INTRODUCTION: JOURNALISM IN INDIA

The press, like other constituents of mass media, plays a key role in dissemination of news and views about the society. It acts as a link between the society and the Government, the ruled and the rulers, the people and the decision-makers by providing information on the decisions taken by the authorities to the public. It also communicates their opinions, feelings and reactions to the decision-makers in the form of feedback. Without press, the administration of the state will be paralyzed as there will be a wider communication gap between the Government and the people. In such a situation the political system is found to pass through crisis and tensions. In other words, the press plays a key role in the maintenance of the system. It also plays a crucial role in bringing out radical changes in the political system. Since pen is mightier than the sword, the press helps in ushering a new era. It shapes the destiny of a nation and influences its course of history.

Press transmits social, economic, political, and cultural values from one generation to another; promotes peace; maintains social order; brings harmony; defends rights and freedom; fights for justice and equality; makes the people politically conscious, develops social awareness in them and
helps them in acquiring orientations; airs their grievances and
tries to redress them; highlights their sorrows and miseries,
pains and anguish; supports their genuine demands; helps
them to understand their problems in right perspectives;
informs them, educates them, entertains them and enlightens
them; promotes their political efficacy; reflects their mind,
expresses their opinion, presents their views; moulds their
outlook, influences their way of life and shapes their
perceptions; reveals their “past”, discusses their “present” and
shapes their “future”. It motivates them to fight against
racialism, communalism, casteism, chauvinism; helps them to
lead a happy, peaceful and harmonious life in the society, and
encourages them in their pursuits. It is their “eyes and ears”. It
acts as their “friend, philosopher and guide”.

The press, an important political communicator, is an
agent of political socialization. It fights by itself alone and nor
for itself alone; can make or unmake democracy and it is,
therefore, called the Fourth Estate of the realm. It is a chief
“instrument” whereby contemporary society orders and
changes its ways in the direction of clearly visioned goals of
increased human welfare. It is a “private industry” and a
“public service”. People, without a reliable press, are without a
basis of freedom.

The press is an agency of mass communication and the
communication is a necessary tool of learning. It reports facts,
comments on political questions, interprets politics, discusses
issues, brings to limelight the hidden facts, puts forth new
proposals, conducts campaigns, carries on propaganda and
organizes extramural activities. It influences and educates voters, canalizes public opinion, aids and effects reforms, provides solutions to the problems and influences the course of public events. It helps the people to play an effective role in the decision making process.

The press plays a very responsible role during war and peace. Even Napoleon had to admit: “Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets”. That it plays an effective role is evident from the words of Thomas Jefferson, who once wrote: “were it left to me to decide whether we would have a Government without newspapers or newspapers without Government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter”. It is often investigative in nature. It reveals the “truth” and exposes corruption and misconduct in high offices. Its activities are multifarious. It is “functional” beneficial and indispensable for the society. It is a pillar on which the edifice of democracy rests.

A free and healthy press is highly essential and very much indispensable to the functioning of democracy. Democracy is a Government of the people, for the people and by the people. It can be effective and successful only when people voluntarily participate in the affairs of State and Government. And, by all means, their participation depends on and influenced by the information that they have about different aspects of human life as well as the state. Unless they are well informed they cannot play an effective role in the political process. The press provides them comprehensive and
objective information on current affairs and broad issues. It keeps them well-informed.

Discussing the role of the press in a democracy, the first Royal Commission on Press in England observed: “The democratic form of society demands of its members active and intelligent participation in the affairs of their community. It assumes that they are sufficiently well informed about the issues of the day to be able to form the broad judgment required on an election, and to maintain between the elections the vigilance necessary in those whose governors are their servants and not their masters. More and more it demands also an alert and informed participation not only in purely political processes but also in the efforts of the community to adjust its social and economic life to increasingly complex circumstances. Democratic society, therefore, needs a clear and truthful account of events, of their background and their causes; and forum for discussion and informed criticism; and a means whereby individuals and groups can express a point of view or advocate a cause”.

Explaining the duties of the journalists, the All India Newspaper Editors’ Conference in their memorandum to the First Press Commission stated that “Journalism should strive to inform the people of the current events and trends of opinion, to create and sustain an ever widening range of interest, and to encourage discussion of current problems with due regard to all points of view, all of which involve accurate and impartial presentation of news and views and dispassionate evaluation of conflicting ideas”. A democratic society “lives and grows” by
free and open public discussion and the press facilitates this process. The people should have access to different shades of public opinion as this helps them to judge rightly different issues and problems.

