

**Media Ownership and its impact on News**  
**A Sociological Study**

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**MASTERS OF PHILOSOPHY**

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## **DECLARATION**

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled “**Media Ownership and its impact on News: A Sociological Study**” submitted by me under the guidance of Dr. Amit Kumar Sharma in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is my original work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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## **CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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## PREFACE

Media plays a powerful role in shaping public opinion. People religiously believe whatever is disseminated by mass media. Such a power to influence public opinion manifested in sociological, political and economical influence of mass media and culture industry. With the increasing concentration of ownership in few powerful hands, such manifestation reaches to alarming situation. This trend had been visible in European countries much earlier, however it has been brought to notice in context of Indian media only few years ago. In such scenario, it is important to analyse the complex media ownership pattern in not only on national level but also on international level. The giant media owners are an important subject for research in order to assess what they do with their acquired financial powers via their media outlets and content platforms.

There are four research questions on which the study would revolve. The first question is: *How the role of owners affects the quality of mass media production and news media?* The second question is: *How big the media concentration is in India and in Europe and what these data reveal?* Third question is, *what can we learn from the application of both political economy and institutional economic perspectives and from corporate media and media power approaches?* And the fourth question is, *what are the sociological implications of changing patterns of ownership for media content, the economy and audiences?*

The hypothesis of present study discusses that ownership pattern affects significantly the mass media content and influences the social, political and economic fabric of nation. Such research is needed to assess political outcomes and alternative ways in which the media can be made more accountable to all the mediating institutions of civil society.

The study discusses in total five chapters. The chapters speak about the sociology of mass media, evolution and growth of mass media with changing ownership patterns. It also provides incites into the pitching of corporates and political parties in mass media industry and how they affect the media content. The data used in these chapters are both national and international to show that the influence of ownership is same all over the world.

# INTRODUCTION

A democratic society of any substantial size is unthinkable without the mass media. Without free and fair media industry, citizens can not obtain the true informations necessary to evaluate their leaders, to assess social conditions and to judge the viability of public policies. Consequently, democratic system will collapse. On account of such an immense power of media, it has been a matter of concern in Europe since long time and in India few years back that who the media owners are. In American society, it has been a critical issue since colonial times.

Now-a-days, the increasing number of mergers between print media and entertainment media, take-overs of media houses by business and corporate houses, owning of media houses by political parties leaves many critics warning about media concentration. From General Electrics to Westinghouse to Disney Corporation, large conglomerates have been taking control of the mass media in the United States. Thirty years ago, half of their media revenues were generated by 46 large media corporations (Bagdikian 1992). Today 6 largest media owing companies produce half of the media's revenues.

More or less this situation is also arising in India very fast. There is a dominance of few media groups on the whole Indian media scenario and now some corporate houses, business houses, political parties are also entering in the Indian mass media industry. Not only this most of the media houses are owning a number of media products like print media, FM channels, TV channels, Web sites and even production houses. When such concentration of mass media industry will be established, then certainly there will be its repercussions on media content and media content would cease to be just a commodity. Not only this, since these media organizations are not less than any business organizations in terms of money and power, they try to facilitate political parties either in terms of funding by parent company or in terms of wide coverage in lieu of some political favour.

Mass communication has become an integral part of people's life. Our society has become information driven society which believes, "information is power". In this information dominated era, people's lifestyle, values, thoughts are very strongly influenced by all forms of mass media whether it is newspapers or TV or radio or video or internet. Access to these mass media is also one remote button or one click away. They are available all around us in many forms and people are dependent upon them, consciously or unconsciously for every decision. It is expected to help people in taking right decision. However, in a media-saturated society, there is a risk in taking the social significance of the mass media for granted (Hanson 2005). Thus it is important to understand mass media in social context.

Although the media play a crucial role in almost all aspects of daily life, their role is not limited to what is apparent. The sociological significance of media extends beyond the content of media messages. Mass media are also related to the process of social relations. It literally mediates one's relationships with various social institutions. The largest category of media content can probably be labeled as 'entertainment' and it is the main reason why media are so popular. Entertainment also has many effects beyond the unintended negative consequences so often studied and that entertainment is also an effect in itself, intended as such by producers and audiences (Zillmann and Bryant 1994). Communication media also helps in the creation of new forms of action and interaction in the social world, new kind of social relationships or socializing process, which means new ways of relating to others and to one. When individuals use communication media they interact differently than the type of face-to-face interaction which characterizes most encounters of daily life. There is little doubt that media do have many effects and they probably do account for some general trends.

As a consequence of globalization, a kind of information revolution is being witnessed, which has converted the world into a global village. However, one side effect of this globalization is also that the qualities of informations are being compromised at many stages. In order to reach as quickly as possible to the audience, many times news comes unfiltered or uncensored. In that case, it is important for the audience to choose

wisely which information is beneficial and which is not. It is not difficult to imagine, how slow the world of informations would have been before commencement of modern mass media. Modern mass media is a recent development made possible by modern technologies. The modern mass media can be seen as the 'extension of our senses' as they allow us to see and hear beyond our normal sensory limits (McLuhan 1964). However unlike our predecessors, the bulk of our knowledge is not based on our direct experience. It is mediated or received second hand via the media. We may know more about film stars, politicians, the problems of Third World or national crisis, but we have to rely largely on the informations provided by the mass media on these topics (Barrat 1986).

Such a study of mass media ownership and its impact on content can not be carried out successfully without taking into consideration the sociological perspective of mass media and media sociology. That's why Chapter 1 of this study tries to look into the sociological aspect of mass media and symbiosis of mass media with sociology. Before moving to the present day media concentration in India, the initial days of media and its ownership pattern should be analysed and also the growth and changes in that pattern should be noticed. Only then the present form of media ownership and media concentration can be dealt appropriately. So, Chapter 2 of this study deals with evolution and growth of Indian mass media and its ownership pattern. Also, without understanding the theoretical perspective of ownership pattern, the practical aspect of media ownership would not be explained adequately. Thus Chapter 3 looks into the theoretical perspective of ownership patterns. The entertainment media is new entrant into mass media industry and now collectively it is called as Entertainment and Media industry. So, Chapter 4 explains the new entrants in E & M industry and analyse the data of Indian newspapers industry, its concentration and monopoly over readers.



# Chapter 1

## SOCIOLOGY OF MASS MEDIA

### **The Notion of Mass Media**

Mass media is a term used to describe all those forms of communication that reach large audiences. This includes films, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, literature, music, advertising, internet and so forth (Barrat 1986). All types of communication are very important for sociologists. When a child is born, his first interaction with this world is through crying. He communicates through crying and gradually learns various verbal or non-verbal communication techniques to interact within society. Thus communication is precondition of the very existence of the society. It is as essential as breathing. One cannot try to not communicate; he communicates something or the other through his every action. Modern technologies have amplified the mode of communications in various forms of mass communication. We have now computer-based printing technology, highly modified television and radio broadcasting, very advanced film making techniques. The message reaches to the remotest area in a fraction of second. Thus 'mass media' plays the role of 'magic multiplier' and multiplies the message manifold to send it to huge no. of people within seconds.

According to Marshall Mc Luhan, "Medium is the message" - means the impact of medium itself is much stronger than the message. It is said that best communication is that which appeals to maximum number of senses of human beings. Media is an extension of body and senses. Each medium of communication has its own appeal to senses of human beings (Marshall, 2000: 14). The written words and languages are filled with testimony to the grasping, devouring power and precision of teeth. The power of letters as agents of aggressive order and precision should be expressed as extensions of the dragon's teeth in natural and fitting. Letters are like teeth not only visually, but their power to give teeth to the common people and put teeth into any misdeed of government, corporates or powerful section of the society is manifested in world history. Similarly, phonetic alphabet is a unique technology. Sound appeals to the ears and then it is

translated into movement and movement into taste and smell. In the same way, visual media also appeals to both ears and eyes simultaneously. Also each mass media has its own type of content and creativity. For example, broadcast media transmits its information electronically, while print media sends its information physically and internet sends its information digitally.

Croteau and Hoyness (2003), use the term ‘reader’ for ‘audience’ or ‘receivers’, because they understand the role of audiences in understanding the messages and want to highlight their active role in interpreting the messages they receive. In this sense, people read the sound and pictures of media messages just as they read the words of a written media message. Reading implies actively interpreting media messages. Sociologists call this process of interpreting meaning of the message and actively creating meaning in this way the “social construction of reality”. Human communication over time and a distance is much older than are the existence of mass media. This process was in existence since the establishment of organised societies and even before that it was existing in non-verbal form. The process of human communication was carried out especially within religious, political and educational institutions. Even the elements of large scale (mass) dissemination of ideas were present at an early point in time, in propagation of political and religious awareness and obligations (Mc Quail, 2005). Generally mass media is a vehicle for dissemination of informations in any form to the large number of people. So, it is considered as the vehicles of mass communication. The prominent mass media vehicles are – newspapers, magazines, books, radio, film, television, satellite TV and internet. Mass media is broadly divided into print media and electronic media. While the print media are the oldest having a history of about five hundred years, the electronic media are the product of 20<sup>th</sup> century technological revolution (Yadava, Eswara, Rahim, 2006).

Print Media signifies all types of printed materials like newspapers, magazines, books and so on. The history of modern mass media begins with the printed book which was considered earliest form of media. Whether it is social revolution or political revolution, printing played an inseparable part not only in Indian context, but also in global scenario. Since literacy was low in India, so growth of this mass media was rather

slow earlier, however it is one of the most thriving mass media these days. Among the top 100 paid-for dailies in the world, 19 are from India, second to China. In terms of circulation also, India is the second largest newspaper market in the world and one of the fastest growing (Jethwaney and Sarkar 2009). Now-a-days, the newspapers and magazines are coming up in more visually attractive layouts and colours to attract the modern audience which is more inclined towards visual media. Not only this, print media is also trying to lure all section of society by producing publications for all segments of readers. Now there are all kinds of newspapers – big, medium and small instead of only local ones.

Electronic media is more entertainment based and less news and views based. It includes radio, television, satellite TV, films and so on. Their beauty is their fast pace and eye-capturing audio-visual impact. They are more timely and more effective with their distinguished features. Their reach to the audiences is also quicker and wider than the print media, so they can be said true ‘magic multiplier’. Radio and television have an existence of more than eighty years and fifty years respectively as mass media and both grew up of pre-existing technologies – telephone, telegraph, moving and still photography and sound recording. Despite they are obviously different in content and use, radio and television are considered together in terms of their history. Radio seems to have been a technology looking for a use, rather than a response to a demand for a new kind of service content and much the same is true of television (Mc Quail 2005).

Radio is most advantageous mass media vehicle in India. Since it is an audio medium, it does not require a literate audience. Also it is a cheaper medium, so it is easy for the vast majority of India to own it. It attracts all age groups of people by its variety of programmes and easy to access quality. It has the advantage to serve the audience who are already occupied. People can be seen doing their work at factories, offices, farms, homes while listening to the radio. Government owned All India Radio (AIR) has the largest broadcasting network in the world. It covers 80 per cent of the area and 90 per cent of the country’s population (Yadava, Eswara, Rahim 2006).

With its attractive audio-visual impact, Television, these days has become one of the most powerful vehicle of mass media. It started in 1930s with very low viewership and today it is perhaps most watched mass media vehicle in the world. The moving pictures with its authenticity and realistic presentation attract the viewers strongly. Also it appeals to both the audio and visual senses of viewers and leaves a stunning effect upon them. For the first time live telecast of Gulf war was shown by CNN, which was a breakthrough in the history of television and attracted millions of viewers worldwide. It provides instant report to the audience in best possible manner, which makes it most wanted mass media vehicle.

Films began at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a surprising technological novelty; however it was not different in terms of content. It presented an amalgamation of stories, music, drama, and dance in a technologically advanced form. It is more likely to an improvement of an older tradition of entertainment, offering stories, spectacles, music, drama, humour by technical tricks for popular consumption. It was also almost instantly a true mass medium in the sense that it quite quickly reached a very large proportion of populations, even in rural areas (McQuail 2005). Films are considered major entertaining mass medium with its emotional appeal to the viewers. India is the largest producer of feature film in the world with production of about 800 films per year (Yadava, Eswara, Rahim 2006). Films are considered the most attractive medium of entertainment, though watching a movie in theatre is expensive for most of the middle class families in India. Still people go to theatre due to tremendous charm of this media. Not only Hindi films are being produced in India, rather many regional movies in local languages are also being produced, some of which are internationally recognized like Satyajit Ray's 'Pather Panchali', 'Aparajito', 'Apur Sansar', 'Teen Kanya', 'Mahanagar', 'Charulata' and many more in Bengali, Adoor Gopalakrishnan's 'Swayamvaram', 'Oru Pennum Randaanum', 'Elippathayam' and others in Malayalam and so on.

Mass media also includes Internet media like blogs, social networking sites (Facebook, Orkut, Twitter, My Space etc.), and electronic sites of almost all other mass

media. It began primarily as a non-commercial means of intercommunication and data exchange between professionals, but its more recent rapid advance has been fuelled by its potential as a purveyor of goods and many profitable services and as an alternative to other means of interpersonal communication (Castells 2001). However, it is considered that internet is not yet mature or clearly defined. Its diffusion proceeded most rapidly in North America and Northern Europe. In the USA it appeared to reach a ceiling of diffusion in 2001, at around 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the population (Rainie and Bell 2004). Today, it is the most emerging field of mass media. According to Mr. Dilip Mandal, “20 million unique users at facebook are as big as TV was in 1980s. It has democratized the information which was earlier concentrated in few hands.” Some people view the communication audience of internet as a formation of different mass society with special characteristics. Till recently, radio was considered to be the most immediate medium, yet it can give one thing at a time, while the web has the potential to carry a minute-by-minute update on any page simultaneously and repeatedly (Singh 2006). Thus internet provides a rare combination of immediacy with flexibility in this sense it has reduced the time and space distance.

### **Sociological perspective of Mass Media**

For viewing the mass media in social context, it is needed to be more fully aware of their social significance at both macro and micro levels. At the macro level, the mass media are an important agent of transformation and social change. They are inextricably bound up with the capitalist project and they play a centre-stage role in the reproduction and continuation of various kinds of social inequalities at local, national and global levels (Devereux 2007). Even though, media is accused of sensationalizing the news content, providing biased coverage, giving paid news, still it remains major vehicle for information of realities. By and large, mass communication messages are positive i.e. pro-communal harmony, pro-environmental, pro-national, anti-drugs, anti-AIDS, anti-war, anti-terrorism, anti-social evils and so on. Mass communication has fulfilled the role of fourth pillar of democracy by promoting national integration and knowledge of our cultural heritage and creating awareness among people about the socio-economic and

political development of the country. For instance, Press played a significant role in shaping public opinion against colonial rule and participated actively in freedom struggle. Later it also played great role in the development of independent modern India. Similarly, Broadcasting under the government control, has been used as an instrument of education, development and social change. Even 'Bollywood' which are often accused of creating unhealthy social values, attitudes and habits, have contributed a great deal in promoting national integration, common culture and the national language of Hindi all over the country (Yadava, Eswara, Rahim 2006).

