Introduction
INTRODUCTION

In today’s world the mass media- newspapers, magazine, radio, television, internet for all practical purposes, are nearly omnipresent whatever be the nature of the political system: a democracy, a semi-democracy, or even no-democracy. American political scientist, Gabriel A.Almond writes: “There is virtually no place so remote that people lack the means to be informed about events elsewhere: in affluent nations the public is wired to the internet, satellite dishes sprout from houses in Iran, inexpensive transistor radios are omnipresent even in third world villages far removed from urban centers” (Almond, 2010:55). Media theorist Marshall McLuhan visualized long back in 1960s a universalizing characteristic of mass media in transforming the world into a ‘global village’. The term refers to the transcendence of constraints of physical place enabled by new communication technologies that allow instant, inexpensive, global communication (McLuhan, 1964:6). The scientific innovations, technological advancements, and of course, emergence of global capitalism, all the three, have enormously contributed and facilitated the possibility of the media to register its presence in any of the political systems of the globe either by being there under the provisions of law of that land or by witnessing every event of that political system from outside. In this context, Newton and Van Deth rightly observes: “Communications are no longer limited by boundaries; they are no longer merely international, but global.Journalists can dispatch reports and pictures from almost any part of the world which can be broadcast almost instantaneously to the other parts of the globe” (Newton and Van Deth, 2005: 192). A globalizing market has undoubtedly supported and vigorously promoted to the commercialization of information and communication technologies which have helped any of the news of any part of the globe to travel quickly to another part of the globe, and leave its impact upon the people as well as the existing socio-economic and political processes. Recently, the Jasmine Revolution which started in one of the North
African countries, named Tunisia, against the authoritarian regime, spread like a wild fire in most of the parts of the Arab world…Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Syria etc. Apart from internal socio-economic and political dynamics of the people’s unrest, the role of the mass media, especially of the web media, as a catalyst, can’t be undermined in this process of political transition. It is, therefore, not untrue to say that the media have created a political boundary less world of its own and have forced all of us virtually to live in and believe in the ‘Media-Age’.

**MASS MEDIA: MEANING**

Media is communication-whether written, broadcast, or spoken. Generally, the word ‘communication’ is defined as an exchange of information and message. However, Mass Media denote a section of the media especially designed to reach a large audience. The term was coined in the 1920s with the advent of nationwide radio networks, mass-circulation newspapers and magazines (Briggs & Burke, 2010:1). It refers collectively to all media technologies, including the newspapers, radio, television, and Internet which are used for communications, and to the organizations which control these technologies. The press or the print media (newspapers and magazines) is the oldest form of the present day’s mass media, which came into being after the introduction of the printing press. Radio or broadcast media, television or telecast media, and Internet or web media are the other important forms of the mass media, which were originated at different points of time in the last century. Though the contribution of the longest serving print media is historic, its impact remained limited due to its direct relationship with the state of literacy in society. Therefore, initially the print media remained confined to metros or cities and its constituency was educated higher and higher middle classes. Its circulation to smaller cities and rural areas was of very late development. Spread of education, development of means of transportation, and innovation of faster means of communication played very significant role in spreading the circulation of the print media and subsequently increasing its role.
and contribution in the socio-economic-political life of the people. Thomas Scroth says that 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 (Scroth, 1966:4). The story of evolution and growth of broadcast and telecast media was quite faster because these are audio as well as visual media which serve both of the literate and illiterate constituency with equal efficiency. There is one thing most people in the world share in common: we sit before our television to learn about the world (Norris, 2003: 45). Television can have a powerful cognitive and emotional impact on large public audiences by enlisting the senses of both sight and sound. Watching events on television—such as the broadcasts of government affairs or war in Iraq—gives a reality to the news (Almond, 2010:55). With the revolution in information and communication technologies, the web media has transformed itself into the combined form of all the three above mentioned forms of the mass media. With the result of it, it has evolved as the most effective form of the mass media. Howard Rheingold, formerly associated with the 1960s Californian counter culture, has articulated vociferously the progressive possibilities of the Internet (Rheingold, 1995). Rheingold sees the Internet as an electronic forum through which public opinion can be regenerated as citizens engage in rational argument (Mackay, 2000:55). Therefore, today, the Internet provides a powerful source of news for those with access to it (Almond, 2010:55).

**MASS MEDIA: DEFINING GOALS**

The mass media newspapers, radio, television, magazines are important in socializing attitudes and values in nations around the globe. The mass media are typically the prime source of information on the politics of the day (Almond, 2010:55). However, there is no consensus regarding the précised and definite objectives of the mass media among the political scientists and social theorists. However, the two of the politico-economic factors that generally have a direct bearing in defining the objectives of the mass media are: first, the nature of the
political system and its relationship with the media, and second, the nature of the ownership that controls the mass media. However, for a general understanding, the primary objective of the mass media is to narrate the existing realities to the readers, listeners or the viewers and to help them to form their opinion about it, and if needed, to provide them opportunity to express their opinion, views and interests. As a matter of fact, the media are the medium between the people and the society, the means of communication between citizens and political organization, and a bridge between the state and the international community. Mahatma Gandhi, who was himself an editor, and had published many newspapers in South Africa and India during his long mass struggles, while defining the objective of the print media, wrote in his autobiography: “One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; and the third is fearlessly to express popular defects” (Gandhi, 1927: 118). Outlining the duties of journalists, the All India Newspaper Editors Conference, in their memorandum to the First Press Commission, said, “Journalist should have strive to inform the people of 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” (The Second Press Commission Report, 1978: 399). Similar views were also expressed earlier by the First Royal Commission on the Press in United Kingdom. Dealing with the role of the Press in a democracy, it observed, “The democratic forms of society demands of its members’ active and intellectual 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 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 true account of events, of their background and their causes; a forum for discussion and informed criticism; a means whereby individuals and groups can express a point of view or advocate a cause” (Report of the First Royal Commission on the Press, The Government of United Kingdom, 1947-49: 100-101).

As a matter of fact, the newspaper keeps faith with its readers by presenting the news comprehensively, accurately and fairly (Holmes, 1992: 28). Therefore, if a well-informed citizenry is the foundation of democracy, the mass media as the vital source of information are undoubtedly the life-line of that democracy. Theoretically, a democratic polity lives, grows and gets matured by free and open public discussion. In order to enable the citizen to form their judgment on various issues, they must have access to all shades of opinion. It is, for that matter, essential that there should be a variety of ownership and opinion, and different newspapers, magazines, broadcast and telecast channels should put before the people the varied and diverse points of view held by different political parties or groups. However, in all desirability and possibility, it should be left to the people to choose their course of action.

