

## **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA CENSORSHIP IN PAKISTAN: A HISTORICAL STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

*Media is the most crucial element for the development of freedom of expression. Unfortunately history of Pakistan is evident of many unjustified rules and regulations imposed on media at the name of securing 'National Interest'. Many steps were taken like Press and Publication Ordinance (1963), creation of National Press Trust (1964), Registration of Printing Presses and Publication Ordinance (1988) etc... to keep the media in control. On October 12, 1999 the fourth martial law was imposed by General Pervaiz Musharraf who introduced a new dimension of media's role towards politics and then media started its journey towards gradual freedom and liberty. This research paper is a qualitative analysis of the relation between Pakistan's political and military governments and media.*

**Key Words:** Democracy, Freedom of Expression, Martial Law, Media, Politics.

### **Introduction:**

There is no concept of Modern Democracy without free and fair Media. Media plays the role of fourth pillar of state and has literally adopted the role of a healthy opposition as far as

the criticism on government policies is concerned. It is the media that represents public opinion properly and no doubt the strength of media represents the strength of democracy in a state. Media is a very vast term in itself, and encompasses many fields. The term 'media' are difficult to capture and define. The media are a 'catch all term' that includes transactional corporations, communication technologies, policies and regularity frame works, the practices of journalism, columns, the nightly television, block buster movies, advertisements, business magazines, music, radio, the local news papers and the internet<sup>1</sup>.

The media can play its constructive role in democracy only if there is encouraging environment that allow them to do so. They need the vital skills of comprehensive reporting that a new democracy requires. There should also be a mechanism to make certain that they are accountable to the public and that moral and professional standards are sustained. Media independence is guaranteed if media organizations are economically free from interference of media owners and the state, and operate in a competitive environment. The media should also be reachable to as wide section of society as possible. Efforts to help the media should be directed towards the fortification of press rights, enhancing media liability, building media capability and democratizing media access.

Pakistan, unluckily since its formation in 1947, has been continuously victimized by political instability. Even after the death of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, no political leader could prove him the savior of the country and bring out the nation from the marsh of economic and political problems. From 1947 to 1958, there was continuous political anarchy and unstable governments. Muslim League considering its birth right to rule the country forgot the politics of principles taught by the father of the nation during freedom movement and this situation paved way for the first Martial Law in October 1958. It is a grim reality that the imposition of first Martial Law also failed to develop any sense of responsibility in political leadership.

General Muhammad Ayub Khan decided to quit in 1969 and powers were transferred to General Yahya Khan, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Martial Law Administrator. The democracy was restored in 1972 but this restoration led to another Martial Law imposed by General Zia ul Haq in 1977. General Zia died in an air crash on 17<sup>th</sup> of August 1988 and Benazir Bhutto became the next elected Prime Minister. For the next 11 years, the government rolled like a ball between Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and both the parties led to another phase of martial law. These four military regimes were the same as far as the tactics to assume power and efforts to sustain rule were concerned but during that regime media witnessed a change in its policies.

When the martial law was imposed on October 12, 1999, media was on the same lines to praise the ruler and criticize his predecessor. But after the elections of 2002, there was a significant change in its behavior. Many new private channels had been opened and they started a competition to be more informative, up to date and critical. The change in the electronic media policy of government influenced the print media policy. So, here we are going to have a look on the journey of Pakistani media towards freedom of expression.

### **Electronic Media in Pakistan:**

The Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation was formed on August 14, 1947 when Pakistan became independent. It was direct descendent of the Indian Broadcasting Company which later became the All India Radio. At independence, Pakistan got only three Radio stations at Dhaka, Lahore and Peshawar. Under a major program of development, new stations were opened at Karachi and Rawalpindi in 1948. This was followed by further stations at Hyderabad in 1951, Quetta in 1956, a second station at Rawalpindi in 1960 and a receiving center at Peshawar in 1960<sup>2</sup>. Then started a phase when radio stations were opened all over the country and radio transmission was in access to all Pakistanis. In October 1998, radio Pakistan started FM transmissions and over the period of 2002-2005 new FM stations were opened at major cities. Now these FM stations are

very much familiar in the country, because they are not only the source of news but also of entertainment like music, dramas, social, cultural, religious and agricultural programs. They have a large number of listeners.