It does seem that whenever the stability of society is disturbed, by crime, war, economic malaise or some 'moral panic', the mass media are given some of the responsibility (Mc Quail 2005). This cannot be ruled out that media are actually more influential in certain ways at times of crisis or heightened awareness. Be it any national conflict or international conflict, mass media acted as great tool of awareness among people. For example, it played active role during the crisis of the fall of communism in Europe or during international conflicts such as the Gulf and Balkan wars of 1990s and the Afghanistan and Iraq wars that followed 9/11. There are appropriate reasons for this possibility. People often know about the more significant historical events only through the media. In times of change and uncertainty it is also highly probable that people are more dependent on media as a source of information and guidance (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 1976, Ball-Rokeach 1985 and 1998). Media have also been shown to be more influential on matters outside immediate personal experience. Under conditions of tension and uncertainty, government, business and other elites and interests often try to use media to influence and control opinion (Mc Quail 2005).

There is no doubt that mass media have acquired important place in people's life. Individually or collectively, they serve the needs of various audiences who have specific requirements. Some people want entertainment, some sports or news or films or serials and any other form of mass media product. Others may have greater interest in news and views. Yet others seek guidance to solve their socio-economic problems. Each medium is

powerful in its own right in serving people and each has gone through several stages of development due to pressure and competition from newer communication technologies (Yadava, Eswara, Rahim 2006).

The mass media have played and continue to play an important part in the transformation of societies from being traditional to modern and from being modern to postmodern. The experience of living in modernity and post modernity is shaped significantly by mass mediation. For most of the people, the ‘texture’ of modernity and post modernity is a result of the very existence of the mass media in their everyday lives (Devereux 2007). Silverstone (1999) states that, “Media are a constant presence in our everyday lives, as we switch in and out, on and off, from one media space, one media connection, to another. From radio, to newspaper, to telephone. From television to, hi-fi to internet. In public and in private, alone and with others.”

### **Effects of Mass media on Society**

The entire study of mass communication is based on the assumption that the mass media have significant effects on society. In the history of media research, the idea of the effects of the media has played an important part. At each stage in the development of media study, researchers saw ‘effects’ in different ways. In the first stage effects were perceived on a grand scale as dramatic and far-reaching, while in the second stage, developed by American sociologists in 1940s and 1950s, a quite opposite conclusion was derived. They claimed that media had very limited direct effects and its power was moderated by the intervening influence of social groups. For them, media effects were indirect (Barrat 1986). The researchers found this conclusion surprising as there are a number of minor and major examples of influence of media not only upon the individuals but also on the society as a whole. People start their day from reading newspapers and using its various columns according to their needs, like reading morning horoscope and following its suggestions, checking out share prices and making business deal accordingly, changing the office route due to forecast of bad congestion in usual route, dress according to weather forecast and buying something after watching its advertisement, there are

numerous such examples which show they decide and plan their day as well as life under the influence of media.

According to Denis McQuail (2005), the media effect concept went through four phases. First phase of media effect research sustained till 1930s which considered media all powerful. In this phase, media were credited with considerable power to shape opinion and belief, to change habits of life and to mould behaviour more or less according to the will of their controllers (Bauer and Bauer 1960). However, this view was not based on proper scientific investigations but on the general observation based on the popularity of the press and film and radio. Second phase was 'limited effect theory' (McQuail 2005), which argues that it is the choice of the people what to watch or read according to their requirement or believe or values, so media exerts a negligible influence upon them. This theory was originated and tested in 1940s and 1950s. There are some new assumptions which believe in natural wisdom of people and thuds assigns a much more modest role to media in causing any planned or unintended effects. The useful summary of early research by Joseph Klapper concluded that, 'mass communication does not ordinarily serve as a necessary or sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions through a nexus of mediating factors' (Klapper 1960). Media were shown to operate within a pre-existing structure of social relationships and a particular social and cultural context (McQuail 2005). Third phase rediscovered the power of media. The studies of 1940s and 1950s examined the ability of media to influence voting and found that well-informed people relied more on personal experience, prior knowledge and their reasoning rather than media (McQuail 2005). However, media experts more likely to sway those who were less informed.

In relation to public opinion effects, Lang and Lang (1981) argued that the 'Limited effect' conclusion is only one particular interpretation which has gained undue currency. Lang and Lang (1981) write: "The evidence available by the end of the 1950s, even when balanced against some of the negative findings, gives no justification for an overall verdict of media impotence." According to this statement, no effect of media is a myth and it was due to a combination of factors. Most notable was the undue



concentration on a limited range of effects, especially short-term effects on individuals (for instance, during elections) instead of on broader social and institutional effects and the undue weight given to two publications: Katz and Lazarsfeld's *Personal Influence* (1955) and Klapper's *The Effects of Mass Communication* (1960). (McQuail 2005).

There is another reason for not accepting 'limited effect' conclusion - the arrival of television in 1950s and 1960s as a new medium with huge power of attraction. Thus the critics point to two problems with 'limited effect' perspective. First, they question that limited-effects theory does not consider the role of media in framing public opinion as a result of the discussions and debates on various issues. How media frames the debate and what questions members of the media ask change the outcome of the discussion and the possible conclusions people may draw. Second, this theory came into existence when the availability and dominance of media was far less widespread. In this third phase, apart from many other contributors, it was Noelle-Neumann (1973) who coined the slogan 'return to the concept of powerful mass media' which serves to identify this phase.

The fourth phase was developed in 1980s and 1990s with 'culturalist theory', which says that people interpret the messages and informations of media to create their own meanings on the basis of the images and messages they receive. This involves a view of media as having their most significant effects by constructing meanings. This new approach to media effects was termed as 'social constructivist' (Gamson and Modigliani). According to this approach, meanings and thus effects are constructed by receivers themselves. Thus it sees audiences as playing an active rather than passive role in relation to mass media. This mediating process often involves strong influence from the immediate social context of the receiver (McQuail 2005). Some theorists argue that audiences choose what to watch and how much to watch. Studies of mass media done by sociologist parallel text-reading and interpretation research completed by linguists, both groups of researchers find that when people approach material, whether written text or media images and messages, they interpret that material based on their own knowledge and experience. Similar conclusion was also derived by Denis McQuail in 2005, "This emergence paradigm of effects has two main thrusts. First, media 'construct' social

formations and even history itself by framing images of reality in predictable and patterned ways. Secondly, people in audiences construct for themselves their own view of social reality and their place in it, in interaction with the symbolic constructions offered by the media. The approach allows both for the power of media and for the power of people to choose.”

## **Notion of Media Sociology**

In spite of limited reach, mass communication is so central to society that life seems inconceivable without mass media. They make and shape our social life by providing informations, discussing various views and other relevant ideas. Their influence is considered to be positive if they are able to fulfill the information and entertainment needs of people in accordance with the existing norms, values and culture in society. But media sociologists are more concerned with their negative influence on society. An overdose of foreign programmes, excessive television viewing and advertising, exposure to violence, crime, sex, etc. can adversely affect people, especially children, in societies that are traditional (Yadava, Eswara, Rahim 2006).

In spite of the fact that the world is progressing with highest speed in every sphere of life, there is still a lot of problems in the path of social development. Though everyone is racing for money, power or status in today’s materialistic society, it cannot be ignored that the society is bounded with loads of social problems, which are very hard to remove. Social issues affect all members of a society directly or indirectly. They not only hamper the social fabric but also affect the moral values. Such social issues include poverty, violence, corruption, and violation of human rights, discrimination against caste, religion, race, and honour killing and so on.

In such scenario, mass communication also tries to influence the society in order to eradicate social problems. In this information society, everyone wants to be informed about events that significantly touch and influence his life; everyone wants entertainment after working hard whole day. Also, in democracy, it is necessary to shape the public

opinion before any important decision. All these needs are fulfilled by mass communication. While doing all this, mass communication obviously influences people and society. Media sociologists try to gauge, what is the extent and nature of this influence. Media has a constructive role to play for the society. Today, not only some news channels, but also some newspapers are giving voices to the social issues like 'Satyamev Jayate' telecasted on Star Plus and Doordarshan is one of such programmes based on social issues. Newspaper 'The Hindu' also publishes many stories related to social issues and human interest stories too. Media has played an important role in order to highlight the social issues in almost every era, be it campaign against 'Sati Pratha' in Raja Rammohan Roy period or discrimination against women in modern time. It is the fact that in most of the eras, media were not being given free and fair chances to explore the issues of society more openly than it is being given now, however this is also a well accepted fact that the issues were always raised in order to provide justice to the people.

It is believed that the media have almost magical powers to change the ideas and behaviour of their audience. Media messages are seen as being directly injected into the minds of individuals who are considered passive and powerless audiences. This is referred as the 'hypodermic model'. There are generally two assumptions about the way media work. The first is often referred as the idea of 'mass society'. This implies that individuals who make up modern society exist as isolated atoms (Barrat 1986). A view expressed by many early sociologists was that industrialization brought about many changes which destroyed many of the links between people-to-people which used to exist in traditional, pre-industrial communities. This left a society made up of a chaotic mass of individuals who were without any organized community to give their lives shape and meaning. In this world of uncertainty, the mass media provided the only point of reference.

It is assumed that, mass society left individuals defenseless against the persuasive powers of the media. Media messages pierced the skin with the ease of hypodermic needle and in the cases of 'Sex' and 'Violence', the hypodermic model of media effects is still alive and valid (Barrat 1986). It is a well known fact that millions of people are

exposed to a variety of messages each day given by variety of media. People come out of home after reading newspaper and exposed to some kind of advertisement on walls or roadside, they switch on radio in their car and another message channel serves them, they enter in their office and switch on their PC with internet connection and thus switch to another channel of media. Thus, it is impossible to skip the wide and pervasive reach of mass media these days. Simultaneously, with this penetrating reach and effect, there is increasing anxiety about the adverse effect of mass media on society in general and individuals in particular.

There is widespread fear among media sociologists that the audiences of mass media are being manipulated or brainwashed, violence, crime or sex in media affect young minds, foreign programmes are a threat to the cultural and national identity and so on. Interestingly, the adverse effect of mass communication have been felt not so much from print media as from those of exciting media like television and satellite TV. The reason is that audiences of these electronic media, in order to get live entertainment at low cost, catch all that which comes through the 'open sky', without discrimination and without realizing their good or bad effects. In this way, they are becoming helpless victims of this pervasive media (Yadava, Eswara, Rahim 2006).

Since media are an intrinsic part of life, they generate a great deal of discussions and debates among media sociologists. A sociological perspective would help in understanding the role of media in individual lives (the micro level) and in the context of social forces such as the economy, politics and technological development (the macro level). The media sociology suggests that if we want to understand the media and their impact on society, we must consider the relationships (both micro and macro) between media and the social world. One way in which individuals are connected to the larger social world is through socialization (Croteau and Hoynes 2003). Socialization is a process where one learns and internalizes the values, beliefs and norms of his culture and in doing so develops a sense of self. It is through the socialization process that people learn to perform their social roles as friend, student, worker, citizen and so forth. The process of socialization continues throughout life, but it is especially influential for

children and adolescents. In contemporary society, the mass media serves as a powerful socializing agent because people spent a lot of time with mass media products. By the time an average American student graduates from high school, she or he will have spent more time in front of the television than in the classroom (Graber 1997). This is partly just because it is such a long term process and partly because any effect from media interacts with other social background influences and variable modes of socialization within families (Hedinsson 1981). Rare longitudinal studies of development have sometimes produced prima facie evidence of socialization from media (Rosengren and Windahl 1989). The thesis of media socialization has two sides to it, on the one hand, the media can reinforce and support other agencies of socialization, and on the other hand they are also viewed as a potential threat to the values set by parents, educators and other agents of social control (McQuail 2005).

However, their effects are often inconsistent and cancel each other. The media are unlikely to be the main driving forces of fundamental long term change. Rather they act as a channel and facilitator and they help to make society aware of itself as well as of changes, by reflecting them in content and also by providing the means for debating and adapting to change (McQuail 2005). However, media does not work in isolation. It has to deal with sociology, anthropology, political science, development studies and so on. Even literary scholars might examine the media as cultural texts and some psychologists may be interested in the effect of media exposure on individual behaviour. Thus, mass communication scholars explore a wide range of media issues that often emphasize the structure and practice of media institutions. However the lines between the different approaches to the media are too thin to differentiate.

About sociological perspective, an American sociologist, C. Wright Mills (1959) argued that a sociological perspective, what he called the “sociological imagination” – enables us to see the connection between “private troubles” and “Public issues”. Such a perspective suggests that the condition of the individual can be understood only by situating that person in the larger context of society. In contemporary society, it is media that most often act as the bridge between people’s private lives and their relation to the

public world. Means, people often learn about their place in larger society through mass media. The lessons media vehicles might be teaching and the experience of participating in a mass-mediated society, therefore, are of crucial interest to anyone who wants to understand how society functions (Croteau and Hoynes 2003). According to Keith Tester (1994), “There is much more to be said about the media than cultural studies can allow. Most of these additional things can be said if a sociological light is brought to bear on the media. This is because sociology holds out the possibility of a lively study of culture which is informed by a seriousness of moral and cultural purpose of a kind that is inconceivable from the point of view of cultural studies.” The very aim of sociology is to seek to know, why things happen. In doing so, it offers the chance that it will be possible to develop an argument for why things ought to have happened differently in the past or could be made to happen differently in the future. Consequently, a sociological approach of media can mean that people will refuse to take anything for granted. People will be unable to take it for granted that something is ‘good’ or ‘boring’ simply because it is. Sociology can in principle rescue the media – and therefore the cultural and moral values – from the trivialization to which they are otherwise all too susceptible (Tester 1994).

### **Mass Media and Sociology: A symbiosis**

The common assumption about sociology is that it is a subject through which one would understand the behaviour of a particular society or a social group. The goal of most of the students of sociology is to ‘do something for people’, ‘help people’ or ‘do useful work for the community’ (Berger 1963). A sociologist tries to understand everything beyond the apparent and his subject makes him capable in doing so. Some culture, behaviour and traditions are embedded in our society. We are brought up with them. So we take it as part of our normal life. We do not try to see the reasons behind them and the outcome of them. But when a sociologist goes through these culture, behaviour or traditions, he tries to see behind the closed door. He has natural tendency to analyse why it happens, how it happens and what are its repercussions. This is the gift of the subject sociology has taught him. Due to being a student of sociology this natural tendency emerge inside him. Here sociology provides a perspective to see and analyse the particular social system. It is due

to the knowledge of sociology that a sociologist is able to interpret and finds reasons behind any social problem. He may not suggest solution for such problems, but he certainly can point out, analyse and dig out the reasons behind any such problem.

A newborn human baby does not understand social behaviour and he is completely dependent on the older member of his family for his needs and requirements. Gradually when he gets older, he learns and adopts the behaviour of society and acquires a way of life which is called culture in sociology. Without culture, there would be no human society. So, sociology deals with the culture of the society too. Thus sociology is vitally concerned with human condition itself. It tries to answer what it means to be a man and what it means to be a man in a particular situation. As a discipline, sociology has a vast range. Every small thing happening in society which is normal incident for everyone is a matter of concern for sociologist. As a discipline, sociology was treated as a peripheral subject of social sciences. But now-a-days the sociological thinking and its outlook are being incorporated into disciplines that used to keep distance from it. These influences quite easily are found in history, philosophy, political science, international relations, social anthropology etc. (Giddens 1987).

