CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTORY
Lexically\(^1\) speaking the Press refers to a kind of instrument for compressing, flattening or shaping for extracting juice etc. Thus viewed, the Press is an instrument and its objective is to extract the juice, or if one could otherwise say, the essence. Between keeping the instrument ready for operation and extracting the juice, lie some phases which are inevitably to be covered. Materials out of which the juice is to be extracted must be fed into the instrument. And when the instrument starts acting on the materials so fed, it may in its ultimate interest of extracting the juice, compress the materials, flatten them or shape them. In this context it may be evident that both the machine seeking to extract the juice and the material fed into it are significant. Good materials fed into a bad or malfunctioning machine may not necessarily ooze out good and/or adequate juice,

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the nature of which may be different from what is normally expected. In other words, the machine needs functioning well. Its parts must be in right working order. Adequate technical care must be taken for protection of the machine from being affected. Also, the material must be appropriate, adequate and, from the technical point of view, dependable.

1.1. The Press: the concept:

The concept of the Press, with which a student of Political and Social Sciences is concerned, is slightly different from how we have viewed it earlier. It ordinarily refers to the mechanism through which the people get news about the Political, Social, Economic and Cultural matters. If we accept this as a mechanism, it may be necessary to highlight its constituents. It includes the reporters, journalists, and above all the vast multitude of men and materials performing the business of presenting all sorts of news from the perspective of their own views.

In the context of what we have discussed earlier, the Press relevant for the political scientist
resembles the press which is an instrument. Just like the parts of the instrument referred to above, the constituents of the press must be in right working order, meaning thereby, there must not be any dislocation in their schedule of functioning. The news-reporter or the journalist should be so appropriately situated in the social, economic and political scale that his creative impulses do not suffer frustration. The bread should not create bottlenecks in the functioning of the brain nor should the powers that be get the opportunity to force him speak out things he does not think right. This presupposes the existence of a stable establishment committed to the cause of the freedom of the press. By the term stable establishment, we mean an establishment based on sound financial foundation and guided by laws promoting freedom. The sources of its income must be regular and not dependent upon the whims and caprices of any external agency like the Government, the functioning of which may attract the critical attention of the press. Otherwise, it can not be protected from being affected. Also, the individual journalist, be he a reporter, a member of the editorial staff or the editor himself, should not be under the nightmare of prosecution, either of its own management or of the Government. Once one
becomes a journalist, one's job security as also the security of one's body and mind should not be threatened. This, however, does not suggest that the whims of the journalist be let loose. He must be a self-restraining individual striving to effectively strike a balance between his power and responsibility. He must have commitment to the cardinal principles accepted by the society. His arguments should be based on a dispassionate analysis of facts and his approach should be absolutely objective and impersonal. He must be aware of the fact that the society looks to him for well considered views on the available news, and thus the quantum of faith the society has reposed on him is immeasurable. Any attempt at careful twisting of facts and/or suppression of falsi suggestion is an unpardonable betrayal to the society at large. If a journalist fails to be self-restraining and tilts the balance between power and responsibility in favour of power, promoting self and position for himself the laws of the land should butt in. In other words, like the parts of the instrument, the constituents of the press should function properly and, as long as there is harmonious functioning of it, there should be no threat to it. Thus, one could say, the significant constituents
of the instrument "the press" are the individual journalist, the management of the press and a functional relationship between the above two on the one hand and the government on the other.

1.2. **The raw material:**

In the foregoing analysis we have argued that for extracting the juice of right taste and quantity, adequate and proper raw materials should be fed into the instrument. Viewing the press as an instrument, the 'news' becomes the raw material. Since our interest is to get the juice of right taste and quantity, the propriety and adequacy of the news to be fed into the press attract our serious consideration. Determining the propriety of the news would presuppose the selection of the type of news to be given prominent publicity through the agency of the press. News that promote good taste and the healthy development of the society are thus to be carefully chosen and their analysis in the columns of the newspaper should also be based on adequate facts on the issues.
1.3. News and information:

If "news" and information are selected in the context of their saleability in their domestic market, then the credibility of the press as one of the free news agencies belonging to communication media will suffer a serious setback. This may ultimately lead to the destruction of its infrastructure. The quality of news is as important as the freedom of the press. "Disaster news" such as an earthquake, or a plane crash or a revolt or an outbreak of communal violence has to be served to the masses with utmost honesty and sincerity of desire. In other words, the press should not be superficial and its observations must not be impressionistic, varying from person to person. We do not argue here that all journalists should give identical views and they should view things from one perspective only. One could reasonably presume that if honest and intelligent minds played freely on some data, the approaches may be different but the conclusions may be more or less identical, or at

least, there may be some consensus on the cardinal values governing the social and political life.

1.4. Evolution of the press:

The press, as we know to-day, is a modern institution. What makes it different from anything which preceded it is its responsibility to the public in democracy. Newspapers first came into being as a means of popular education. Their commercial side is a comparatively recent development, but the equally important cause of social reform, as well as industrial development, owes a great deal to the Indian press.

