

# STATE Vs. MEDIA: A Game Which Will Never End

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*Abstract: State and Media – we are quite familiar with these two actors. Because in present day nobody can ignore them, rather we are actually controlled by both of them. We are controlled by the state – that is quite natural, but now our viewpoints regarding the state or any other institutions or issues are controlled by the media. That's quite unnatural, but true. Though state and media both are also important for each other and that's why they can't act without each other. Because without media it's quite hard for any kind of state to connect with its people and run the government with accuracy. Media, whether it's state owned or mass media – we can't deny that actually very important for any form of state. At the same time without state media's socio-political role will be baseless. Actually the increasing importance of the media in the political process within the state brings out an ambiguity in its role. Today media is one of the primary actors on the political scene, capable of making or breaking any state or issues. Here starts the game between state and media. In this game both are trying to win over each other, to control over each other and also trying to become a facilitator. But like nothing is permanent in this moving world, we can't come to any conclusion about the winner of this game. It's an ongoing and ever changing game.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The increased importance of the media in the political process of the state brings out an ambiguity in its role. Traditionally, the media has been conceived as an observer, or we can say ideally a neutral observer of the political scene. On this view, the media is a part of the political process of the state, but the true fact is that it is not part of any political process rather its actual role is to stand outside of political process and act like a watch dog. But events of the last few decades have demonstrated the inadequacy of this role. And we can't ignore that we live in a dynamic world where ignorance of economic and political change is destructive of democracy and fatal to intelligent decision making. In earlier age citizen talked to citizen about public policies that effected them. Each community could gather in a hall or charge to decide its own fate. Deciding its fate was real because in older, agricultural societies each society came close to self sufficiency and remote events had marginal marginal meaning. But that method of politics disappeared long ago. In place of the small town, now there are huge urban complexes

where no citizen can know most other members of the community. No town hall or church could possibly hold all the voters. Now the individual depends on media that inform what is going on and even sometimes media tell us what should be going on. Today media is one of the primary actors on the political scene, capable of making or breaking any state or issues. So, now the media are playing a role like a agent within the state and not simply observers of it. There is an ongoing contradiction between the media and the state. It's like a game, where sometimes the state wins, become successful to control over the media, and sometimes the media wins, plays the key actor to break or downfall any state. But this game is unending, because we can't come to any final conclusion. That's why it's become important for rethinking the traditional state-media relationship.

## II. STATE AND MEDIA: DIFFERENT COUNTRIES WITH DIFFERENT VIEWS

All governments anywhere, whatever their makeup, share a certain antipathy to the media. Notwithstanding their avowals that they are committed to openness and honesty, officials will usually seek to prevent the thorough airing and debate of issues that are uncomfortable or embarrassing. Such instinctive secrecy – particularly in the field of foreign policy, tempts governments to use deception as a tool to achieve their political ends.

Abroad as in the United States, it is critically important that the media not permit this to happen, that they intervene to promote public discussion of problems that may not be fully or adequately handled by the normal processes of government. The promotion of a free media should therefore be a priority in American foreign policy, without regard to which party is in power at any given time. Actually there is a great yearning around the world today for free expression through open media, and it is one of the most significant areas where the United States still has reason to boast of its own record. Although it's even true that in most of the countries freedom of media comes under threat. The United States has always placed a tremendous amount of faith in the ability of free and open communication to bring peace, stability, and justice to its people. It is ironic, but American government has often failed to recognize the fundamental role of a free press in sustaining democracies everywhere, and in helping to build them where they do not exist.

Perhaps no leader in recent times has appreciated the role of media than Mikhail Gorbachev. Greater media freedom is one of the central elements in his policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring), not least because media has served as a useful weapon in ferreting out corruption in the Soviet system. Newspapers and magazines felt immediate impact when they began to exploit his reforms. While subscribers flocked to the new Soviet journals and literary periodicals testing the limits, the readership of traditional newspapers calling for a more cautious approach, such as Pravda, the official publication of the communist party, plummeted. Eventually Gorbachev replaced Pravda's editor with one of his personal advisers. Even in China, the events in Tienanmen Square, Den Xiaoping made clear that he would tolerate no challenge to Communist Party rule, and the media were expected to toe the line. Like, African leaders may not tolerate an institutionalised opposition party, they can sometimes be persuaded to accept the existence of an opposition media.