The press is an instrument of social change. It feels the pulse of the people; understands the popular feeling; gives expression to it; it arouses certain sentiments among the people; and whenever necessary it exposes and points out popular defects. The press should present the news without any bias, prejudice, fear or favour. The presentation of news should be truthful, objective and comprehensive. News should not be distorted, suppressed, vulgar and unnecessarily sensational. The press should have certain commitments, convictions, ideals and principles.

1.1 THE PRESS: ROLE AND IMPORTANCE

Significant development in the field of communication has reduced the world to a global village. At the heart of this village life lays the vast information ecosystem wherein the ideas of many competing ideologies fight, sometimes in an unfair manner, to win the hearts of the attentive public so that they can influence them. Mass media, which can immediately reach the public, have become an “ideological terrain’ where the “fight for supremacy” between different ideologies-democracy, communism, capitalism, etc., has become a dispirited struggle (M. A. Ansari,1990).

Rightly described as the fourth estate by Thomas Carlyle, Macaulay and Edmund Burke the press, by all means,
plays a significant role in the society as is evident from Thomas Jefferson’s observation: where it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspaper or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. It influences almost every aspect of life and discharges five basic responsibilities i.e., to survive, to provide information, to offer guidance or interpretation of the news, to entertain, and to serve the public.

What the people know, what they read, what they listen to, is in large part and in the final act of decision determined by the press. Thus, it renders a splendid service to the society. Dedicated to the service of the reader, of the community, of the state and of the nation and guided by principles, ethics and morals, it has a noble mission to carry out. Acting as independent watchdog of the public, it searches out scoundrels in government, those who cheat and steal, but also those who abuse their powers in pursuit of their own ideologies, or what they believe are the ideologies of those who elected him. As a sort of third party or third force, the press is, and must be, a party of opposition; a party without the responsibility of directing or participating in government, but with the responsibility of criticizing and commenting and independently investigating both the party that is in power and the party that is out of power.

A participant in the democratic governmental process, a bulwark of democracy, a censor and critic of government, a public protector and indispensable institution of a free people, an advisor to them, the press keeps a close watch on
government, that ever-dangerous foe of freedom, and sounds
the alarm whenever the citizen’s rights are infringed. Scathing
criticism and constant surveillance of actions of the authorities
by an alert and intelligent press, established as the
cornerstone of the democratic society, is essential to the
successful functioning of a government.

1.1.1 AN AGENT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT

Press acts as a powerful instrument of persuasion for
political indoctrination. In an authoritarian society where the
economy is regulated by the State and media act as an agency
of the government, the press has a central role to play in the
whole system of administration. However, in a free society
certain important issues are highlighted by the press. It
presents a forum of opinion for public discussion. Political
stability and growth of democratic institutions rest mainly on
the manner of functioning of the press.

The press protects the public interest and checks any
effort on the part of the authority to curb the freedom of
speech and expression. It acts as a link between the rulers and
the ruled; and also develops civic consciousness. Its editorials
provide leadership to the nation and guidance to its people. In
brief it is an instrument of change and strives hard to create a
new and better world to live in peacefully and happily.

As an important source of knowledge, the press provides
varied information to the people far beyond the boundaries of
their observation and experience. Furthermore, free flow of
information acts as a vital factor in creating mutual understanding between men and between nations. Outlining the duties of journalists, that All India Newspaper Editor’s Conference in their memorandum to the First Press commission stated that “Journalism should strive to inform the people of current events and trends of opinion, to create and sustain an every widening range of interest, and to encourage discussion of current problems with due regard to all points of view, all of which involve accurate and impartial presentation of news and views and dispassionate evaluation of conflicting ideals.” The presentation of news should be truthful, objective, impartial and comprehensive. There should be no unnecessary sensationalism by publishing distorted news and biased comments. News and views being fair and functional should be based on facts and supported by evidence.