Modern life has become so dependent on the press that it is very difficult for us at times to doubt whether there can be life without the press. We forget also how a mass medium, particularly a paper, which is so much an integral part of life, affects our thinking, our actions, and our social behaviour. Communication in the modern life is a carrier of social process. And in a

thousand unseen ways, this carrier influences the political, social and cultural life of a community in which this medium functions. But this social process, to a very great degree, depends on the communication, exchange and transmission of knowledge. And since knowledge is an integral part of this carrier, knowledge again depends upon communication. Throughout the historical times, rulers appointed individuals to collect information, particularly about any challenge to their authority. Also, the rulers wanted to keep themselves informed of the main currents in the life of the people. Further, they wanted the people to know their orders. Kautilya, the Minister of Chandragupta Maurya, who was a contemporary of Alexander the Great, maintained in his famous "Arthasastra" that the King should listen to the reports pertaining to law and order. He also refers to the officers of the secret service organisations who should give him information (Kautilya). This dual system of gathering information is a feature of the monarchic system of gathering information which existed from the ages. But the significant feature of the reign of Asoka is a type of communication he designed by publishing the imperial edicts on rocks and on stone pillars which are
existing even today from Afghanistan in North West to Karnataka State in the South.

1.5. The Modern Newspaper:

One of the greatest events in the history of man is the invention of printing in the fifteen century in Europe. Printing being the first mass production industry has been a dominant feature of modern times. The development of telegraphs, telephones, and railways, enabled the newspapers to get quickly news from different places. Significant developments in news reporting are squarely vested with news reporter whose presentation of unbiased news brings confidence and good name to the newspaper in the eyes of the public.

1.6. Growth and development:

The Indian press played a meaningful role in the national movement. It aroused the masses against foreign rule. After the achievement of national independence, the role of the press has undergone some changes.
Its main role seems creating an atmosphere conducive to development of a critical outlook. It thus, if one could say, has instilled in the masses a new awareness; the awareness of the rights of the individual as well as their duties. The press should continue its effort to be relentless critic of administration in democracy, apart from its traditional role as a consolidator and the mobiliser of public opinion for the preservation of freedom. The press has a great responsibility to help the society to work for social and economic revolution and to ensure that the benefits of these changes are not limited to a small section of the society but reach the masses.

It can discharge this task satisfactorily when there is growth in the rate of circulation that is commensurate with the growth of population, the increase in the rate of literacy and growth of the economy. Thus, literacy, democracy, developing technology, and urbanisation work in increasing the citizen's requirements for a greater amount of information which the masses need.

Further, there is also an intimate relationship between the circulation of newspapers and advertisements,
Further, there is also an intimate relationship between the circulation of newspapers and advertisements, which help make the papers viable. It is obvious that the advertisers prefer to give their advertisements to papers having larger circulation only. Inevitably this hits the small papers with low circulation, and they keep struggling for their survival.

The press in India has a great duty to perform towards the development of democracy in India, as a large part of the overwhelming part of the electorate (enfranchised) is still uneducated. The year 1947 can be said to mark the beginning of a new era for the press of India. Before India became independent, the press in India functioned as a crusading agent for the freedom of the country. It contributed its might to see the nationalist movement to its fruition. It is no mincing words to say that the freedom movement launched by the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, received considerable fillip from the press in India. It is difficult to say how quickly the movement for freedom would have progressed without the understanding and support which it received from the press in India. The fact that the newspapers had
to function as the spearhead of the nationalist movement left its indelible mark on the profession as a whole and on the format of the press in the country.

The growth of vernacular press is a useful barometer of measuring native feeling and excitement. Besides, it took up local problems of the masses on an emergency basis and provided them with a forum for debate and discussion of their critical problems.

1.7. The People and the press:

People are inclined to believe anything they see in print. It is this gullibility of most people which accords a high position. If the press analyses the facts in an impersonal way, it can provide the true leadership to the masses that look to it for that. The forces of democracy get strengthened, opinion becomes really representative opinion, and the decisions and actions of governments on the basis of such facts go a long way in really solving the problem of the people. This makes the press an effective tool of change in the society. The constituents, that is to say, the journalists, thus should
realise that the future of the republic is in their hands. However, the journalists are human beings and as such, they at times display all human weaknesses in their behaviour. These weaknesses are not confined to the journalists only. They pervade the whole social and political life in presenting twisted news representing perverted views. Either for attaining their personal objectives or for carving out a place of honour forcibly for themselves, the journalists use the press and exercise their power to do mischief. They do not have the slightest compunction in impugning the reputation of any individual or institution. Whatever may be its circulation, the impact of a newspaper is out of all proportion to its readership, not only because each reader is a carrier of the impact of the press, but also because the people who read the press are the opinion makers in this country. We are a comparatively inexperienced democracy where the common people have much less to say than their proportions warrant. The intelligentsia as a class is powerful beyond all comparison, much more powerful than big business or the press itself. And it is the intelligentsia who read the press, who help form opinion and then convey it to others in the society. Therefore, the influence of the press is tremendously strong in backward countries.
The importance of a free press in a democracy is not only that it explains the facts but also it can be an instrument of social change. The press must succeed (with its might and main to focus attention on all) public issues \(^4\) like prohibition, nationalisation of insurance or banks, or transportation, etc., and, mobilising public opinion against corruption and communalism, in pressing the cause of the weaker sections of the community and in support of social programmes such as family welfare.

The press being a mass medium has the advantage of playing a dominant role in moulding public opinion. It can also help the people to orient their activities to meet the future needs and future demands. It also helps them to prepare themselves for new roles and new responsibilities and equip themselves to face the new problems that arise in a changing society. But it should be aware of public reaction to any wrong news or "Prejudicial" news columns published. The Press must always endeavour to picturise the correct facts; twisting them either for fear of

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exposure or for playing "diplomacy" or covering them because all papers have covered them may not sound tenable and justifiable. The press is the creator of public opinion, either for or against a thing, but the creator should remember at no point of time it should mislead the creature. The creature may devour the creator.

