

A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CENTRAL ASIA

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

ARUMALA . MOHAN



**CENTRE FOR RUSSIAN, CENTRAL ASIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067
INDIA
2003**

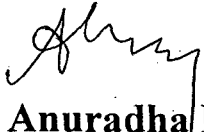


जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

21-07-2003.

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, **A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CENTRAL ASIA**, submitted by **Mr. ARUMALA. MOHAN**, Centre for Russian, Central Asian and East European Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067, in partial fulfillment of the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is his own work based mostly on secondary sources and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or else where.


(Prof. Anuradha M. Chenoy)
Chairperson


(Dr. Phool Badan)
Supervisor

*Dedicated
to
my parents*

CONTENTS

Preface		i-iv
Chapter I	Introduction	1-7
Chapter II	The Role of Media in The Soviet Union	8-28
Chapter III	Gorbachev's Policy of Reform and its Impact on Media.	29-50
Chapter IV	The Role of Media in Contemporary Central Asia	51-104
Chapter V	Conclusion	105-110
	Bibliography	111-119

Preface

Today, we are living in an age of democracy which has become an accepted way of life throughout the world. The promise of popular engagement is poised to breathe a new meaning and life to the very concept of democracy. In a modern democratic country, the concept of freedom of the press or media (print and electronic) is considered to be an important pillar on which the smooth and successful functioning of a democratic process rests upon. The free and independent media plays a pivotal role in strengthening the civil society which is a sine quo non for the success of any modern democratic society.

The changing role of media in Central Asian states since their independence, is the main objective of the study of the former Soviet Central Asian republics i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In fact, after the collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union, these newly independent states have given freedom to the media which has not yet been realized.

The study undertakes an in depth analysis of the role of media (print and electronic) in Central Asian republics i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan since their independence in early nineteen nineties. The present work consists of five chapters including conclusion.

The first chapter of this study entitled Introduction deals with the general framework of the role played by the print and electronic media in a

modern democratic and political processes and how the free and independent media has become an imperative for the creation of a sound, vibrant and viable civil society of a modern democratic society.

The second chapter is related to “The Role of Media in the Soviet Union” which deals with the role of media in the former Soviet Union. This chapter encompasses the historical genesis of the media and the development of censor board of the Soviet period i.e. *Glavlit* and the strangulation of the freedom of the press during the Soviet times.

The third chapter is concerned with “Gorbachev’s Policy of Reforms and its Impact on Media”. This chapter delineates the extent of impact of Gorbachev’s reform policy on media.

The fourth chapter focuses on “The Role of Media in Contemporary Central Asia”. In this chapter an elaborative attempt has been made to analyse the changing role of media in the political processes of the Central Asian republics since independence. The prevailing political culture, authoritarian tendencies of the regimes and tenuous civil societies are also discussed in this chapter.

The next chapter deals with the absence of democratic history in the past, authoritarian political tendencies of the ruling regimes and also the weak and nascent civil societies and considers these above mentioned factors as responsible for the absence of a free and independent media in Central Asian states.

In the present study, an attempt has been made to develop a complete and coherent account of changing role of media in Central Asia with an analytical view. The historical and analytical method has been followed in the evaluation and analysis of changing role of Media in deriving conclusions.

The present work is the product of generous cooperation and assistance provided by several people. First of all, I record my utmost sense of gratitude to my respected, friendly and cooperative supervisor **Dr. Phool Badan** who extended invaluable guidance in planning the scheme of this work and gave me full opportunity to discuss my problems with him. It was through his insights, deep affection and sincere guidance that I was able to bring my research work to a successful completion. In this regard, I am short of appropriate words to express my gratitude to him. And also, I am grateful to the Chairperson and faculty members of the Centre for Russian, Central Asian and East European Studies (CRCA&EES) for their kind help and cooperation.

I am very anxious to take the opportunity to thank my extended family in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi i.e. Koti Anna, Suresh Babu, Uma Anna, Gopal Anna and N.Kakedeji for their all kinds of help. It was these brothers who could understand and empathize my mental agony and suffering and virtually came to my rescue at a time when my life is passing through a tremendous state of turbulence. I am greatly indebted and will be grateful to them till the last day of my life.

I am also greatly indebted and grateful to Sri. Chaitanya Murali garu and Dr. Siddoji Rao garu for their generous financial assistance. A word of thanks to Sri. Ramesh Chanderji, Benerjee Anna, Sushmitha, Mintu, Jayanta, Pranav, Sunil, Jayaraj, V.Ramana, R.Gupta, Devendra Sahu, Anjaiah, Indra and M.D. for their constant friendly attitude towards me.