The Press having a local base too plays a vital role, in making the people informed. It is evident from an interesting social experiment in village India, carried out in 1963-64 by two American social scientists, Selden C.Menefee and Mr. Audrey G. Menefee. (Selden G. Menefee and A.G. Menefee,1996). They selected four large villages in the Tumkur district of Mysore State and in three of them distributed thirteen weekly issues of a mimeographed newspaper, ‘Village News’, written in the local language, Kannada, the fourth village being used as a control. The four villages were not entirely isolated from mass media, as they used to receive a small number of copies of national and district newspapers. Some people also possessed radio sets and one village had in addition a community radio and a public education forum. The
circulation or distribution of “Village news” posed some problems, as the level of literacy in the villages was low.

It is interesting as well as significant to note that the people to whom were made the weekly issues available were more and better informed than those who were not provided with the issues. It may, therefore, be concluded that “the press is the best instrument for enlightening the mind of man, and improving him as a rational, moral and social being.”

In developing countries much of the knowledge so vitally necessary to inform the people about development can be most effectively disseminated by the enlightened press. The news criteria of the press are based not on the conventional news values of the West but on the emerging Third World concept of news. In the Western countries, the news media, automatically accepting their “advocacy role”, are essentially concerned with recording events, facts and situations in terms of media market requirements, news being regarded there as a mere photographic record and saleable commodity like any other. However, in the developing countries of the Third World, the news media are seen today as instrument of change for better. In this context the Third World press, while functioning "in the public interest", has the responsibility of assisting the government in power with the task of nation-building as well as playing the role of educator, contributing as best it can to the peculiar development needs of its own developing society.

In the process of development, the role of the press is indeed very important, since in reality people's concept of their own developing society and the true state of the world around
them, as well as their view of how good or bad this state is, largely depends on the "raw material for thought" selected by it. However the tension between confirming people in their limited knowledge and of providing information which is not readily integrated into everyday life strikes at the very heart of the basic functions of the news media in a developing nation like India.

It is, indeed, the state that exists for individuals but not individuals for the state. In other words, the state is not an end in itself but a mean: to end. The challenge is how best to promote and protect the interest of both the individual and society according to the particular circumstances and in each age according to its needs and demands. Certain societies at certain times will put the emphasis on individualism; in other societies or at other times, the stress will be on the needs of the collectivism. The recent history of newly-independent countries shows that in the early stages of freedom the emphasis will be on the collective needs of society; as a society develops, it can afford to give greater freedom to the individual. And individual's urge for freedom must be increased to a greater extend through the institution of the press.

1.1.2 AN AGENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION AND POLITICAL SOCIALISATION

A democratic society can be effective, successful and deliver its goods only when it has a well-informed citizenry capable of playing an independent and decisive role by taking right and rational decisions on various aspects. Providing information and creating a climate for discussion has become a
major responsibility on the part of the press. Of all the ingredients that constitute democracy, information is a key component. Information is highly essential especially at the time of taking a very important decision. In this regard the press in particular is the main source of information and occupies a commanding position as a medium of mass communication. The press being a fundamental institution of the society plays a vital role in creating, shaping and reflecting the public opinion.

The role and involvement of the people in the formation and functioning of the government depends on their attitudes and values which can, to some extent, be molded, shaped and influenced by the press. Free exchange of ideas and open and fearless debates and discussions are an essential part of the government of a free country, and this is possible and can be ensured only through the press.

The rights to hear and be heared, to inform and to be informed, together may be regarded as the essential components of a "right to communicate". The realization of a "right to communicate" is a desirable objective for a democratic society, so that each individual may know he is entitled to be informed and to be heard, regardless of where he may live or work or travel in his own country.

The press, acting as a public conscience, investigates stories affecting the public welfare and highlights injustice. The press, particularly the newspapers, announces the time, the place and the topic of meetings and chronicles, births, deaths and marriages. It makes the people informed about current
issues. "If warms when taxes must be paid, when voters must register. It proclaims elections, designates voting places, and informs parents and children when schools open and when and where the classes must register. It stimulates public interest in holidays and special days and their programmes. It tell when service clubs, women's organisations, and church groups meet. It heralds coming sports events. This constantly changing community bulletin board is delivered to the reader to be perused at leisure. But speed and, above, all, accuracy are essential in assembling and presenting such information, which is always important to some one".

The press conveys the weatherman going on an outing the cheerful news of a bright day or warns the farmer with hay on the ground of possible danger of crop spoilage from rains to come the following days. Recipes and beauty hints enlighten and please women readers. Columns are devoted to human behavior and political issues, and generally there is a sprinkling of practical advice on a myriad hobbies and activities. Such important services of the newspaper require research, selection and direction. Plan facts are dramatised with colorful and helpful information. Photographs of individuals and groups, view, maps and charts make news more understandable and meaningful.