1.8. The Press and public affairs:

The press is used for information about and interpretation of Public Offices and their affairs. The Press, on the basis of different logical considerations extole or decry public offices, office bearers and their functioning. One group of journalists differs from the other in reasoning and arguments put forward which have varying power of appeal to different segments of the population. To some, one newspaper may provide tremendous food for thought and, the same press may be enough to get another segment of the population thoroughly vexed. It thus, at times provides psychological relaxation. The press is the most accessible instrument. The press is an indispensable public instrument of importance. It is
sought after, even though sometimes it is torn or burnt in anger at public places as a mark of ventilating public disapproval about some wrong news items or those of bad taste and colour.

1.9. The Press: its relevance, power and responsibility:

The press is a means through which news is transmitted to the public. News is information about events taking place, development plans, movement of personalities, announcement of policies, unusual happenings or purely educational thought. However, since a newspaper is but a reflection of the community it serves, or the people it hopes to serve, it has to print something meaningful to its readers. Thus, it can be said that news is information which is meaningful to people. Our use of the term 'meaningful' is deliberate and it implies importance. The press being a very powerful institution of modern times, its responsibility of serving the people as public instrument in democracy suffers seriously if it fails to perform its duties towards the public properly and promptly.

Violence has no room in democracy and our people should learn from and through the press code of social behaviour so as not to be its victim. The importance of the press is vitally felt in democracy for the maintenance of self-government. The press can also be watching over the ever more complex ethical problems of conflicting of interest of all public officials from governors to the man in the streets. The press, in democracy, plays a significant part in informing, educating and enlightening the citizens that they remain armed with facts and information to the teeth so as to meet any eventualities that are coming their way. The press while playing this role becomes instrumental to creating such public opinion which is supposed to govern the action of government officials. The press which is called the Fourth Estate of democracy, its timeliness is crucial to all reporting political, economic and social matters.

1.10. Opinion formation and political process:

The press, in a democracy, is the standard vehicle for the formation of public opinion. Public
opinion like a pendulum in the clock of newspapers swings. On several occasions, and notably during the time of political turmoil and also at other times, the press rendered valuable service to the society in being an exponent of instructed and thoughtful opinion. In democratic and welfare state, the issues and problems are so complex that for comprehension the government needs the help of the press to realise the nature of public opinion, so that it would be strong and stable. The public no longer play the role of "dumb-driven cattle" in democracies but are sincere and active in thought and action to influence policies and decisions of the government through the various media of expressing public opinion. The responsibility of the press as an agent of opinion formation increases. The newspaper should be pressed more into public service than into being an industry in a democracy. The policy makers in democracy reach for the newspaper to solicit the help of the press for favourable public opinion. In fact, many officials


treat the press and public opinion as synonymous, either explicitly equating them or using them interchangeably. The press should develop an attitude of responsiveness to popular desire in a democracy. The press has to function as an independent fact-finding agency. News and views are to be presented accurately for the creation of healthy public opinion. The objectivity in the presentation of news and views is the scientific method. In the absence of a rational judgement, a sound public opinion is unthinkable. The newspapers, thus, print both sides of an issue so as to provide news to the public truly and accurately. The press should act like the beam of searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of darkness into vision.

The press because of its importance as an instrument of creating opinions, must work as the main agent in forming opinion by letting everybody know what everybody else is


saying or is supposed to be thinking. The press has to report matters by going down below the surface of public affairs and ferret out information needed to give shape to the event of proper significance. It should tell its audience about the occurrence of event as also the reasons as to why the event occurred. The process is one of providing clarification and explanation through interpretation of happenings. It should not credit itself for reporting of public affairs if it relies on the accounts of personalities and issues. It is this process of selection, rejection, interpretation and seeking of right information of events that lays foundation on which the edifice of public opinion is built. If this foundation is to become all the more stable, the press need lay emphasis on reporting of news on national, rather than individual, sectional or communal matters. Effective public opinion, for the purpose of a democratic government, is the opinion which is organised and representative of special knowledge concerning the question at issue. Besides,

the intensity of an opinion is often of far more importance than the number of persons who accept it.

1.11. The Press as the guide:

The press has some persuasive role in relation to economic and social development. It is a powerful instrument of persuasion for political activities including mass participation. It creates consciousness and rouses them to the occasion. It strengthens the social values and norms. The ethics of the press does not leave room for intrigue for power, privileges of the class or any vested interest in the society. It, on the other hand, acts as a formidable guide to prevention of social maladies, formulation of healthier economic policies and creation of better and healthier political activities leading to mass participation, debate and discussion. The press involves itself actively propagating basic values of life to the people of the community for the establishment of healthier society and a government. It tries to place the readers on the ringside of important

social, cultural, economic and political events instead of telling them what happened in the past. It develops a climate for change and creates an understanding of community objectives as also civic consciousness. These are the basis of democracy and social advancement. It fights crime in the society by publicising the work of our law enforcement officers and sometimes their negligence to their embarrassment. It opens the eyes of the public to be more vigilant and critical of activities of the public servants. And it being an ever going-concern it tries to promote social cause, and new ideas concerning economic and political. The power and the responsibility of the press should be harnessed and directed to follow closely the developments in various fields, informing people, reacting to policies and creating the social climate in which development and nation-building programmes can take place. The activities of the press can not operate