I am extremely grateful and indebted to my beloved parents and my sisters for their all kinds of help. I render my extreme sense of gratitude to my loving elder sister Sukanya and my brother-in-law Narayana for their invaluable and indescribable moral and financial backup. My heartfelt special thanks to N.R.Suresh Babu for typing my dissertation by spending his precious time.

I am also thankful to the staff of Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, New Delhi; I.D.S.A. Library, New Delhi; Teenmurti (Nehru Memorial) Library, New Delhi; and Sapru House (Indian Council of World Affairs) Library, New Delhi; and Indian Institute of Mass Communications Library, New Delhi; for extending good facilities for my research work.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my friends and well wishers whose names I could not mention here and whose help and cooperation led my research work to a successful state of fruition.


Arumala Mohan

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter -1

Introduction

In a modern democratic society, a free and independent media plays a pivotal role in strengthening the political and democratic processes. The former U.S. President Thomas Jafferson opined that “a free press is crucial element in a democracy”.¹ The press, by playing a key role in democracy, it provides a common ground of knowledge and analysis, a meeting place for national debates and discussions. The press is the link between the people and their institutions. Without the objective information provided by the print and electronic media public, virtually starve of information and creates a lot of confusion and mistrust regarding what to believe and what to support.

The strong and trusted freedom of the press motivates the people to keep its government and other institutions honest, transparent and accountable to the public. The government in a modern democratic society has vast powers to mislead the people and misrepresent the information and news. The government officials can conceal impending actions until their effects are irreversible. Other governmental institutions i.e. Corporations, Unions, Hospitals, Police forces, Banks etc. can operate with impunity, making decisions that affect the lives and welfare of millions if their

¹. Peter Stoler, *The War Against the Press, Politics, Pressure and Intimidation in the 1980's* (Dodd, Mead Company, 1986), p.15.

activities are not subjected to public scrutiny.² A free press can be a thorn in the side of politicians, an often unwelcome reminder to the public of its failures and flaws. It can be an annoyance. But it can be a guardian of the people's rights, freedoms, and liberties. A free press is essential to the very survival of a democratic system. Without a free press to keep it informed, the citizen's rights, and freedoms can be eroded. In a democracy, it is the people who are sovereign and they can best protect and exercise their sovereignty if they are informed and in possession of the knowledge with which they can carry on public debates and discussions.

The mass media exercises profound influence upon the traditional representative model of the democratic process. In today's world, the distribution and consumption of information are much more important to a democratic society than at any time in the past. The quantity of information in circulation is greater than ever; its distribution has become more globalized rendering traditional nation state divisions less meaningful; the technological means of accessing information have become more sophisticated, faster and in their various forms available for more people than ever before to use; the quality of information has become more crucial to more people.

The relationship between government and governed depends hugely upon the efficiency of information and transmission. This is one reason for

². Leonard, W. Levy, *The Emergence of Free Press* (Oxford University press, 1985), p.4.

the rise of what has been called 'media democracy'.³ An informed citizenry is the one which can consent more knowingly, scrutinize the political process more simply and obtain access to government services readily.

In today's fast changing world, media, society and polity are inter related and inter dependent and the activities of media, society and polity do impinge upon one another and in turn influence the decision making process of the country. Today, the media not only mirrors the societal trends, but also interprets the world events and it is one of the most potent instruments for changing the trajectory of this ever evolving economic and political international order. The media changes the societal values, tastes, lifestyles, and influence the thought process of the people. And, no other institution has gained more power and access to the people in the twentieth century than the press and no institution has woven itself more closely into the lives of all classes of the society than the press. Today, the press or the mass media (print and electronic) has become an integral part of life and their power and influence have become infinitely greater.

Thus, the press or mass media is playing a multifaceted role in the present day society and polity. The present day interdependent society has made the existence of media inevitable and inalienable component for the successful functioning of the democratic polity. The existence of popular government without the presence of popular information is meaningless and inefficient.

³ . Stephen Coleman, "Can the New Media Invigorate Democracy"? *Political Quarterly*, vol..70, no.1, January-March 1999, p.16.