The editor, through the editorial columns, interprets the feelings of the community and in response the reaction of the readers obtained. Thus the public knows both the sides of the picture. This is a truly democratic service that requires "understanding, courage, fairness and diplomacy". The press
plays a vital role in formulating a community programme and in organising the community to carry it out in "promoting the growth and development of the community, in advertising its assets to the outside world, and in pointing out its faults and weaknesses to the home people it organised, informs, promotes and finances. In most communities the newspaper willingly provides space for and actively supports campaigns to raise funds for worthy causes".

It promotes peace, maintains order in society, defends rights and freedom, and fights for justice and equality. It motivates the people to fight against racialism, communalism, casteism, chauvinism, helps them to lead a happy, peaceful and harmonious life in the society, and encourages them in their pursuits. Being an agency of mass communication, it reports facts, comments on political questions, interprets politics, discusses issues, brings to limelight the hidden facts, puts forth new proposals, conducts campaigns, carries on propaganda and organises extramural activities. It helps the people to play an effective role in the decision-making process.

It makes the people politically conscious, develops awareness in them and helps them in acquiring orientations and values in various fields including political. It is through press, their feelings revealed, opinion expressed, views presented, outlook moulded. It influences their perceptions as well as their way of life, reveals their past, discusses their present and shapes their future.

Political socialisation mainly refers to the learning process by which norms and behavior acceptable to the
Political system are transmitted. In the broader sense, it refers to the way the society transmits its political culture from generation to generation. It is a gradual process through which an individual attains his personal identity which allows him to express himself in his own way. It operates in a quiet and smooth manner without people being aware of it.

Political socialisation is relatively a modern concept and quite new in the field of empirical research. But the concept, in the broader sense, has been with us ever since the birth of political philosophy. "The field of political socialisations", in the words of David O Sears, "has been anticipated, of course, in the political theory of almost every era, from Plato through Rousseau to Mao." (David O Sears, 1975)

But the Credit, however, goes to H.H. Hyman for coining the term "political socialisation" and recognising its importance in political science research in his work, "Political Socialisation" published in 1959. Its current incarnation dates mainly from American studies of civic education in the 1920s and 1930s (H. H. Hyman, 1972). However, it had a somewhat delayed entry" into the empirically oriented political behavior literature. In the late 1950s and 1960s research work was taken up with great interest in the field of political socialisation.

Political socialisation refers to the learning of norms, attitudes and behaviours accepted and practiced by the ongoing political system, and of social patterns through various agencies of the society. It is the induction of the individual into political culture. It helps in the acquisition of political orientations and patterns of behaviour and in the development
of awareness of political world and appreciation, judgment, and understanding of political events. It is a process through which individuals acquire formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned politically relevant social attitudes and personality traits, there types of basic orientations-knowledge, values and attitudes; and motives, habits and values relevant to participation in political system.

Political socialization is a process by which an individual becomes acquainted with the political system and it determines his perceptions of politics and his reaction to the political phenomena. It helps him in learning the basic orientation necessary for the maintenance of the democratic system. It also provides information about citizenship role, impetus for participant role and awareness of political values.

The progress of human society depends largely on the development of communication. Only those civilizations which are advanced in the field of communication can leave a deep impression on the sands of time. The invention of script has been a turning point in the development of humanity. The people at present are capable of developing and acquiring knowledge in various fields as well as keeping records of their deeds. This has become possible only because of tremendous advancement in communication technologies. The invention of printing press has not only been a mile stone but also given a great boost to political development.

The press plays a key role in the political sphere of a society. When the latter is not independent, that is, if it is either a colony or an authoritarian regime where freedom is
suppressed and the people are subjugated it fights for freedom, extends its full co-operation to the freedom fighters, makes the people politically conscious, encourages them, inspires them, provokes them and if necessary forces them to join the freedom struggle by inculcating in them new political values that would bring radical changes in the political sphere and herald a new era. The role of the press in making the people free from bondage, slavery, torture and suppression is quite significant. The Indian language press during the independence movement made a significant contribution to it and came forward to undergo any amount of sacrifice. It had to pay a very heavy price for going against the interest of the British Government.