14. In social terms, the press should focus on means of better hygiene and nutrition, improvements in housing and home management, prevention of illness, care of children, family welfare, as well as revision of values and relationships. In economic terms, the press should be careful to direct its attention to a better use of resources, greater efficiency and productivity, cooperation, and in due course mechanisation and industrialisation.
in a social and political vacuum, nor do they deal with abstruse philosophies. The press should embark upon the constructive role of preventing anti-social behaviour resulting in violence which may affect the society with vigour and energy. The press failing to guide the public on social, economic, cultural and political matters may likely to lose its "mass" appeal nature, and acquire the status of social parochialism. The press can direct public attention to development and from time to time, interest can be directed to a new custom, a new behaviour, a new health or agricultural practice. The press as an 'instrument-panacea' of public weal should guard our cultural life for it does not deteriorate for want of moral standards. And it should not only highlight as the true test of our culture and civilisation the welfare measures of our government but also its inference, and omission. The press as an instrument of democracy for ushering in of social change through peaceful and democratic


methods have an important responsibility in guiding the public. It is the business of the press to provide the information and guidance towards sound judgements which are essential to the healthy functioning of democracy.

1.12. The Press in a regimented society:

In a regimented society, unlike in democracy, the ruler who is essentially a dictator of some forum or the other, paradoxically, deprives himself of a great benefit. He refuses to look into the mirror of public opinion and thereby fails to see how good or otherwise he looks. He is unable to know the people's reaction to

17. I.K. Gujral in The Indian Press : Challenge and Opportunity, p.67 (ed.) A.G. Noorani, Freedom of the Press in India, Nachiketa Publications Ltd.; 22 Naushir Bharucha Road, Bombay - 7, 1971. He further explains since we feel that a News paper is a part of our life, we ignore the forces that make a paper and ignore the factors that compose a paper. We forget also how a mass medium (The press), particularly a paper, which is so much an integral part of our life, affects our thinking, our actions, our social behaviour and social structure at p.59. He further tells us that mass media influence and maintain the social institutions, values, ways of life, not only from day to day, but also from generation to generation. If a news paper is a part of our integral life, then the influence that it has on our values and our social institutions has always to be kept in mind, as also its social impact at p.60.

his actions and decisions, and ultimately gets deprived of prospects of improving. He is allergic to criticism and as a result, any attempt by a press to criticise the ruler is invariably followed by acts of prosecution. The press, in such a situation, at the best, becomes extremely careful in making analysis of public policies. Mostly, however, the press tends to toe the line of the ruler and disseminates the official expectations provided for by them. And the dictator takes a sadistic delight of riding roughshod with the press. As a consequence, the press fails to serve the Government and the people with its role of dynamic equilibrium between aspiration and performance that which possibly may not hopefully be attained in a regimented society. There is little, if any, perception of the role of an Opposition, loyal or otherwise, in the carrying out of this function. 19.

A regimentation may be made by a single individual or a dictator. It may also be that by a group

like the military junta or a political party. The former Shah of Iran may be cited as a suitable example of a single individual acting as a dictator. The military junta of Pakistan or Bangladesh may represent the second type whereas the communist party of the people's Republic of China or that of the U.S.S.R. may be cited as the example of the third type. In a competitive party system, where, however, attempts are made at controlling the free play of the press, there is some form of regimentation, moderate though. In all these societies only the degree of regimentation varies. Invariably, however, the ruling elites refuse to see the realities of the political life. The press, here, does not act as the defender of people's liberties. It only becomes an invisible official agency of the Government. It becomes a tool for, what Professor Lucian W. Pye calls, the political penetration of the ruling elites. Programmes of the Government for social and economic change, government's explanation, mostly misleading, about the factors responsible for its non-achievement of the objective. Condemnation of those

persuing a different approach to the problems become the news items for the press. One may not be wrong to hold here that from the perspective of promotion of liberty, the justification for the existence of the press becomes highly superfluous. History records that extensive use of mass media was made in the Nazi Germany with a view to converting the people to the Nazi way of thinking and behaviour. Application of force and other forms of coercion controls the people. Obedience to the regime was imposed and thus, if one could say the regime lacked legitimacy\textsuperscript{21} of the Max Weberian sense. In this regimented society the official attitudes extend over the whole range of human activities. There the press plays a second fiddle. Collection of facts and a dispassionate analysis of them do not become the responsibilities of the press. The journalist, who in a democracy is a very respectable person becomes positively inferior to a civil servant. He connives with the Government in distorting the picture of the political life and in course of doing

\textsuperscript{21} Here, legitimacy means that the people with whom the regime is associated should have popular and spontaneous support. The Government is based on consent. For details see \textit{Essays from Max Weber}. Also, see R.K. Chatterjee's \textit{Mass Communication}, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1973, p. 112.
it, he does what is known as suppressio falsi suggestio. As a result the people are kept in darkness which pervades the whole society.