AUTHORITARIAN VS DEMOCRATIC STATE

Information and coercion are two antagonistic categories having completely adverse implications in identifying, understanding, and evaluating the nature and functioning of the political systems. Generally, an authoritarian system flourishes on the denial of information about its working to the people. A military oligarch, an autocrat, a dictator, a despot, a fascist leader, or a totalitarian system want to take the people into their full control without sharing even legitimate information with them. Hence coercion that includes secrecy is the fundamental policy of every non-democratic regime. Ancient India’s author and architect of the
Maurian Empire, Kautilya in his famous text on statecraft, ‘Arthashastra’, emphasized the importance of secrecy for the monarch, and advised him to obtain secret information about others, but warned him not to allow others to probe his own secrets (Kangle, 1965: 47). However, contrary to that, in a democratic political system there is no substitute for imparting ever-increasing information to the people. As early as 17th century Enlightenment theorist had argued that publicity and openness provide best protection against tyranny and excesses of arbitrary rule. As a matter of fact, democratic system tends to evolve a legal framework through which right to freedom of speech, expression, and information are granted as fundamental rights to the people. Since the liberal democratic theory believes that the consent of the people is the sole basis of the constitution of the government (Dunn, 1969:65), communication with the people has no alternative in democracy (Almond & Verba, 1965:134). Communication between the government and the governed keeps both of them informed about each other and helps them to form their respective opinion, and when need arises, allows them to take appropriate decisions and act accordingly to influence each other. The mass media, therefore, work as one of the essential means of communication between the democratic government and the governed. Information is power, therefore, access to information becomes an important political commodity in the contemporary world. Western democracies put a premium on freedom of media, even if they frequently complain about what the media reports. In many European nations the government still manages television and radio stations because it views the media a public service. Autocratic governments typically seek to control the media and what they can report, as well as the public’s access to information. Similarly the communist regimes of eastern Europe had tried to limit access to news reports from the west because they feared it would undermine their regimes, and the movements for democracy in the region were partially created by the image of the way of life in the west. In the contemporary world of Internet
and satellite broadcasting, it is becoming increasingly difficult for governments to control the spread of information (Almond, 2010:55).

Anthony Mughan and Richard Gunther call the mass communication media as the ‘connective tissue’ of democracy. They observe: “They are the principal means through which citizens and their elected representative communicate in the reciprocal efforts to inform and influence” (Gunther & Mughan, 2000: 1). As a matter of fact, a free press helps the democratic governments in getting aware of the public’s discontents and allowing it to rectify its mistakes and errors (Holmes, 1991:21-65).

**FREE PRESS: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION**

Historically, the origin and evolution of the very idea of a ‘free press’ (media) is directly associated with the idea of free speech. Though the invention of the printing press, particularly in Europe in 1443, had, in due course of time, facilitated the logistic support to the idea of a free press, the philosophical foundation of the idea of a free press, no doubt, came from the idea of free speech whose origin can be traced in the philosophies of rationalism, natural rights and liberalism. Since the inception of the idea of modernity, the renaissance, reformation, and enlightenment, all the three: intellectual; religious; and philosophical; movements, laid the solid foundation of a modern Europe and collectively facilitated the emergence of the idea of freedom of thought, speech and expression. John Milton, John Locke, Montesquieu, Thomas Paine, Voltaire, Thomas Jefferson, Edmund Burke, J.S. Mill and many other political philosophers, poets, writers, social theorists enormously contributed to the growth of the idea of free speech and expression, therefore, ultimately paving the way for the evolution of the idea of a free press. English great poet, John Milton, in the 17th century when Britain was passing through civil war between the despotic monarch and the parliament, declaring the historic importance of freedom of speech in his famous book, Aeropagitica, urged: “Give me the liberty to know, to
utter and argue freely according to conscience above all liberties” (Milton, 1644:258). Eighteenth century was the century of great revolutions in the history of modern world: the American Revolution and the French Revolution. The United States ‘Declaration of Independence’ (4th July, 1776), which proclaimed liberty as one of the three inalienable rights of individual, and The French ‘Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen’ (26th August, 1789), in which article 11 clearly declared: “The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may accordingly, speak, write and print with freedom…. ”, were such revolutionary declarations in the history of modern world that universalized the value of freedom of speech and expression including the freedom of the press. American freedom fighter, chief author of the Declaration of Independence, and of course, one of the founding fathers of the American constitution who latter also served as the third president of the USA, Thomas Jefferson, in one of his letters in 1787, communicated: “The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should to keep that right. And were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter” (Jefferson, 1787: 4). In the same year in 1787, British philosopher and parliamentarian, Edmund Burke used the term ‘Fourth Estate’ for the press reporters during the debate of the House of Commons which, since then, became almost synonymous of the free press in political dictionary. Referring to Burke as the originator of the historic term, Thomas Carlyle in his famous book, On Heroes and Hero Worship, referred: “Burke said there were three Estates in the Parliament; but in the Reporters’Gallery Yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all” (Carlyle, 19th May 1840:392). In the 19th century, British political philosopher and author of the political classic, ‘On Liberty’, J.S. Mill, championing the cause of freedom of expression of an individual, wrote: “If all mankind, minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind
no more be justified in silencing that one person, then he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing the mankind” (Mill, 1991: 21). Acknowledging the increasing domination and continuing influence of the press in 1891, Oscar Wilde very critically and satirically remarked: “In the old days man had the rack. Now they have the press. This is an improvement certainly. But still it is very bad, and wrong, and demoralizing. Some body—was it Burke?—called journalism the fourth estate. That was true at the time no doubt. But at the present moment it is only estate. It has eaten up the other three. The Lords Temporal say nothing, the Lords Spiritual have nothing to say, and the House of Commons has nothing to say and says it. We are dominated by Journalism” (Wilde, Feb, 1891: 290). In the 20th century during 1948, in the background of holocaust of world war second, the General Assembly of the newly formed international organization, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10th December, of which article 19th declares: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (UDHR, 10th December, 1948).

Almost all the constitutions of liberal democratic nations from developed world to developing world have given the prime place for the right to free speech and freedom of press.