But its role does not end there with the society becoming free and independent. Its role and responsibility becomes more important as it has to give direction and guidance to the new government, see that it is stable both politically and economically. It has to take all necessary steps to safeguard the country’s newly earned freedom.

The present day democracy is an indirect one. Representatives are elected for certain period and during this time, the voice of the individual or group has little influence on government. In indirect democracy, every parliamentarian speaks for thousands, and his main task is to work within the political manifesto agreed by his party beforehand, and upon which he has been elected. Participation in government by citizens is a fundamental norm, and is virtually non-existent. Despite the shortcomings of the system it functions and the
press takes a major responsibility of developing political consciousness among people so that the arbitrary functioning of the government can be checked.

1.1.3 AN STIMULUS TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE

Changes are inherent in anything and everything including the individual and the society. They help them in their evolution. Greater the change higher is the evolution. These changes have profoundly affected the human condition. Most of the evolutionary, turning points, which have brought us to our present physiological, psychological and sociological stages of development, are lost in the pre-historic stage. In the historic period, however, we can distinguish humankind’s transition from a nomadic existence based on hunting to settle community life based on agriculture and from there to the industrial society of the past two centuries. And now we are emerging from the industrial society to what the sociologists call the information society where press plays a significant role. For the present day socio-economic development, the emphasis is shifting from manufacturing and service industries to information processing made by the press in connection with the preparation, transfer and storage of information.

There are some traditional values which created obstacles in the national progress. Unless they are replaced, changed and substituted hope for socio-economic development in a country becomes bleak. Certain age-old values, which are detrimental to development, must be given up to bring out changes in the life style of the people. Each
fundamental change in the life style has been accompanied by changes in socio-economic and political structures. Industrialisation led to the growth of cities and trade unions, to universal education and to the present day democratic structures. Science and technology developed in line with the changes in socio-economic and political structures; in many cases, indeed, they initiated the changes. To improve people’s standard of living they shall be informed, through the press, not only about the scientific achievements but the recent developments in various spheres. This rests on modernization which would be possible only when there is change of values, attitudes, outlook, habits, domestic livings, etc. More emphasis is to be laid on personal cleanliness, sanitation, home nursing, improvements in housing and home management, better hygiene and nutrition, prevention of illness, care of children, family planning, as well as a revision of values and relationships. This is the present day requirement from the social point of view. This is the present day requirement from the social point of view. This means, in the language of economics, a better and rational utilization of resources, the learning of new skills, greater efficiency and productivity, the organisation of labour and marketing, co-operation, and in due course mechanization and industrialization. In a broader sense it means universal education covering socio-economic and political spheres of the democratic system.

Over the years man has developed many techniques to communicate his messages to others. But it is only the transmitting technologies underlying the mass media which have made it possible for the written or spoken word, sound
and visual images, motion and colour emanating from a single source to reach an infinitely large number of possible interpreters. The power inherent in mass communication media-press, film, radio and television-is thus evident.

In our country, today, we have many problems like high rate of illiteracy, an accelerating population growth, explosion in knowledge necessitating change and review of curriculum and teaching methods. Urban-rural imbalance is a need for raising standards of living etc. It is clear that the traditional approach has failed to solve these problems. And now as a fight against these problems we are to set right things to achieve our socio-economic goals through the adoption of the resources of modern technology and mass media that can accelerate knowledge and education to the maximum extent.

In the context of conditions obtaining in all developing countries, where illiteracy is still to be completely eradicated, where the need for modernization continues to be of prime and urgent importance and where access to information is either denied or not possible with people living in remote areas, the newer mass media alone are the means of teaching and learning about what is happening in other countries and in the world. The mass media and recent innovations in education can, when used with intelligence, discrimination and proper appreciation of their specific nature, help to serve the ends of education in a manner the traditional methods could never hope to achieve. It is the role of the press and other media to convey to the community news and views which are not only related to changes but also capable of disseminating seeds for
changes and bring an all-round development in every sphere of life.

Individuals are expected to be aware of the changes taking place around them in various walks of life. They are motivated to accept changes and adopt new methods, techniques and measures in spite of traditional conservatism. At the first instance they are found hesitant to give up the traditional values. Therefore, they are to be inspired, educated and motivated, to go for new values, accept the changes that have taken place and adopt new techniques and methods to usher in a new era. But, no doubt, the traditional conservatism may well lead the villager to resist changes in spite of their confirmation about future benefits. For example, the Government of India did not get a favorable response when it, through mass media, encouraged people to raise poultry as a side business that would improve their financial condition. The proposal was strongly opposed mainly by the Hindu Brahmins. They considered it to be a low caste occupation which would certainly belittle them, denigrate their status and degrade their position in the society. Such kind of feeling on their part was certainly an obstacle to their economic development.

