CONCLUSION

Media is the powerful social institution of this post modern world. It is pervaded in our life. It has tremendous impact on our life, on our government and on our society as a whole. It shapes our opinions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

In view of the implicit power of media, its deep penetration in our society, and tremendous impact on our life, we need to be vigilant and conscious of its negative effects. Needless to say, media has shown its negative effects in form of invasion of privacy, sensationalism, character assassination, propaganda, violence etc. and has created hue and cry in the society at several occasions. Now and then media earns ire of critics on the abovementioned issues. People have attacked media organizations and raised voice against them at several occasions. In addition, there are possibilities to misuse media against individuals, groups, culture, society and a country with ulterior motives.

However, seeing the potential of media to have negative effects on our life and society, and its vulnerability to misuse, we must use this powerful instrument with great caution and control. As its minor mistake can cause huge damage to individuals, groups or even to a country.
In my view the caution and measure to control this powerful institution (media) should be ethical or moral, and not legal. The reason behind recommending ethical or moral solution to sort out ethical issues is that someway or the other, there is deliberate or undeliberate violations of some basic ethical values such as truth, accuracy, honesty, fairness, confidentiality, privacy, etc in the perplexing issues in mass media.

As to resolve the perplexing ethical issues in mass media, ethical or moral laws would be the best possible way. Ethical or moral issues cannot be dealt with legal laws as application of legal laws does not allow to use freedom of will. And if there is no freedom of will in performing an action, then the action or the issue or the problem in question is no more ethical or moral. In fact, a legal action cannot be called ethical or moral as a legal action happens to be predetermined and it does not makes sense to use freedom of will in legal action rather it simply demands conformity. Legal laws predetermine what and how we have to perform an action, and what not we have to do. Therefore, ethical or moral issues fall out of the jurisdiction of legal laws in absence of freedom of will. Furthermore, legal laws put restraints and cut the rights. However, ethics would be best possible way-out to deal with ethical or moral issues arising in mass media. Here, my argument is
rightly supported by the formulation of ethical codes by different
governing bodies and media organizations themselves.

As to privacy I come to conclude that it is not an absolute rights.
Though it is basic necessity for living dignified and peaceful life. No
doubt, we need privacy for maintaining diverse social relationships, for
development of personality, for individual liberty and autonomy, and for
protecting inviolate personality and human dignity. But the need is not
absolute. Rather, it must be balanced with individuals’ need to disclose
information and with society’s need to conduct surveillance.

Privacy is neither a self sufficient state nor an end in itself. It is
simply an instrument for achieving individual and group goals and self-
realization. Privacy as such is only part of individuals’ complex and
shifting systems of social needs.

No individual can claim for absolute or too much privacy as there
is equally powerful desire to participate in society. Thus each individual
needs to communicate with others, to disclose information about
himself, and to find companionship. Having the two desires (desire for
privacy and desire to participate in society) simultaneously each
individual makes a constant adjustment of these two desires with respect
to his culture, status and personal situation. However, he always
attempts to establish a balance that serves his general social aims as well as his individual social needs. Either too much privacy or too little can create imbalances that seriously jeopardize individual well-being. As against the need of privacy for individual, there is equally essential need of surveillance by a society or a government to safeguard against antisocial conducts. A society or government needs to invade privacy on reasonable grounds just to maintain peace, law and order, rules, norms etc. established and enforced by a society. A government can invade privacy of an individual, group or institution to protect its sovereignty and integrity. It can invade privacy to stop crimes and hazards to national security, public health, public morality etc. However, every society establishes machinery for penetrating the privacy of individuals or groups to protect others’ rights, to enforce norms, rules, and law and order in a society.

Finally we cannot claim absolute position like deontologists who claim privacy as absolute rights, and human personality as essentially inviolate. Somehow we can take utilitarian position.

Concerning pornography I would take middle position. As I believe that nothing is intrinsically bad and good. Rather, all works and ideas have their own social importance. Most of works, someway or the
other, have artistic, aesthetic, literary, social, political, scientific and educational value. Therefore, before calling a work as pornographic and demanding censorship for it, we must assess the work in question alleged to be pornographic to have any of the abovementioned values. If the work or ideas alleged to be pornographic has any of the aforementioned values and in no way is intended to arouse sexual lust, then it must be ensured protection. And if the work or ideas alleged to be pornographic has no any abovementioned values and is utterly sensual and titillating and intended solely to induce sexual arousal in viewers or readers, then it must be censored or banned.

However, in dealing with the cases of pornography, we can take the help of utilitarian principle of J.S. Mill. Because the utilitarian principle of J.S. Mill aims at maximizing higher pleasure – pleasure of power and education – and not sensual one. There are several works alleged to be pornographic by conservatives have educational, scientific and aesthetics values. Hence, to call these works as pornographic would stand justified according to J.S. Mill.

Regarding effects of television on children I come to this conclusion that neither the negative effects of television on children could be denied nor they could be ascertained. As several research data
endorsing the negative effects of television on children have been contradicted by another research data collected at different times and at different places. However, we should take middle position avoiding the extreme one. Neither we should completely ban television watching of our children nor we should allow excess of it. Rather, we should fix the time limit and censor some programs which are horrible violent and sexual in nature shown on late night. We should allow our children to watch television for some limited hours. We should keep watch on what programs our children should watch and what they should not. We should always discourage imitations of negative and violent behaviours learned from television programs. We should have discussions with our children over the programs watched and should make them understand about the imagined story, fictitious characters, fake style, graphics, and about inherent messages given out through the programs so that they could understand them fake or unreal and could not imitate them. However, this way we can keep away our children from having any kind of negative effect of television programs and could make some positive benefits. We can also take help of utilitarian principle to decide the usefulness of the television programs.

Concerning advertisements I am of the view that there is nothing intrinsically bad or good about advertisements. It is simply an
instrument to produce awareness and knowledge about products, services and ideas. Rather, much depends on how it is used. It could have positive and beneficial results if it is used in a right direction and in a proper way. Or, it could have negative and harmful impact if not used in right and prescribed way. However, professionals should be highly responsible and sensitive towards their duty. They should have respect for consumers and should not treat them as a means. Professionals should not use false and deceptive information, lies, fake images, distortions, exaggerations, etc. to sale their products and services to customers considering them fool. They should observe ethical practices and avoid unethical ones.

However, negative impact of advertising can be avoided if professionals observe high ethical standards in terms of truthfulness, human dignity, social responsibility, fairness, etc. We must also learn to read and decipher advertising to see through the hype so that we can analyze and criticize advertising’s persuasive technique.

My view concerning censorship is that it is not a term of endearment. As it aims at curtailing the freedom of speech and expression and deprives general public to know truths and facts. If we peep into the past we find that it has been used by church and state
authority to suppress apposing views, ideas and opinions. It has been used as an instrument to control and rule masses. It has been used as an instrument to crush opponents. However, censorship always becomes a good pretext in the hands of authorities to hide their short comings, weak policies and programs, and above all bad governance. However, there should be the minimal use of censorship. There should be use of censorship if an only if it is not possible to sort out problems in another way. Furthermore, there must be valid reasons and justification to use censorship.