It is so because each discipline has influence on society and these are partly or fully associated with society and at the end of the day, these have to deal with society. So other disciplines can not afford to ignore sociology and succeed. One discipline in itself is not perfect or complete. It can not resolve everything alone. It has to move through other disciplines to make sense and be useful. Only economics can not produce theories in isolation without understanding the demand of the society. Only social anthropology can not study family without application of sociological ideas. Here, an example may be cited of an experiment called Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), in 1975. This was to broadcast educational programmes directly from a satellite to the TV sets, for the first time. These programmes were received by 2400 villages in six states – Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. The programmes were on education, agriculture, health and family planning. The experiment was engineered by Yashpal. It was to be a scientific experiment, but they required

sociologists to understand and count the problems of various regions and how those could be dealt with. Various reasons had different cultures, so programmes should also be made separately for different regions to touch their heart and mind and to be in their interest. So many sociologists were hired to not only understand and judge the requirements of the target audience, but also to collect the feedback. And it became one of hit programme in the sphere of mass communication. So, various disciplines when mingle with each other become more productive and can do wonder.

When sociology interacts with other disciplines, some general lines of agreements are developed to best understand human social life and social institutions. It is also a fact that sociology emerges from these interactions is more sophisticated (Giddens, 1987). We can take one more example here, when a professor of JNU tried to study the language of Jarava Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar, she took the help of science and measured their age through carbon dating. She amazingly found that they were oldest existing tribe on earth. So such amazing results we find by moving through various disciplines including sociology. According to Anthony Giddens, “Sociology as a subject does not concerned with a particular object – ‘society’. Society in modern world is nation- states bounded by other nation states in a global system. When we conceptualize nation states, they are territorial or political formations, not the particular province of any discipline, be it sociology, political science or economics.” So there are many dimensions of sociology – political and economic sociology, medicinal sociology, educational sociology, media sociology and many more. Besides, sociology is not happy just to describe and explore what exists. Sociology ought to be driven by a sense of moral commitment and by a moral outrage at what presently passes for a good life, an outrage that cultural studies, with its increasing emphasis on things like clothes and shopping can say absolutely nothing about.



## Chapter 2

# EVOLUTION AND GROWTH OF INDIAN MASS MEDIA AND ITS OWNERSHIP PATTERN

The evolution of Indian Media can be traced back to 1780 with the publication of a weekly, Bengal Gazette by James Augustus Hickey. Though it was in English, by Englishman for English people, it paved the way for further indigenous media. Hickey was himself writer, printer, and publisher of his paper (Natarajan 1955). At that time he had no competitor and his monopoly was reflected in the content of his weekly publication. He used it for personal vendetta but became miraculously popular among his readers. In the same year 1780, another newspaper India Gazette was started by Messrs. B Messink and Peter Reed (Natarajan 1955). Unlike Hicky, they requested Lord Hastings to allow them to publish a newspaper and grant them postal concessions for the circulation of their paper. Both their requests got cleared. In return, they assured the governor general that they would not violate any laws and regulations laid by him in connection with the publication and circulation of the paper. They further requested him to appoint them as printer to the East India Company (Parthasarthy 1989). This was first example of ownership in partnership.

However the content of the early periodicals remained similar to that of Hicky's Gazette. This trend continued till 1818, when James Silk Buckingham became the editor of Calcutta Chronicle. Jawaharlal Nehru has described him as amongst the earliest champion of freedom of press in India. It is believed that after an era of gossip columns, conspiracies and scandalizing through newspapers, he brought a breath of fresh air in the field of journalism (Parthasarthy 1989). It was with the advent of Buckingham that the press really began to discuss public questions. He was active in Indian journalism for a very short period, but he educated the public opinion by focusing the conduct of bureaucrats and state functionaries. It was also an example of individual ownership. Indian press was fortunate to have Raja Rammohan Roy contemporary to James Silk Buckingham. He was first Indian to start three journals in

three different languages. Sambad Kaumudi in Bengali, Mirat-ul-Akhbar in Persian and Brahminical Magazine in English. Though he was owner of all the three publications, he did not use them for personal interest rather he used them against social evils like sati, poor social condition of widow, wildly prevailing in society at that time. He carried local news items and the reports on events in India and the world in Sambad Kaumudi, more international news in Mirat-ul-Akhbar and religious issues in Brahminical Magazine (Parthasarthy 1989). Thus language press started in early years of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most of these were owned by a single individual highly dedicated to the freedom struggle. They were treating journalism as a mission in the spree of freedom struggle. For example, Urdu newspaper 'Al Hilal' by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Bengali newspaper 'Bande Matram' of B.C. Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh, Marathi newspaper 'Kesari' by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. These language presses were vocal in criticizing government policies and actions.

The contribution of language press to the freedom struggle and political awakening of the masses was immense (Natarajan 1955). Almost all newspapers in 19<sup>th</sup> century were owned by individuals. For example Surendranath Banerjee was editor and proprietor of Bengalee, M.G. Ranade started Indu Prakash in Marathi and English, Lala Lajpat Rai started Bande Matram.

At the same time some newspapers were owned by a group of people, one of whom used to be editor. Like Amrita Bazar Patrika was started by four brothers, one of them Sisir Kumar was the editor of the paper. It was the oldest Indian owned daily and was described as "the best nationalist paper in India". In spite of being owned by four persons of a family, this newspaper became mouthpiece of poor and downtrodden people. Similarly, The Hindu was founded by six young men in 1878, later two of them G. Subramania Aiyar and M. Veeraraghvacharier stayed to become joint proprietors of the paper. At that time public opinion in Madras was voiceless, so Hindu played an active role in voicing the feelings and grievances of Indians. In 1905, Mr. S. Kasturiranga Iyenger bought it and became its editor (Parthasarthy 1989). The Hindustan Times was started in 1923 by some Sikhs as a result of Akali movement in

Delhi. The Sikhs sold this paper to a congress leader Pd. Madan Mohan Malviya. The paper passed into the hands of G.D. Birla in 1927 and it got a sound financial base since then. Robert Knight founded The Statesman in 1875 as an individual owner of the paper. He was one of the early British Journalists, who like Silk Buckingham, encouraged critical review of the government's action and policies which set him apart from other British-owned papers. The Statesman progressively changed into Indian hands and today it is a fully Indian-owned and Indian-edited newspaper (Parthasarthy 1989).

In Madras, the Indian Express and the Dinamani passed under the control of Shri Ramnath Goenka although the firm retained the name of Free Press of India (Madras) Ltd till it went into liquidation in 1946 when its business was taken over by the Express Newspapers Ltd, with Shri Ramnath Goenka as the largest shareholder and Chairman of the Board of Directors (Natarajan, 1955). The Express Newspapers Ltd controls the following publications:

Madras:

1. Indian Express, English Daily.
2. Dinamani, Tamil Daily, with an edition publishing from Madurai since 1951, and Dinamani Kadir, an illustrated Tamil Weekly (1949).
3. Andhra Prabha, Telugu daily (1938) and Andhra Prabha Weekly started later.

Bombay:

1. Indian Express, English Daily, Published as the Bombay edition of the Madras paper of the same name. It was originally acquired in 1946 and published as National Standard till July 1953.
2. Loksatta, Marathi daily (1948).
3. Screen, an English film weekly (1951) with a Hindi edition (1952).
4. Sunday Standard, English weekly published in Bombay and Delhi.

Delhi:

1. Indian Express, English daily, published earlier under the name of Delhi Express and Indian News Chronicle.

2. Jansatta, a Hindi daily (1952), which discontinued publication in 1954.

(Source: Report of First Press Commission, 1954)

The Tribune was started as a weekly in Lahore in 1881 by Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia who was a great admirer of Raja Rammohan Roy. He was helped by Surendranath Banerjee to buy a printing press and choose the first editor, Sital Kanta Chatterjee of Dacca. A great philanthropist and prominent nationalist of northern India, Sardar Dayal Singh established a trust for the Tribune which continues to function till today (Parthasarthy 1989). Thus it is an example of press owned by a trust. The Times of India, largest circulating English daily was initially owned by Bennett Coleman and Co. Ltd with British nationals as shareholders, until it was taken over in 1946 by Seth Ramkrishna Dalmia. Under the new ownership, the firm has expanded and extended its publication activities. Originally it owned the Times of India of Bombay, the Illustrated Weekly and the Evenings News of India. It owns the following publications:

Bombay:

1. Times of India, English Daily (1838)
2. Illustrated Weekly (English 1901)
3. Navbharat Times, Hindi daily (1950)
4. Dharmyug, Hindi Illustrated Weekly (1950)
5. Evening News of India, English Daily (1923)
6. Filfare, English fortnightly (1952)

Delhi:

1. Times of India
2. Navbharat Times

Calcutta:

1. Times of India, started in March 1953
2. Navbharat Times, started in 1950
3. Satyayug, a Bengali daily, started in 1949

(Source – Report of First Press Commission, 1954)

The firm owns the most modern press in India. After Dalmiyas it was taken over by Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain of the Kunal Jain group from Bijnore, UP. Yet another form of ownership of a number of papers publishing from Kolkata is represented by the Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., which is owned by the lineal descendants of the founder of the Ananda Bazar Patrika. Initially it brought out following papers:

1. The Ananda Bazar Patrika (Calcutta), a Bengali daily, established in 1922, enjoying the largest circulation of any single Indian language daily in the country.
2. The Hindustan Standard, English daily, published from Calcutta (1937) and Delhi (1951).
3. Desh, a Bengali Weekly, published from Calcutta since 1933.

(Source – Report of First Press Commission, 1954)

A similar form of ownership in which the proprietor had remained undisturbed was controlled by Amrita Bazar Patrika Ltd. Amrita Bazar Patrika stopped publication in 1986. A primarily Hindi combine, the Vishwamitra, published from Calcutta (1916), Bombay (1941), Patna, New Delhi and Kanpur was controlled and conducted by Shri Mulchand Aggarwal. Shri Aggarwal also owned the Advance, English daily, published from Calcutta and Kanpur (Natarajan, 1955). Other exclusively Indian language newspapers which were published from more than one centres were the Pratap (Urdu) owned by Mahashe Krishan and published from Jullundur and New Delhi and Milap, owned by Milap Newspapers Co. from Jullundur, and the Saurashtra Trust which published the Janmabhoomi (Gujarati) and the Lokmanya (Marathi) from Bombay, the Vir Bharat, owned by Vir Bharat Trust and published from Amritsar and Delhi in Urdu, the Nav Prabhat owned by the Hindustan Journals Ltd., and published from Indore, Ujjain, Bhopal and Lashkar in Hindi and Nav Bharat, published from Nagpur, Jabalpur and Bhopal in Hindi (Natarajan, 1955). Some newspapers were published in one language only like the Hindu and the Mail of Madras and the Tribune of Punjab. The prominent papers published in one language only may be listed as follows:

Language	Newspaper	Place	Year	Proprietor
Assamese	1. Nutan Assamiya	Guwahati	1950	R.K. Bezboruah
Bengali	1. Basumati	Calcutta	1880	Owned by family of S.C. Mukherjee
	2. Lokasevak	Calcutta	1948	Shramik Trust Society
	3. Janasevak	Calcutta		Shri Atulya Ghosh (West Bengal Congress Committee)
	4. Swadhinata	Calcutta		Shri Jyoti Basu and others. (Organ of the Communist Party of India).
English	1. Hitavada	Nagpur	1911	Servants of India Society
	2. Nagpur Times	Nagpur	1933	Nava Samaj Ltd.
	3. Deccan Chronicle	Secunderabad	1938	A.P. Nagaratnam and others
	4. Eastern Times	Cuttack	1949	Prajatantra Prachar Samiti
	5. Assam Tribune	Guwahati		R.G. Baruah
Gujarati	1. Sandesh	Ahmedabad	1923	N.C. Bodiwala & P.D. Brahmabhatt
	2. Sevak	Ahmedabad	1941	N.C. Bodiwala & P.D. Brahmabhatt
	3. Gujarat Samachar	Ahmedabad	1932	Lok Prakashan Ltd.
	4. Loknad	Ahmedabad	1947	Lok Prakashan Ltd.
	5. Jai Hind	Rajkot	1948	M. L. Shah
	6. Vandemataram	Bombay	1941	Family of late Samaldas Gandhi
	7. Lokasatta	Baroda		Ramanlal Chhotalal Shah
	8. Jam-e-Jamshed	Bombay	1832	J.B. Marzban and Co. Ltd.
	9. Nutan Saurashtra	Rajkot	1927	J. R. Rawal
	10. Phulchhab	Rajkot		Jai Bharat Ltd.
	11. Gujarat Mitra and Gujarat Darpan	Ahmedabad		P.K. Reshamwala
	12. Prabhat	Ahmedabad	1939	New Era Publications Ltd.
	13. Jaya Gujarat	Baroda	1942	Jayant Kumar Yagnik
Hindi	1. Navarashtra	Patna	1946	Navarashtra Publications
	2. Jagran	Kanpur, Indore and Jhansi	1942	Puran Chandra Gupta and Paripurananand Verma
	3. Pratap	Kanpur	1913	Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi
	4. Rashtradoot	Jaipur		R.D. Joshi
	5. Aaj	Banaras	1920	Jnanamandal Ltd.
	6. Amar Ujala	Agra	1940	D. Aggarwal and others
	7. Indore Samachar	Indore	1941	Sita Ram Ji Nanaria and others
	8. Jai Hind	Jabalpur	1946	Jai Hind Publishing Co.

