners and publishers were persons who believed strongly in the institution of private property'. Consequently, they encouraged expression of views and news that favoured the status quo while censoring contrary news. The Press Commission concluded that twelve Indian languages, excluding English, required detailed discussion. But it could find only 330 daily newspapers in the whole of India with a total circulation of about 2. 5 million copies, nearly 28 per cent of which was in English. The Commission noticed that English publications got the larger share of advertising. The difficulty of finding readers and distributing a newspaper among an overwhelmingly illiterate, rural population resulted in lack of investment in Indian-language newspapers. An estimated 55 per cent of newspapers were sold in state capital cities, though their combined population totaled only seven per cent of India's population. The Commission recommended the creation of two institutions – a Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI), a central government body intended to monitor the industry and collect statistics, and a Press Council to oversee ethics and hear complaints.

The rapport between the Congress party and business community dates back to the early 1900s. When the rising Indian industrialist class supported the party in order to counter the influence that British capital, its well-established competitor, had with the colonial government. This trend continued throughout the pre-independence period when the Congress party came to depend for its financial survival almost entirely on the periodic donations made by some of the leading Indian business houses. After independence, these donations, some made in cash and others by cheques, became the main source for the party's central election fund. This happened in the first general elections in 1951-52, and again in 1957.

Later that year, when the new Companies Act, meant to rationalize the working of companies, came into effect, the public limited firms found themselves barred from making donations to political parties. But this did not last long. An amendment to the Companies Act, passed in 1960, allowed these companies to donate five per cent of their total annual profit or Rs. 25,000, whichever was higher, to political parties. A study of the financial statement of 144 major companies for 1961-62, which included the period covering the 1962 general elections, showed that they had contributed the Rs. 79, 04, 000 to the Congress party, or nearly half of the party's total 'official'expenses in the state and Parliamentary elections; and Rs. 20, 76, 000 to the right-wing Swantantra (i.e., Freedom) Party, or nearly three-fifths of the party's total 'official'election expenses.

After independence the former leaders of the freedom struggle became the new rulers of the country. For the Press it marked a sea change in its role. The nationalist Press during the freedom movement had served more as 'View-papers'and looked at the leaders with some kind of adulation fully supporting and propagating their views, programmes and actions. In fact, the Press as a whole was an integral part of the struggle. In free India this continued for a rather long time. This was natural because the leaders, many of whom were journalists in their own right, shared common values and experiences of working in close association as partners in the freedom struggle. The Press adopting the role of an adversary towards the generation of politicians and journalists was not easy. Moreover, there were towering personalities in public life and the government like Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Patel, to name a few.

Under these circumstances, journalism became too dependent upon official hand-outs, ceremonies and inaugurations for daily coverage. Of course, politics dominated the newspapers. And only at times the Press was critical. The views

and actions of the political opponents of the ruling Congress party were also covered adequately. Jawaharlal Nehru valued Press comments and took note of the critical editorials. On the whole the Press was a tame affair, largely of their own valuation but at times through carrot and stick methods as well, at least in some States. There was no serious expose by the Press during the Chinese aggression on the northern borders of India. The 'honeymoon'period between rulers and the Press during Jawaharlal Nehru's period lasted for sometime.

As far back as 1964, Hindi had the largest number of newspapers among language papers with 149 dailies, 726 weeklies and other kinds of periodicals. The main centres of publication were in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Delhi. On that account during Jawaharlal Nehru's period (1947-64), the Press grew substantially, but it would not be wrong to say that it lost touch with the people, their urges and aspirations. It became a 'capital'centered political Press. It was no more playing the role of a means for social and political awakening as it did during the course of the freedom movement nor that of a watchdog.

In order to realise the recommendation of the first Press Commission, necessary legislation by an Act of Parliament was passed in 1965 and the Press Council of India came into existence in July 1966. The objective, as defined in the Act, was to preserve the freedom of the Press and maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India. The Council has the power to initiate, hear and adjudicate complaints against the Press, as well as against the authorities. The Council comprises 28 members and a chair, out of whom 20 were nominated by the various newspaper organizations. The chair is nominated by a committee of three: the heads of the two Houses of Parliament and an elected member from the council itself. The Chairman of the Council has traditionally been a retired judge of the Supreme Court. Its first President was Justice N. Rajapopala Iyengar, who said that the council had a close likeness with the reconstituted British Press Council.