In 1964 with the establishment of Pakistan Television under Government of Pakistan, the significance of Radio reduced. But both the media were not decisive in politics because they were under government control and they only promoted and provided coverage to government policies. Media was duly so much bound to obey the government that, Pakistan Television was not allowed to show a single shot of Benazir Bhutto, except once for a couple of seconds from July 1977 when General Zia-ul-Haq imposed Martial Law up to August 1988 when he died in an air crash. For eleven years whereas the General appeared every single day, she was kept away from TV and Radio<sup>3</sup>. In fact media was just like a puppet in government's hands, it couldn't take decisions at its own, but only to promote the official policy. In November 1988, when Benazir Bhutto was elected as Prime Minister, the media which were not allowed to cover her activities, started giving full coverage to her and her government.

In previous governments only Benazir Bhutto tried to break PTV's domination by establishing the People's Television Network. This channel was renamed as Shalimar Recording & Broadcasting Company (STN), and in 1990 it sold some of its broadcasting time to a private company the Network Television Marketing (NTM). NTM further developed as an entertainment channel and it obtained fame mainly for its dramas and music shows<sup>4</sup>. These TV channels were only for entertainment through dramas, songs and religious, social and cultural type of talk shows. They were just to promote the official policy of Pakistani government. The only gain for electronic media during 1997-1999 was the decision to telecast recorded versions of Question Hours in Parliament on radio and TV<sup>5</sup>. Although it was an encouraging decision, but because it was a recorded version of question hours in parliament, it did not fulfill the requirements of free media.

It is a surprising fact that free electronic media was initiated by a dictator General Pervez Musharraf with the inauguration of private TV channels in Pakistan during his military regime and now Pakistani Media is the most liberal and active media of the Muslim world. Cable system was introduced in 2004 in major cities of Pakistan and then it expanded all over the country. There are many private channels like Geo, Aaj, Hum, and Express, Dunia etc. which are working to make nation more and more aware of government policies and its corruptions. Looking on the table, one can better reveal the changes in electronic media from 1999 to 2009.

#### **Growth in Electronic Media: 1999-2009**

Medium	1999	2009
Local TV Channels	2	71
Radio stations	22	25
FM Radio stations in private sector	Nil	111 (121 licensed)
FM Radio stations in Public sector	Nil	10
Cable operators (licensed)	Nil	1600
Cable subscribers	Nil	5 millions

Source: (PEMRA and Ministry of Information and Broadcast)

#### **Print Media in Pakistan**

History of Print Media in Pakistan is full of tragedies. Since the creation of Pakistan, the rulers as well as the masses have not developed the habit of free and true Media. A 1954 report of the Press Commission is open in its judgment of the state of the media at that time in Pakistan. A national press is the reflection of national politics. The politics of the country therefore do have very important effects on the country's press. It can be said that a country gets the kind of press it deserves. If the politics of a country is polluted, the country's press cannot get unaffected of it. The country will continue to have a bad press as long as its politics is not clean<sup>6</sup>. The history of democracy in Pakistan is full of tragedies. Here, since the 70 years of

establishment of Pakistan, elections have been conducted with irregular intervals. It was because the elected governments were continuously interrupted by the military regimes. Similarly, not even a single elected government except that of PML (Q) from 2002 to 2007 and Pakistan People's Party (Parliamentarians) PPP (P) from 2008 to 2013 completed its tenure.

Democracy has faced many challenges in Pakistan which are due to the inherited colonial pattern, absence of true and visionary leadership, ethnic and linguistic differences and some other factors which resulted in the domination of civil bureaucratic and military elites instead of the elected legislative bodies. Military rule has lasted for more than around 35 years (Ayub Khan 1958-1969, Yahya Khan 1969-1971, Zia ul Haq 1977-1988, and Pervaiz Musharraf 1999-2008). During the 70 years history of Pakistan, the reigns of Pakistani governments have been in the hand of military and civil (elected and unelected) rulers in alternate phases. It is very unfortunate that during the democratic regimes, opposition starts looking or rather invites the Army to intervene due to the failure of the governments.

However, when Army takes over and prolongs for certain years, public again gets unsatisfied with this type of regimes and military regimes are not conducive for and fit in a democracy. This trend in politics has destabilized the democracy in Pakistan and has hindered the growth of democratic spirit.