So far as the role and functioning of the mass media in Central Asian republics is concerned, the entire Central Asian region has been marked by the absence of democratic polity and popular political culture from the very beginning of the region's history. The democratic popular participation in politics and popular sovereignty were completely alien to Central Asian societies. Popular participation and sovereignty were alien to the hereditary rule of Khanates in Central Asian region during the pre-Soviet period. Khans claimed their throne and asserted legitimacy on the basis of their lineage and upholding of the *Sharia* (Islamic law). *The Ulema* (Islamic clergy) played a vital role in sanctifying the Khans' rule and directing the population to submit to their rule. This situation remained true till the consolidation of the Soviet regime in the region. The Soviet system with its authoritarian rule did not allow the popular sovereignty to become a political reality. Authoritarianism has been a common thread that runs through the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods of Central Asia.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early nineteen nineties, the five Central Asian republics i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan emerged as sovereign independent states. With the independence, the Central Asian Republics inherited the censorship mechanism on media (print and electronic) as a part of the Soviet political legacy and the censorship is still in operation in these countries. In a modern democratic country, the media or the press is

considered to be an important pillar on which the smooth and successful functioning of a democratic process rests upon.

So far as the Central Asian republics are concerned, the absence of free and independent media (print and electronic) is hindering the political process in the region. All the Central Asian republics have continued with their homegrown versions of Soviet era despotic ways by shutting down the independent media outlets in their countries. All the five Central Asian governments are backtracking on their international pledges to promote democracy and civil society, which they made on the eve of their independence in the early nineteen nineties. The democratic governments with authoritarian tendencies have imposed several curbs on different areas of civil society that range from media curtailment, restrictions on the role of NGO's, intelligentsia and human rights groups, etc. The repression of political opponents and persecution of dissidents have become the order of the day.

The curtailment of freedom of the media in Central Asian States is mainly due to the pervasive prevalence of corruption in the higher levels of the political system. The media's attempts to expose the corruption have always been meted out with harsh governmental repression. The corrupt attitudes of the leaders always prompt them to impose heavy handed controls on media to protect their reputations and vested interests. Owing to such situation, the role of the civil society is being affected in rejuvenating the civil, economic, and political life of the people of Central Asia.

The ruling elites in these countries have curbed the freedom of expression (media) by applying the brutal and sometime insidious methods because the governments want to enforce the censorship mechanism very strictly to further their own vested interests. They support freedom of the press in theory while undermining it in practice. For instance, in countries like Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan different methods of curbs on media are in operation like monopoly on paper, control over paper imports, increases in office rents, control over distribution, the channeling of advertising towards friendly media outlets and the filing of defaming lawsuits that entail the payments of incredibly stiff fines. Sometimes, officials exercise of the so called "telephone law" to anonymous threats to settle scores with uncooperative journalists.

In countries like Uzbekistan News Media is still being censored even though censorship is legally prohibited by the country's Constitution and laws like "On protecting the professional activities of journalists" and "On the News Media". The censorship mechanism developed during the Soviet period is still in operation in Central Asia but it varies from country to country. For example, in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan media is relatively free but in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan it is under the control of the respective governments. In these countries, no page of the newspaper is accepted for printing unless it bears a special stamp by the State Press Committee inspectors.

Due to the absence of free and independent media, the people of the region are denied the objective and qualitative information. Thus, the people are deprived of participation in the political process. All these five Central Asian republics have legislations on media and the freedom of the press is enshrined in their Constitutions and laws. But the reality is different from the legislations. The legislations on media have remained as toothless paper tigers. And there is a yawning gap between the theory and the practice.

The present research is an attempt to study the changing role of Media in Central Asia. The following chapter deals with the role of Media in the Soviet Union. The chapter also focuses on the origin of the Media and the development of Censor Board (*Glavlit*) and the strangulation of the freedom of the press during the Soviet period. The third chapter focuses on Gorbachev's policy of reforms and how it influenced the Media in the former Soviet Union in general and Central Asia in particular. The fourth chapter is related to the role of Media in contemporary Central Asia. In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyse what kind of role media plays in the region and what amount of freedom that it has got.

CHAPTER TWO

Chapter – II

The Role of Media in the Soviet Union

The Media during the former Soviet Union was under the control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But in 1985, Gorbachev introduced radical economic and political reforms in the Soviet system. After the declaration of Gorbachev's reform policies particularly after *Glasnost*, the former Central Asian republics as elsewhere witnessed the emergence of various groups and movements clamouring for greater cultural autonomy. These issues had not been addressed openly since the consolidation of the Bolshevik regime in mid-nineteen –twenties. Hence, in short we can say that during the Soviet period the media in the erstwhile Soviet Union was controlled by the Central authority and the freedom of the press (print and electronic media) was curbed in the name of the Soviet State Communist ideological interests through the censor board (*Glavlit*)

The Supreme Soviet of the USSR passed a law on the "Press and Other News Media" on 12 June 1990, with a decision to implement it from 1 August 1990. It was the first law in the legal history of the Soviet media. Before the emergence of the Soviet press law in 1990, the Soviet press had lost its relevance and credibility among the common people. It was working completely under the control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Soviet Government.