1.13 RADIO: A GOVERNMENTAL VENTURE

Radio is the first form of broadcast media having the capacity to address both of the target groups: literate and illiterate. It has the ability to reach through airwaves and address people sitting near as well as far off places. This technology of mass communication started it journey in colonial India in the 1920s. Radio clubs began in Calcutta and Bombay in 1923. These clubs had received temporary sanction for transmissions while various offices of the Government of India (GOI) undertook lengthy study pursuant to the formation of policies to govern this new technology. The first radio station, in Pittsburgh, US, had opened in 1920, and the first regular broadcasts in England began in only in 1922. The British Indian Government had few established procedures to govern the emerging technology, and designed policy reactively, in consultation with officials grappling with the same issues in Britain. The emergence of radio as an issue requiring regulation had been brought to the attention of the Government of India in 1922 by the Director General, Posts & Telegraphs, in the Department of Industries and Labour, but it was not until 1925 that the Government issued a Press communiqué indicating that the GOI was prepared to grant a license to private enterprise for the provision of radio broadcasting in India. Eminent journalist summarizes up its beginning as Raj-supported venture, but in the process ended as a direct government venture in the hands of the British colonial state. He describes: "Radio was introduced in August 1921 in an experimental way. It made a false start in1926 as a Raj- supported private enterprise in the form of Indian Broadcasting Company, which quickly failed; was converted into a state-owned and state- controlled monopoly in the 1930s; was passed on from one bureaucratic department to another until it came under the permanent tutelage of the department of Information and Broadcasting in 1941; was expanded and exploited relentlessly as a means of propaganda during the second world war. The broadcast media tradition thus initiated in India seven decades ago seems to represent the anti thesis of the older press tradition" (Ram, 2001: 248). On the

political front, broadcasting as a State monopoly has two-fold responsibility: to the government, of which it is a part, and to the public. It is not always easy to reconcile these, for national objectives are not always the same as the interests of the government or party in power. As early as in 1935, Satyamurthi, member of the Central Legislative Assembly moved a cut motion in the House for the reduction of the supplementary grant in respect of expenditure on the development of broadcasting on the ground that "it should be made available for political propaganda under reasonable conditions". Expectedly, the motion was rejected. The government decided in 1936 that even the election manifestos or election speeches should not be broadcast or reported over the radio in any form.

1.14 RADIO: REGIME'S WEAPON

The AIR, established under British Rule in India was used for strengthening the role of the empire in India. It also followed the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) tradition developed by John Reith in England. After Independence, this tradition of reiterating the paternalistic role of the states has continued, though with modifications, by the Government of India. The radio-broadcasting network was seen as a means by which an indigenous Indian culture could be forged and disseminated (Ghose, 1996:59).

Although Jawaharlal Nehru preserved AIR from misuse for political and commercial advertising, there was no radical reorientation of the medium. During the nearly 17 years of his Prime Minister ship, radio continued to play its old role of providing entertainment and information of interest to the urban middle and affluent classes who alone could afford the luxury, in the pre-transistor age, of owning a radio set (Raghavan, 1992:79).

Since the first Lok Sabha elections in 1952, the radio facilities have been utilized by various political parties to put forth their point of view. In this regard a statement issued by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting in August 1951 has stated that broadcasting facilities to political parties would not be available for

electioneering purposes. AIR, would however, carry publicity confined to the electoral policy of the parties on the basis of election manifestos, speeches, statements of leaders, and party statements designed to educate the electorate about their responsibilities as voters (without bringing in party interest), and factual news about information of parties or groups within the parties, and their objectives. In 1956, the government went a little further and has stated that political parties could use AIR on a restricted basis, as an experimental measure. An offer was made to the four All-India parties – Congress, Jan Sangh, Communists and Praja Socialists to send their manifestos, which would be read out over the microphone by a member of AIR staff. This was rejected by all of them (Luthra, 1986:147).