It is well known that adoption of family-planning measures to prevent and control what is called population explosion is the pressing demand of the present day Indian society for her socio-economic development. However, the common man is not mentally prepared to accept this wholeheartedly. But it is only due to the role played by the media including the newspapers, in highlighting the issue, the people,
of the late, have become more and more conscious about the problem.

In a society where traditional values and conservatism play a crucial role in influencing human behavior, changes and modernity can only be brought about by information and persuasion and this is basically the task of communication. And this communication process shall not be considered solely in terms of the downward and outward flow from elite to the mass; from the centre to the periphery; from the communication rich to the communication-poor. It shall be seen as the right of the individual to communicate with as many of his fellow humans as his own ability and the availability of resources allow. From this right of the individual stems the right of communities, societies and nations to communicate among them. Communication is a fundamental human need, necessary to one’s growth and development as a human being, and, therefore, a fundamental human right. In this regard, the role of press and other electronic mass media is quite significant as they help in raising swiftness in the communication process.

The pattern of development often means that essential services and improvements, such as industrialization, education and health services, reach the towns first. It takes a long time for these to be extended to the countryside, where the bulk of the population lives. The limited number of education and training centres in the cities cannot cope with the number who needs to be trained, and extension workers find it hard cover the areas where they are most needed. And
without an influx of specialized help and information to rural areas, development will be slow. A danger facing many countries is the drift to the cities by the people, attracted by urban facilities. The only way to prevent this is through rural development. Communication media can be the cheapest and swiftest method of reaching rural communities, and of providing some expertise where none has existed.

Development has something to do with personal growth and personal experience. The extent to which a country can be developed by such processes as industrialization, agricultural reform, medical services, and transport and communication projects is limited by the extent to which people themselves are changed by participation in development. This is a belief that modernization along is only the technology of development; it ignores the human element.

Man can only liberate himself. He cannot be liberated or developed by another. For man makes himself, it is his ability to act deliberately, for a self-determined purpose, which distinguishes him from the animals. The expansion of his own consciousness, and therefore of his power over himself, his environment, and his society, must therefore ultimately be what we mean by development. So development is for Man, by Man, and of Man.

In 1823, when journalism in the United States was still in its formative stages, Thomas Jefferson wrote, “The press is the best instrument for enlightening the mind of man, and improving him as a rational, moral and social being”. Jefferson’s sentiment is mildly hyperbolic, but the press, more
than any other institution, is able to add to the knowledge and understanding of vast numbers of individuals. It is a short step from this fact to the conclusion that it is part of the media’s mandate in democracies to provide a public benefit by circulating useful information and promoting the public’s understanding.

An individual, after passing through many stages in his mental approach to the problem, adopts a new idea, a new method, a new technique, a new practice to improve his socio-economic condition. This is what is called the adoption process that follows four stages. The individual, lacking adequate information, is only exposed to the recent innovation at the awareness stage. When he wishes to have more and minute information he reaches the interest stage. And he applies the innovation mentally to his own situation at the evaluation stage and decides whether to go for it. And finally at the trail stage, he makes an experiment of the new practice, if succeeds, a decision is made for adoption.

At every stage, the press plays a very significant role. It provides earliest information to the people constituting the awareness stage. At the interest stage, it provides additional details. And it has got a remarkable contribution by stimulating discussion at the evaluation stage. A newspaper, by publishing an issue of common interest, may create an urge in the minds of the people to have a group discussion. Through this the newspaper broadens their outlook and helps them to develop new aspirations. It also makes the decision-making process much easier on the part of the people.
1.1.4 A FORUM FOR PUBLIC DEBATE

The success and growth of a democratic polity normally rests on an effective and enlightened public opinion which can be created and influenced by the press. It is through the column of news, articles and letters, facilities are provided by newspaper for direct public participation. But the nature of such participation is totally within the discretion of the owner or controller of the newspaper. The editors never feel embarrassed by rejecting the copies contributed by the people if the content of the copies is found to be unethical and goes against the norms of the press. The copies can also be ignored or thrown into the dustbin if they are of little interest, poorly written, or create a legal risk for the newspaper, or because they are too long and there is no space to accommodate.