**DEMOCRACY: MEANING**

Modern democracy and mass media are the twins product of modernity and are complimenting to each other in their survival, growth, acceptability and effectiveness. Therefore, a working definition of democracy is required to understand the interdependent relationship between the two. Etymologically, democracy means “rule of the demos, ”the people, where “people” designates the popular masses (in contrast to social or economic elites) (Levine, 2007:43). Therefore, democracy unlike monarchy, aristocracy or authoritarian: civilian and
military, is a system of rule where people rule either directly or indirectly. A highly idealized and generalized definition of democracy—government of the people, by the people and for the people—was given by former American President Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address (Newton & Van Deth, 2005: 24). Newton and Van Deth defines democracy: “A democracy is a system of government in which leaders are chosen in competitive elections, where many parties and candidates participate and where opposition parties can attain power if they get popular support” (Newton & Van Deth, 2005: 22).

A list of the core characteristics of democracy includes people’s sovereignty, rule of law, social and political equality, elected government by means of universal adult franchise, free and open competition for political positions and institutions, periodic elections for legitimizing government, fundamental rights and civil liberties, multi-party system, independent judiciary and free media.

**DEMOCRACY AND MASS MEDIA**

The modern age is generally considered to be the age of representative democracy, and the mass media are an informal but an essential component of that representative democratic polity. Equally important is the fact that a democratic polity is an institutional guarantee of a free, fair and fearless media. With the evolution of liberalism as a political philosophy and capitalism as an economic system in modern times, a representative form of government, unlike the direct democracy of ancient Athens, together with the idea of civil liberties and political rights to the citizens constituted the core of a democratic polity. Though there is a long list of civil rights and liberties, and every right and liberty have its own significance and contribution in the growth of a ‘political individual’, but definitely, out of this long list, one of the most important civil rights is the freedom of thought, speech and expression. The freedom of thought, speech and expression is an integral constituent of one of the three natural and inalienable rights e.g. liberty. Hence the freedom of thought, speech and expression has
become a fundamental mantra to realise democratic aspirations. In 1787, one of the founding fathers of the United States of America, Thomas Jefferson, made a historic observation about the importance of the press as the foundation of democracy. Even he emphasized the superiority of the press over government. It was because of his underlining principle that first amendment in the Constitution of the United States of America was inserted to guarantee this right to its people. Nevertheless, sustained suppression of public opinion during the British colonial period influenced the founding fathers of the republic to introduce the ‘Bill of Rights’in the form of first ten amendments immediately after the commencement of the constitution of the United States of America. Ensuring free speech and freedom of the press, first amendment says: “Congress shall make no law…abridging the freedom of speech or of the Press” (Constitution of USA, 1791). Hence, the norms on limiting the freedom of expression mean that public debate may not be completely suppressed even in emergency. One of the most notable proponents of the link between freedom of speech and democracy is Alexander Meiklejohn. He argues that the concept of democracy is that of self-government by the people. For such system to work an informed electorate is necessary. In order to be appropriately knowledgeable, there must be no constraints on the free flow of information and ideas. According to Meiklejohn, democracy will not be true to its ideal if those in power are able to manipulate the electorate by withholding information stifling criticism. Meiklejohn acknowledges that the desire to manipulate opinion can stem from the motive of seeking to benefit society. However, he argues that choosing manipulation negates, in its mean, the democratic ideal (Randal, 2002: 226-227). Eric Barendt has called this defense of free speech on the grounds of democracy ‘probably the most fashionable free speech theory in modern western democracies (Randal, 2002:226). Thomas I. Emerson expanded on this defense when he argued that freedom of speech helps to provide a balance between stability and change. Freedom of speech acts as a ‘safety valve’to let off the steam when people might
otherwise be bent upon revolution. He argues that “the principle of open
discussion is a method of achieving a more adaptable and at the same time more
stable community, of maintaining the precarious balance between healthy
cleavage and necessary consensus”. Emerson further maintains that “opposition
serves a vital social function in offsetting or ameliorating normal process of
bureaucratic decay” (Randal, 2002: 228-229).

Research undertaken by the worldwide governance indicators project at the world
Bank indicates that freedom of speech and the process of accountability that
follows it, have a significant impact in the quality of governance in a country.
“Voice and accountability within a country defined as the extent to which a
country’s citizens are able to participating in selecting their government, as well
as freedom of expression, freedom of association and free media” is one of the six
dimensions of governance that worldwide governance indicators measure for
more than two hundred countries (A Decade of Measuring the Quality Of
Governance).

DEMOCRACY, PUBLIC SPHERE AND MEDIA

German social scientist and critical theorist, Jurgen Habermas (1989) has invented
the notion of public sphere-space for public debate on polity and policy, which is
free from government or institutional control- in which press is the main
architecture and facilitator of public opinion in a democratic society. This is core
essence in the concept of public sphere where rational public debate and discourse
is given importance. Individuals can freely discuss issues of common concern
(Tsekeris, 2004: 65). Media plays one of the crucial roles behind the formation
of public sphere. John B. Robinson sums up Habermas’s contribution: “He
argued that the circulation of printed materials in early modern Europe played a
crucial role in the transition from absolutist to liberal-democratic regimes, and that
the articulation of critical public opinion through the media was a vital feature of
modern democratic life” (Thompson, 1995:7). However, Barnett is of the
opinion that in modern times the true sense of public sphere is getting eroded with the media of public debate getting transformed to medium for expressing particular interests rather than general interests which are universally accepted. This signifies that public sphere which is essential for a vibrant democracy can actually be channelized to serve vested interests rather public good. Habermas has also accepted later that with the emergence of corporatization of media, the notion of public sphere was declining. Rheingold follows Habermas in seeing around him the erosion of such free communication and discussion— with growing manipulation of the news and public opinion by governments and corporations through advertising, public relations and information management. He criticizes television for becoming entertainment oriented for profit, however, he sees hope in internet as an electronic forum through which public opinion can be regenerated as citizens engage in rational argument. As a matter of fact, this is an argument which focuses on structure—structure of domination. Rheingold’s interest is in how new electronic networks allow alternative structure, which bypass established institutions (Mackay, 2000:55).

**OWNERSHIP OF MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY**

The mass media itself cannot be treated as a neutral institution fully committed to public good owing to its organizational structure and its commercial interest. Thus, who has the ownership of the media organizations matters a lot in defining the objective and role of media in democracy. The media is an important player in democratic political process, however, its working can’t be judged without the understanding of its structure and nature of ownership and its defined and inherent goals. A simple observation concludes that who controls ownership, controls media, and media as an institution would serve the interests of the owners. If state controls and monopolies media, media becomes an instruments in the hands of rulers for sustaining its political powers, and interests of the ruled becomes secondary. On the contrary, if media is owned by private individuals, it becomes
a business or enterprise to serve the economic interests of the owners. Therefore, question of ownership of media is vital in any democracy.