In 1962, the Chief Election Commissioner proposed that each 'national'party get 15 minutes of the radio, with an additional 15 minutes allotted to the ruling Congress party. This was not accepted by the opposition parties. The efforts made by the Chief Election Commissioner in 1967 and 1971 also failed for want of agreement between the parties (Ghosh, 1996:110). The problem was to devise a formula which could be acceptable to all the recognized parties. With the Congress party having an overwhelming majority in Parliament and in the State Assemblies and fielding by far the largest number of candidates, any agreement based on the number of sitting members and the number of candidates fielded would tilt the scales heavily in its favour. The complaint of the other parties was that the Congress, being the party in power, was in any case able exclusively to propagate and publicise its own programme through AIR under the guise of government information. (Chatterji, 1991:48).

Political comment apart, even in talks on general subjects AIR did not give expression to views critical of the government or of any part of the establishment. Government instructions on what could or could not be said over the AIR were issued confidentially to solution directors. Station directors were expected to

settle matters 'tactfully'with talkers and writers should they try to transgress the bounds of what was permissible. This situation continued till 1968 when the AIR Code agreed to by the political parties was accepted by the Cabinet and laid on the table in both houses of parliament. The AIR Code, which also applies to Doordarshan, was adopted in 1968 and revised in 1970 (Mass media, 1989: 5).

In fact, since the early days of the internecine quarrel within the party, which developed in the summer of 1969 and matured into an open split some months later, the Congress government made an extensive use of radio to project Indira Gandhi as a darling and radical leader who had chosen to cross swords with the old, as reactionary party bosses and expose their conservatism and affinity for the 'vested interests'.

The story of the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Bill is a good example of the paralysis that seized Indian political parties on gaining power. Even the very first committee that was set up in 1964 to enquire about future broadcasting possibilities, the Chanda Committee, recommended in 1966 that AIR be converted into a public corporation which was not implemented (Ohm, 1999:69).

1.15 INDIAN TELIVISION: INCARNATION OF NEW MEDIA

The first television transmission in India, in 1959, was certainly novel for its use of a new broadcasting technology. Although television was new to India, by 1959 broadcasting already had a long history in India, going back to the early days of radio, and before that to telegraphs. The emergence of television did not necessitate the wholesale creation of new broadcasting policies, ideas about cultural transmission, or scheme for the structure and expansion of broadcasting networks. Instead, the introduction of television occurred within the contours of the structure, administration, and concepts regarding the electronic media that had already evolved around radio, which emphasised national development (or subjugation) and centralized control. To begin an examination of Indian

television with the first broadcast in 1959 would thus obscure the ways in which television broadcasting was both impelled and constrained by a system of ideas and policies already in place. As David Lelyveld eloquently notes: Broadcasting has long existed in India as an institution both as a specific and monolithic formal organization and as a 'discourse, 'a set of assumptions, conceptual constraints and logical connections. Emerging in the last two decades of British rule, broadcasting can stand as one of the last instances of a long history of British efforts to transfer their own institutions armies and police, bibles and churches, tax collectors and judges, schools and colleges, elections and legislatures to India. Each of these institutions has a complicated history of British intention and reluctance, Indian initiative and resistance, and unanticipated consequences. Routine procedures, the definition of roles in a bureaucracy, recruitment of personnel, concepts of authority and control, even typologies of programming and styles of presentation were all based upon well-established previous experience. . .The transfer of power from a colonial regime to a democracy did not substantially change that condition (Ram, 1990: 43).

Television is 'the transmission of visual images of moving and stationary objects, generally with accompanying sound, as electromagnetic waves and the reconversion of received waves into visual images. 'Television in India is undergoing significant changes in the current liberalized environment at 1956. To understand these changes, one needs to have some brief idea of the road covered by the television channels so far.

The makeshift studio at Akashvani Bhavan in New Delhi was chosen for location of the experiment. The experiment started with one-hour program, broadcast twice a week, on community health, citizen rights, education and traffic sense etc. As far as news is concerned, it was launched exactly six years after the inception of television broadcasting. Daily one-hour program with a news bulletin was served to the Indian viewers. But one major drawback of television was that you