In 1940, when Lahore Resolution was passed, All India Muslim League and the Quaid-e-Azam felt need of their own press who could promote their opinion and convey it to the common masses. In this regard the Dawn which was a weekly newspaper was converted in to a daily newspaper. Another Urdu newspaper started during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War by Mir Khalil-ur-Rehman, a weekly periodical the Jang, from Delhi. This paper was also converted to daily newspaper during the movement for the demand of Pakistan. After independence the Dawn and the Jang were shifted to Karachi from Delhi.

Another Urdu fortnightly periodical was started by Hamid Nizami in March 1940 from Lahore, when Lahore Resolution was passed. This paper completely devoted itself for the cause of Muslim League. An English daily named “*The Pakistan Times*” was launched by Mian Iftikhar-u-din in February 1947. Mian Iftikhar was a liberal intellectual, graduated from Oxford, so he collected outstanding cohort of journalists for his paper. These papers really set examples for future journalism. Their contribution was outstanding in the history of journalism in Pakistan.

Mapping the Media in Pakistan, a report by International Media Support (IMS) says that there are 945 regular daily and weekly newspapers and magazines published in Pakistan<sup>7</sup>. As we are going to discuss about the historical background of Print Media in Pakistani politics it would not be out of place to have an overview of the print media groups in Pakistan.

### **An Overview of Print Media Groups in Pakistan**

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Media group</b>	<b>Newspaper/Magazine</b>	<b>Language</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Jang</b>	a- The daily Jang b- The Daily Awam c- The Daily Awaz d- The Daily <i>Waqf</i> e- The <i>News</i> f- Akhbar-e-Jehan <i>weekly</i> g- <i>MAG The Weekly</i>	a- Urdu b- Urdu c- Urdu d- Urdu e- English f- Urdu g- English
<b>2</b>	<b>Dawn</b>	a- The Daily <i>Dawn</i> b- The Star	a- English b- English
<b>3</b>	<b>Nawa-i-Waqf</b>	a- The Daily <i>Nawa-i-Waqf</i> b- <i>The Nation</i> c- <u>Phool</u> (Monthly) d- <i>Family Magazine (Weekly)</i> e- <i>Nida-i-Millat (Weekly)</i>	a- Urdu b- English c- Urdu d- Urdu e- Urdu

<b>4</b>	<b>Express</b>	a- The Daily <i>Express</i> b- <i>The Express Tribune</i> c- <i>Express Sunday (Magazine)</i>	a- Urdu b- English c- Urdu
<b>5</b>	<b>Daily Times</b>	a- The Daily <i>Aaj Kal</i> b- The Daily <i>Times</i> c- <i>The Friday Times</i> English d- The <i>Wikkid</i> English	a- Urdu b- English c- English d- English

Source: Mezzera, Marco, and Safdar Sial. "Media and Governance in Pakistan: A Controversial yet Essential relationship."

Looking at the history of print media in Pakistan in the perspective of political development, it is unfortunate to note that the history of 70 years is full with successful use of all means to suppress media by Government, whether these governments were political or military. The history of suppression on Pakistani press starts in 1948, within the first year of independence. The first attack on press freedom in Pakistan came in 1948, when three progressive periodicals were proscribed by Muslim League government. Later on the ban was expired and one of the journals re-appeared in the market, it was asked to furnish a security deposit. After this, its editor was jailed under the Safety Act Ordinance of 1948. Other publications were also banned and asked to furnish securities, and their editors were arrested<sup>8</sup>. It is lamentable that democratic traditions have never been promoted and followed in our country. From the very beginning the government officials and ministers tried to hide their mischievous deeds from the masses, it opened the way of corruption in government and the media, if tried to expose it, was made to suffer. Journalism has always been the most challenging type of profession in Pakistan and the first attack on freedom of press in 1948 opened the gate for further attacks on media.

Although, Pakistan was achieved in the name of Islam, where every person would be allowed to follow his religion, customs,

culture and traditions yet the media were not given permission to work freely. They were not more than a puppet in governments' hands. They were not free to defend the democratic values; instead they were working to praise government policies for just to secure themselves. "National interests", "the glory of Islam" and "the Ideology of Pakistan" these catchwords were used to extend support from press for the government. Another step taken by Ayub Khan was to take the charge of PPL group on April 18, 1959 for the reason that they contained news likely to endanger the security of Pakistan: and that they were printed with funds from foreign sources. Types of excuses were made to usurp the freedom of media in Pakistan by all the dictators as well as the democratic rulers, because democratic rulers had ruled like despots in the case of Pakistan.