The rulers and leaders influence as well as lead the people through the press. A process continues where and when the people react and respond to the action taken by the rulers. Ultimately the government and the governed become partners in the progress of the nation. The press helps people to articulate their opinion, ventilate their grievances, put forth their demands on the system, and express their views on different issues and policies adopted by the Government. By developing a lively “Letters to the Editor” feature, newspaper encourage the public to discuss the matters of national importance.

The Press and other mass media liberate the people from the bondage of distance and isolation. By bringing what is distant near, and making understandable what is difficult and
strange, the media can help “bridge the transition between traditional and modern society.” The press as a forum for public debate narrates what the people know, think, feel and talk about. It acts as a mirror reflecting the opinion, impression and reactions of the people towards different problems. This act of choice as to what events are to be reported, who are to be quoted and whom to write about, determines to a large extent what people know and talk about. This is certainly a significant practice that guarantees the freedom of speech and expression as necessitated by a democratic policy. Further the press helps in enforcing social norms, forming tastes, conferring status on an individual; and it can broaden the ‘policy dialogue’ “providing the two-way flow of information and opinion which is a requirement for strengthening the concept of democracy”. In fact, freedom of speech and expression has been regarded by many commentators as a political liberty. Its values, therefore, has been expressed in terms of the furtherance of democracy.

Democracy stands for protection of public interest. This can be ensured only when there is a public debate where all the parties are involved to discuss openly various issues confronting the political system. Each gives relaxation to the other for an established understanding for the smooth functioning of the governmental machinery. The people at large are given a scope to utilize their talent for the advent of the nation. They vehemently criticize the rulers for the latter’s acts of omission and commission. Without such practice carelessness will be maximized at the level of administration that ultimately be resulted in the downfall of a system.
Press, whether in developed or developing nations, is certainly crucial to man’s effort to gain a greater quality or life because it affects his productivity, his personal expression, social needs and aspirations. Shifting our focus to the electronic media, it is observed that, broadcasting seems to present particularly intractable problems all over the world for one reason that it is inextricable caught in-between tale-communication and the press. Broadcasting, for example, in most developing countries, is usually managed by government. This is so partly because the leaders of these countries feel that this would ensure and facilitate greater participation of the people in economic and national affairs, increase their skills and knowledge, weld them together into nationhood, and permit them to find their cultural and personal identity in the efforts towards development.

It may, further, be noted that the press, for the sake of dissemination of information, prints the news and this freedom to publish the news and views is often said to be “the first freedom.” When the news and freedom become synonymous, then “news is more than printed sheets of paper, more than accounts of events, and more than an immediate report of what is happening. The free and unhampered printing and distribution of news provides a forum in which truth may become clear.”

1.1.4 A WATCHDOG OF THE PEOPLE
The role of the press in a democracy is that of a watchdog for the interest of the people, but if this powerful watchdog is not reasonable restrained or disciplined, it might run berserk to bite the people, whom it is supposed to serve. Barring occasional lapses, well-established newspapers have generally maintained standards of professional rectitude even in the face of coercive and corruptive influences. However, unfortunately, there is a section of the press, known as Yellow Journalism, which frequently indulge in smut and slime games, smear campaigns, scurrilous, sensational, baseless and graceless writings. The problem is how to curb or deal with this evil? To get rid of this evil, the observance of the professional ethics is the objective duty of the press itself. In the performance of this ethical duty, it is imperative that the press should be inspired by the consciousness that abuse of this freedom, even if not legally punishable, tarnishes the fair name of the press, and therefore, deserves to be censured by fellow journalists.

Acknowledging the importance of the Press, the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi emphasized that both the government and the press should work together to promote national interest. Speaking at the inauguration of the golden jubilee celebrations of the Indian Newspaper Society at its new building at Vigyan Bhawan, he said, the press must fulfill its role of criticizing authority and correcting it if it feels something is going wrong. He further said that the government and the press have antagonistic relations with one another. He hoped that both could fight the evils of corruption and poverty together and work towards fulfilling the need of social
transformation and strengthening the nation. He affirmed his government’s commitment to a free press.