1.13. The Press in a developing society:

A developing society, usually menaced by political instability, social disequilibrium, struggle for rapid economic and political modernisation despite inadequate tools and expertise, needs effective guidance and aid of the press. The struggle for power in such a society tends to be fierce and, as a consequence, politics becomes a normless. The press, here, need discipline discussion of public affairs and create a climate for the governors to govern with the rational support of the masses and their representatives. It has to make threabare discussion of the public affairs and, in all reasonable cases urge upon the people to cooperate with the government in the management of public affairs. Not only does it bring light and knowledge to the common people but also it sows the seeds of a revolution of rising expectations. If a developing society is wedded
to democracy, like India, the press has to breed and foster a democratic political culture, during election and at other times. It must support a governing elites as also the critics of the government, depending on which of them represent reason and society's welfare. Forces of disintegration as also those promoting unnecessary disaffection for authority should, in no case be promoted by the Press. This is because the press and the government are not at cross purposes with each other. In reality the press aims at equipping the government better for discharging its own responsibility in fulfilling its declared objective. A set of people committed to the cause of people's welfare and working with honesty and sincerity should never find a press hostile. All that the press might do sometime is projecting alternatives, ideological or otherwise, not acceptable to the people that form the government. If the press deviates from the norms prescribed for it there seems no justification for continuing its existence. The press in such a society is an instrument of social, economic and political change. Its failure may signal dangerous for the freedom of the individual and for the society.
1.14. The Press in a developed society:

There seems to be some difference in the role of the press in a developed society which can have the luxury of frequent battles, rightly or wrongly from the point of view of social, economic and political status of the people and the society, there is a marked difference in it. The people here seem to be capable of understanding public debates and identifying forces detrimental to their cause. No doubt, the press broadens their horizon but the individuals are capable of getting such services even from other sources including other forms of mass media.

1.15. Democracy and the Press:

In a political system the inputs are really very important. The nature and character of the output in form of decisions and actions shall, to a very considerable extent, be dependent upon the input. The output in form of decisions and actions becomes significant only when they are accepted as authoritatively allocated.
In a democracy, it is said that the people rule themselves in as much as their hope and aspirations get properly reflected in decisions and actions of the government. In other words, the government decisions and actions are based on the experiences and needs of the people of the society. Thus if the experiences and needs of the people are effectively communicated to decision makers and actors the functioning of the government goes in direction of serving the problems of the people. It, thus becomes evident, as the system analysts hold, political communication is an important input. The press doing this political communication has therefore to carefully judiciously and dispassionately project the real problems facing the people to the decision makers. As discussed in an earlier context in this chapter the press has to compress and flatten the news carefully. It has to eliminate news which are likely to go against the cause of the people. It has to take steps to eradicate, as far as possible the personal prejudices and biases from the news about the experiences and problems of the society to the decision making centers. Since the press views the problem from all possible angles and tries to make honest efforts of presenting the untwisted news the problem
facing the society becomes totally perceptively to the decision makers, and, as such, the decisions and actions of the system become functional and authoritatively allocated. In extending this argument a little further it may be said that the press does not stop functioning after the decision is made or action is taken. It continues ceaselessly with its watchful eyes and points out the shortcomings or otherwise of the impact of the decisions and actions. Simultaneously the press provides constructive suggestions and since all the newspapers are dispassionate and honest, their reflections educate the masses on matters relating to the functioning of the government, etc.

In a political society where these normative conditions exist, the government becomes really democratic and there is absolute support for such a government. However, where there is a norm-fact dichotomy the communications made through agencies of the state are either wrong or dishonest. Personal whims and caprices as also the likes and dislikes vitiate the process of political communication. The actions of the government
are innocent of the experiences and problems of the people. The decision makers are misled and indifferent to the problems of the people for whom they make decisions and on whose support they are placed on the position of power. One could argue here that the government and the press are not antithetical. The functioning of the one does not frustrate the creative impulses of the other. On the other hand if the press functions well independently and points out the lacune in the decisions and actions of the government, it only gives an opportunity to the government to improve itself. The government should accept the press as an honest adviser doing the unpleasant task of speaking the truth. In such a situation the Press is accorded a position of dignity and it enjoys freedom of expression in a real way. In case the unpleasant statements made by the Press are construed as an act of hostility the thinking of the government gets derailed and to that extent its ability to see things in their proper perspective disappears. The rulers who in a democracy are the people's representatives fail to read the pulse of the people
and the gap between the ruler and the ruled is created. This results in malfunctioning of the government as also the non-acceptance of the government decisions by the people as values authoritatively allocated. Chaos and Political instability become the order of the day. The press and democracy must have to work hand in hand. The press and democracy are complimentary to each other and wherever either of the two tries to injure the other, apart from injuring its target it injures itself and ultimately the process which it starts proves suicidal for itself.

We do not seek to lay down some code of conduct for the press but since ours is a democracy based on certain values, and the freedom of the press is interlinked with the healthy development of democracy, it may not be improper to hope that the press should help in the process of political socialisation of the values of democracy. Violence for example does not find favour in a democracy. Tolerance, respect for the dissenter as also the rule
of the majority are some of the cardinal principles of democracy. The more they are socialised the stronger is the foundation of democracy and the greater are the prospects of the freedom of the press.

Since democracy believes in participation of the masses in the decision making process the people should be well informed of the problems of social, economic and political relevance. Once they are informed, involved and committed to issues and values their participation becomes very active and the democracy becomes a participant one.

1.16. Election and the Press:

Democracy believes in continuance of a set of individuals or a party in the seat of power as long as the people so desire. Elections in a democracy are in the nature of a referendum. It is said that during the elections the electorate is asked "do you desire these individuals or this political party should continue to manage your affairs? Do you accept their
principles and methods of political action? Are you satisfied with their functioning before this election?" The press in such a situation has an important role to play. It has to make a detailed study of the antecedents of the individual candidates and or their parties, examining thereby the principles they uphold or seek to block. In this connection a comparative analysis of the usefulness of their election manifesto its contextuality with reference to the prevailing needs and experiences of the masses is made by the press. The personal achievement and failures of the individual candidates and their relative suitability or otherwise are also examined by the press. The electorate who are less aware of the political currents and cross-currents and who look to the press for news, views and guidance depend upon the press very much. Here the press as a media of communication and political education plays its role. It does some investigative work to unearth the truth. Faithful discharge of this duty helps in building up of a sound public opinion. In such a situation the reporters who are keenly interested of the public,
however, some reporters do this work with a purpose of grinding an axe.