Scholars, media experts and academicians have been debating throughout the world the implications of corporate control of media through ownership. Robinson and Harris say that with the transformation of media organization into large-scale commercial entities, freedom of expression in threatened not from state power but from the commercial concerns that govern media organizations. The assumption of a media that national is also difficult to sustain with the development of transnational networks leading to globalization of communication as well as emergence of a global or transnational capitalist class (Robinson and Harris, 2000). In “Rethinking Media and Democracy” James Curran discards the accepted view of the media’s role in democracy and shows that corporate control may be worse for the people than government control. Historically, the media is seen as a check on government that must be independent—meaning it must reside in the free market. Curran says this arrangement has failed the people in several ways. Curran gives three standard arguments for media independent of government: first, to act as a watchdog; second, as a way to facilitate idea exchange and debate; and third, so that they may act as the voice of the people more. He says all three arguments are flawed by real-world conditions and corporate ownership. First off, the media rarely even schedule watchdog-type news anymore—most mass media effort today is entertainment. And the government is no longer the only large, faceless entity that the people need a watchdog for. Giant corporations, the same ones that own the bulk of the mass media, today have more power than some governments, yet the classical argument doesn’t mention them. Furthermore, there are many examples of the mass media working with or for the government even if they are independently owned, simply because it is in their best economic interest. Curran does allow that loss of credibility and professional ethics counter these arguments to some degree, but not enough to overpower his concern. Curran rejects the marketplace of ideas.
theory largely because the free market has led to multi-billion dollar media mergers, large percentages of market share for a small number of companies, and a high cost to enter the marketplace in any meaningful manner. Second, the mass market demands more entertaining, less informative content; third, the market lead to information-rich media for elite and info-poor media for the mass market; and fourth, it leads to simplified news rather than process-type news. The mass media also do not really act as a voice of the people. Curran thinks the free market is fundamentally flawed in this regard—public participation in the media is passive, in terms of buying what they like, rather than an active voice in most cases. Even new communication technologies, he says, which may seem to give people more of a voice, have been reigned in by deregulation-inspired mergers (Curran & Gurevitch, 2005: 226).

ROLE OF MEDIA: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Imagining a democratic polity without the freedom of thought, speech and expression as a civil right is next to impossible. From developed to the developing world, democratic political system is in operation in large number of countries. However, modern representative democracy has evolved over a long period of time, and its structural characteristics and procedural necessities have transformed an ordinary individual into a ‘sovereign political man’. The opinion of political man shapes democratic institutions and guides it in the making of rules and taking of decisions for the organization of the whole society. The public opinion, therefore, has seminal importance and decisive political value in a democracy, and as a result of it, it is often observed that public opinion is the price blood of democracy.

Though the public opinion is made and developed by many social, cultural, religious, educational, economic and political institutions. The mass media, because of its reach and accessibility, become one of the most important constituents of public opinion. Thus it becomes a political actor in a democracy
because the success of democratic system requires an informed and participating population. As we understand and experience that modern politics is largely a mediated politics, experienced by most citizens through the print and broadcast media of their choice. Any study of democracy in contemporary world, therefore, is a study of how the mass media report and interpret political events and issues, and how the mass media itself influence the political process and shape public opinion. Hence, the role of mass media has become central to politics and public life in contemporary democracy.

However, political scientists lack consensus on the issue and they dispute whether the mass media are powerful or not, and whether their impact on politics is constructive or destructive for democracy: “On the one hand, the mass media are supposed to play a crucial role in supplying citizens with a full and fair account of the news and wide range of political opinion about it. On the other hand, the media are often criticized for being systematically biased politically, and for their growing but unaccountable power” (Newton, 2005: 181).

In theory, a free press, radio, and television should be the watchdogs of civil liberties and political freedoms of citizens in democratic politics; in practice, some analysts believe they are as much a threat to democratic government as a protector of it.

However, the dilemmas posed by the modern media raise all sorts of political problems. What is the proper role of the media in democracy, and do they perform it in the appropriate manner? Given their political importance, how should they be organized? They should certainly not come under the control of state because that would be undemocratic, and this leaves two main alternatives:

- They could come under the regulation of public bodies not controlled by the government, to keep them accountable and responsible to the general public;
- Or they could be constrained only by the economic forces of the market.
The mass media are supposed to play a vital role in a democracy. The great majority of us rely almost entirely on them for political news and opinion, and the role we are able to play as citizens depends heavily on the fairness, accuracy and balance of the news we get. We cannot make sensible judgments about politics if we are fed a diet of biased, partial and inaccurate news, and if the range of political opinion expressed in the media is narrow and shallow. This means that the news media should provide citizens with a full and fair account of the news and a wide variety of political opinion about it. If democracy is founded on the peaceful struggle between competing interests and ideas, then we all need full information about these interests and ideas in order to make up our mind about the political issues of the day.

In the same way that the political system should be pluralist- permitting the competition of many political interests and groups- so also should the media be pluralist, reporting a full range of political opinion and interpreting the news from a variety of political standpoints. In turn, this means that the political media must not be controlled by governments, nor must they be dominated by a narrow set of commercial or social interests that presents only one political position. The news media should not only be accurate in their reporting of the news, but open and pluralist in their presentation of opinion about it.

Hence the importance of the media is magnified by the fact that they are not just channels of communication that simply convey news, but major political player in a democratic political system.

**LIBERAL PHILOSOPHY AND FREE PRESS IN INDIA**

The Bengal Renaissance during the British colonialism laid the foundation of modern India and Raja Ram Mohan Roy who is often described as the father of modern India, and others emphasized the importance of the liberal philosophy and the significance of the civil rights including the freedom of the press in modern Indian society (Bandyopadhyay, 2004:151). Historian Bipan Chandra rightly
observed: “Almost from the beginning of the 19th century, politically conscious Indians had been attracted to modern civil rights, especially the freedom of the Press” (Chandra & Others, 1987: 102). Though an Englishman, A. Hickey founded the first newspaper, Bengal Gazzett, in India in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the credit to indigenize the press and to emphasize its freedom, definitely, goes to none other than the founder of the Brahma Samaj (1828), Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He himself started the publication of many newspapers in many languages; Bengla, Persian, and English, and was the staunch believer in the notion of a free press. As early as 1824, he had protested against a regulation restricting the freedom of the press. In a memorandum to the then Supreme Court, he had said that every good ruler ‘will be anxious to afford every individual the readiest means of bringing to his notice whatever may require his interference. To secure this important object, the unrestricted liberty of publication is the only effectual means that can be employed (Natrajan, 1955:15).