The state official secrecy and the control over the media have been the well established traditions of the Russian society since the establishment

of the Soviet state. Prior to the October revolution, the Czarist regime had enforced a law up to 1917 which laid down a series of prohibitions on the publications of printed material. During Czarist times not only military but also harmless social information was withheld from the common people of the empire.¹

In the aftermath of the October Revolution (1917), the Bolshevik party came into power and Marxism-Leninism became the official ideology of the Soviet state. Since the establishment of the Bolshevik regime in 1917 in the former Soviet Union, the media had been regarded as an instrument of propaganda rather than as a source of information for the general public. The Soviet Union had exercised its control over media, education, and sports, social and cultural activities of the Soviet people. The main objective behind it was to propagate Communist ideology. There were no private owned schools, newspapers, journals or radio and television, etc. All these means of communications were owned by the state, due to which the social and political life of the people had been controlled in general and the media in particular. The media was working under the complete control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The media had to get the prior approval from the censor board (*Glavlit*) before publishing any printed material.

According to *Glavlit*, every published material should be in conformity with the existing Soviet system. After the consolidation of the

¹. White Stephen, *Gorbachev and After* (Cambridge University press, 1992), p.74.

Bolshevik regime, the main aim of the Soviet Government was to eradicate all bourgeoisie norms and values of the society. The media was one of them. The media was considered to be the most dangerous and potent apparatus of the bourgeoisie. Thus, the Soviet media lost its relevance in the eyes of the Soviet people.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to discuss and analyse the attitudes and approaches of the Soviet leaders especially of V.I. Lenin, J. Stalin and N. Khrushchev Leonid Brezhnev, etc. towards the Soviet print media; Constitutional provisions regarding the media; structure of the press and its relationship with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The role of news agencies; contents in the press, unpublished events and literature; role of the underground press and the growing faith in Western media among the Soviet people are also be discussed. All these analysis enable us to get the true picture of the press during the pre-*Perestroika* and *Glasnost* period.

Soviet Leader's Views on Press

With regard to the press, all the Soviet leaders followed the principles of Lenin. Lenin opined that the press should remain under the control of the party (CPSU), because non-party press could publish materials against socialism. According to Lenin, information must serve the interests of the oppressed people. So, the press must play three kinds of

roles- of collective propagandist, collective agitator, and collective organizer.²

Lenin never favoured absolute freedom of criticism'. He considered it as a bourgeois concept. Lenin was of the opinion that we can only govern when we correctly express what is in the public mind.³ So, he stressed the point that the Soviet journalists must combine high ideological moral qualities with professional mastery to be an active bearer of the party policy.⁴ As propagandists they must highlight about what is socialism in practice.

Each propagandist belongs to the ruling party which directs the whole state and the Soviet Russia's world struggle against the bourgeois system.⁵ So they must be ideologically sound and professionally skilled, because they have to operate chiefly by means of the printed word.

Lenin held the view that no mass movement in any civilized country can get along without a journalistic apparatus. The newspaper should work as a major source for probing public opinion and also for channeling grievances and criticism.⁶

Lenin never favoured the bourgeois press. He wrote in 1919, "See how millions of copies of their newspapers control what the capitalists regard as 'model' enterprises, and how 'model' bourgeois institutions are

² V.I. Lenin, "Left wing Communism: An infantile disorder, May 1920", *Selected Works*, Vol.3, (Progress publishers, 1977),p.366.

³ Bohdan Harasymiw (ed.), *Education and the Mass Media in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (Praeger Publishers, 1976),p.118.

⁴ V.M. Teplzok, *The Social Responsibility of the Journalist*, translated from Russian by Steven Sally (Mysl Publishing House, 1984),p.111.

⁵ Lenin, n.2,p.431.