could not enjoy the original colour of the objects because of black and white transmission. First multi-color programme was the Prime Minister's address to the nation from Red Fort in Delhi on India's 35th Independence Day at 1982. In the same day, DD National channel was launched. The aim of launching the National channel is nurturing national integration, and inculcating a sense of pride in Indians. Indian viewers also enjoyed the coloured version of the Asian Games hosted at 1982 by New Delhi in their drawing room. The coverage of major events and different occasions lend a big hand behind the infiltration of television signals to nook and corners of the subcontinent. The journey started on an experimental basis with a financial grant from UNESCO on 15th September 1959, and grew very slowly in the 1960s. The big leap in Indian television came in 1975 with SITE, which broadcast to 2, 400 villages in six Indian states. Satellite television conveyed educational–development information to rural India, and provided Indian technologists an opportunity to gain television expertise prior to launching their own national satellite (Karkhanis, 1981:26). The television network was initiated in most of the developing countries including India mainly due to 'political will'. It accomplished technical efficiency over the years (from black and white to colour, portable television sets, television broadcasting by satellites, development of cable television), establishing itself in the society due to private investment in television sets and finally strengthening its presence because of advertisers'interest in the medium since 1976, when the first advertisement was aired on Indian television. As a public broadcaster, Doordarshan presented the news in naturalized manner. All controversial issues were pushed under the carpet. The ruling government had a strong hold on the television broadcasting. Doordarshan news bulletins were unable to provide the international news to the national viewers.

1.16 MEDIA AND INDIRA GANDHI

In contrast, the press was to be brought under rigid censorship, and the country's news agencies subjected to extralegal arm-twisting, under the emergency rule of prime minister Indira Gandhi during 1975-1977.

Jawaharlal Nehru had entertained high hopes for his daughter and did his best to train her, beginning with the correspondence course he conducted in order to afford her, and a wider reading public, glimpses of world history. After Nehru's death in 1964, Indira Gandhi joined the Union Cabinet as Minister of Information & Broadcasting. Following the sudden death of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri at Tashkent, she was elected as leader of the congress parliamentary party and became prime Minister in January 1966 (Raghavan, 1994:20).

After a hesitant start during which she found that her decision to devalue the rupee, though inescapable on economic grounds, was politically unpopular, she decided to chart her course as a radical dedicated to the removal of mass poverty. She shook herself free of the provincial congress barons, known as the Syndicate, and cultivated the left within and outside the congress. Communists supported her programme of bank nationalization and abolition of the princes'privy purses. With this support she got elected as president of India an independent candidate, V. V. Giri, defeating the congress nominee Sanjiva Reddy whose candidature had been sponsored earlier by Indira Gandhi herself among others. The spilt in the congress that ensued had profound consequence for the Indian press (Raghavan, 1994:24).

As the years went on, the Press took on a more critical role, and by the 1960s, the relations (between the Press and government) were in some degree transformed, the Press having taken on the role of an adversary. This sharpened in the latter 1960s, and particularly from 1969 onward when Indira Gandhi split the Congress party. The Indira Gandhi period (first phase: 1967-77) was full of strife and stress. Her disposition towards the Press was, if not hostile, not friendly either.

The Press was also not as kind to her as it was to Nehru. The people were also not very happy about some of the Congress party policies. Many of the old Congress party leaders were also out to harass her. In the 1967 elections the Congress party was returned to power at the Centre with a thin majority. It even lost in many northern states. Indira Gandhi was cornered and from thereon she fought with her back to the wall. She attacked her political opponents and the Press for being out of touch with the people and out of tune with the times. She communicated over the heads of her opponents directly with the masses.

1.17 REGIME'S INVISIBLE HAND AND THE MEDIA

Allocation of newsprint and the purchase of advertising were two ways to open to central government to put Pressure on newspapers. It was difficult, however, for a central government to be too blatant in dispensing advertisements to favourites or withholding them from foes. Newsprint also provided possibilities for rewards and favours. The proprietors naturally do not want anything to be published which is against their business interests or the interests of their fellow businessmen. Moreover, as there is pervasive governmental regulation of industry and business in a planned economy, they cannot afford to take the risk of offending the government or other authorities. In such cases, the proprietor leaves the control of the newspaper to an executive or a manager who hardly knows the contours of the freedom of the Press. The manager dictates to the editor what to say and what not to say and the editor becomes no more than a mere scribe of the proprietor. Though the control of newsprint gave the central government the potential to pull newspapers into line, the growth of a black market made government pressure less likely to be effective.