He even thought that a free press could help the government to know the mood of the people and could provide it the time to find the remedial measures and avoid rebellion. Therefore, the newspapers as the vehicle of social and religious reforms, leading in germinating the seed of the political consciousness among the colonial subjects, proved its utility and played a very significant role in laying down the foundation of a modern India.

INDIA’S FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND THE PRESS

During the first war of independence of 1857, as nationalist school of the Indian historians consider (Chaudhuri, 1957: 297), against the British East India Company’s rule, some vernacular newspapers played very crucial role. Many newspapers published then in different Indian languages reflected and strengthened popular sentiments even at the cost of their peril. Recalling the historic courage and great contribution of many of such newspapers, Jagdish Prasad Chaturvedi writes: “It was in 1857 itself that Payam-e- Azadi started
publication in Hindi and Urdu, calling upon the people to fight against the British. The paper was soon confiscated and anyone found with a copy of the paper prosecuted for the sedition. Again, the first Hindi daily, Samachar Sudhavarshan, and two newspapers in Urdu and Persian respectively, Doorbeen and Sultan-ul-Akhbar, faced trial in 1857 for having published a firman by Bahadur Shah Zafar urging the people to drive the British out of India” (Raghvan, 1994: 18). How effectively and successfully the newspapers, published on the eve of 1857 in the Indian languages, were reading the pulse of the people and subsequently reflecting their mind, were later substantiated by a report prepared by Rev. Long for the government in 1859. The report said: “The opinions of the native press may often be regarded as the safety valve which gives warning of danger. Thus, had the Delhi native newspapers of January 1857 been consulted by European functionaries, they would have seen in them how the natives were ripe for revolt, and were expecting aid from Persia and Russia (Raghavan, 1994: 18).

The post-1857 history of freedom struggle is also full of such examples of freedom fighters having direct association with journalism and editing of newspapers who believed in, fought for, and sacrificed for the freedom of the press. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and many others who established a great tradition of missionary journalism during the nationalist movement against the British Empire. Emphasizing the importance of a free press, first Prime Minister of free India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in Jaffersonian style emphatically observed: “I would rather have a completely free press with all dangers in the wrongful use of that freedom than a suppressed or regulated press” (Sarkar, 1984: 6).

Summing up the core characteristics of the print media in pre-independent India, particularly during the period of freedom struggle, Victoria L. Farmer observes: ‘…the roots of the robust and multilingual print media are found in the struggle
against colonialism, proving the press with the lingering aura of an oppositional, civil and fundamentally legitimate media” (Ludden, 1996:108).

**EVOLUTION OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN COLONIAL INDIA**

Modern representative democracy is a western system of rule which evolved in a particular historical context in Europe. In Indian context, there is no consensus among the historians and political scientist regarding the origins of modern democracy. One type of argument suggests that the modern democracy in India is mainly a legacy of the British colonialism (Weiner, 1989), however, another argument differs and emphasizes the role of the nationalist elites and national movement in the birth of Indian democracy (Moore, 1966; Sarkar, 1983). However, in a legalistic sense, the origins of the parliamentary democracy in India could be traced in the Indian Councils Act, 1861 which came into being after the transfer of the Indian empire from the British East India Company to the British Crown in 1958. The Indian Councils Act, 1892 brought the non-elected native component in the legislative process which over the period of time introduced the limited elected native components in the process of legislation in The Indian Councils Act, 1909. The concept of self-rule as a fundamental necessity of democratic governance and a long cherished demand of the freedom struggle was introduced in a limited sense in the provinces of the British India under the Government of India Act, 1919 (Basu, 1995: 2). However, the constitutional developments though with all limitations were the result of the British Colonial ruler’s unwilling response in reaction to the mounting pressures of the mass freedom struggle (Basu, 1995: 3). Therefore, the introduction of the parliamentary democracy and its institutions during the colonial India was the historical product of the India’s political struggle for national freedom which were fully realized when the sovereign Constituent Assembly adopted the Republican Democratic Constitution on 26th November, 1949 and fully implemented after two months on 26th January, a historical day in India’s freedom struggle, in 1950 (Austin, 1966).
MASS MEDIA IN INDIA: CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK

The constitution of free India which was adopted on 26\textsuperscript{th} November, 1949 and implemented on 26\textsuperscript{th} January, 1950, nearly two and half years later its independence from the British colonial Raj, was no less than a revolutionary political document that accepted in its own collective wisdom the philosophy of political equality between man and woman irrespective of any socio-economic and educational distinctions prevailing at that time and empowered its every adult citizen with the right to elect (article 326) his government as well as the right to be elected as government in regular and periodic elections (Bakshi, 2009: 276).