## III. DEMOCRATIC STATE AND MASS MEDIA: EFFECTIVENESS, CONTROL AND LIMITATIONS

Democratic states presumed to be strong and they are capable of making necessary changes without violence or lasting injustice. The root process of peaceful and appropriate change begins with the right of the aggrieved to be heard, thus presenting the best evidence of the need for change. The voice of the aggrieved, being heard by the general citizenry, can create consensus for a remedy. Media is very important in this

process. If the media do not report malfunctions of the system, the unheard cries never become a social fact. Or if the public, sensing the need for change, has opinions that go unreported, no mechanism exists for consensus to evolve. In those instances, public opinion remains powerless. That's why sometimes unheard cries turn to aggression. Common feelings become detached from institutions. The result is apathy or violence, both of which are subversive of democracy.

The power to control information by control the media is the major lever in the control of society. Giving citizens a choice in ideas and information is important as giving them a choice in politics. If a nation has narrowly controlled information, then it will soon have narrowly controlled politics. Though commercial control of the media is not inherently bad. It is far from perfect, but it is less bad than any other corporations, which are inherently bad. Though democratic limits on the size of media companies are workable and socially desirable, but there is a fundamental flow in proposing this as a national debate. In the past, media corporations have not treated issues which went against their ethics. Even if, somehow, legal limits were placed on the size of media corporations, control of excessive power would be dim. At every step of democratic reform, an imbalance of power, sooner or later frustrate the reform. But the inappropriate fit between a country's major media and political system has served voters of relevant information, leaving them at the mercy of paid political propaganda, that is close to meaningless and often worse. It has eroded the central requirement of a state (democratic state) that those who are governed give not only their consent but their informed consent.

## IV. STATE MEDIA: STATE OWNED MEDIA

We can understand State Media better as state owned media, which is controlled financially and editorially by the state. The term State Media is primarily understood in contrast to corporate independent news, which has no direct control from any political party. Generally, state ownership of the media is found in poor, autocratic, non-democratic countries with highly interventionist governments that have some interest in controlling the flow of information. Countries with 'weak' governments do not possess the political will to break up state media monopolies. In this context it is important to mention that there are two kinds of theories regarding state control media. On is Public Interest Theory which think that government ownership is beneficial, whereas the Public Choice Theory suggests that state control undermines economic and political freedoms.

State media outlets usually enjoy increased funding and subsidies compared to private media counterparts, but this can create inefficiency in the state media. Though we can see that in the People's Republic of China, where state control of media is high, levels of funding have been reduced for state outlets, which have forced the party media to sidestep official restrictions on content.

## V. FREEDOM OF MEDIA: A BIG CHALLENGE FOR BOTH STATE AND MEDIA

This is not to say that freedom of media is easy to establish in countries that have little recent experience with democratic values and institutions. But media freedom is much more likely to be accepted in some nation than other democratic traditions, such as an institutionalised opposition party, that might be seen as too much of a threat to existing regimes. Instead of functioning strictly as an adversary of the government, a free press can provide an effective forum for public debate, a mechanism for precious two-way communication between the people and their leaders. In this role, it can accomplish a great deal. Any country with a genuinely free media, for example will have a hard time holding a large number of political prisoners without having to explain itself to the public. A free media may, in fact, be more effective than an opposition party in achieving change in an oppressive system.

Leaders who are intolerant of media freedom may soon find themselves powerless to prevent it, as new technologies are making it much easier to launch and sustain independent media. One could argue that the rarity of media freedom, especially in Third World and Communist –bloc countries, is proof of how difficult it is for this democratic values to take hold. But there are cases in which freedom of the media has been difficult to establish, or re-establish. If a regime is brutally repressive and does not even pretend to be accountable to its people, it will never willingly tolerate a free media; it simply would not be in its best interest to do so. Though if media freedom is denied, this opposition may turn to other, more violent forms of expression.

## VI. ROLE OF MEDIA WITHIN STATE: PROS AND CONS

Media, undoubtedly playing a vital role within state. But if we think in a deeper way, then we can understand that all the actions of the media are not totally progressive. So, there are some positive and also negative sides of media in its role within state.