During Ayub regime, the press in Pakistan suffered the greatest and the most destructive set back. He was the ruler who first time introduced the blackest law known as the "Press and Publication (Amendments) Ordinance" on September 2, 1963 in history. Ayub Khan started his invasion on press by taking over the independent papers, namely the "*Pakistan Times*", "*Imroz*" and weekly "*Lail o Nahar*" belonging to the Progressive Papers Ltd., under Martial Law ordinance. The Press and publication amendment ordinance known as "National Press Trust" took over at least fourteen established dailies and weeklies and their chain papers including "*The Pakistan Times*", "*Imroz*", "*Morning News*", and "*Mashriq*". In this way Ayub Khan nationalized large parts of the press and took over one of the two largest news agencies<sup>9</sup>. The next step to press the Media was the formation of National Press Trust (NPT) which was taken to "raise the standards of journalism in the country." The main cause to form NPT was to control and cover press and set loyalist and conformist traditions to be followed by others. This trust whose five to nine trustees were government representatives acquired 12 newspapers.

This type of pressure on press stopped its creativity. A false, incredible staleness emerged in the printed word in Pakistan so journalism stopped growing; it became simply the profession of

reproduction of various official versions. The level of information necessary for a dynamic public opinion never rose above the files of the Information Ministry<sup>10</sup>. This was not only in the case of Ayub regime, but the elected governments also performed the same character. When Ayub regime ended in 1970, the loyalties of NPT were transferred to the next ruler General Yahya Khan. Ayub government also took over the premier news agency Associated Printing Press (APP), again through an ordinance. The whole period of 1968 and the beginning of 1969 ending on the imposition of Martial law by another military ruler General Yahya Khan was marked by a great rise of people against the despotic rule of General Ayub Khan. To press this revolt Ayub government reasserted more and more repressive measures.

General Yahya Khan was welcomed by Pakistani Media as a military ruler. No one criticized the rule but all tried to promote their proclaimed intentions. All Press was looking to the Military regime to articulate 'the wishes and aspirations of the people' and bring about the Islamic democratic system for which the country had been created. During Yahya regime, the elections were held in December 1970 which resulted in 167 seats of Awami League and 85 seats of Pakistan People Party. But during the tussle for power between Z.A Bhutto and Mujib-ur-Rehman, the Media of both wings completely divided in support of two different groups. Media in East Pakistan was supporting Mujib and his Six Points while media in West Pakistan was declaring six points as danger to Pakistan's integrity and Mujib as a traitor. No one worked for the national interests or unity of Pakistan. The Media treatment of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, the leader of the majority party (Awami League), is couched in negative vocabulary. He is projected as an 'intransigent' and 'obstinate' person, who insists constitution only on 'Six Points' basis<sup>11</sup>.

This was the perception given to the Media by the central government. Media played the role of a puppet in government's hands. Media had no right to show the real picture of the issue to the nation. So, one can't deny the fact that media also played negative role in the separation of East Pakistan. On the other

hand, a democratic era was about to *Dawn* after a long night (1958 to 1971) of military dictatorship. An editorial was published in “*Dawn*” on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1973, which warned that no constitution given by a single individual or alone party, however, massive its majority in the constitution-framing body can be immune from future challenges or possess and insurance against subversion. The media seemed to be moving away from the shadow of the status quo group and trying to find a locus stand of its own. This was truer of *Dawn* and *Nawa-i-Waqt* than about *Jang* and the *Pakistan times*. During the tragic time of separation of East Pakistan, the whole nation was in a feeling of chaos that’s why media felt its responsibility. Upcoming government also became lenient but very soon the dream of free press changed into nightmare.

When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took over power, he addressed many friendly speeches for press and showed intentions to join a friendly relation with press. But this friendly relation ended very soon. The dismissal of Z. A. Suleri and then there was a series of despotic actions taken by the Bhutto government. Government cancelled the new print quota of “*the Jang*”, Quetta and issued show cause notice to a number of newspapers including “*the Nawa-i-Waqt* and *Imroz*”, in 1972. “*The Sun*”, Karachi was also banned in July of the same year, under Press & Publication ordinance<sup>12</sup>. Government stopped the national advertisements to “*Dawn*” group of newspapers, and many other newspapers were penalized by the curtailment of news print quota. With the help of these actions government wanted to strangle the independence of the press not toeing its political line. The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and other employees of press industry condemned the despotic actions which rendered more than five hundred families jobless.