In the 'socialist India'of the 1950s to 1970s, some proprietors and editors saw advertising as a gift of government, bestowed upon the newspaper industry's deserving poor. Such a view accorded with the rhetoric about building a self-sufficient India that would both industrialize and transform the lives of the rural

poor. Somehow, advertising that came from government, as if by right, escaped the taint of having been solicited by salesperson. Instead, such advertising could be seen to have been graciously accepted by patriots. Proprietors of small newspapers – "small" is usually a synonym for Indian-language newspapers – regularly appealed to central and state governments for more advertising. Governments in the 1970s placed roughly 25 per cent of their advertising expenditure with small newspapers. By the standards of the time, it was a substantial sum: governmental advertising in the 1970s was estimated to account for 20 to 30 per cent of India's print advertising expenditure. Nearly half of this, however, was believed to go to the English-language Press. The government's policy has been to support small newspapers through advertisements and newsprint subsidies so as to counter balance the English newspapers which are seen as wielding a "political and social influence in the course of national affairs far in excess of what mere circulation figures might indicate.

1.18 MEDIA: OWNERSHIP AND FREEDOM

From an ideological viewpoint, the industrialist-owners of the Press would prefer a party committed, unambiguously, to helping free enterprise; but as pragmatists, who understand the implications of a parliamentary system, they consider the Congress party to be the best bet. They also realize that it is the only truly all-India party, and that it is committed to countering any and all divisive tendencies in the country no matter how high cost. This policy is beneficial to their larger economic interests, since, as industrialists, they do not wish to see the size of their market diminish. The ruling party is particularly sensitive to criticisms in the (comparatively) large-circulation English-language dailies, partly because they set the bias, tone, and style for the more numerous Indian language papers, and, more importantly, because they play a substantial role in creating and moulding political consciousness of the only section of society that really counts – as far as day-to-day politicking during the inter-election period is concerned – the urban

middle classes. In 1972, newspapers began to reveal cases of corruption involving ministers of the central government who were reported to have taken donations for the congress party from smugglers and mafia bosses in return for certain favours. Before long it came to be generally known that "suitcase full of currency notes" were being sent to the prime minister's house by various interested in receiving favours from Indira Gandhi.

By 1974, having fought off these attacks on its independence, the Press had become increasingly critical of the government for its economic draft, and for the political corruption that had pervaded the whole system. The anti-government movements in Gujarat and Bihar, led by Jayaprakash Narayan, attracted a great deal of attention in the Press and a good deal of sympathy and support. This was the backdrop for the emergency that came in June 1975. The freedom of the Press in India received a setback when the Emergency was proclaimed in the country.

On the eve of the mid-term elections to parliament, in March 1971, the Indira Gandhi-led Congress party approached all the prominent members of the business community (91 commercial undertakings run by the then central government), to find some means of contributing funds to the Congress party, and reportedly managed to do so. These (industrialist) owners (of major newspaper chains) are said to have given Indira Gandhi roughly Rs. 150 million. Many "progressives" saw the Press as a reactionary institution intimately linked to the "moneybags" of big business who owned the newspapers and journals that dominated public discourse among the educated classes. The relations between the private Press, the government, and business leaders clearly highlight the problem of 'control'versus 'freedom' (Rajagopal, 2001:43). The greatest threats to the freedom of the Press come not only from the restrictions imposed by the government but also from a hardening of the ownership pattern which results in tighter control and less freedom for journalists. In this context, has stated that 'a substantial portion of the Indians Press, and in particular a major segment of the

daily newspapers, was found to be controlled by persons having strong links with other business or industries'. In this regard (Hiro, 1976:67), had stated that 'the big business houses support the (then) Congress party with huge sums because they knew that the party believes, in practice capitalistic development' (Hiro, 1976:67).

In theory, the Press is free to criticize; but in practice, its industrialists-owners take care to see that criticism against the Congress party administration remained fairly restrained and 'issue oriented'. Most objective observers are likely to agree that – 'the Press baron is sensitive to government's industrial policy in which free enterprise and regulation are two phases of the same game'. It is no surprise then, the relations between the Press led by the English language newspapers and the Congress party regime in the past have been generally correct to cordial. Therefore some kind of strains that developed between the Congress, led by Indira Gandhi, and the conservative Indian Express and Statesman at the time of the split in the party, in mid-1969, ended when Indira Gandhi emerged as the clear victor at the polls in March 1971. For the fifth Lok Sabha elections (1971), apart from the Press, the Congress party extensively used posters, handbills and signs on the walk. The split in the party, and the efforts of the faction led by Indira Gandhi to present itself as radical and socialistic, did not materially alter the relationship between business and the party.