1.17. **Image building**:

In course of making its analysis of the experiences and needs of the country as also the candidates, their political parties and their antecedents the press becomes both an image builder and image knocker. Some argue that the image building or knocking is a joint enterprise of the candidates, professionals and voters. A candidate or a party is, mostly, what the press does it. Publicity of plus points of the candidate of the party in the press is of such vital necessity that elections without them do not seem possible. Where an individual or a party has a political press, publicity of the plus points becomes rather very easy. Also, the shortcomings of the rival candidates or the parties are given due, often more than due, publicity which tends to promote the prospect of the candidates and parties concerned. In case a candidate or a party does not
have a political press at the disposal, buying some space or columns in the newspapers to reach the voters at large becomes an unavoidable necessity.

1.18. Intensifies Political Participation:

Normally the masses confine their political participation to voting in the election. The press, as one viewing things on their behalf, analyses the pros and cons of issues: Political, social and economic and recruits the support of the masses get them thoroughly committed and involved, on matters of national interest. Hereby a climate of participation comes up. The masses become active and democracy becomes participant. If the newspapers are honest and unsparing with regard to the exposure of weaknesses and also the unhealthy features of administration, without sensationalising them, it

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would be doing a great service to the cause of democracy. The press that alerts the voter, or the public, to scandalous or incompetent behaviour of public officials assumes that such exposure will arouse public opinion and this public opinion would exert sufficient pressure on the political institutions or public officials for appropriate change. It may be this fear that mainly drives public officials to keep their political house in order. The press not only tells its audience that an event has occurred but also it explains the why and how of the event. In providing clarification and explanation through interpretation of happenings the press alerts the masses and as a consequence public opinion gets built up. Public opinion being an aggregate of views expressed by majority of persons within a given operational public acquires relevance where it is injected into the decision making process and when it has some impact on the behaviour and the conduct of the operators of public offices. Effective public opinion for the purpose of a democratic government is essentially an organised one and it
represents a special knowledge concerning the question at issue. It is the intensity of an opinion which is often of far more importance than the number of persons who accept it. During the election time as also before that, the press organises opinions effectively and this public opinion which may be the reaction of the masses to the output function of the political system gets into the system in form of inputs along with the output that moves in the feedback loop. In other words, as the builder of public opinion the press does, through its interpretation, clarification and rejection, etc. involve greater and greater segments of the population in the political process. Also, because of the free opinion of the different sections of the press and because of the divergent viewpoints expressed by them the masses become able to have a totality of the situation and in course of their enlightenment, their commitment becomes stronger they become militant and their participation gets intensified. This results the election being the weather cock strongly indicating a change in the political climate of the state.
Morris Rosenberg said that uninhibited airing of ideas views points and facts is conducive to the attainment of rational decision making. He was guided by the argument that if men are to maintain control over their political destinies they must be aware of what is going on and must take a hand in determining public policy. Therefore in the interest of strengthening the forces of freedom as also the processes of rational decision making the mass media, particularly the press should be well equipped. The press gives access to knowledge and events far beyond the boundaries of an individual's own observation and experience. Dissemination of news and information is the soul monopoly of the press particularly in a society like ours. This dissemination brings up an informed public and strengthened democratic values and ideas. But one of the preconditions for the strengthening the forces of democracy and the democratic values is the freedom of the press. We are aware that this freedom of the press is dependent upon the some

other forces important among which are the basic character and efficiency of the personnel that constitute the press, the attitude of the individuals and institutions criticised by it, the legal and constitutional provisions governing its conduct, the viability of the institutions as also the ownership of the press. Careful and honest analysis by the journalist may injure the prospects of those who are wrong-doers by choice. However, when a mistake is a bonafide mistake the attack on the press should be construed as an opportunity for one for self-correction and improvement. Policy makers and implementers should view the press as an honest and unsparing adviser. Any deviation from this attitude is likely to be of undesirable repercussions if honesty and straightforwardness are misconstrued to be acts of hostility and retaliatory efforts are made by the misunderstanding party problems become insurmountable for the press. Freedom of the press so curtailed results in curtailment of freedom for the society. In such a situation the newspapers do not get a fair deal from the government on matters relating to
government advertisements, etc. and the supply of newsprint and the other materials needed by the press. This results in either the press being submissive to the government and remaining silent over the weaknesses of the latter or being irrationally hostile and blind to the government's policies. In the first case the masses that look to the press for news and views get frustrated and the formation of the public opinion does not become scientific. In the second case because of the personal hostility of the journalist and the press the beauty of the good policies and their implementation is distorted. A sense of participation and active cooperation in favour of good policies and programmes disappear and the progress of the society gets impeded. Also, in course of discovering new allies to undo the onslaughts of the government the press sometimes joins unholy alliances, slips into wrong hands and functions more as a pressure group than as a press. Thus, it may be argued that the freedom of the press is of vital concern in a democracy and, particularly so in a developing society where the other channels of communication are rather
available. Legal and constitutional provisions should protest the press from all possible onslaughts of the government. No newspapers should be deprived of its legitimate share of government's favour.