Political scientist, C.P. Bhambhri rightly observes: “The Republic of India was inaugurated only on January 26, 1950 and unlike many democracies of Western countries, including the US, citizens of India were guaranteed rights from the day of the very birth of the Republic” (Bhambhri, 2007: 20). The revolutionary political agenda of the founding fathers was in complete contrast to the prevailing examples of Western industrialized and developed democracies including United Kingdom, the mother of Parliamentary democracy as well as United States of America, the land of first Presidential democracy, where even the political ideas of Utilitarian Bentham’s one man, one vote and J.S. Mill’s advocacy of woman’s suffrage were not attained without passing through a long historical trajectory, and where the ultimate realization of the universal adult franchise was the product of evolutionary process spanning over hundred years. Besides, a free and open competition between individuals and organized political groups for all political institutions and positions for a fixed tenure for running the government, and a list of fundamental rights and civil liberties for every citizen enshrined in the third part, protected by an independent judiciary as the custodian, were the other very important democratic features of constitution of India. Though the long list of rights and civil liberties does not refer explicitly to the freedom of the media, the article 19 (1)a implicitly provides as much freedom of expression to the media as
is enjoyed by any Indian citizen under the provisions of law on Indian Soil. While taking part in the constituent assembly debate, the chairman of the drafting Committee of the constitution, Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar emphatically remarked, “The press has no special rights, which are not being given to be or which are not to be exercised by the citizen in his individual capacity. The editor of the press or its manager are merely exercising the right of expression and therefore no special mention is necessary of the freedom of the press” (Constituent Assembly Debates of India). In many cases, the highest court of India has reiterated the need to protect the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression. In a historic judgement in Romesh Thappar Vs. State of Madras in 1950, Justice Patanjali Sastri declared: “Freedom of speech and the press lay at the foundation of all democratic organizations, for without free political discussions, no public education, so essential for the proper functioning of the processes of popular government, is possible” (Ramesh Thappar vs. State of Madras, 1950: 594). Since Romesh Thapper case there have been many cases involving the right to free speech and expression and freedom of the press. In R. Rajgopal Vs. Tamil Nadu case, Justice Jeevan Reddy reiterated the indispensability of the freedom of the press. In his lucid analysis he pointed out the jurisprudential desideratum thus, “But what is called for today, in the present times, is a proper balancing of the freedom of the press and said laws consisted with the democratic way of life ordained by the constitution. Over the last few decades, press and electronic media have emerged as major factors in our nation’s life. They are still expanding and in the process becoming more inquisitive. Our system of government demands, as do the systems of government of the United States of America and the United Kingdom- constant vigilance over exercise of governmental power by the press and the media among others. It is essential for good government”. However, the media in India, unlike USA, enjoy only that much freedom which doesn’t cross the limit of reasonable restrictions as provided under the provision of 19 (2)a but the reasonability of restrictions has not been left on the mercy of the
executive. On the contrary, Judiciary has the constitutional obligation to examine
the reasonability of the restrictions if it is being challenged in the court by the
victim citizen and if found unreasonable; it can be declared null and void.
However in case of the declaration of an emergency under the provision of article
352 of the constitution, some fundamental rights including the freedom of speech
and expression can be suspended either automatically or by issuing a special order
by the President of India. Explaining the status of the media in the constitution of
India, former Director of Indian Law Institute, P. M. Bakshi observes: “Freedom
of the press is not expressly mentioned in article 19 but has been held to flow
from the general freedom of speech and expression guaranteed to all citizens. As
judicially construed, this freedom now includes not merely the freedom to write
and publish what the writer considers proper (subject to reasonable restrictions
imposed by law for specific purpose), but also the freedom to carry on the
business so that information may be disseminated and excessive and prohibitive
burden restricting circulation may be avoided” (Bakshi, 2009: 40-41). While
addressing the Newspaper Society, the doyen of the Indian legal profession, N.A.
Phalkivala observed: “Freedom is to the press what oxygen is to the human being;
it is the essential condition of its survival. To talk of a democracy without a free
press is a contradiction in terms. A free press is not an optional extra in a
democracy” (Phalkivala, 1994: 291).

MASS MEDIA DURING INTERNAL EMERGENCY

The emergency (1975-77) in independent India is generally observed as the
darkest phase in the life of world’s largest functioning democracy. This phase is
also described as the most harmful and shameful period in the history of the
media, especially the print media because in general it effectively failed in
maintaining the great tradition of a adversarial press inherited from the days of the
British imperialism, however, radio and television had a manipulative tradition
throughout as the media of the government (Ram, 2000). During this brief but
politically, highly critical period, the citizens of this republic were deprived of those fundamental freedoms and civil liberties which were achieved by them by means of a long struggle fought during the national freedom movement against the British colonialism, and which were later guaranteed by the newly enacted supreme law of the land, and the press which is considered as the fourth pillar of democracy, and which, as a functional necessity of democratic system, had remained so far relatively free since independence, lost its freedom to publish news, to express her views, to critique government’s policies, and to act as public sphere as inherent part of the provision of, freedom of speech and expression, provided by article 19(1)(a) of the constitution, and put under strict executive censorship. The most unfortunate thing was the proclamation of the national emergency under article 352 of the India’s constitution on account of ‘internal disturbance’ leading to the threat to the security of the Indian state. As a result, democratically elected government turned itself into a constitutional authoritarian regime. Describing this phase as ‘a shattering experience’ for Indian democrats, Soli J. Sorabjee, later who served as the Attorney General of India, observed in 1977 that this was the severest jolt that democracy had received in India since its birth (Sorabjee, 1977: 13). The Indian democracy came a cross of such serious political challenge for the first time, however, setback to civil liberties of citizens, erosion of freedom of the press, and abolition of democratic institutions were very common in number of newly independent countries of Asia, Africa and other parts of the globe. So, this was actually the testing time for the politically conscious citizens as well as for the freedom loving print media people.

However, contrary to the expectations, the most shocking thing was the response of the people as well as of the media against the emergency. Though the country was witnessing frequent protests, strikes by the trade unions, and movements by the students under the leadership of Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan, in different parts of the country just before the declaration of the emergency, and which were primarily cited as the reason by the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi for
the proclamation of emergency, the sudden silence among the people and the media, barring honorable exceptions such as The Statesman and The Indian Express, emboldened the ruling party to justify the imposition of emergency. The more and less absence of strong reactions among the people and the media against the emergency surprised the political analysts in India and the world. Therefore, one can’t blame then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi for her gloating remark, ‘there was not even a spark, leave aside a conflagration’. Soli J. Sorabjee called this virtual ‘self-emasculaton’ of media as a ‘Himalayan tragedy’ for Indian democracy (Sorabjee, 1977). Surprisingly, after the relaxation in emergency and declaration of election of the Lok Sabha in January 1977, both the citizens and the print media gave a befitting reply to the emergency regime. The print media came out of forced hibernation and decided to fully expose the misuses and abuses of power committed by the state machinery and the ruling party during the emergency. Since the anger of the people against the emergency regime was at the peak, the media left no stone unturned to convert this anger into an explosive. As a result, the people gave their mandate against the regime and defeated badly the ruling Congress party and its leader and Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi along with the emergency boy, Sanjay Gandhi, and many of the notorious politicians of the emergency regime (Chakrabarty, 2008: 45).