1.1.5 A PROTECTOR OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

The press, as said earlier, provides useful information to the public. This social function can be successfully performed only when people support it, trust it, and patronize it. And without such trust within the profession—between editors and reporters and between reporters and sources—that functions is endangered. Hence it is argued that newspapers should not be compelled to disclose their sources of information as this would restrain the flow of information and adversely affect the interest of the press in discharging its responsibility.

The foundation for trust is journalism is truthfulness, but trustworthiness does not rest solely on truthfulness. There is, for example, substantial public concern about “reporters’ lack of concern whether their stories hurt people.” Scepticism of this kind erodes trust, too. Even a reporter or editor who is scrupulously truthful and concerned about causing harm many be careless, have poor judgment, or be unable to keep confidences. These character flaws all discourage trust.

The right to seek information on behalf of the public has been entrusted to the press, and the press in turn is expected to present the information to the public fairly, truthfully, and competently. Thomas Jefferson once observed, “When a man assumes a public trust, he should consider himself as public property.” The press has implicitly assumed a public trust and
can therefore legitimately be considered public property as it is obligated to serve the public and is accountable to the public.

The press, with an assurance to keep the source confidential, avails more of information. And if sources cannot trust reporters to accurately convey their information to the public and to keep confidences, the sources will cease to be sources. Confidentiality is at the heart of trust in regular reporter-source relationships. Such relationships are different from those found in other professional settings such as between lawyers and clients, and physicians and patients. In these relationships, the right of confidentiality exists to protect privacy and to encourage the openness that is required to guarantee the client or patient the full benefit of the professional’s service. In the case of reporters and sources, by contrast, there are distrust and adversarial elements in the relationship, with the reporter aiming to learn more than the source wants to tell and the source trying to promote a particular, view with due emphasis. And of course, from the journalists’ standpoint, not the source’s interest but the public’s interest should be paramount.

The Press is viewed by many people with ambivalence. Their attitudes express a mixture of trust and distrust, as well as respect and disrespect. Different people cite different reasons for their distrust. Some think that journalists are very often biased, incompetent, inaccurate, negligent, callous, sensationalistic, arrogant and contemptuous of the public. Others believe that the press frequently abuses its privileges and as a result, the other rights and values such as national
security, reputation, as well as privacy suffer disproportionately. And it is because there appears to be an underlying general trust in the media to present the news in a reasonable fair and unbiased pattern, there seems to be a little threat of an overall breakdown of public trust.

In USA the courts have been trying to strike a balance between the various public interests involved. While on the one hand the importance of the press not being compelled to reveal its source of information is recognized, on the other, the importance of private individual being in a position to obtain redress for wrong done to him is also acknowledge. Neither interest over-rides the other. Each case depends on its own facts. The public has a right of access to information which is of public concern or in the interest of the public. The newspapers, supposed to be the agents of the public, collect that information and place it before them.

In India, no newspaper, news agency, editor or journalist shall be compelled by the council to disclose the source of any news or information vide Sec. 15(2) of the Press Council Act 1978. The source is to be given maximum protection on the basis of confidentiality from the press. This is the base which strengthens free flow of information being the fundamental necessity of a democratic polity. It reporters, as it is observed, could not provide a minimum guarantee of confidentiality, much important news world never be reported. Reporters who break the trust put in them by sources are rare, even though a clash of values may sometime justify doing so. As most reporters, sources and editors agree, if the press is to provide
the public with vital information that it needs and to which it is entitled, there is no practical alternative to the existing system, which sometimes entails not identifying sources to the public. But some like, Girilal Jain, Rajendra Mathur, S. K. Mukherjee, H. K. Paranjape are of the view that journalists should be compelled to disclose their sources, if at all, in extreme cases only and that too in confidence to a judge or a judicial officer, and any changes in laws that may be necessary for this purpose should be made.

In order to strengthen the reporter-source relationship, trust in very much essential. And every arrangement of trust involves an implicit contract whose terms express an arrangement of co-operation and confidence. However, if the terms are violated by either party, the other party’s obligations are nullified. To minimize the ill motives of both the parties, there becomes the necessity of a contract, at least in an implied form which to some extent dictates that the source will not grossly deceive or mislead the reporter for it’s political, ideological, economic or other goals at the reporter’s cost. Simultaneously, on the other hand, the reporter is obliged to keep confidentiality and promises, as well as to exercise sufficient care to ensure that the source’s information is not misrepresented in print. Such terms denote the basic moral principles that sustain relationships of confidentiality and trustworthiness.

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