	9. Lokmanya	Calcutta and Nagpur	1930	Ramshankar Tripathi
	10. Lokawani	Jaipur	1943	Yugantar Prakashan Mandir Ltd.
	11. Mahakoshal	Raipur	1935	Shyamcharan Shukla
	12. Navajyoti	Ajmer		Srimati Vimla Devi
	13. Rashtravani	Patna	1941	Navashakti Publishing Co.
	14. Sainik	Agra	1925	Sainik Press
	15. Sanmarg	Banaras	1946	Dharma Sangh Shiksha Mandal
Kannada	1. Prajavani	Bangalore	1948	Printers Ltd.
	2. Janavani	Bangalore	1934	Mysore Press Ltd.
	3. Samyukta Karnataka	Hubli		B.V. Belvi, Narayan Rao Joshi, B.N. Datar and Mr. R. R. Diwakar
	4. Tainadu	Bangalore	1927	T. R. Ramaiyya
	5. Mysore Patrika and Mysore Prabhat	Mysore		T. Narayanan
	6. Viswakarnataka	Bangalore	1932	India Publications Ltd.
	7. Visal Karnataka	Hubli	1947	Karnataka Publicity Co.
	8. Mysore Prabha	Mysore		K.M.R.V. Sastri
	9. Navabharata	Bangalore		V. S. Kudwa
Malayalam	1. Mathrubhumi	Calicut	1923	Mathrubhumi Papers and Publications Ltd.
	2. Chandrika	Kozhikode		Abu Baker
	3. Malayala Manorama	Kottayam	1888	Malayala Manorama Co. Ltd.
	4. Deepika	Kottayam	1887	St. Joseph's Monastery
	5. Kerala Kaumudi	Trivandram	1911	K. Sukumaran
	6. Malayala Rajyam	Quilon	1929	N. S. Nair
	7. Powradhwani	Kottayam	1939	C.M. Karuvelithra
	8. Express	Trichur		K. Krishnan
	9. Deshabhimani	Kozhikode		Communist Party of India
	10. Deshabandhu	Kottayam		Swaraj Industry Ltd.
	11. Malabar Mail	Ernakulam	1936	Archbishop of Ernakulam
	12. Powrashakti	Kozhikode	1944	United Printers Ltd.
	13. Powrakashalam	Trivandram		K.M. Chako
	14. Kerala Bhushanam	Kottayam	1944	K.P. Madhawan Nair
	15. Deepam	Ernakulam	1931	Thomas Cheryan
	16. Prabhatham	Quillon	1934	Thangal Kunju Mudaliar
Marathi	1. Sakal			Sakal Papers Ltd.
	2. Chitra	Bombay		Bharati Newspapers

	3. Navakal and Sandhyakal	Bombay		Y.K. Khadikar and C.H. Khadikar
	4. Tarun Bharat	Nagpur	1926	Narkesari Prakashan Ltd.
	5. Gavakari	Nasik City		D.S. Potnis
	6. Daily Kal	Poona	1939	S.R. Date
	7. Dainik Bharat	Poona	1948	V.P. Geet
	8. Lokashakti	Poona	1935	Rashtriya Vichar Prasarak Mandal Ltd.
Oriya	1. Samaj	Cuttack	1918	Servants of People Society
	2. Prajatantra	Cuttack	1930	Prajatantra Praja Samiti
	3. Matrubhumi	Cuttack		Balkrishna Veer
Punjabi	1. Akali Patrika	Amritsar and Jullundur	1920	Sikh Newspapers Ltd.
	2. Khalsa Sevak	Amritsar	1924	G.Z. Singh and G.S. Musaffir
	3. Prakash	Patiyala	1948	Sardar Gurdit Singh
	4. Ranjit	Patiyala	1946	H. S. Mehar Singh
Sindhi	1. Hindustan	Bombay	1916	Bombay Printers Ltd.
	2. Hindu Daily	Ajmer	1948	Tilok Chand Gopal Dass
Tamil	1. Swadesmitram	Madras	1882	C. R. Srinivasan
	2. Thanthi	Madras	1942	S. B. Adityan
	3. Nava India	Coimbatore	1948	Ramakrishna Industries Ltd.
	4. Viduthalai	Madras	1935	The Periyar Institute
	5. Bharat Devi	Madras	1940	Free Press Journals Ltd.
Telugu	1. Andhra Patrika	Madras	1908	S. K. Ramayamma
	2. Golkonda Patrika	Hyderabad	1925	Golkonda Publications Ltd.
	3. Visala Andhra	Vijayawada		Communist Party
Urdu	1. Pratap	Delhi and Jullundur	1919	Mahashe Krishan and others
	2. Milap	Delhi, Jullundur and Hyderabad	1925	Milap Newspapers Co.
	3. Veer Bharat	Amritsar and Delhi	1947	Veer Bharat trust
	4. Tej	Delhi	1923	Daily Tej Ltd.
	5. Hind Samachar	Jullundur	1948	Hind Samachar Ltd.
	6. Sathi	Patna		Ghulam Sarwar
	7. Asre-Jadid	Calcutta	1919	Janab Shaikh Mohammed Jan
	8. Al Jamiat	Delhi	1925	Maulana Mohammed Usman Farqaleet
	9. Vande Mataram	Delhi	1920	Lala Lajpat Rai
	10. Hindustan	Bombay	1939	Ghulam Ahmed Khan
	11. Inquilab-e-	Bombay	1939	Abdul Hameed Ansari



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(Source: Report of First Press Commission, 1954)

Few important observations on the basis of First Press Commission's Report were made by J. Natarajan in 1955, as follows:

1. It should not be assumed from the list of Hindi newspapers that they were either small in number or not significant in influence. The leading Hindi papers were owned by combines such as the Vishwamitra group, controlled by M.C. Aggarwal, the Birla Group, the Dalmia Group and the Hindustan Journals Ltd which published the Navaprabhat from four centres (Indore, Ujjain, Bhopal and Lashkar). It was also noticed that leading Indian Newspapers published in the English language also published daily papers in Hindi. These were the main features of Hindi Press which in size and extent of circulation, content and standard of production, came second only to the English language press.
2. Among the founders of Samyukta Karnataka in Kannada was B. N. Datar, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs in the Government of India and Mr. R. R. Diwakar, Governor of Bihar.
3. Most of the Kanarese daily newspapers were single publications, publishing only in one language except Tainadu and Prajavani, which were also in English.
4. Similar to Hindi newspapers, some leading papers were also published in Marathi by the larger combines. Prominent among these were Loksatta (Express Newspapers group) and Navashakti Indian National Press (Bombay) Ltd. Group.
5. Owing to the general backwardness of the state and the low standard of literacy, newspapers in Orissa were few and underdeveloped.
6. A number of newspapers in Punjabi had come into existence since partition, particularly in the States forming the Patiala and the East Punjab States Union. The leading papers advocating the Sikh cause were published in Urdu. They

were, the Ajit and Prabhat. The other paper published in Punjabi was Master Tara Singh's Akali from Jullundur.

7. Since partition Sindhi papers were being published from India as the Sindhi speaking population was scattered in all over India. Sindhi newspapers had local circulation.
8. There were a large number of Urdu newspapers with small circulations throughout the country. The technique of newspaper production in Urdu was such that it was easy to start a newspaper but not easy to attain speed in production.

After independence the development of media started in two directions – first government owned media and second private media. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting became the nodal Ministry for the information, broadcasting and film sectors. Various media units attached/ subordinate offices, autonomous organizations and PSUs still under this ministry's control are written below:

## **Information**

### **Media Units**

- Press Information Bureau
- Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity
- Registrar of Newspaper for India
- Directorate of Field Publicity
- Publications Division
- Research, Reference and Training Division
- Song and Drama Division
- Photo Division

### **Autonomous Organizations**

- Press Council of India
- Indian Institute of Mass Communication

### **Broadcasting**

### **Attached/ Subordinate offices**

- Electronic Media Monitoring Centre

### **Autonomous Organisations**

- Prasar Bharti
- All India Radio
- Doordarshan

### **Public Sector Organization**

- BECIL

### **Films**

#### **Attached/Subordinate Offices**

- Films Division
- Centre Board of Film Certification
- National Film Archive of India
- Directorate of Film Festivals

### **Public Sector Undertaking**

- National Film Development Corporation

(Source: Mass Media in India, 2010)

Prominent government owned media are All India Radio and Doordarshan. Besides Publication Division brings out 18 monthly journals including ‘Bal Bharati’ – a children magazine, ‘Aajkal’ in Hindi and Urdu, ‘Kuruksheetra’ in Hindi and English and ‘Yojana’ in Hindi, English, Urdu, Punjabi, Oriya, Bengali, Asamese, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada (Mass Media in India 2010). The Division brings out a weekly, Employment News/Rozgar Samachar in English, Hindi and Urdu. Along with these government owned mass media, there are many private owned media. According to 1990 Report of the Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, the ownership pattern in India is written below:

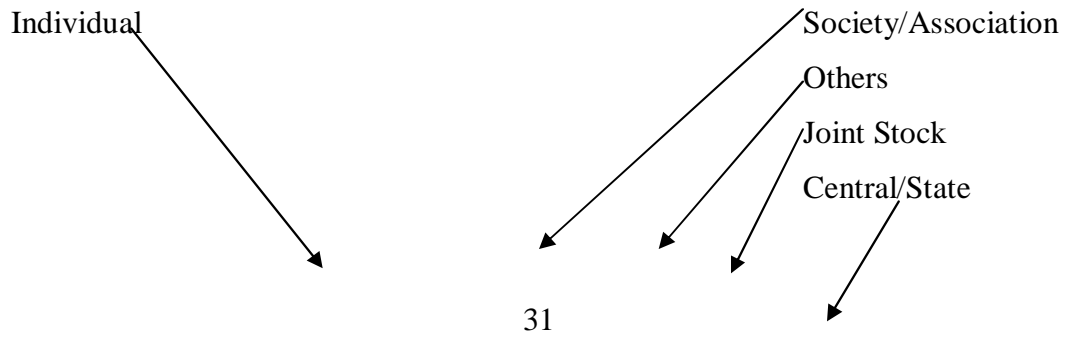
Form of Ownership	No. of Newspapers
1. Individual	18,873

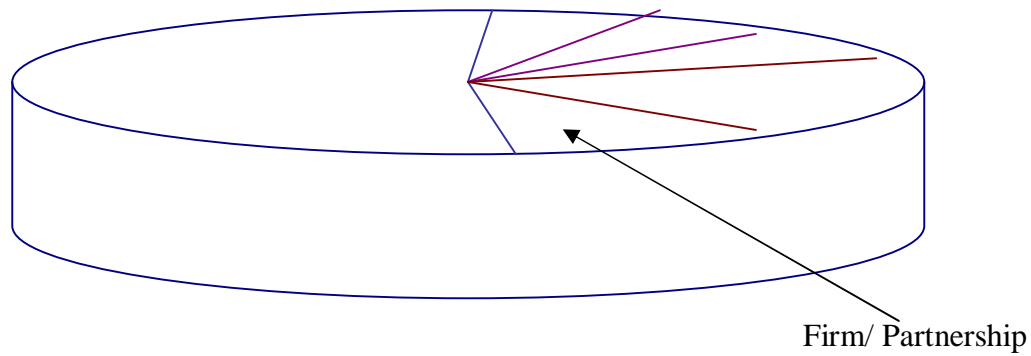
2. Societies/Association	3,875
3. Firm/Partnership	1,237
4. Joint Stock Company	1,199
5. Government Central/State	673
6. Others	1,197
	<hr/>
Total	27,054
	<hr/>

(The figures were given in the year 1989, but have been published in the RNI's publication, The Press in India, 1990)

This can be interpreted from the above list that the number of newspapers concentrated in the individual ownership is highest followed by societies/associations.

The concentration of ownership may be shown by a pi-chart constructed below:





According to the chart shown above, it can be understood that 75 percent of newspaper ownership in India is individual ownership while societies and associations own 10.67 percent newspapers. Only 4.45 percent newspapers come under joint stock companies, however all big media houses are mainly owned by joint venture companies. Some of the prominent owners and their publications are as shown below:

S. No.	Company	Main Publishing Brands
1.	Bennet and Colman Company Limited (BCCL)	Times of India, Economic Times, Filmfare, Femina, Maharashtra Times
2.	Hindustan Times Limited	Hindustan Times, Hindustan, Mint, Kadambini, Nandan
3.	Anand Bazar Patrika	Ananda Bazar Patrika, The Telegraph, Sananda, Anandamela, Anandlok, Desh, Business World
4.	Malayala Manorama	Malayala Manorama, Balarama, Vanitha, The Week
5.	The Hindu	The Hindu, Business Line, Frontline
6.	Indian Express Limited	Indian Express, Financial Express, Express Computer Weekly
7.	Dainik Bhaskar	Dainik Bhaskar, Daily News Analysis (DNA)
8.	Jagaran Prakashan	Dainik Jagaran

9.	Living Media India Limited	India Today (English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam), Business Today, India Today Plus
10.	Sakal	Sakal
11.	Mid-Day Multimedia	Mid-Day (English, Gujarati), Metro, Inquilab
12.	Hathway Investments	Outlook (Hindi, English), Intelligent Investors, Outlook Traveller

Now-a-days the trend has been changed. Now a publication house is not only owning some publications but also owning FM Radio channels, television channels and websites. For example, ABP Pvt. Ltd. Hindustan Pvt. Ltd., Bennet and Colman Ltd and so on. *Anandabazar Patrika* first came out as a four-page evening daily in 1922 that sold at two paise and had a circulation of about 1,000 copies a day. It reaches out to over seven million readers, eighty-five years later. Today, the ABP Group has evolved into a media conglomerate that has eleven premier publications, three 24-hour national TV news channels, two leading book publishing businesses as well as mobile and internet properties (<http://www.abp.in/index.php?show=2001>). HT Media established in 1924 with its flagship newspaper, Hindustan Times inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. HT Media has today grown to become one of India's largest media companies and listed in BSE and NSE. Hindustan Times (English newspaper) and Hindustan (Hindi newspaper through a subsidiary Hindustan Media Ventures Limited) are two main publications of this group. Hindustan Times is the choice for nearly 3.7 million readers across India, who read it daily for news, information, analysis and entertainment. Hindustan, the group's Hindi daily, continues to be the second-largest daily in the country with a total readership of 36.6 million, based on

Indian Readership Survey (IRS) for the first quarter (Q1) of 2011. Both dailies enjoy strong brand recognition among readers as well as advertisers.

In addition to Hindustan Times, HT Media also publishes a national business newspaper, Mint. It is today the second-largest business newspaper in India with presence in the key markets of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Pune, Kolkata and now Ahmedabad too. HT Media has also made its foray into electronic media. Diversifying its ambit of operations, the company in a consulting partnership with Virgin Radio, has launched the FM radio channel - Fever 104. Currently available in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata, Fever 104 has established a strong presence as being one of the most vibrant channels on air. Internet businesses of HT Media incorporated under Firefly e-ventures; operate leading web portals Hindustantimes.com and livemint.com in the general and business news categories respectively. The company's job portal Shine.com which has received high appreciation from consumers and industry for its innovative design and usability crossed 7 million registrations. Desimartini.com -a platform to discover and express oneself on movies. The company also has an education portal [www.HTCampus.com](http://www.HTCampus.com) aimed at students passing out of school and college to help them take the right decision about their higher education.

Financially, the Company was ahead of the industry in more ways than one. On a consolidated basis, its revenues grew by 25 percent to reach Rs.1, 815 Crore, EBITDA grew by 26 percent to reach Rs. 365 Crore, net profit grew by 33 percent to reach Rs.181 Crore. Its revenue growth was driven by a 22 percent increase in advertisement revenue within the print segment, which reached Rs. 1,395 Crore from Rs. 1,141 Crore in the previous fiscal and an impressive 63 percent increase in revenue from the Radio & Entertainment segment from Rs. 43 Crore in Financial Year, 10 to Rs. 70 Crore this year. This robust revenue growth has been partially offset by a significant increase in cost of raw material, reaching Rs. 628 Crore in Financial Year, 11 from Rs. 476 Crore in the previous year, due to higher circulation

and newsprint prices (<http://www.htmedia.in/Section.aspx?Page=Page-HTMedia-AboutUs>).

Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. provides media publishing services. The company offers newspapers, magazines, Internet, and electronic commerce information publication services. Its brands include The Economic Times, Times of India, Femina, Sandhya Times, Times FM, and Filmfare. Additionally, it provides radio and television programs production and distribution, Web portals operation, and mobile value added services. Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. was founded in 1838 and is based in Mumbai, India (<http://investing.businessweek.com/research/stocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=7604379>).

The Times Group is India's largest media conglomerate with its flagship Bennett, Coleman and Company Limited (BCCL) being the largest publishing company in India and South-Asia. Starting off with The Times of India – which is now the largest English publication in the world, BCCL and its subsidiaries (called The Times of India Group), are present in every existing media platform – Newspapers, Magazines, Books, TV, Radio, Internet, Event Management, Outdoor Display, Music, Movies and more. With a turnover exceeding a billion dollars, the group has the support of over 25,000 advertisers, 11,000 employees and an audience spanning across all continents.

## **Key Businesses**

- **Publishing**



- Largest publishing co in India: 13 newspapers, 18 magazines, 11 publishing centers, 26 printing centers
- Largest English newspaper in India by circulation (and the world)
- Largest Business newspaper in India by circulation (2nd largest English Business daily in the world, behind WSJ)
- Largest Non-English newspapers in Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore by circulation (India's three largest cities)
- **Television**
  - Largest English News TV Channel, No. 2 English Business News TV Channel
  - Largest Bollywood News and Lifestyle TV Channel, No. 2 English Movies TV Channel
- **Digital**
  - Largest Indian network based on traffic and revenue (behind Google, Facebook, Yahoo)
  - Operates 30+ digital businesses, most of which are Top 3 in their competitive segment
  - Most popular B2C mobile shortcode in India, across SMS, voice, WAP, and USSD Radio
  - Largest radio network in India by revenue and listenership, with 32 stations
  - Operates the largest rock radio station in the UK
- **Out-of-home**
  - Largest Out-of-home advertising business in India with presence in all major metros
  - Owns advertising contracts in most major airports in India.
- **Other Activities**
  - Music

- Movies
- Syndication
- Education
- Financial Services
- Event Management
- Specialised publications - including books and multimedia

(Source - <http://www.timesgroup.com/bccl/about-us.html>)

Indian Express Newspapers (Mumbai), Ltd. publishes daily and weekly newspapers in India. It offers magazines and trade publications, as well as news online. The company also provides newsgathering, marketing infrastructure, and communications network in the Indian publishing industry. It covers news in various sectors, including hi-tech, hospitality, travel and tourism, pharmaceuticals, textiles and business trade, as well as politics, economy, society, and culture. The company was founded in 1932 and is based in Mumbai, India with additional offices in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Chennai, Jammu, Kolkata, Lucknow, and Pune, India

(<http://investing.businessweek.com/research/stocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=22077949>).

Similarly all the media houses have emerged as a media conglomerate by owning a number of publications, FM channels, television channels, and websites, in recent years. Interestingly most of these media houses are owned by business groups as shown above. Considering such concentration of ownership of media, it is imperative to examine, how sensitive these media houses are towards news.

## **Chapter 3**

# **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MASS MEDIA OWNERSHIP**

### **Impact of Media Ownership**

Media ownership matters mainly due to two reasons. The first one is pluralism. Here pluralism means pluralism of ideas and thoughts. Pluralism is generally associated with diversity in the media, the presence of a number of different and independent voices and of differing political opinions and representations of culture within the media (Doyle 2002). The citizens of a democratic and diverse society like India need a diverse and plural media content and media sources. The need for diversity and pluralism is some times associated with the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression as given in Article 19 of the Constitution.

According to William Melody, the greatest threat to freedom of expression in the United States or elsewhere is the possibility that private entrepreneurs will always tend to monopolise the marketplace of ideas in the name of economic efficiency and private profit (Melody 1978). The members of societies have a need for diverse and pluralistic media provision so that there can be multiple ideas and multiple thoughts can be given voices. Without an open and pluralistic system of dissemination of informations, thoughts, ideas or any other media provisions, the right to receive and impart information might well be curtailed for individuals or groups of a society. In addition to it, concentrations of media ownership narrow the range of voices that predominate in the media and consequently pose a threat to the interests of a democratic society. A great many writers have focused attention on the potential harms that may result from concentrated media ownership, including the abuse of political power by media owners or the under representation of some significant viewpoints (Doyle 2002).

Concentration of media ownership is a phenomenon described by politicians and critics of the media. It is characterized by the ownership of a large number of media outlets by a small number of corporations or media conglomerates. The six largest media-owning corporations of Europe are dominating 96 percent of the world media market. A state of concentrated ownership can be either a monopoly or an oligopoly. A monopoly exists when a single corporation owns the entire market. In oligopoly, media industry is owned by two or more extremely large conglomerates that dominate the market together and compete only with each other. The film and music industries are both oligopolistic.

Cable television and satellite radio may create some media variety in concentrated local markets. However, the cable stations are standardized across the nation, and most are still owned by a small number of corporations. Newspapers and magazines are also generally concentrated in ownership. This is true even of some local independent (<http://communication1234.blogspot.in/>).

Concentration of media is the relative proportion between two quantities: first, the numbers of people or parties who own, control, or influence a given medium; and second, the numbers of people or parties who are exposed to, affected by, or influenced by, that medium. Concentration of media ownership/media consolidation is also refers to the view that the majority of the major media outlets are owned by a proportionately small number of conglomerates and corporations. According to Anthony Giddens, “The media have a double relation to democracy. On the one hand the emergence of a global information society is a powerful democratizing force. Yet, television and the other media tend to destroy the very public space of dialogue they open up, through relentless trivializing and personalizing of political issues. Moreover the growth of giant multinational media corporations means that unelected business tycoons can hold enormous power.” (Giddens 1999).

It is recognized historically that pluralism should be protected in media content in order to give attention to different voices of people and groups and it has been the main reason for regulating ownership of the media. However, concentrated media ownership

also matters to society, not only because of pluralism and democracy, but also because ownership patterns may affect the way in which the media industry is able to manage the resources available for media provision. Restrictions on ownership could, for example, result in a duplication of resources which prevents the industry from capitalizing on all potential economies of scale and thus push the media industry towards economic loss. The ways in which ownership patterns affect the economic strength and efficiency of the sector are not solely a matter for broad societal interest but are obviously of immense and particular concern to media firms (Doyle 2002). As a result of economic conditions or circumstances, access to the marketplace of ideas is restricted to the privileged few.

The problem of media ownership and concentration is perceived quite differently from a political economy perspective. In this context, the mass media industry is said to play a significant role in legitimating inequalities in wealth, power and privilege. When the control of the flow of information, knowledge, values and images is concentrated in the hands of those who share the power of the dominant class, the ruling class will establish what is circulated through the mass media in order to reproduce the structure of class inequalities from which they benefit. The mass media industry is crucial for the creation of reliable information, knowledge, ideology and propaganda in contemporary capitalist societies (Meier 2002). Strinati (1995) also argues its structure of ownership and controls are equally crucial. Marxist 'critical studies' claim that the mass media 'assume an all-encompassing conspiracy by monopolist' (Gomery 2000). Political economists like Golding and Murdoch (1997) see the relationship between ownership and control as an indirect and mediated one.

Control is not always exercised in a direct way, nor does the economic structure of media institutions always have an immediate impact on their output. Mainstream communication researchers criticise the conspiracy theories of the media on theoretical as well as on empirical grounds, arguing that political economists' views are supported only by anecdotal evidence. Above all, ownership and control over the media raise special concerns that do not apply in the case of other sectors of industry as media industry is very much different from other profit and loss based industries. The importance of media

concentration can also be understood on the basis of its influence on politics. It matters because media have the power to make or break political careers as in the notorious case of the Berlusconi media empire in Italy. It was said about a former UK media baron: ‘Without his newspaper, he is just an ordinary millionaire. With it, he can knock on the door of 10 Downing Street any day he pleases’ (Financial Times, 2000). Control over a substantial share of the more popular avenues for dissemination of media content can confer very considerable influence on public opinion and politicians are well aware about it.

## **Sociological Perspective**

A sociological perspective suggests that media products cannot be looked into a vacuum. Instead, media products should be seen as the result of a social process of production that occurs within an institutional framework. Some researchers call this kind of institutional approach a “production perspective” (Crane 1992; Peterson 1976) because it emphasizes the media production process rather than either specific media products or the consumption of those products. The production perspective highlights the fact that mass media products are not free-floating texts; they do not just appear out of thin air rather they are the result of a complex production process that in turn is shaped by a variety of social structural forces that operate on various levels, some affecting the industry as a whole, some affecting particular actors or groups of actors within the industry (Croteau and Hoynes 2003).

Croteau and Hoynes (2001) identify two perspectives on mass media ownership on the basis of public interest – market model and public sphere model – which affect the way the public interest is seen. In the market model of media, content of media is seen as any other commodity and interests of the public are served by the market rule of demand and supply. The public interest is what public is interested in and what it needs and demands. In this model, the audience of mass media is seen as consumer. It says that the primary goal of media is to generate profit and profit will be converted into success. Sometimes, competition between media companies provides good results in public

interest and ensures that the public interest is served properly. On the other hand, the main assumption of the public sphere model is market's inability to meet the society's needs. Based on the characteristics of the public sphere model, Croteau and Hoynes (2003) see the public sphere on a macro level as a social discourse that enables the circulation of ideas and knowledge, thereby ensuring the successful socialization of individuals into society.

Mass media are also considered as capable of affecting people's behaviour (Lippmann 1965). It is assumed that since it has an effect on public media organizations, so it should "promote active citizenship, education and social integration" through its messages (Croteau & Hoynes 2001). Here it is necessary to understand that producers create media products under always changing economic, technological, political conditions which is reflected on social changes which occur in the broader society. Therefore to better understand media products, the historically specific context in which people created them, must be taken into account. According to David Barrat (1986), the mass media are products in two senses – first, they are the result of an industrial process and manufacturing of a TV programme or a popular magazine resembles the production of a refrigerator or a washing machine. All require the division of labour, a complex social organization, and heavy investment in highly technological capital. Second, the consumers are able to choose only between those products that are available in the market place. Like in other markets, the consumer of mass media products has very little control over their nature (Barrat 1986).

One central feature of traditional mass media is that they are designed to allow a one way flow of information. A small group of media professionals transmit messages to a much larger audience which has very little opportunity to reply means the feedback mechanism is very weak in mass media. It can be better explained by "hypodermic model of mass communication". According to this model, media messages are seen as being directly injected into the minds of individuals who are powerless to resist. It is believed that media have almost magical powers to alter the ideas and behaviour of their audience.

Mc Luhan (1964) takes an optimistic view of the mass media, which he sees as possessing the power to reunite mankind in a new electronic community: the 'global village'. Others look more skeptically at the special power of those who control the mass media to manipulate and suppress dissent.

One approach which has been a strong influence on media sociologists in recent years is based on the work of Karl Marx. Writing before the development of TV, film and radio, Marx did produce a number of useful insights into the role of the media in capitalist societies. His own experience as a journalist was a useful resource in this (Murdock 1982). In his view, all capitalist societies were split into two major sections. One section is of a small group of powerful people (the ruling class), who through their ownership of factories and equipment used to make the things needed by people in society and in this way they are able to dominate group of employees, although they were not allowed to receive the full value of the work they performed. The power of this ruling group or class comes from their economic control of the media, but according to Marx, it spread out from here to cover all other aspects of society. To make this unequal system sustain it was essential that the exploited working classes were kept under firm control. To some extent this was achieved through the power of the owners to sack workers and thus deny them the means of earning their living, but this control system did not remain confined to media industry rather it extended throughout the major institutions of society. For Marx, the state was no neutral institution which represented in a democratic way the interests of all. Regardless of the electoral processes that led to the selection of a government, the state, in a capitalist society, would continue to represent the interest of the ruling class. The control of the ruling classes resulted into the control of ideas. Marx wrote 'In every historical epoch', 'the dominant ideas are those of the dominant class'. The mass media are to be included in this observation. It is to be expected, from a Marxist perspective, that the dominant ideas they express will reflect ruling-class interests (Barrat 1986).



## **The political economy perspective**

The political economy theory has been the most important one in an attempt to understand and critique the implications of media concentration and conglomeration. The political economy perspective is concerned with investigating how the capitalist class promote and ensure their dominance or hegemonic position. It is first and foremost a theory about unequal power relations (Mosco 1996). It is a socially critical approach that focuses primarily on the relation between the economic structure and dynamics of media industries and the ideological content of media (McQuail 2000). It draws research attention to the empirical analysis of the structure of ownership and control of media and the way media market forces operates and influence media content. In view of this assumption, the media institution has to be considered as part of the economic system, with close links to the political system. The predominance of what the media products can largely be accounted for different kinds of content, under pressurizing conditions to expand markets and by the underlying economic interests of owners and decision makers (Garnham 1979). These interests culminate in the need for profit oriented media operations as a result of monopolistic tendencies and processes of vertical and horizontal integration.

According to McQuail (2000), the implications of changes in the ownership structures of the media industries from a political economy perspective is a reduction in independent media sources, concentration on the largest markets, avoidance of risks and reduced investment in less profitable media tasks such as investigative reporting and documentary film making. It also results in negligence of smaller and poorer sections of the potential audience and production of mostly a politically unbalanced range of news media. According to this perspective, concentration and conglomeration have serious implications for media content (especially factual genres such as news, current affairs, and documentaries) and media audiences. Audiences are constructed primarily as consumers rather than as citizens who have a right to be informed. Concentration and conglomeration also pose severe results for media workers such as Increasing number of

casual media workers and the greater economies of scale demanded by the media oligopolies have also resulted in job losses (Devereux 2007).

The political economy perspective indicates that in order to understand media content honestly, especially its ideological character, one must examine the ownership and control of the media industries. Not only this, it is also needed to examine the relationship of media industries to other political and economic elite groups in society. If cultural production is driven predominantly by the relentless search for profit and is increasingly undertaken by media organizations that have a wide range of economic interests, then the political economic perspective would lead to conclude that one of the first casualties tends to be media content that directly challenges the prevailing capitalist interests (Devereux 2007).

### **Changing patterns of ownership**

The central question about the economic organization of mass media is – who owns the media? The assumption behind the question is that owners of the media control the content and thus can mould the public opinion. They can influence the content and sometimes also take decision to hire and fire certain personnel, to fund certain projects and to give a media platform to certain speakers. As a result of mergers, takeovers, deregulation, privatization, globalization and technological change, a substantial amount of mainstream media ownership increasingly rests in fewer hands. Much media ownership is now increasingly characterized by both concentration and conglomeration. Individual media companies may be owned and controlled by conglomerates that concentrates exclusively on media activities or by conglomerates that have a wider range of commercial activities within their specific portfolios. Conglomerations operate at the local, regional, national and increasingly at the transnational levels.