PFUJ met Z.A Bhutto and tried to get a sympathetic consideration and some positive actions from government. But government continued with its policy of muzzling the press and banned one after another newspapers and journals including “*the Frontier Guardian*” and “*the Shahbaz*” of Peshawar, “*the Outlook*” and “*the Mubrih*” of Quetta, *the Zindagi* and a

number of weeklies edited by Mujib-ur-Rehman Shami. Another step taken by the government was the formation of National press Commission, in September 19, 1973. The constitution of 1973 was favored by “*The Pakistan Times*” but other newspapers did not warmly welcome the constitution. But very soon Bhutto’s dominant personality made the Media to be on its way. NPT was the creation of a military ruler and Pakistan Peoples' Party had earlier promised to dissolve it. But when PPP came to power in 1972, it simply extended the tradition of taking over the control of NPT. Under the false promise that the newspapers belonging to it had to be maintained it was returned to collective domain. A shameless campaign was initiated by the new political masters, of character assassination against those who dared to criticize any action of Bhutto or other party workers<sup>13</sup>. Although, Pakistan was blessed with a democratic government after the despotic rule of 11 years of military rulers yet it was not a blessing for media. Due to his obstinate, nature Bhutto always tried to suppress his opposition with using all possible means.

Bhutto’s oppressive policies continued until Muhammad Zia ul Haq stole power in a 1977’s bloodless coup. Like his predecessor, he also adopted the friendly policy towards the press in the beginning of his regime just to gain the sympathies of media and motivate them to make masses to say welcome to another military regime. As an editorial in *the Jang* commented on imposition of Martial Law by Zia, the action, taken by the armed forces at the beginning of the last month had become inevitable because the country had reached the brink of disaster and had this action been delayed it would have become impossible to control the situation. Had the armed forces not intervened on 5<sup>th</sup> July, the situation would have become so grave that it could have endangered the very existence and integrity of the country. The way the military forces have taken steps, in a short period of 5 weeks since 5<sup>th</sup> July to organize political process on the correct lines, could not have been expected by many people<sup>14</sup>.

This was the main reason to develop friendly relations with Media at initial stage of Martial Law, that the leading

newspaper of a free country was favoring imposition of Martial Law. But this relation did not last long. Zia jailed eleven journalists and flogged four more on May 12, 1978 for organizing a meeting at a public place, raising banners and starting a hunger strike<sup>15</sup>. General Zia ul Haq, who ruled for eleven years introduced another weapon to control the press and to defend “Islam and Islamic values”, named “censorship”. During his regime, journalists were sentenced to imprisonment and lashes. When he postponed elections the second time and dissolved all political parties on October 1979, to make press less effective he imposed censorship on newspapers. His next step was that he directed all government departments, educational institutes and libraries to purchase only NPT publications. Zia justified his repressive policies in the name of protecting Islam, the ideological priorities of the country and the nation.

In societies like ours it's a great tragedy that whenever the question of media freedom is raised, the governments come up with their self styled code of ethics, for journalists. During the last 70 years all governments tried to lessen the influence of media at the name of ethical laws. Gen. Zia ul Haq dismissed nine senior journalists working in *the Imroz*, *Pakistan Times* and *Mashriq*, three Lahore newspapers of National Press Trust for signing a memorandum demanding to end the atrocities on Sindhi population, in 1983<sup>16</sup>. Well known professor of journalism Dr. Mehdi Hassan suggested that there should be a line of neutrality and self evaluation for the media and the journalists, but it is a lamentable fact that every government tried to evolve a code of ethics only in partnership with the media owners, instead of co-operating also with the journalists. Same was the case with military ruler General Zia ul Haq; he always tried to bound press in the name of Islamic values and traditions. He introduced many Islamic laws to be followed by media.