⁶ Ellen Propper Mickiewicz, *Media and the Russian Public* (Praeger Publishers, 1981),p.51.

made an object of national pride”.⁷ Again in 1922, he warned against capitalist press saying that “the bourgeoisie is still able to freely torment, torture and kill”. He also attacked the defenders of pure democracy alleging that they favour control of the rich over the mass media. To them, freedom of the press means “freedom of the rich to bribe the press freedom to use their wealth to shape and fabricate so-called public opinion”. Lenin also opposed the concept of opposition and stated that it belongs to parliamentary struggle and corresponds to an absence of revolution”.⁸

Whatever Lenin thought and spoke about freedom of the press, may be understood fully with the help of the ‘Decree of the Press’,⁹ issued on 9 November 1917 as Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars, Lenin issued the decree to protect the gains of socialism from attacks by counter-revolutionary press. The bourgeois press was called as the most powerful weapon of the bourgeoisie and it was pointed out that at the crucial moment when the new power (*Bolshevik Party*) was only affirming itself, it was impossible to leave this weapon wholly in the hands of the enemy and the press is considered to be more dangerous than bombs and machine guns.

So far as the general provisions of the Decree were concerned, all arrangements were made to suppress the anti-socialist press. Their fate was handed over completely to the hands of the Council of Peoples Commissars.

After the death of Lenin, Stalin came to power in 1924 and tightened the party (CPSU), the government and brought about the control over the

⁷ Lenin, n.2,p.130.

⁸ Ibid,p.53.

⁹ Yuri Akhupkin, *First Decrees of Soviet Power* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1970),p.16.

press. Most of his critics were failed, exiled and many of them lost even their lives. Censorship and secrecy were imposed even on minor issues.¹⁰ *Ten Days that Shook the World* by an American journalist, John Reed could not be reprinted because the author had mentioned the leading role of the well known revolutionary leaders like Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kumanev and others in October Revolution. Stalin never allowed such materials to be published.

The death of Stalin in 1953 and the entry of new leadership namely Nikita Khrushchev gave some freedom to the press by allowing it to criticize Stalin and his policies. The Twentieth Party Congress took place in 1956 in which Khrushchev himself criticized all shortcomings of the past policies of the Soviet Union. The Soviet media got a certain amount of freedom after the Twentieth Party Congress. The survivors of the labour camps had begun returning and among them there were many writers and journalists. Thus, the period of Khrushchev witnessed a number of articles and literary works on formerly forbidden themes. Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was even awarded a Lenin Prize for Literature. Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone* and Ethrenburg's memoirs *People, Years, Life* were published among a host of other writings. However, the freedom that the media had enjoyed was limited to "approved" themes and short lived. Khrushchev belonged to the Stalinist generation and was afraid to give too

¹⁰ Ravi. M. Bakaya, *The Second Revolution: Democratization in the USSR* (Patriot Publishers, 1989). P. 70

much freedom to the intellectuals. Soon Khrushchev himself came down heavily on writers and artists.¹¹

After Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev became the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He also strengthened full control of the Party and Government over the print media. The Censor Board *Glavlit* became more powerful. The press was not allowed to publish printed material without the prior approval of *Glavlit*. Due to such reasons so many *Samizdat* (underground) publications sprang up. As a result, the Brezhnev period was noted more for the popularity of underground *Samizdat* publications and probably greater reliance on outside information sources than for innovation in the domestic media.¹²

After Brezhnev, the two leaders who came to power were Andropov and Chernenko and they expired within a short span of time and could not change the existing role and status of the Soviet press. Thus, before the arrival of Gorbachev on the Soviet political scene in 1985, all the Soviet leaders since 1917 adopted the same principles and policies towards the Soviet press. None of them allowed the press to openly discuss matters related to the Party, Government and Soviet society to adopt pluralism of opinion.

The press was expected to work as “the main agent of adult political socialization” in the Soviet society. The next task was to create

¹¹ Ibid., pp.71-72.

¹² L. John Martin and Ray Elden Hiebert (eds.), *Current Issues in International Communications* (Longman, 1990), p.195.

consciousness among the people so that they might participate in such a way as to contribute to the economic goals of the leadership.¹³

The objectives of the press during pre-*Perestroika* period may be pointed out in the light of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Central Committee Resolution of the June 1983 Plenum. The resolution underlines that the mass media “are an active instrument in the ideological work of the party”. It is a highly important institution of socialist democracy, “a means of attracting workers to the discussion and resolutions of burning questions, a means of forming public opinion”. It is clear that the purpose of the Soviet press before 1985 was to protect and strengthen socialism.