1.19. A Vigilant press:

The press in democracy should perform its function most effectively if it is detached from ephemeral and preconceived party politics. A vigilant press may contribute its might and mane to the cause of democracy and public interest if it is acting as a 'watch-dog', of scrutinising the activities of the government of the day and if the government has failed in its duty towards the public. An independent press is a sine qua non of democracy and a press not committed to any party ideology should discuss the country's affairs purely on their merits. It may be very useful things presented by the press to the masses. It alone can provide a free forum for the exchange of ideas, unclouded by preconceived views based on a party-line.
The true measure of health and vigour of a democracy is to be found in its press. The newspapers are the index of the true character of the government. Whether it is democratic or authoritarian. Without an informed and free press there can not be an enlightened people. Laski says 'a people without reliable news is sooner or later a people without the

24. Mr. Justice P.N. Bhagwati in Manska Gandhi V. Union of India, AIR, 1978, S.C., 597 2 tp. 640, Abernathy says "To restrict substantially the rights of speech, press, assembly and voting, however, is to cut the arteries that feed the heart of the democratic model". Abernathy, M. Glenn in Civil Liberties under the constitution (3rd Edition) (1977) p. 352.

basis of freedom. Even Nehru believed that the freedom of press was not merely a slogan but an essential attribute of the democratic process.

1.20. Free Press: remedy to maladies of democracy:

A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both.

26. "I have no doubt that even if the government dislikes the liberties taken by the press and considers them dangerous, it is wrong to interfere with the freedom of the press. By imposing restrictions you do not change anything; you merely suppress the public manifestation of certain things, thereby causing the idea and thought underlying them to spread further. Therefore, I would rather have a completely free press with all the dangers involved in the wrong use of that freedom than a suppressed or regulated press". Speech in New Delhi, December 3, 1950, Jawaharlal Nehru's speeches 1949-53, p. 461. See also Smith, Donald Eugenk's Nehru and Democracy: The Political Thought of an Asian Democrat, (1958), p. 91, Sachin Sen's The press and Democracy (1957), p. 19, Sethi, Vinod's 'Pre-censorship in illogical', Indian Press, Vol. II, No. 7, (1974) p. 69.

knowledge will for ever govern ignorances. A people who remain to be their own governors should arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives. Freedom of expression is very necessary for discovery of truth. Freedom to think as you will and to speak as you think are means indispensable to the discovery and spread of political truth. Free and frank debate on all matters of public interest should be a public duty. Inert people are greatest menace to freedom. In democracy, the foundation of which is free election based on reason, can not function in a


society where there is no freedom of speech available.
The ultimate good, philosophically, in a free society
can be reached only by a discovery of truth, and that
can be trade of ideas — good or bad. The freedom of
expression Mill wrote "the time is hoped, is gone
by, when any defence would be necessary of the liberty
of the press" as one of the securities against corrupt or
tyrannical government.

Where men can not convey their thoughts to
one another, no freedom is possible despite provisions
for freedom of expression in the constitution. Thus,
the freedom of Press is essential to political liberty.
If the people are to govern themselves, their only
hope of doing so wisely lies in the collective wisdom

30. Jennings, Ivor., in Cabinet Government

31. Mill, John Stuart., in On Liberty, Chapter-II,
'Liberty of Thought and Discussion' (year of
publication not mentioned) p. 31.
derived from the fullest possible information of differing opinions.

1.21. **Freedom of the press is a social good:**

The freedom of expression is not only an individual good, but a social good. It is probably the best process for advancing knowledge and discovering the truth\(^{32}\). Thus we see that right of free-speech serves social goals of utmost importance, foremost among which is to encourage a free market place of ideas so that thoughts and information will be exchanged among the populace. The viability of our society depends upon exchange of ideas. The right of free speech also safeguards other rights by allowing persons to criticise government transgressions and, through freedom of speech, citizens

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participate in the democratic process. Free speech, in a wider scale, fosters individual self fulfilment by encouraging persons to express their beliefs and feelings.

1.22. **Freedom of publicity of values (both loved and hated):**

There must be freedom not only for the thought we cherish but also for the thought we hate. A right to receive information from any source without interference by public authority is a vital right of mankind. Freedom to think as one likes and to speak as one thinks are, as a rule, indispensable to the discovery and spread of truth and without free speech, discussion may well be futile.

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B.R. Ambedkar\textsuperscript{37}, stressing the need for the freedom of expression which includes freedom of the press also, said the editor of the press or his manager are all citizens. When they choose to represent any newspaper, they are merely exercising their right of expression.

Mr. Justice Patanjali Shastri\textsuperscript{38} underlined the special role of press in a democratic organisation. For without free political discussion no public education, so essential for the proper functioning of the process of popular government, is possible.

1.23. \textit{Freedom of propagation of ideas}:

There can be no doubt that the freedom of speech and expression includes freedom of propagation of ideas. This freedom is not confined to one's own

\textsuperscript{37} Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. II, (2, 12, 1948) p. 780.

views but extends to the circulation of others' views. Pre-censorship is a restriction on the liberty of the press. The press, being a responsible part of a democratic society, should provide the public with an intelligent narration of the day's events, set in a context which gives them meaning. It should also clarify the values of society and present a clear picture of its goals.  

The press should strive hard to inform people of current events and trends of opinion to create and sustain an ever widening range of interests, 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.