Murdock (1982) has suggested that the control of media conglomerates is best understood in terms of a distinction between ‘allocative control’ and ‘operational control’. The owners and those in senior management possess allocative control in the sense that

they determine the overall direction of the media organization in question. They decide whether to concentrate on particular forms of programming over others. Decisions are taken in terms of how much money will be allocated to news and current affairs programming as opposed to 'reality' or entertainment –based shows. Those with allocative control may decide to invest in other media companies who are in business of producing or distributing media content through the use of new media technology, for example. Operational control exists at much lower level in the media organization. An editor or a series producer may exert operational control in the making of a particular television or radio programme. He/she will decide on content and on how a budget is spent during production. Operational control is constrained by the allocative control exerted by those at a more senior level in the media organization (Devereux 2007).

### **Vertical and Horizontal integration**

Concentration is usually described as being either vertical or horizontal. According to Croteau and Hoyens (2003), 'vertical integration refers to the process by which one owner acquires all aspects of production and distribution of a single type of media product'. In contrast to it, Horizontal integration refers to the process by which one company buys different kinds of media, concentrating ownership across differing types of media through one industry. This shows that media conglomerates that engage in horizontal integration own and control a diverse range of media companies like the print, broadcast and ICT sectors. Vertically integrated media conglomerates may also own and control a number of companies, all of which are involved in various stages in the production and distribution of a specific kind of media product. For example, vertical integration or concentration occurs when a conglomerate owns and controls the companies that print, publish, distribute and sell a women's magazine. A vertically integrated conglomerate in the field of television involved in making a drama serial might, in turn, own and control the production company, the television station and the cable network that broadcast the programme in question.

Most of the media conglomerates all over the world are horizontal in structure for the reason that it allows to expand in various media sectors. Global media conglomerates such as Vivendi Universal or Time Warner own and control a wide variety of media companies in the 'old' and 'new' media sectors (Devereux 2007). There are clear strategic reasons why media firms engage in both horizontal and vertical integration. According to Doyle (2002), horizontal expansion allows for greater economies of scale. In his words, "Vertically integrated media firms may have activities that span the creation of media output through to distribution or retail of that output in various guises. Vertical expansion generally results in reduced transaction costs for the enlarged firm. Another benefit, which may be of great significance for media players, is that vertical integration gives firms some control over their operating environment and it can help them to avoid losing market access in important 'upstream' or 'downstream' phases." (Doyle 2002).

The term 'synergy' has become the watchword of media conglomerates and a core part of their strategy in maintaining a position of power and dominance. Turow (1992) defines synergy as: 'the coordination of parts of a company so that the whole actually turns out to be worth more than the sum of its parts acting alone, without helping one another'. In the view of increasing audiences and media fragmentation, conglomerates have used synergies in their endless search for profit. The rationale for such an approach is quite clear. Turow (1992) remarks that from the perspective of those who own and control media conglomerates, 'power would accrue to those who could use them synergistically to play out materials across a gamut of holdings for the most value possible. Playing as they do on a global stage, media conglomerates try to maximize profits on the cultural products that they produce (Devereux 2007). In many instances the studios that make the film also own the distribution companies and cinemas where the movies are shown. This form of vertical integration gives the larger media organizations considerable leverage. Their considerable power is manifest in their ability to keep smaller players out of the mainstream and more profitable market (Devereux 2007).

The blurring of distinction between the ownership and control of the culture industries and other types of economic production raises a number of important issues, one of which is the direct impact of ownership and control of the media by conglomerates on media content.

### **Examining the reasons of expansion of media firms**

An important reason for expansion of media firms is erosion of traditional boundaries surrounding media markets. National markets are being opened up by 'globalization'. 'The communication revolution has caused an internationalization of competition in almost all industries. National markets are no longer protected for local producers by high costs of transportation and communication or by the ignorance of foreign firms. Global competition is fierce competition and firms need to be fast on the uptake, if they are to survive.' (Lipsey & Chrystal 1995). The emergence of a borderless economy and more international competition has naturally affected media markets and firms across the globe (Alexander et al. 1998). Throughout in 1990s, policy makers not only in US and Europe but also in India sought to develop initiatives that supported the development of a 'Global Information Society'. Their hopes have been realized to some extent with the dramatic growth of a truly transnational and borderless distribution infrastructure for media in recent years – the internet. So, changes in technology are also helping to diminish traditional market boundaries.

It is not just geographic market boundaries that are being affected but also product markets. Technological convergence has blurred the divisions between different sorts of media and communication products and markets. The term 'convergence' refers to the coming together of the technologies of media, telecommunications and computing (Doyle 2002). It is also used sometimes to denote greater technological overlap between broadcasting and other conventional media forms. Digital technology is the driving force behind convergence. Sectors of industry that were previously seen as separate are now converging or beginning to overlap because of the shift towards using common digital technologies.

The implications of convergence are far reaching. With the arrival of common digital storage, manipulation, packaging and delivery techniques for information, media output can more readily be repackaged for dissemination in alternative formats. For example, images and text gathered for a magazine, once reduced to digits, can very easily be retrieved, reassembled and delivered as another product, say, an electronic newsletter. So, digitization and convergence are weakening some of the market boundaries that used to separate different media products. Convergence is also drawing together the broadcasting, computing and IT sectors to the extent that it is said; there will be no differences between broadcasting and telecommunications (Styles et al 1996). More and more homes are now linked into advanced high capacity communication networks and through these, are able to receive a range of multimedia, interactive and other 'new' media and communication services as well as conventional television and radio services.

It is due to the potential for economies of scale and scope, the greater the number of products and services that can be delivered to consumers via the same communications infrastructure, the better the economics of each service (Doyle 2002). The logic of exploiting economies of scale creates an incentive to expand product sales into secondary external or overseas markets. As market structures have been freed up and have become more competitive and international in outlook, the opportunities to exploit economies of scale and economies of scope have increased.

Globalization and convergence have created additional possibilities and incentives to re-package or to repurpose media content into as many different formats as is technically and commercially feasible and to sell that product through as many distribution channels or windows in as many geographic markets and to as many paying consumers as possible. The media industry's response to these developments has been remarkable. Media firms have been joining forces at a faster pace than ever before. They have been involved in takeovers, mergers and other strategic deals and alliances, not only with rivals in the same business sector, but also with firms involved in other areas that are now seen as complementary. The basic rationale behind all such strategies of

enlargement is usually to try and use common resources more fully. Diversified and large scale media organisations are clearly in the best position to exploit common resources across different product and geographic markets. So, enlarged enterprises are better able to reap the economies of scale and scope which are naturally present in the industry and which have become even more pronounced due to globalization and convergence. This situation indicates towards Demers' concept of 'paradox of capitalism', which says that intensified global competition results in less competition over the long run (Demers 1999).

Even with a loosening up of national markets and fewer technological barriers to protect media incumbents from new competitors, the trend that exists in the media – of increased concentration of ownership and power into the hands of a few very large transnational corporations – clearly reflects the overwhelming advantages that accrue to large scale firms. Industrial or economic arguments favouring a more liberal approach towards concentrations of ownership seem to have become more influential in determining media ownership policies in the UK and Europe since the early 1990s. The elevation of industrial interests may be attributed to 'technological mystique' surrounding developments such as convergence and globalization and to the perception that policy-making ought to help industry capitalize on such developments (Hitchens 1995).

## Chapter 4

### MEDIA OWNERSHIP: NEWS MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA

#### Indian Newspaper Industry

It is very easy to start newspapers or magazines in India. According to the data available till 15<sup>th</sup> August 2011, there are 84 thousand 277 papers and magazines registered in India (According to Parliament question answer no. 5313 on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2011). In view of this number, it seems that there is wide diversity of newspapers in India and the readers have many choices. In first glance, it appears that there is no monopoly in Indian media business and dissemination of information is very democratic. To examine this assumption, the report of Indian readership survey of Rajasthan, Bihar, UP and Delhi in second quarter of 2011 (IRS Q2, 2011) has been analysed.

The condition of newspaper market in Rajasthan:

Position	Newspaper	Number of daily readers (in lakhs)
1	Rajasthan Patrika	68.05
2	Dainik Bhasker	64.25
3	Dainik Navjyoti	5.54
4	Punjab Kesari	2.20
5	Times of India	2.08
6	News Today	1.50
7	Daily News	1.44
8	Rashtrdoot	1.04
9	Hindustan Times	0.64
10	DNA	0.32



(Source: Indian Readership Survey, Quarter 2, 2011.)

This data reveals that total numbers of readers of top 10 newspapers in Rajasthan are 146.85 lakh. Out of this, 132.30 lakh means almost 90 percent readers are of only two newspapers – Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik Bhasker. Besides two newspapers of this top 10 list, News Today and Daily News are products of Rajasthan Patrika group and DNA newspaper is a product of Dainik Bhasker group. This means that there is clear dominance of Rajasthan Patrika group and Dainik Bhasker group on the newspaper scenario of Rajasthan. It proves that there is no healthy competition among various newspapers in Rajasthan as the market is dominated by few.

The condition of newspaper market of Bihar:

Position	Newspaper	Number of daily readers in lakh
1	Dainik Hindustan	48.42
2	Dainik Jagaran	27.27
3	Prabhat Khabar	4.26
4	Aaj	2.86
5	Times of India	1.62
6	Rashtriya Sahara	1.19
7	INext	0.92
8	Hindustan Times	0.88
9	Hindu	0.30
10	Economic Times	0.19

(Source: Indian Readership Survey, Quarter 2, 2011.)

Total number of readers of top 10 newspapers of Bihar is 87.91 lakh, out of which only two newspapers Dainik Hindustan and Dainik Jagaran have total readership of 75.69 lakh which is 86 percent of total readership. In this list of top 10 newspapers of Bihar, Hindustan Times is also the product of the same group of which Dainik Hindustan is and INext is the product of the same group of which Dainik Jagaran is. This proves that there

is total dominance of these two media groups and the number of readers of Dainik Hindustan is more than the total number of readership of remaining nine newspapers.

The condition of newspaper market of Uttar Pradesh:

Position	Newspapers	Number of daily readers in lakh
1	Dainik Jagaran	90.07
2	Amar Ujala	70.55
3	Dainik Hindustan	38.06
4	Amar Ujala Compact	10.05
5	Aaj	7.68
6	Rashtriya Sahara	6.92
7	Times of India	5.52
8	INext	5.06
9	DNA	3.17
10	Hindustan Times	2.98

(Source: Indian Readership Survey, Quarter 2, 2011.)

In UP, total numbers of readers of top 10 newspapers are 240.06 lakh. Out of these the total number of readers of the groups of top three newspapers which consists of Dainik Jagaran, Amar Ujala, Hindustan, Amar Ujala Compact, INext and Hindustan Times, is 216.77. This is 90 percent of total readership of top 10 newspapers. It is clear from this analysis that in newspaper market of UP, there is clear monopoly of Dainik Jagaran, Amar Ujala and to some extent Dainik Hindustan.

The condition of newspaper market of Madhya Pradesh:

Position	Newspaper	Number of daily readers in lakh
1	Dainik Bhasker	38.06
2	Nai Duniya and Nav Duniya	15.75
3	Patrika	12.51
4	Raj Express	4.92
5	Dainik Jagaran	3.96
6	Dainik Agniban	3.23
7	Haribhumi	2.59
8	Dainik Navbharat	1.52
9	Dainik Prabhat Kiran	0.77
10	Times of India	0.72

(Source: Indian Readership Survey, Quarter 2, 2011.)

In Madhya Pradesh, total number of readers of top 10 newspapers is 84.03 lakh, while top two newspapers Dainik Bhasker and Nai Duniya has total readership of 53.81 lakh. After adding the readership of third newspaper this number becomes 66.32 lakh. This is 78.92 percent of total readership of top ten newspapers of MP. This further proves the dominance of few media groups on the newspaper market. Actually this is not only a story of these four states; rather this situation is prevailing all over India. In the newspaper market of Delhi, top four newspapers are from Times of India group and Hindustan Times group. Besides, biggest economic newspaper of Delhi The Economic Times is also a product of Times of India group.

The condition of newspaper market of Delhi:

Position	Newspaper	Number of daily readers in lakh
1	Hindustan Times	19.48
2	Times of India	19.1
3	Navbharat Times	19
4	Dainik Hindustan	11.24
5	Punjab Kesari	7.44
6	Dainik Jagaran	6.66
7	Mail Today	2.09
8	Economic Times	1.92
9	Nai Duniya	1.26
10	The Hindu	1.13

(Source: Indian Readership Survey, Quarter 2, 2011.)

It is obvious from above data that there is complete dominance of Times of Indias group and Hindustan Times on the newspaper market of Delhi. Similarly, in Mumbai, Times of India group dominates and in Kolkata Anand Bazar Patrika group dominates. The Indian Readership Survey, Quarter 2, 2011 also proves that in such dominance of few groups, it is very difficult for new players to come into fray. If the circulation of top 10 English newspapers and their establishment year is seen, this will be further proved.

Position	Newspaper	Average daily readership in lakh	Establishment year
1	Times of India	74.71	1838
2	Hindustan Times	37.37	1924
3	The Hindu	20.77	1878
4	The Telegraph	12.09	1922
5	Deccan Chronicle	10.88	1938
6	DNA	8.24	1958 (Bhasker)
7	Economic Times	7.85	1838

8	Mumbai Mirror	7.58	1838
9	The Tribune	5.67	1881
10	Indian Express	5.59	1931

Similar condition is with Hindi newspapers:

Position	Newspaper	Average daily readership in lakh	Establishment year
1	Dainik Jagaran	163.93	1942
2	Dainik Bhasker	141.74	1958
3	Hindustan	119.85	1924
4	Amar Ujala	88.91	1948
5	Rajasthan Patrika	69.41	1956
6	Punjab Kesari	34.14	1948
7	Navbharat Times	26.50	1838
8	Prabhat Khabar	18.93	1984
9	Nai Duniya	17.14	1947
10	Haribhumi	14.37	1996

In addition to English and Hindi, the highly circulated newspapers of other Indian languages too are established since long time. Top circulated in Malayalam, Malayala Monorama is since 1888, Lokmat in Marathi is since 1918, Daily Tanti in Tamil is since 1942, Matrubhumi in Malayalam is since 1923 and Anand bazaar Patrika is being published since 1922. Telugu newspaper Eenadu is being published for last 37 years and Gujarat Samachar is being published for last 70 years. Marathi newspaper Sakal is published since 1932 (Mandal 2011). This shows that even if someone starts a newspaper in India, it is not easy to run it successfully in prevailing situation is not an easy task. It can be possible only if the new players have strong back up of any political party or any corporate house. For example, Telugu newspaper Sakshi has strong back up of family of ex-Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Y.S.R. Reddy and Hindi newspaper Prabhat Khabar is supported by Usha Martin Company.

## **Indian Entertainment and Media Industry and entry of corporate houses**

The year 2005 saw the entry of new players across all segments of the E & M industry. The most prominent entry was that of the Reliance Group in the film entertainment and radio segment. During 2005, Reliance Capital bought a majority stake in Adlabs which enabled it to have a presence across the entire value chain of the film entertainment segment ranging from film production, exhibition and distribution. Through Adlabs, Reliance also made its entry into the radio segment by bidding for over 50 FM radio stations across the country with aggregate bids of over INR 1.5 billion (Report of FICCI 2006).

