**E-CONTENT**

**MJMC,  SEM-IV, PAPER-XIV (CC-402)  
  
 Topic : Press Freedom in India(CONTINUE…)**

**Date : 18-01-2020, TIME : 2.00 P.M.-3.00 P.M.**

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**Press Freedom in India(CONTINUE…)**

**Freedom of the Press during the emergency.**

A persistent attempt to curb Press freedom how ever began from 1969 when Indira Gandhi felt that the Press was too critical of her ways and she sought to change its approach. Freedom of the press suffered during the emergency. ‘Prevention of Publication of Objectionable Matters Act in 1976’ tried to control the press with threat of punishment. After the emergency, the changed government repealed the act in 1977. From 1980 struggle between the press and the government worsened. In different states it had the same repercussions. In Karnataka major daily offices were blocked so as to prevent their publication on one day and the police practically pleaded helplessness to do anything about the matter. Another former chief Minister compared the press to snakes and scorpions.

The Tamil Nadu Government adopted stringent measures and made the “scurrilous” writing a non-bailable offence and also one where imprisonment on conviction is made obligatory as a punishment. The then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi herself clearly ruled out giving autonomy to All India Radio. She stated that All India Radio is “a Government organ, it is going to remain a Government organ… It is there to project Government policies and Government views. It does not mean we do not give the views of other people, but primarily its function is there to give the views of the Government of India”. The Prime Minister justified this by stating that “in no country in the world, in no developing country, do they even allow anybody else to appear or any other viewpoint to be projected’.

Though the Janata Government appointed B. G. Verghese Committee to examine this question, and the Committee recommended the setting up of an autonomous body for taking charge of broadcasting, the Janata Government, and also the short-lived Lok Dal Government, took no steps to pursue this recommendation and to make All India Radio autonomous and largely free of Government control. This is an adequate indication of the battles that may always have to be fought, whichever party is in power, to ensure that media of mass communication are permitted to operate freely. The struggle is on the rise. Now what is spoken about is “Freedom with Responsibility,” and “Autonomy with accountability”. Threats to Press Freedom Press Council has enacted procedures to check the threats to press freedom in India.

**Different activities of the interest groups threatening the freedom of the press, and to make the press to act according to their wishes are:**

**· Attacking media offices, media personnel, blocking the activities**

**· Refusing access to information**

**· Fabricating cases against media professionals**

**· Harassing and victimizing journalists**

**· Seizing camera and destroying film by police from a Press Photographer**

**· Disaccrediting and withdrawing of housing facilities from media professionals**

**· Favors to media professionals.**

**· Control over issue of newsprint,**

**· Control over Electricity supply Government Control through Discrimination Revenue from advertisements is the blood of any media organization.**

The giving or withholding of advertisements, whether by individuals or by the government as a lever to influence the editorial policy constitutes a threat to and jeopardises the liberty of the Press. This is especially so in case of the government since it is the trustee of public funds and, therefore, bound to utilise them without discrimination.

Advertisements, from any party including the government cannot be claimed as a matter of right by a newspaper. Government can frame its policy of placing advertisements based on objective criteria. But this should be based upon publicly stated principles without taking into consideration the editorial policy of the paper. If an editor is found guilty of an action, he can be proceeded against personally but this would not justify denial of advertisements to the paper of which he happens to be the editor. This applies to an employee or even the proprietor of a newspaper.