Rahul Mukherji writes: “The Congress party under Indira Gandhi, unable to respond to an increasingly mobilized opposition, invoked a ‘national emergency’ between 1975 and 1977. The electorate supported the movement against authoritarian rule and dislodged the Congress party from power in 1977” (Frankel, 2005: 221). The anger of the people, therefore, was the ultimate reason for this historic defeat of the Congress in the election of the Lok Sabha in 1977, so far for the first time at the national level. Acknowledging this historic response of Indian voters in the election, Professor W. H. Morris-Jones, one of the keenest observers of Indian politics remarked: “The voters, however, seized the opportunity to reject a regime which they associated with the excesses of
insensitive rule; they used their free vote as if they feared it might be their last chance”. Nevertheless, the role of the press as the catalyst in deepening the anger was very significant political factor. Hence, this constitutional emergency can be taken as the benchmark in the history of democracy as well as of the media in independent India to draw a line for the study of the role of the media in India’s democracy and its contribution in strengthening the democratic institutions and its functioning, and by ensuring the larger participation of the masses in the political process, it virtually extended the social horizon of democracy.

The media in India which have a glorious past related to its untiring struggle against the highhandedness of the British colonial regime and its draconian laws to suppress the freedom of the media, especially the vernacular print media echoing the spirit of national freedom movement, is an essential and integral part of democratic political process and have been playing very significant role in independent India in enabling a procedural democracy to be a vibrant democracy. Its diversified roles include: an instrument of nation building, an active agent of political socialization, a platform for rational public debate and discourse, an important public opinion maker, a communicator between the government and the governed, a watchdog of democracy, and on occasions, an active political actor playing the role of political opposition to the party or parties in power.

However, despite its positive contributions and multiple crucial roles in the life of the largest functioning democracy and its citizenry, it is not free from severe criticisms of playing partisan role, propagating particular opinion and ideas and making undue efforts in influencing the political process for serving its own economic, professional and even personal interests. Apart from the above-mentioned criticisms, media’s ever growing unaccountable power and its consistent denial of any self-regulatory mechanism also attracted more critics. The role of media in democracy, therefore, is very complex, and controversial,
and its relationship, particularly with the political class is like a love and hate relationship.

**HYPOTHESES**

The proposed study is based on the following hypotheses:

1. The Mass Media in the post-emergency India has proved itself as to be the bulwark against onslaught on political freedom of individual and democratic governance in the country.
2. The Mass Media in India has significantly contributed in expanding the social bases of India’s democracy.

**METHODOLOGY**

The mass media in this proposed study are the news media that include the print media, radio and television. Even the content of the media taken into account is purely political in nature and the study aims to critically examine its implications in the functioning of democratic institutions and political processes. The study is primarily a study of the relationship of the mass media with the democratic process in India. Therefore, this study takes into account of the constitutional provisions related to the freedom of the media and the practice of the state organs in either defending or diluting the freedom of media, the role that the Indian media itself played in defending its own freedom, and in strengthening the democratic process by involving the people in the political process through providing information about the functioning of the government and the opposition, imparting political education, and organizing vibrant debates on issues of public concerns. The phenomenal expansion of media’s reach, its role as instrument of social change, and its educative as well as mobilizing value, are collectively resulting in expanding the social bases of democratic system.

The origin and growth of media and the evolution of democratic institutions have similar kind of history in India. Media came into existence against an
authoritarian British East India regime in the last quarter of eighteen century, and the demand for civil liberties was made by the Indians against the same British regime in the early nineteenth century. Therefore, it seems as if the media and democracy are twin products of India’s freedom struggle. It also seems that these two institutions grew simultaneously and complimented to each other in the process of their transformation and consolidation.

Any study of present requires the understanding of the past. Media in India inherited a glorious past known for fighting for its freedom in general and for civil liberties for the citizens of colonial state. From social reformer like Raja Ram Mohan Roy to freedom fighters like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi and others used media as the strong weapon for their cause. Therefore, this study applies historical approach in exploring the evolutionary growth of media in India since its birth. This historical approach highlights continuities between the colonial and independent periods that may be less apparent in other methodological or disciplinary analyses of contemporary India. Commenting on the rigor of fight and the suffering the Indian press had put up and undergone during the British period, a veteran freedom fighter and journalist writes, “The over 200 year history of the Indian press, from the time of Hicky to the present day is the history of a struggle for freedom, which has not yet ended. Though media always exhibited a brave face against repressive laws made by the regimes, demand for more legal protection was always on the agenda of the media”. Therefore, this study applies legal approach in exploring the legal provisions related to the freedom of the media during the colonial period and after. This study also examines different recommendations made by different commissions for enhancing the scope of media’s working environment. Since media have passed through four different phases in free India, these phases are divided on the basis of the kind of experiences Indian media have gone through since independence.
Having established the initial character of the media in the immediate years after the independence as adversarial and constructivist, the rest of the study is carried forward to analyze whether the media retained the adversarial as well as constructivist behavior entire length and breadth of post independent era. For the sake of convenience, the study preferred to divide post-independent era into four specific phases such as pre-emergency, emergency, post-emergency and post-liberalization. Therefore, methodology of the research as applies here are descriptive, interpretative and analytical. Related study material collection has been made primarily from secondary sources; particularly books, Journals, newspapers and government reports. So far as the primary information is concerned, it has been collected through interviews of some media person and government documents.

CHAPTERIZATION

This study takes into account primarily the post-Emergency period and analyzes the relationship of mass media with democratic system in India, however, for the sake of understanding it examines the evolution of mass media as an institution and its relationship with the colonial state, and thereafter with the independent democratic state in pre-Emergency and during Emergency period too. Therefore, in a way the whole political history of mass media in India spanning from pre-independence to the present globalization phase becomes the subject of the study. The study has been divided into five phases keeping in mind the specific features of the evolving mass media organization as well as of the democratic state in India. The five phages are: Pre-independent era to pre-Emergency in independent India; Emergency era; Post-Emergency era; Media in transition; and Media in globalizing India.

In doing so, the study is trying to discern the media trends between specific periods and to correlate them (the trends) with the contemporary political situations prevailing then. It is also this study emphasizing to gain important
insights in the transitions of history of Indian media as to its consistent and avowed role as a fourth estate and to arrive at an outline where it exhibited deviant behavior.

The thesis has five chapters along with an introduction and conclusion. The five chapters are:

1. Media in India: Raj to Swaraj;
2. Media under the Shadow of Emergency;
3. Media in Post-Emergency: Restoration and Resurgence;
4. Media in Decade of Single Party Dominance to Decline (1980-1990);

The study of the mass media and democracy can not be possible without understanding the theoretical relationship of the two. Therefore, the Introduction of thesis briefly examines the relationship between the democratic system and the mass media. This also examines the methodological problems that come up while exploring the nature and amount of the impact of the mass media leave on the working of democratic system.