The other significant entry into the entertainment and media segment was that of the Tata group, through its subsidiary Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL). VSNL tied up with the Paris-based Thomson Group in 2005 with the objective of identifying opportunities in managing and delivering content for third parties, including broadcasters and content providers. Thomson Group also recently announced its partnership with Tata Sky Limited for manufacturing set-top-boxes and providing sales service and support network for their DTH customers (Report of FICCI 2006).

Owing to the strong impetus for growth from the economic and demographic factors coupled with some regulatory corrections, the sector also recently witnessed increasing foreign investment inflows in most segments of the E & M industry, especially the print media. Recent examples include foreign investment in English dailies such as Hindustan Times and Business Standard by Henderson Global and Financial Times respectively. Vernacular media too saw its share of foreign investment with a strategic equity investment by independent News & Media in Dainik Jagran, a leading Hindi Daily. In the broadcasting space, most channels beaming into India such as Walt Disney, ESPN Star Sports, Star, Discovery, BBC and so on, have established foreign investment subsidiary companies for content development and advertisement airtime sales. In the television distribution space arena, foreign investment is being drawn by the larger cable

operators referred to as ‘multi-system operators (MSO)’ such as Hathway and Hinduja. In the television content space, the recent investment in Nimbus Communications by a foreign private equity player is seen as the start of a significant trend of foreign investment inflows.

Foreign investments in the Indian E & M industry:

Foreign investor	Indian entity	Segment	Nature of investment	Reason
Virgin Radio Asia	HT Media	FM radio	Equity stake	Entry into the FM radio segment
Financial Times (Pearson Group)	Business Sstandard	Newspaper publishing – print media	Equity stake	Expansion and strengthening of operations
Independent News & Media, UK	Jagran Prakashan	Newspaper publishing – print media	Equity stake	Expansion and strengthening of operations
T Rowe Price International	Mid-day multimedia	Newspaper publishing – print media	Equity stake	Expansion and strengthening of operations
AMP Hendersen, UK	HT Media	Newspaper publishing – print media	Equity stake	Expansion and strengthening of operations
Bear Stearns	Adlabs Films	Film production and exhibition	Equity stake	Expansion of operations
3i (UK-based private equity FTSE 100 company)	Nimbus Communications	Television and Films	Equity stake	Expansion and strengthening of operations
Americorp	Nimbus	Television and	Equity stake	Expansion and

Ventures, Mauritius	Communications	films		strengthening of operations
Americorp Ventures, Mauritius	Asianet Communications	Television broadcasting	Equity stake	Expansion and strengthening of operations
Dubai – based NRI group	Yantra Media	Television content provider in South India	Equity stake	Expansion and strengthening of operations in South India and entry into Hindi television content market
New Vernon Bharat, Mauritius – based	Jagran TV	Television production and broadcasting	Equity stake	Expansion and strengthening of operations
Reuters, UK	Times Global Broadcasting	Television production and broadcasting	Equity stake	Expansion and strengthening of operations

(Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers Research)

## Concentration of Ownership

One of the clearest trends visible in the media and entertainment industry from the above data is its concentration in fewer and fewer hands. This is true not only in Indian context, but also in global scenario. In the sixth edition of ‘The Media Monopoly’ Ben Bagdikian (2000) argues that ownership of media has become so concentrated that by 2000 only six multinational conglomerates dominated the mass media industry. For example, since the sales leader in trade books, Random House, was acquired by the German company Bertelsmann in 1998, book publishing has been more concentrated than ever. Three



companies – Bertelsmann’s Random House, Pearson’s Penguin Group and News Corporation’s Harper Collins- are far away the industry leaders outpacing the second tier of Viacom’s Simon & Schuster and AOL Time Warner’s trade publishing division (Croteau & Hoynes 2003).

In the magazine industry, AOL Time Warner towers above its competitors with more than \$4 billion revenue in 2000. The second tier consisting of the Hearst Corporation and Advance Publications each brought in more than \$1.7 billion in 2000. The motion picture industry is dominated by six companies – Vivendi’s Universal, Viacom’s Paramount, AOL Time Warner’s Warner Bros., Disney, the News Corporation’s 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox and Sony – that accounted for more than 65 percent of the domestic box office in 2001. In addition, two of the leading “independent” film companies, Miramax (Disney) and New Line (AOL Time Warner) are owned by industry giants. In the music industry, only five companies account for the vast majority of U.S. music sales, Vivendi/Universal, Sony, AOL Time Warner, Bertelsmann and EMI and Clear Channel, with more than 1000 radio stations in 2001, is the dominant player in radio industry (Croteau & Hoynes 2003).

In contrast, the television industry became somewhat less concentrated in the 1990s, moving from three to four major networks along with two other fledging networks. The new players in the television industry are companies that are leaders in other sectors of the media industry. Along with the longstanding three networks – ABC (Disney), NBC (General Electric) and CBS (Viacom) – Fox (News Corp.) has become a full fledged fourth network and the WB Network (AOL Time Warner) and UPN (Viacom) are new entrants into the business of network television. In addition, Disney, Viacom and AOL Time Warner are three of the leading producers of prime time programming for network television (Croteau & Hoynes 2003).

On international level, two media moguls are Silvio Berlusconi and Rupert Murdoch. A brief introduction of them is given below:

### **Silvio Berlusconi**

He was born in Italy in 1936. His business is estimated to be worth US \$ 13 billion. He is a highly controversial politician, he served as Italian Prime Minister in 1994 for nine months and from 2001-2006. He is an owner of the Italian Fininvest media empire – which controls in excess of 50 companies. His media interests include commercial television (Canale 5, Italy 1, Rete 4 which claim a combined 45 per cent share of the Italian television audience), advertising sales, publishing (Mondadori) and the print media (the daily newspaper, Giornale and the current affairs magazine Panorama). Berlusconi's television stations attract over 45 percent of the Italian viewing public. He has other financial interests in the insurance and banking sectors as well as construction, food production and a department store – Standa. He is also founder of the political party Forza Italia (Go Italy). He also owns the Italian soccer club AC Milan. He has been criticized by many because of his direct and indirect control of the Italian mass media – a factor which his critics say has helped his rise to political power.

(Source: 'Silvio Berlusconi' by G. Murdock at [www.museum.tv](http://www.museum.tv))

### **Rupert Murdoch**

He was born in Australia in 1931 but held US citizenship since 1985. His business estimated to be worth US\$ 5.3 billion. He is owner of 40 percent of global media giant News Corporation. He has referred to his media empire as 'freedom's greatest messenger'. His media interests lie in film, television, broadcasting delivery systems (cable, digital and satellite), print media (newspapers and magazines in the US, Australia and UK), book publishing and internet-based services. Buying sports teams as well as controlling the broadcasting rights to key sporting events has been a key part of his

overall strategy in the USA, Australia, the UK and India for example. His company's key media brands include Fox News, Twentieth Television, Sky television, Star television (China), myspace.com, HarperCollins, a range of tabloid and broadsheet newspapers including The Sun and The Times (UK), The Daily Telegraph (Australia) and The New York Post (USA). News Corporation print is excess of 40 million newspapers each week. Like Berlusconi, Murdoch has also been controversial in political terms. His newspapers have openly supported political parties in favour of deregulation and liberalization. In the UK, for example, he has openly supported both the Conservatives and (New) Labour. Despite his own ideological commitment to free market capitalism, he has managed to hammer out an arrangement with state communist China in order to facilitate the spread of his Star TV network. He removed the BBC World Service TV from the network when Chinese authorities expressed alarm at the critical tone of the public service broadcaster's coverage of world and Chinese affairs (Wheen, 2004 and Pilger, 1999).

(Source: 'Rupert Murdoch' by D. Gunzerath at [www.museum.tv](http://www.museum.tv)).

<b>News Corporation</b>		
Print Newspapers	Television and Film entertainment	Others
<b>UK</b>	<b>Film entertainment</b>	<b>Others</b>
News International	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Fox	Broadsystem
The Sun	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Fox Espanol	Classic FM
The Sunday Times	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Fox Home Entertainment	Ign.com
The Times	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Fox International	Intermix
Times Literary Supplement	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Fox Television	Myspace.com
<b>USA</b>	Blue Sky Studios	National Rugby League
New York Post	Fox Searchlight Pictures	NDS
<b>Australia</b>	Fox Studios Australia	News Interactive
Daily Telegraph	Fox Studios Baja	News Optimus

Fiji Times	Fox Studios LA	News Outdoor
Gold Coast Bulletin	Fox Television Studios	Radio Veronica
Herald Sun	<b>Television</b>	Scout.com
Newsphotos	Fox Broadcasting Company	
Newspix	Fox Sports Australia	
Newstext	Fox Television Studios	
NT News	Foxtel	
Post-Courier	Star	
Sunday Herald	<b>Cable</b>	
Sun	Fox Movie Channel	
Sunday Mail	Fox News Channel	
Sunday Tasmanian	Fox College Sports	
Sunday Territorian	Fox Sports Enterprises	
Sunday Times	Fox Sports En Espanol	
The Advertiser	Fox Sports Net	
The Australian	Fox Soccer Channel	
The Courier-Mail	Fox Reality	
The Mercury	Fuel TV	
The Sunday Mail	FX	
The Sunday Telegraph	National Geographic USA	
Weekly Times	National Geographic Worldwide	
<b>Magazines</b>	Speed	
Big League	STATS, Inc.	
Inside Out		
Donna Hay		
Alpha		
News America		
Marketing		
Gemstar TV Guide		
<b>Book Publishing</b>		

Harper Collins Publishers		
(HC) Australia		
(HC) Canada		
(HC) Children's Book		
(HC) United States		
(HC) United Kingdom		
Regan Books		
Zondervan		

(Source: "Understanding the Media" by Eoin Devereux, 2007)

The above data reveals the huge amount of media concentration in very few hands on global level.

## Conclusion

The most common assumption is that the owners of the media influence the content and form of media content through their decisions to employ certain personnel, by funding special projects and by providing a media platform for ideological interest groups. In the United Kingdom, Curran and Seaton (1997) conclude that the national press generally endorses the basic tenets of the capitalist system – private enterprise, profit, the free market and the rights of property ownership.

As shown in previous chapter, in the United States, according to some media observers and scholars, a small group of powerful owners of six to ten media conglomerates control what is read by the population, what people see and hear or do not read, see and hear. It is also shown in previous chapter, how corporates are involved and controlling the mass media. Concerns are expressed by some scholars (Bagdikian 2000, Mc Chesney 2000, Herman 1998) about increasing corporate control of mass mediated information flows and about how democracy can function if the information that citizens rely on is tainted by the influence of mega-media. Within an organization, factors on the organizational level are the key to understanding the presence of a certain type of content. Decisions about the target audiences and type of content are made on this level. Ownership structures, as one of the factors on the organizational level, also affect the content of mass media messages.

As described in chapter 1, there are basically three significant types of mass media ownership: government owned, privately owned and owned both by government and private organizations or individuals (Press Freedom 1997). Government owned media outlets are usually seen by social scientists as pursuing goal of social welfare and harmony, while privately owned media are seen as pursuing interests that are determined by desire to make profit, although it is not always the case. The fact that media are partly or fully owned by government does not mean that channels and content are totally controlled by government. Usually, if not subsidized, these channels have to make profit, which means independence to certain extent from government ideological interests.

When effects of ownership are gauged in the public interest, it points towards a bigger theme of effects of mass media ownership on content. There are number of studies that were able to determine effects of ownership on content, though some of them present the opposite view. Some of these studies found that media ownership effects on content deals with consolidation of media, which occurred in order to pursue economic and organizational advantages. In this context, vertical ownership in the newspaper industry received a lot of attention. Studies found that the editorials of the big chain-owned newspapers were more likely to express positions on some issues and less likely to vary in positions taken than editorials of non-chain-owned newspapers (Akhavan-Majid, Rife and Gopinath 1991). Another study found that editorial's endorsement patterns changed when newspapers were purchased by chains (Rystrom 1987). Thrift (1977) found that the editorials of the chain-owned papers tended to have less argumentative editorials on local controversial issues. The location of newspaper's headquarters (out of state place of headquarters in case of chain newspapers) was also found to affect the way local conflicts were presented in papers (Donohue, Olien & Tichenor 1985).

In some of the studies, news reporting patterns were also found to be influenced by the type of ownership. Independently owned daily newspapers had more stories that require more reportorial efforts and used more enterprises news sources than chain-owned (Fradgley & Niebauer 1995). A study by Olien, Tichenor and Donohue (1988) found a strong correlation between the type of ownership and coverage in terms of frequency and proportion of non-local business. Another study found that the more characteristics of the corporate form of organization newspaper had, the more emphasis was placed on quality of news coverage (Demers 1996). As a source of political information, mass media may also affect public behaviour and opinion on elections. Scholars examined the effects of newspaper's consolidation on endorsement of political candidates. In a study by Wackman, Gillmor, Giano and Dennis (1975), it was found that chain owned newspapers in comparison to independent newspapers were more likely to endorse candidates for president, support the favoured candidate of the press and be homogeneous in endorsing candidates during observed election periods. The authors

concluded that “chain ownership of newspapers discourages editorial independence in endorsing presidential candidates”.

Another study concluded that newspaper ownership was an important factor in endorsement, although chain newspapers were found to be homogeneous to lesser extent (Gaziano, 1989). However, a study by Busterna and Hansen (1990) found no significant differences in endorsing the press-favoured candidates. It is experienced that chain owned newspapers command even more autonomy that has been found in other research. However it can be concluded that this difference in results may be due to different methods of research adopted by the authors. A study of effects of foreign ownership on content by Hollifield (1999) found significant differences between domestically-owned and internationally-owned newspapers in the coverage of local stories. It was also observed that control for circulation size and size of newspapers did not diminish these differences. There were also some studies that reported no effects of ownership on content of newspapers. For example, Akhavan-Majid and Boudreau (1995) compared the editorial role perception of chain owned and independent newspapers. It was found that after controlling the size of newspapers there was no difference in editorial role perceptions.

Some studies focused upon the questions about effects of ownership and the size of newspapers on space and allocation of different kinds of content. Lacy (1991) found that ownership did not have an effect on how news were allocated. Yet group-owned newspapers, when compared to independently owned ones, had shorter stories and devoted more space and stories to editorial and op-ed material. Thus the above discussion shows that mass media ownership has impact on the diversity of its messages on two levels : 1) presenting different points of view or different perspectives on some issue (for example, while endorsing, newspaper either endorse one favourable candidate or presents several); 2) presenting a variety of issues in general.

Considering critically the changes in the structure of media ownership, a concern for the ideological implications of such developments is automatically evolved. There



seems to be a clear link between increased media ownership concentration and the narrowing of the range of voices heard within a media setting. The contraction of the public sphere, the rise of 'infotainment', the decline of critical investigative journalism are also repercussions of this trend. Even the casualization of much media work, the homogenizing tendencies inherent in media globalization and the so called 'dumbing down' of much media content (particularly news and current affairs) are all seen as resulting directly from this increased concentration. O'Sullivan et al. (1994) argues that in this new era of concentrated media ownership, the search for profit is seen as the key arbiter of what is produced in the media, first in the economic sense of achieving surplus revenue and secondly in the ideological sense of the values and beliefs which support capitalism. This is what the political economy perspective also says as explained in chapter 2.