Positive sides of media are –

- ✓ Media and democracy are words with highly positive emotional values. Amartya Sen (1999) has pointed out that while democracy is not yet universally practiced, nor indeed uniformly accepted, in the general climate of world opinion, democratic governance has now achieved the status of being taken to be generally right. And for democratic governance, the role of media has become very important.
- ✓ A free media is a necessary condition for good governance. As an information conduit between corporations, government, and the populace, the media acts as a watchdog against government malfeasance, while at the same time fostering greater transparency and accountability.
- ✓ Media has a definite role to play in the empowerment of citizens. Because media gives voice to the needs and aspirations of the people and provides them access to relevant information. When people lack a voice in the

public arena, or access to information on issues that affect their lives, and if their concerns are not reasonably reflected in the public domain, their capacity to participate in democratic process is undermined.

- ✓ Media in all its varied forms, has opened up the potential the new forms of participation. The vulnerable and marginalized sections of the society such as the poor, women, weaker sections and socially disadvantaged are also using the media to make their voices hard.
- ✓ The potential of media to be effectively to enhance social awareness is unquestionable. The news media plays a decisive role in establishing a discursive space for public deliberations over social issues.
- ✓ When media gives a voice to the poor that also entails give the poor people adequate opportunities to take initiatives for overcoming their problems.

There are also some most important factors, which becomes negative sides in the role of media within state. These are –

- ✓ More often, contemporary news organizations belong to large corporations whose interests influence what gets covered and how. They are often less interests regarding public interests.
- ✓ Now news organizations are driven economically to capture the largest possible audience. For this we can hardly find any media ethics, rather TRP become much important.
- ✓ The media are easily manipulated by government officials or others, for whom the press, by simply reporting press releases and official statements, can be virtually unfiltered.
- ✓ It is not surprising that a great range of opinion and analysis outside the narrow mainstream rarely sees the light of the mass media. This lack of diversity manifest itself by lack of adequate exposure to information and ideas that are true or interesting or useful, that help us to understand the world better or make life more satisfactory in one way or another.
- ✓ Media is often described as having a special “watchdog function” or as being a kind of “fourth branch of government”. But now these functions of media have deteriorate by its corporatized business interests.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Though we discussed about the contradictory relation between state and media, but state and media both are made up of human beings of a same society. Rather state is not a monolithic force but a collection of varied agencies, some of which can be more insulated from partition politics than others. At the same time we can say that support of government regulation of the media is compatible with strict opposition to censorship. The point is not to prevent news organisations from expressing their views but to ensure the expression of other views. Frankly speaking in another world things might be different, but in this world we need the state. With forms of state intervention like the fairness doctrine, we risk a number of dangers, including circularity, but only to save our democracy. We turn to the state, because it is the

most public of all our institutions and because only it has the power to resist the pressures of the market and thus to enlarge and invigorate our politics. Ethical discussion of the media often contents on various freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom of press, and freedom of information. These freedoms are seen as rights that protects speech, publication, and other sorts of representation from varied interferences. But states or modern democracies are not and can't be neutral or unconcerned about the regulation of mediated communication. Complete non-interference with communication is impossible and minimal legal regulation of communication may not constitute minimal interference.

It must be acknowledged that in many Third World countries, the only entity that can afford to run a newspaper or a radio or television station is the government. But these governments would do well to permit the expression of all views, or, as in the case of Britain's BBC, to fund the media through a license tax allow independent operation. Under government control, the quality of journalism usually sinks, since reporters who do nothing but repeat the government lines. The public turns away from the media and people are hardly likely to respond to the government's calls for austerity, or other sacrifices, in the name of nation building, which is usually the pretext the government control in the first place

I believe that we have misunderstood what a modern democratic society's commitment to freedom of the media means and should be. Unlike freedom of speech, to certain

aspects of which our commitment must be virtually unconditional, freedom of the media should be contingent on the degree to which it promotes certain values at the core of our interest in freedom of expression generally. Freedom of the media, in other words, is an instrumental good. Like it is good if it does certain things and not especially good otherwise. But in this 21<sup>st</sup> century we have to go ahead with both state and media. We can't ignore any of them or can't give priority to any of them, because otherwise democratic values of any country will be in danger.

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