The first chapter, titled as Media in India: Raj to Swaraj (Empire to Independence), is a descriptive one which goes in past and explores the origin of the mass media in India and how it grew and developed as a private institution in the beginning and how its growing impact forced the British regime either to suppress it or to counter it. The long journey of the media came across evolution of different modes of media and its different roles from colonial period to pre-emergency period in free India. During the course the media was transformed into a powerful weapon of collective struggle of Indian people fighting for their national freedom against an alien rule. However, the question of the freedom of media was very important during the period because the British regime felt it as the potent threat to their existence in India. Therefore, the question of media’s freedom was resolved when the makers of independent India’s constitution
finalized the draft of the supreme law for free India. Since then the media enjoyed relative freedom uninterrupted till the proclamation of emergency in 1975.

The Proclamation of emergency was the first serious challenge that the Indian democracy and its free media came across after two and half decades since the adoption of republican constitution of India. This was the acid test for the democratic citizens and the institution of media, but the media after initial resistance, succumbed miserably, and the hard earned freedom of the media was lost in one go. The second chapter, titled as Media Under the Shadow of Emergency, is purely focused on the declaration of emergency and its impact on the freedom of media. This chapter also examines the reasons that were responsible for media’s sudden failures in neither uniting against the emergency regime nor fighting for the protection of the freedom against censorship laws. They failed in following and maintaining the great traditions of struggle and sacrifices of the people associated with media during the colonial period. This chapter did a comparative study of the struggle fought by the media during the national movement, and nearly the silent acceptance of censorship laws by the media during the emergency era.

The third chapter, titled as Media in Post-Emergency: Restoration and Resurgence, critically examines the role that the mass media played in the post-emergency period. The surprising element was the proactive role media played in exposing the emergency regime and bringing to the notice of the people the wrong deeds committed by the ruling party and its government machinery during the emergency. This chapter explores how media virtually showed solidarity with the forces that were fighting against the emergency regime. The change in political guards at the Union level brought number of legal and constitutional reforms to restore fundamental rights and democratic institutions. This chapter looks into the changes that helped the media to reemerge as the free media and to increase its credibility in the eyes of the people of India. This chapter concludes that freedom
of media and democratic governance compliment to each other in a democratic environment.

The media has passed through a transitional phase in the eighties in last century. The decade started witnessing the decline of dominance of single party rule at the Union level, and an end to the monopoly of state in controlling the broadcast and telecast media. Therefore, the fourth chapter titled, Media in Decade of Single Party Dominance to Decline (1980-90), deals with the structural changes that were knocking at the door either in the format of the political system of India or in the media organizations. The demand to end the monopoly of the state on telecast media and its impact on the working of the democratic system was fully examined in this chapter. This chapter also looks into the role of media as an instrument to expose corruption at political level especially the Bofors deal during the Rajiv Gandhi’s regime and many other political and economic scams.

The last chapter, titled as Media in Globalizing India (1991 onwards), deals with the media boom that brought to the media into a highly competitive phase. How liberalization of state’s economic policies and privatization of electronic media played decisive role in changing the character of the media. De-control, de-licensing and market oriented economy have changed the role of the state as well as economy, and even to the nature and scope of the media. Ever expanding reach of the media has become the most important instrument of giving news and making views that played a very crucial role in informing, empowering, and finally increasing the participation of the people in the democratic process. The chapter also examines whether privatization of media and its competitiveness strengthened democracy or compromised with the interest of people, whether the media is the defender of the rights to freedom of people or an instrument in serving the economic interest of the media owners. It also examines the shifting focus of electronic media from people’s cause to economic interests of the middle and higher classes. As a matter of fact, the media itself can’t be treated as a
neutral institution owing to its organizational structure and its commercial interest. Thus, those who have the ownership of the media organizations, matter a lot in defining the objective and role of the mass media in democracy.

Since the 1950s, the mass media market has developed in such a way that has far-reaching implications for the working of democratic government. Therefore, the media that was once started as a mission has turned into a profession. People associated with media in today’s world are just doing their job. So, media is now simply a profession like other professions. The media has become a big business run by the industrial houses for the sake of economic interest. The huge investment in the media business includes profit seeking objectives of the investor. From national to international industrial houses are now associated with the media business. Therefore, the freedom of media persons working in the media industry are severely affected because of the interest of the owners. Therefore, critical understanding suggests that media under the control of the state primarily serve the interest of the ruling party, media under the control of private ownership serve interest of the owners, As a result, the public interest has, in general, become secondary. However, the open competition among the media owners provides more choices before the readers and viewers to select, verify, and adopt the news and information and use it in taking right political decisions.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between the mass media and representative democracy is one of the most controversial topics in politics, and as the politicians are usually locked in a ‘love-hate’ relationship with the political media, and media seem to play an ever-larger role in political life, this study comes to some of the conclusions. The media in India that started its journey in late eighteenth century just as a small private venture by a British during British Raj, is today one of the most free and vibrant institutions in the world, and it played very crucial role in nationalist project, in nation building, in highlighting people’s problems, exposing misuses
and abuses of power by the political executive and bureaucracy, exposing corrupt politicians and government officials and their relationship with dishonest industrialists, businessmen, and other vested interests, in criticizing criminalization of politics, caste politics, communalism and regionalism, and in making people aware of their rights and civil liberties. In India today, if at all, some of the institutions are still rated very high by the people, definitely the media is one of them. In a country like India where poverty and illiteracy are relatively very high and developmental theory of democracy considers all these as obstacles for the survival of democracy, India proved it wrong, and despite its so many challenges to democratic process, the Indian democracy has survived and is functioning relatively well, and the media no doubt have great contribution in it. However, the Indian media have its own serious criticism, elitists; urban oriented; politically biased; under the grip of big industrial and business houses; using hate politics and sensationalizing the news for economic interest; using communal and caste politics especially by the vernacular media. This study ends with the suggestion that this complex issue and its other dynamics need further investigation.
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Milton, John. (1644). Aeropagitica Note: Milton, John (1608-1674) – English poet and prose writer who is one of the most highly regarded figures in world literature and is widely considered the greatest poet since Shakespeare. Often called the “Puritan Poet,” he had many of the good traits of the Puritans as well as many of the bad and spent much of his life immersed in political and religious controversy. Aeropagitica (1644)-
Milton’s best-known prose work is a political pamphlet, which argues against restricting the freedom of the press.


Universal Declaration of Human Right, 10th December, 1948:4.