1.24. **Dimensions of the freedom of the press:**

As the freedom of the Press carries different meaning for different people. It may imply freedom of proprietors to market their publications, the freedom of individuals, regardless of whether they are professional journalist or not, to address the public through the press. It may also be the freedom of editors to decide what should be published. All these are the elements in the right of freedom of expression. The proprietors, contributors and editors should accept the limit to free expression set by the need to reconcile claims which may often conflict. The public, too, asserts a right to accurate information and fair comment which, in turn, has to be balanced against both of national security and that of the individual. But public interest does not reside in whatever public may find interesting, and the press should be careful not to perpetrate abuses and call them freedom.
1.25. No freedom is absolute:

Freedom of the press is not absolute. It is bounded and realistic discussion concerns where these boundaries should to be set. Freedom of press implies the freedom to have the infrastructure required to set up a newspaper and to run it efficiently, it means freedom to gather and report information and it also means freedom to express opinions. "My concept of a free Press" said Mr. Kuldip Nayar, is that of a vehicle which is used to inform public about true happenings without fear or favour. Facts are narrated as they are and not as they should be and it is left to readers to come to their own conclusion. Press is to ferret out the truth and let the public know.


The question of the freedom of the press has to be understood in the context of 'freedom for whom?' if not for the publisher who has put in the money; the worker who produces the paper; the advertiser who sustains it; the politician who runs the administration and the reader who reads it. On the other hand, freedom of the press is the freedom of the community, of society as a whole. It is not the exclusive privilege of any of the four categories who are associated with the newspaper publication. The reader who represents society should have ultimate freedom. Freedom of Press means the right to public and circulate the ideas, opinions, views and comments with complete freedom of self expression. It is the absence of interference or pressure from any source and direction. A free press is free from compulsions from whatever source, governmental or social, external or internal. There is unanimity.

44. Mathew, K.M., Chief Editor, Malayalam Manorama - A talk on All India Radio on 'Freedom of the Press' Reported in Vidura Vol. XV No. 5 October, 1978, pp. 280-81.

45. D.D. Basu (An author of "Commentaries on constitution of India" also holds that "freedom of the Press" means the right to print and publish without any interference from state or any public authority, except law of the press.)
amongst journalists, jurists and social scientists that press is indispensable instrument of views and opinions in a representative democracy. However the freedom of press is a concept which is living and which can not be put in any narrow strait jacket. It can not be confined in any narrow limits, thus restricting its growth.\(^4^\) \(^6\)

1.26. **Plight of Party Press in democracy:**

The zealots or converts relish party newspapers' slanted treatment of news and bigotry of views. The general public take hardly any interest with them. This is the reason why party newspapers (whether in Britain or in India or elsewhere) are not popular with the general public and have to struggle for existence. A party paper is primarily concerned with promoting the party interests, sometimes even at the expense of those of the country. With all their imperfections, the majority of the non-party newspapers

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in India have no preconceived line on the political affairs of the country. As a result they differ with each other, even within the same family of journals, in their editorial comment on many national controversies.

In reality, the Press is a unique public institution whose "feet are firmly planted in industry, while its head is struck in the public affairs".

Therefore, the relevance of an "independent" uncommitted press as against a committed party press, to the democratic system needs is as vital as arousing of vigilant, active and alert public opinion for the very survival of democracy.

1.27. A regulated Press vis-a-vis free press:

A press can be free only when the Government keeps away from it. News, unlike food, can not be regulated and its flow should be free and continuous.

for reporting for the public interest. A regulated press, and a free press are good contradictions. This is not to suggest that the press is above the law of the land. The press is a permanent institution in contrast to a transient party government which is liable to be changed in democracy after each election. It can discharge its functions effectively when it does not involve in party politics, and when it is in a position to give its dispassionate judgement over its Government's conduct of the public affairs.

1.28. Creates an intelligent mind:

Democratic government rests upon and requires the exercise of a well informed and rational opinion. If the press fails to supply the requisite material for the purpose, the formation of an alert and intelligent public mind becomes an impossibility. To build a strong and viable society, there has to be the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse sources. This can only be done through the press. The right to utter honest and reasonable
criticism on matters of public concern is a source of strength to the community, and the press being a powerful vehicle of mass communication should be free to play its role. In course of discharging its responsibilities in a dispassionate and temperate way, the press creates an atmosphere conducive to promotion of calm and quite reasoning. It was precisely on this understanding of the role of the press that president Jefferson could think of a point of time when there would be newspaper without a government, meaning thereby, there shall be no need of an agency to force obedience to laws.

A people who mean to be their own governors should equip themselves with the power based on the collective wisdom derived from the fullest possible information and honest presentation.

48. Jefferson says "were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without government I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter". A letter Thomas Jefferson wrote to Edward Carrington from Paris, January 16, 1787, Thomas Jefferson on Democracy, Padover, Saul K., (ed.) (1939) p. 93.
of differing opinions by the press. The press clarifies the values of society and presents a clear picture of its goals. The press while informing the people of current events and trends of opinion has been creating and sustaining with them an ever widening range of interests.

1.29. The Press as a forum for discussion:

The press becomes a forum for discussion and informed criticism and a means whereby individuals and groups can express point of view or advocate a cause. A responsible press presents the news objectively and confines its views to the editorial columns with a high sense of responsibility and of integrity.

As moulder and mender of public opinion the press exercises an enormous powers. It should guide public opinion after presenting impartially both sides

of every issue. Woodrow Wilson says, the "food of opinion is the news of the day".