Not only the media but our economy, politics, foreign policy, in fact each and every department has been the victim of authoritarianism. Through our history, the continuing dictatorial and despotic repression has stitched us into the

straitjacket of formal institutionalized control. The power elite that has owned and supervised the means, and the bulk, of economic wealth has almost impulsively realized the correlation between an ignorant public and exploitable people<sup>17</sup>. It is unfortunate that political history of Pakistan is full of such type of tragic facts that our rulers have used to fulfill their personal interests in the name of religion, national interests or national welfare. It not only affected the politics, economics, society but also the media culture of the country. There was no prominent difference in political or military governments regarding their attitude towards media. In 1985, Muhammad Khan Junejo was elected as prime minister and dictatorship of Zia ended but Press and Publication Ordinance (PPO) remained at its place in democratic government also. And media was much under stress as in Zia period. In May 1988, General Zia-ul-Haq dismissed the National Assembly but soon he died in an accidental plane crash in August 1988. During this period another law came in to effect known as Registration of Printing Presses and Publication Ordinance. According to this law District Magistrate was assigned to issue a receipt to an applicant for the issuance of a declaration for the keeping of a printing press to provide an application with proof that would help avoid government interference to control the press.

In November 1988, the first woman prime minister of the Muslim world Benazir Bhutto introduced a new phase of open-mindedness to the mass media laws. Electronic and print media were given consent to provide daily and balanced reporting to the speeches and views of the opposition in news bulletins and current affair programs. Because the print media reaches a small percentage of the population, this change had significant effects on the public. But it continued no longer and was returned to the old, one-sided coverage after only four months because of pressure on Bhutto by her party. The free press grew stronger during this phase as well as the regional language press, such as Sindi language newspapers, showed a new energy in reporting the news and in examining the issues of the day. In addition, new technology and use of computers and desktop publishing permitted a more timely and in-depth reporting of the news. Bhutto also ended the dictatorial

practices of using newsprint as a means of controlling the press. Exclusively, the Ministry of Information no longer need issuance of permits to import newsprint and allowed a free and open system of introducing newsprint at market prices.

In 1990, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif took over the government and restored the issuance of permits system for newsprint. During 1992, government pressure on independent press increased in Pakistan. During the “Long March” of Pakistan Democratic Alliance against the sitting government led by former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, security forces beaten protesters and journalists alike<sup>18</sup>. This was the attitude of an elected government with the media of its country. There was not any difference in the attitude of government with the media whether it was elected or dictatorial. It remained uncertain whether or not any separate press laws existed in the country. In 1988, Ayub Khan’s notorious Press and Publication Ordinance was repealed and replaced by the Registration of Printing Presses and Newspapers Ordinance. This was never made to a parliamentary act. It continued to be reissued as a presidential ordinance after every fourth month- the limit of the life of presidential ordinance until early in 1991. One interpretation was that no press laws had therefore since existed. The other pressed by official quarters was that with the lapse of RPPNO the repeal of the earlier Press and Publication ordinance which it replaced had also lapsed, and therefore the later had since stood revived<sup>19</sup>. In fact press has never been given its due right in our country. Same was the case with Nawaz government, which tried to suppress the media for its own interests. He never tried to promote journalism, which is directly related to democratic culture. Although Nawaz government, was an elected government yet it never tried to create a democratic culture in the country.

Benazir Bhutto again became prime minister and was ousted again in 1996 and Nawaz Sharif took over government in February 1997 elections. Nawaz Sharif remained the ruler for two and a half years. Sharif government was once again repressive for media; many journalists were punished who dared to criticize his government, Sharif government in its

vanity of “heavy mandate” put tremendous pressure on journalists using all possible means. Sharif government was ended by General Pervez Musharraf’s military coup on October 12, 1999. Musharraf Government announced to follow a more liberal policy towards the press with fewer limitations and much less exploitation, news to contradict the claim was numerous. The Pakistan press foundation (PPF) reported continued harassment and dangers to journalists. We cannot, however deny the fact that during Musharraf regime Pakistan entered a distinct new phase of rapid change, so far so the liberation of media is concerned.

It is a hopeful sign for democracy that media is getting influential in politics. Growing influence of Media is certainly a blessing for this nation, which, since its independence has remained under authoritarian regimes. Pakistani media with its relative independence has become a trend setter for political and social discourse in the country. Nevertheless the situation in media industry is not as perfect as to conclude it a story of success<sup>20</sup>. From 1999, Pakistan entered a new era and now, amongst the 57 member states of the organization of the Islamic Conference, Pakistan has the highest level of freedom of expression. Press freedom in Pakistan could be a debate but in over all terms, it can be declared with confidence that the Media in this period have helped the Pakistani nation to obtain a new level of wakefulness plurality in public conversation unknown in all decades of history.