An assessment by Hiro (1976) with regard to Indian Press trends in the early 1970s reads as follows: theoretically speaking, nine million Indians have some 800 dailies to choose from. In practice, however, nearly half of them buy the top 42 newspaper, 31 of which are owned by four major private companies – Express Newspapers, Hindustan Times, Benett Coleman, and Statesman – respectively publishers, among others, of the English-language Indian Express, Hindustan Times, Times of India, and Statesman. These dailies, with 13 editions published from six different cities, consume about a third of all the newsprint allotted by the

Central government to nearly 2, 500 dailies and periodicals, which are published fairly regularly and have a viable circulation. 'For, between them, they claim the large bulk of the total English daily circulation'in India. What is more damaging, they are all owned by the same sector of society: big industry. Consequently, they represent the interests of a very limited section of even the capitalist class – the larger industrial houses whose investments are spread out in various basic industries and to which the newspaper investment is ancillary. While the English language newspapers have thrived and grown in circulation, the small newspapers published in and grown in circulation, the small newspapers published in regional languages have been perpetually on the brink of financial ruin.

The involvement of big business houses in the 1967 elections was much greater and more open than in the past, with the companies now backing the oppositions parties, mainly to the right of the Congress party, to a larger extent than before. Piqued by this, and the loss of power in many of the major States in these elections, the then Congress party in parliament amended the law in 1969, and banned donations by companies to the political parties. The net effect of this change was to drive the practice underground and make it more business-like than in the past, and thus benefit the Congress party which, being the ruling party, could offer an almost instant quid pro quo to the businessman making 'donations'in black money. "Indira Gandhi's initiatives of the early 1970's antagonized the Rightist, communal and disruptive forces. Lawless agitations were fomented by a motley combination of political groups, encouraged by hostile foreign forces intent on toppling her and destabilizing India. To arrest this dangerous trend, Indira Gandhi proclaimed a state of internal emergency. This step was supported in the initial stages by the Left. But there emerged a few months later some distortions of the emergency regulations. Well-meaning but unimaginative and harsh measures were adopted, to promote family planning and carry out slum clearance for instance, which alienated large sections of the people" (Ali, 1989: 476).

In the wake of an adverse verdict in June 1975 by a single-member bench of the Allahabad high Court, which held Prime Minister Indira Gandhi guilty of electoral malpractice in the 1971 elections to the lok Sabha, Indira Gandhi persuaded the then President, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, to proclaim a state of internal emergency. The action was strictly in accord with the letter, though it was not in the spirit, of the Constitution. A proclamation of emergency declaring that security of India or any part of the territory thereof is threatened by war or by external aggression or by internal disturbance may be made before the actual occurrence of war or of any such aggression or disturbance if the president is satisfied that there is imminent danger thereof. With the fundamental Rights suspended for the duration of the emergency and the judiciary thus put out of action, the executive ran amuck in relation to the press. Electric supply to newspaper establishments on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, where most of the capital's dailies are located, was cut off during the night of June 25-26, 1975, so that they could not report truthfully or comment freely on the events culminating in the proclamation of emergency.

1.19 CONCLUSION

This study finds that there is a very cose relationship between the modern india's struggle for social and political emancipation and the origins, growth and development of the print media (Press) in India. The history of the press clearly asserts that from the beginning, nationalist fought against attack by the cononial state on the freedom of expression as well as freedom of press, which was the integral part part of India's Struggle for national freedom. Though there were consistant attacks by both the British East India Rule and the British Empire on the freedom of the press through draconian laws or brutal suppressive measures, however, the press in general defied it, fought against it and played an adverasarial role to support, propagate and promot cause for national independence. From the days of father of the Indian Renaissance, Raja rammohan Roy to the father of India, Mahatma Gandhi, the press in general became the