Also in a global scenario where an increasing amount of media activity (production, distribution and access) is being privatized, the political economy perspective is of critical importance. In attempting to understand the relationship between media ownership and media content, the political economy perspective demands that we critically examine the profit-driven motives of media organizations that commodify both cultural production and audiences (Mc Quail 2000). Media products, be it cartoons, DVDs or computer software, are primarily commodities produced to generate maximum profit. Mc Quail (2000) notes that one strand of political economy theory holds that in an age of media globalization, it is audiences that are being commodified. He gives the example of the radio industry, where some media conglomerates speak of delivering key demographic groups to advertisers and sponsors. Further evidence may be found in the practice of cross-promotion (of other media products, goods and services) between the various media companies owned and controlled by media oligopolies. The political economy perspective illuminates the understanding of media both historically and contemporaneously. Changes within the media industry would seem to add further weight to the political economy thesis.

McQuail (2000) cites the work of Golding and Murdock (1996), who argue for the continued relevance of this theoretical perspective. They hold that the political economy perspective has two key tasks, namely the examination of cultural production and cultural consumption. According to them, it must examine the relationship between structures of ownership (both private and public) and cultural production. Political economists also argue that the rise of the media oligopolies has resulted in a significant change in media content and a consequent contraction in the media's public sphere role (McQuail 2000). This perspective helps us to understand why there is now a greater concentration on entertainment and infotainment within media content. Because there is a huge audience of entertainment and it sells. For example, in the USA, changes in the ownership structure of local television stations resulting in the creation of 'duopolies' – whereby a media conglomerate such as General Electric owns more than one television station – has been shown to have had a negative impact in terms of the overall level of educationally based programming aimed at younger viewers. The Children Now organization found that in Los Angeles there was a significant reduction in the amount and diversity of children's programming between 1998 and 2003 – a fact explained by the shrinkage in ownership terms of the local television networks (Children Now 2003).

The central issue which arises on the basis of above discussion is the extent to which media organizations can claim to exercise autonomy in relation first to their owners and secondly to other direct economic agencies which provide operating funds like investors, advertisers, sponsors. According to Altschull (1984), "The content of the news media always reflects the interests of those who finance the press".

This is evident from the discussion above that the owners in market-based media have ultimate power over content and can ask for what they want to be included or left out. There is plenty of circumstantial evidence to show that this power is used (Curran and Seaton 1997; Shoemaker and Reese 1991). Even so, there are quite strong conventions related to journalism which protect the decision making autonomy of editors on particular news stories. Meyer's survey (1987) is an evidence which confirmed that US journalistic ethics frowned on owner intervention, although editors reported a fair

degree of autonomy in practice. Similar evidence was obtained in Britain by the Royal Commission on the Press (1977). Schultz's (1998) study of Australian journalists showed strong support for the fourth estate role but also a recognition that it was often compromised by commercial considerations and owner's pressure. It is not too surprising that journalists should claim more autonomy or that editor of established newspapers are reluctant to admit being told what to do by proprietors. Nevertheless, there is an inevitable tendency for owners of news media to set broad lines of policy, which are likely to be followed by the editorial staff they employ.

There may also be informal and indirect pressure on particular issues that matters to owners (Turow 1994). There are much evidence to supports this conclusion and the theory of economically free press legitimates this state of affairs. Newspaper owners are free to use their papers to make propaganda, if they wish to do so, provided they accept the risk of losing readers and credibility. The worldwide press condemnation of Unesco's effort to improve international reporting as reported by Giffard (1989), is a convincing example of the media industry protecting their own interests. There is also an argument, though one difficult to substantiate, that media have simply become too big a business to be run by personal whim and decisions have to be taken impersonally on grounds of managerial and market considerations.

The general effect of monopoly media ownership on content has proved difficult to pin down, although there is little doubt that a condition of true monopoly would be harmful for freedom of expression and consumer choice. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) conclude that those who work for large chains are likely to have a lower attachment to and involvement in the community in which they work. For them, the larger media organizations take precedence over community influence. Correlatively, locally based media may gain strength and independence from ties with the community or city that they serve. The degree of freedom for journalists , producers, writers and entertainers in public broadcasting may be formally less than in market based media, but the limits are normally clear and not subject to arbitrary breach or suspension.

It is said that advertising is life and blood of the media industry. This is a well established fact that newspapers get more than half of their revenues from advertisers and most radio and TV stations get all their revenues from advertising and sponsoring. Obviously the advertisers have a strong influence on news contents. Though such an influence is considered unethical, but is difficult to avoid. Now-a-days, the media often generate a “buying mood” by discussing topics of relevance to the advertised products and avoiding any criticism of commercial products or of consumerism in general in order to attract advertisers. The influence of advertisers may be even more direct, although clandestine. Sometimes advertisers have imposed economic sanctions against newspapers that have criticized their products. Advertisers and sponsors are afraid of controversial programs unless this is exactly their niche. It is easy to observe that the more competition there is between the news media, the more entertaining and less serious becomes the news programs and political debates.

The consequences of advertising financing for media content are perennially discussed. Since the structure of much of the mass media industry in most countries reflects the interests of advertisers, it is no accident that media markets often coincide with other consumer divisions. Most of the free-market media are finely tuned to jointly maximizing the needs of advertisers and their own interests as a normal condition of operation. The ‘normal’ influence of advertisements on media content extends to the matching of media content patterns according to the consumption patterns of targeted audiences. In Media industry, design, layout, planning and scheduling often reflect advertiser interests. However it is not easy to demonstrate that particular advertisers can directly intervene to influence significant publication decisions in their own interests. As with proprietorial intervention in news, there is little doubt that it happens from time to time on a local or specific basis (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991).

Mc Manus (1994) describes a systematic pattern of commercial influence on reporting. Baker (1994) observes that ‘advertisers, not governments are the primary censors of media content in the United States today’. He cites evidence of advertisers using their market power to attempt to block particular communications that damage their

interests and also of advertiser pressure that influences personnel as well as editorial decisions in the media. But such influences come in diverse forms that are often hard to detect and not necessarily illegitimate, for instance providing information that has a promotional value, product placement, sponsoring etc. Bogart (1995) summarizes the influence of advertising on media content in terms of five key points, as shown be

\*Advertisers rarely try to buy journalists to slant news in their favour; more often they try to suppress news they don't like.

\*They are sensitive about the environment for their messages and edgy about controversy.

\*When advertisers yield to vigilante pressure, media producers veer towards self-censorship.

\*Advertisers shape content when they sponsor broadcast programmes.

\*The virtual end of local press competition shows how advertisers determine the life and death of media.

Advertiser's influence is ethically disapproved, especially when it affects news (Meyer 1987) and it may not even be in the interests either of media (especially news media) or of advertisers to be seen to be too close to each other. Both can lose credibility and effectiveness if a form of conspiracy against the media public is suspected. In general it seems that economically strong and 'elite' media are best in a position to resist undue pressure (Gans 1979) and the same is true of media that are supported by varied balanced sources of revenue (that is, subscriber payments as well as advertisers or in Europe especially, broadcast license revenue plus advertising income). Media organizations most likely to be influenced by advertiser pressure are those whose sole or overwhelming source of revenue is advertising, especially where the competition is heavy (Picard 2004).

The main pressure and constraints on news arising from the media market have been summarized by Mc Manus (1994) in terms of a 'market model'. This is derived from the principle that market forces require conduct that minimizes cost, protects the interests of owners and clients and maximizes the income producing audience. The model is expressed in the following statement about news selection:

The probability of an event/issue becoming news is:

\*inversely proportional to the harm the information might cause to investors or sponsors;

\*inversely proportional to the cost of covering it;

\*directly proportional to the expected breadth of the appeal to audiences that advertisers are willing to pay for.

As Mc Manus notes, the two theories do not lead to differences of selection in all cases and under certain ideal conditions of rationality, perfect knowledge and diversity, the models might even converge. E. L. Cohen (2002) supposes that online media are especially likely to follow the market-driven model.

There is one more aspect of influence on media ownership that sometimes media ownership can be translated into undue political influence. It is an important issue in examining the government's control of media in totalitarian nations. It is clear in such situations that state ownership and exclusive access are likely to affect media products. In the United States, most discussion about the First Amendment and free speech also focuses on the possibility of government censorship (Croteau and Hoynes 2003). However this discussion is generally blind to the impact of corporate ownership.

In addressing this concern, Bagdikian (2000) has argued that the United States has a "private ministry of information", metaphorically referring to the type of government led propaganda system that exists in totalitarian societies. Bagdikian suggests that when a small number of firms with similar interests dominate the media industry, it begins to function in a way similar to a state information system. It is hard to question the underlying argument that those who own large media conglomerates have at least the potential to wield a great deal of political power. It is possible that the owners of media empires could use their media outlets to promote a very specific political agenda. When media barons become political candidates, their media holdings can be invaluable political resources for them. Media entrepreneur Michael Bloomberg drew on the widespread recognition of his brand name line of Bloomberg business media products in his successful campaign to become New York City mayor in 2001. In the process, he

spent \$69 million dollars of his own money, more than \$92 per vote. And in Italy, Silvio Berlusconi, a media magnate and the dominant force in Italian broadcasting, was elected prime minister in 1994. For Berlusconi, ownership of media was clearly of great political value as he owned this strategic tool used to project him and this advantage was unavailable to other political candidates. However, the reign of his conservative coalition was short-lived, which is an indication of the limitations of media ownership as source of power. He resigned in late 1994 after only eight months in office. One of the many issues that plagued him was the apparent conflict of interest between his role as prime minister and that of media magnate. But just seven years later, in 2001, Berlusconi was elected prime minister of Italy once again after a high profile campaign in which he was the most visible political figure on the television networks owned by him. Indeed, after the election, the European Federation of Journalists called for new regulations limiting media ownership because Berlusconi's three private television networks gave their owner four times the exposure of his rival candidate (Croteau and Hoynes 2003).

The situation in the United States is even more complex, largely because of the vast size of the U.S. media industry. There is an argument which says that owners of media companies have direct control over media products and thus they are able to exert political influence by promoting ideas that enhance their interests. For example, media magnate Rupert Murdoch has used a variety of his News Corporation's media holdings to advance his political and economic goals. In 1975, he had his Australian newspapers slant the news so blatantly in favour of his conservative choice for prime minister that Murdoch's own journalists went on strike in protest (Croteau and Hoynes 2003). His British papers played a crucial role in the 1979 election of British conservative Margaret Thatcher. In 1996, Murdoch's News Corporation initiated a 24-hour news channel, Fox News Channel that prominently features commentary by well known conservatives some critics have argued that the Fox News Channel promotes a consistent conservative agenda (Ackerman 2001). From these discussions, it emerges that one possible political consequence of the concentration of media ownership is that, it becomes more difficult for alternative media voices to emerge.

Since the mass media outlets in all sectors of the media industry are large mass-production and mass-distribution firms, so ownership is restricted to only those who can acquire substantial financial resources. Thus in the age of multimillion-dollar media enterprises, freedom of the press may be left to those few who can afford to own what has become a very expensive “press”. Ownership of the means of information becomes part of larger patterns of inequality in contemporary societies and large media conglomerates can use both cultural and financial strategies to try to influence public policy.

From the above discussion, it seems that ‘Class-dominant theory’ is right which argues that the media reflects and projects the view of minority elite, which controls it. Those people who own and control the corporations that produce media comprise these elite. Advocates of this view concern themselves particularly with massive corporate mergers of media organizations, which limit competitions and put big business at the reins of media – especially news media. Their concern is that when ownership is restricted to a few people, then they have the ability to manipulate what people can see or hear. For example, owners can easily avoid or silence stories that expose unethical corporate behaviour or hold corporations responsible for their actions. The issue of sponsorship adds to this problem while advertising funds most of the mass media. Networks aim programming at the largest possible audience because the broader the appeal, the greater the potential purchasing audience and the easier selling air time to advertisers becomes. Thus, news organizations may shy away from negative stories about corporations (especially parent corporations) that finance large advertising campaigns in their newspaper or on their stations. Television networks receiving millions of dollars in advertising from companies like Nike and other textile manufacturers were slow to run stories on their news shows about possible human-right violations by these companies in foreign countries (Croteau and Hoynes 2003).

It has been identified that the same problem exists at the local level where city newspapers will not give new cars poor reviews or run stories on selling a home without an agent because the majority of their funding comes from auto and real estate advertising. This influence also extends to programming. In the 1990s a network



cancelled a short-run drama with clear religious sentiments, *Christy*, because although highly popular and beloved in rural America, the programme did not rate well among young city dwellers that advertisers were targeting in ads. Not only this, access to the growing number of cultural products in daily life is being increasingly privatized. Access to the array of cultural products and media technologies now available is not equal, thus creating media haves and have-nots.

Media conglomerates define their potential audiences primarily as consumers. Accessing much of the media is predicated upon one's ability to pay. Media conglomerates have managed to privatize a wide range of media activities by charging, for example, for cable television, selling pay-per-view movies and accessing the internet. With the argument that a corporate elite controls the media, there is also an approach that argues that a politically liberal elite controls media. The economic strength of media conglomerates increases their position in society so that they become powerful institutions with substantial political power. According to Bagdikian (2000), the largest media giants have achieved alarming success in writing the media laws and regulations to favour the interests of their corporations rather than the interests of the general public. In Europe and the United States, many cross media ownership rules have been relaxed or have disappeared with the rise of a *laissez-faire* ideology within parliaments, governments and regulatory bodies. In the United States, where the Federal Communications Commission once had stringent ownership controls concerning radio and television stations most are gone and the rest have been liberalized (Sterling, 2000).

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) once believed that programming diversification was necessary to maximize public service. It was argued that the greater the number of independent broadcasters, the greater the chances for achieving the desired diversity. Rules restricting common ownership of broadcast stations and of broadcast stations in combination with other media forms, were adopted (Tillinghast 2000).

But media regulators have actually stimulated the ownership concentration process. In the United Kingdom, for example, a law intended to restrain concentration was manipulated into a Newspaper Preservation Policy under which in practice preservation meant, not less, but more, concentration of ownership (Tunstall, 1996). As a consequence of the increasing influence of the media conglomerates on public opinion, there is little substantive coverage of the spectacular media deals in terms of the perceived effects of these deals. In most cases, journalists are directly affected but they do not report their own concerns, probably because of internal pressure. Media owners are keen to advertise the advantages of horizontal, vertical, diagonal and international concentration. State agencies play down the potential risks and threats of media conglomeration for the public sphere, in particular and for democracy, in general. Overall, the implications of media ownership and concentration on a global scale are as follows: The global interlocking of the media industry and traditional corporate power creates a powerful cartel, which in turn encourages the spread of certain values like consumerism, shareholder value, individualism, egoism etc. There are strong incentives for the displacement of the public sphere with commercial infotainment, reality shows and trivialized news programmes. This strengthens a conservative 'common sense' view of the world, eroding local cultures and communities.

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