In Pakistan, constitutional development has always been subjective to an unstable political system. Pakistan has had three periods of military rule 1958-71, 1977-88 and 1999-2008. Periods between military regimes and democracy rule seem to alternate each other in gaps of almost ten years. In Pakistan Democracy has never been given the full chance to sustain itself. Democracy is both, a process in which every step counts as well as the outcome of this process. It cannot be left to chance, especially when some of the actors have every incentive to prevent such an evolution and distort the process at every stage so as to make sure that not only do they remain in control of the situation; they also succeed in destroying every

institution to be responsible for their interests<sup>21</sup>. Democracy has not had enough time in Pakistan to fully develop. State organizations such as the judiciary remained weak and democratic traditions have not sustained. The political leadership of the country is bound to conventional feudal power configuration, and the deprived are not able to rise to political power. Support for democracy is however strong in Pakistanis. In recent years civil society has proven to be stronger and more committed than ever.

### **Conclusion:**

When one talks about media and its role in deepening democracy it doesn't mean that only democracy depends on media, but media is also dependent on democracy. If a country has strong and free media there would be a suitable atmosphere for democracy, and if a state is a strong and has true democracy its media should be strong and free. So as far as the history of politics in Pakistan is considered non democratic, it's not only merely because of weak institutions, lack of democratic values and personal interests of politicians, media are also responsible for it. As Shams ul Islam Naz, secretary general, Pakistan Federation of Journalists has said in his speech: 'If good governance is a bi-product of democracy and media, it is not important to question whether media are not creating a mess or hampering the progress of good governance. When we talk about tax evasions and accountabilities, do the media hold themselves accountable? In the tax evasion, we must see how much tax the media are giving, 95% of their staff remained unpaid, they are not on a regular pay role and doesn't have any job security, doesn't have job descriptions, is not even at lowest rates. And you think such people will uphold the standards of authentic and objective information. In such times constantly asking the ruling political party, the president and the prime minister to provide good governance, the media should must look in itself'<sup>22</sup>.

So, the weak democratic background of Pakistani politics is due to the media also, which has not played its due role in the past. As well as government's suppressing policies are concerned,

they are still suppressing but now media has firmly decided to perform its due role. We can't forget the attack from Musharraf government on Geo news office, but Geo didn't stop its mission to fight against military rule. If look at the period from 2002 to 20015 it is full of so many incidents, in which media has played decisive role, like judicial crises, Jamea Hafsa issue, Drone attacks and Akbar Bugti's murder, treaty of democracy, assassination of Benazir Bhutto, electric load shedding problem, money laundering issue, National Action Plan and many more. Although media was just a source of entertainment in the past yet there were some people who always tried to change the system. The state-controlled media, radio and TV, parts of the information system, we cannot blame them directly\_ their programming content is determined by the unintelligent system that fully controls them, their programming principles have been laid down in that private, secretive Pakistan. In radio and TV, there are many fine, intelligent fact-conscious personnel struggling to transmit the truth, or whatever part of it they can lay their hands on, but there is always the basic, central systematic control preventing full, open discussion of issues.

Since independence, corruption and mismanagement have become common culture in Pakistan. Now media has to work hard to clean up the mess. As a result Government considers it as degradation and defeat. The anchors like Kamran Khan, Shahid Masood, Hamid Mir, Luqman Mubashar, Talat Hussain, Gharida Farooqi, Shahzeb Khanzada etc. have successfully criticized missing people issue, Kerry Lugar bill, steel mills issue, NRO, rental projects, money laundering issue, National Action plan, victimization by members of assemblies and brought out inside stories of deal with each other. Government feels it as humiliation and use different tactics to stop them but now media has become so strong that it's difficult to stop it. Democracy and Media are closely linked with each other. The deficit of one has its negative implications for the other. It is natural that they reinforce each other. However like democracy whose quality is crucial for sustaining it, the media cannot perform its role effectively without maintaining high

professional standards and performing their critical role with responsibility and non-partisan disposition.

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