vehicle of social reforms to political mass mobilization. In the long process of national awackening the press, especially the vernacular press showed tremendous courage and conviction and played great role in fighting for civil liberties, political rights and freedom of the press. The great leaders like Tilak, Gandhi and many others were associated with press and themselves the editors of newspapers and magazines and uded it as the means to criticize the colonial state and spread the ideas of freedom among the masses for cause of national independence. They considerd jounnalism as a mission not just as profession. However, with the independence of India a democratic constitution incorporated the message of freedom struggle in the form of fundamental rights for individual and citizens which ensure freedom of speech and expression that include freedom of press though not unlimited. The press in india enjoyed relative freedom more or less unintrupted till the declaration of internal emergency by Mrs. Indira Gandhi on 25-26th June, 1975 and lost its constitutionally guaranteed freedom.

REFERENCES

Ali, Aruna Asaf. (1991). *The Resurgence of Indian Women*. New Delhi: Radiant Publication

Asani, M. M. (1985). *Broadcasting and the People*. New Delhi: National Book Trust.

Bandyopadhyay, Shekhar. (2004). *From Plassey to Partition.* New Delhi: Orient Longman Private Limited.

Chanchal, Sarkar. (1967). *The Changing Press.*Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

Chandra, Bipan. (2009). *History of Modern.* Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

Charlton, A. E. Wolseley (1953). *Journalism in Modern India*. University of California : Asia Publication House, .

Chatterji, P. C. (1991). *Broadcasting in India.* New Delhi: Sage.

Gandhi, M. K. (1970). *Gandhi – Essential Writings.*edited by V. V. Ramana Murti. New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation.

Ganguly, Sumit. Larry Diamond. Marc F. Plattner. (ed.) (2007). *The State of India's Democracy.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ghose, Subir. (1996). *Mass Communication in the Indian Context Today.* Calcutta: Profile Publisher.

Hiro, D. (1976). *Inside India Today.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Home Public Original Consultations, (May 5, 1829). p. 116

Iyenger, S. (2001). *Role of Press and Indian Freedom Struggle (all thought the Gandhian Era).* New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation.

Jefferson, Thomas to Edward Carrington, (16th January, 1787). Papers 11:48-49 in *The Founder's Constitution, Vol. 5, Amendment 1, Speech and Press*. Document-8, The University of Chicago Press.

Karkhanis, Sharad. (1981). *Indian Politics and the Role of the Press*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 18-45.

Kuppuswamy. (1984). *Communication and Social Development in India.* University of California: Sterling Publisher.

Lohmann, Manfred. (1971). The Role of Journalism in the Process of Socio-Political Change in India, in A.G. Noorani (ed.) *Freedom of the Press in India.* Bombay: Nachiketa Publications Ltd.

Luthra, H. R. (1986). *Indian Broadcasting*. New Delhi: Publication Division, Government of India.

Mass media in India Research and reference division of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

Mehta, D. S. (1979). *Mass Communication and Journalism in India*. New Delhi: Allied Publication Limited.

Naire, L. R. (1971). "Private Press in National Development: The Indian Example", in Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Sehramn (ed), *Comuunication and Change in the Developing Countries.* Honolulu: East-West Center Press, p. 717.

Natrajan, S. (1962). *A History of Press in India.* New York. Asia Publishing House.

Ohm, B. (1999). Representing to Nations Stake in C. Brosius and M. Butcher (ed.) *Image Journeys.* New Delhi: Sage. 69-98.

Raghavan, G. N. S. (1992). *Development and Communication in India: Editist growth and Mass Deprivation*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.

Rajgopal, A. (2001). *Politics Television, Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping the Public in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ram, N. (1990). 'An Independent Press and Anti-Hunger Strategies: The Indian Experience' in Dreze, J and Sen, A (ed.) *The Political Economy of Hunger, Vol. I,* Clarendon Press: Oxford.

Ram, N. (2001). 'The Great Indian Media Bazaar: Emerging Trends and Issues for the Future', in Romila Thapar (ed.) *India – Another Millennium?* New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Rau, Chatapathi, (1986). *Press in India.* New Delhi: Allied Publisher Pvt. Ltd.

Swami, Parveen. (2007). "Breaking News: The Media Revolution" in Ganguly, Sumit and Others (ed.) (2007). *The State of India's Democracy.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 176-188.