Therefore, before 1985, the official image of the Soviet journalist was as an “ideological warrior”. The journalist had to play three roles in the interests of the Soviet system. As a ‘propagandist’, he had to present a complete picture of the society and class struggle. As an ‘agitator’, he was expected to speak a single idea to the masses. That single idea was none other than socialism. As an ‘organiser’ he had to motivate the masses in favour of Party decisions, Government policies and Soviet system.

Undoubtedly during the pre-*Perestroika* period, the official image of the Soviet journalist had remained unchanged. The image determined by Lenin, was continued till 1985.

¹³ Joseph L. Noguee (ed.), *Soviet Politics: Russia After Brezhnev* (Preager Publishers, 1985), pp.35-36.

Constitutional Provisions

It is very pertinent to know about the Constitutional provisions regarding the press during the Soviet period. The first Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was adopted on 10 July 1918. It was followed by three other Constitutions- the 1924 Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the 1936 Constitution of the USSR and the 1977 Constitution of the USSR. The first two Constitutions carried the same ideas and principles. So far as the provisions regarding the freedom of the press were concerned, the print media was not guaranteed freedom.

Article 14 of the 1918 Constitution of the RSFSR dealt with the Soviet Press, but it nowhere talked about the freedom of the press. It stated: "In order to ensure genuine freedom of expression for the working people, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic abolishes the dependence of the press on capital and places it at the disposal of the working class and the poor peasantry all the technical and material requisites for the publication of newspapers, pamphlets, books and all other printed materials and guarantees their unhindered circulation throughout the country".¹⁴

The same spirit is found in the 1924 Constitution of the USSR towards the freedom of the press. But the 1936 Constitution of the USSR guarantees the freedom of the press. Article 125 of the Constitution stated:

¹⁴ Yuri Akhapiin, n.9,p.155.

“In conformity with the interests of the working people and in order to strengthen the socialist system, the citizens of the USSR are guaranteed by law: “- Freedom of speech; freedom of press; -freedom of assembly including the holding of mass meetings; freedom of street processions and demonstrations. These freedoms were given only on paper and never came into practice.

“The above mentioned civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organizations i.e., printing presses, stocks of papers... and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights”.¹⁵

It is remarkable here to note that unlike previous Constitutions, the Constitution of 1936 guaranteed the above said rights to all the citizens, including the working people. And the 1977 Constitution of the USSR also did the same. Article 46 provides: “the rights to enjoy cultural benefits to the citizens of the country”. This right is ensured “by developing television and radio broadcasting and the publishing of books, newspapers and periodicals”. Many other sources are also mentioned in the article to ensure this right.¹⁶

Article 50 of the 1977 Constitution states: “In accordance with the interests of the people and in order to strengthen and develop the socialist system, citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of speech, of the press and of assembly, meetings, street processions and demonstrations.

¹⁵ Thomas Riha(ed.), *Readings in Russian Civilization* (The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p.616.

¹⁶ Jitendra Sharma, *New Soviet Constitution: An Indian Assessment* (Allied Publishers, 1978),p.93.

“Exercise of these political freedoms is ensured by putting public buildings, streets and squares at the disposal of the working people and their organizations, by broad dissemination of information and by the opportunity to use the press, television and radio”.¹⁷

To put it in a nutshell, we can say that the various Constitutional provisions had guaranteed the freedom of the press. But the reality was quite different. All these provisions and lofty ideals regarding the freedom of the press and of speech and of assembly remained on the paper only. They had never been implemented seriously. Thus, the concept of freedom of the press was not in conformity with the rigid Marxist-Leninist system. Hence, there was a huge gap between the theory and the practice of the freedom of the press.

The Structure of the Press and its Relationship with the CPSU

In order to cater to the needs of the larger territory and the reading habits of the people, the Soviet system established a multi-layered press. At the top of the structure, there was the Central press. It was called as All Union newspapers. Below the All-Union newspapers, print media was available at all levels. The huge mechanism and structure of the press was also found at republic level, province level, city level and district level. Besides these, there were also in-house papers. This category of newspapers was found in individual factories, in collective farms and state farms. The

¹⁷ Ibid;p.64.

Party (CPSU) throughout the *Perestroika* period controlled, guided and directed the press. The party controlled the press through *Glavlit* or censor board. In every newspaper there was a representative of *Glavlit* just below the editor-in-chief. Only he could decide what is and what is not to be published. In fact, the *Glavlit* was also in continuation of the controlled media. Before the October revolution of 1917, the mass media belonged to the ruling classes, the capitalists and landowners. There was no room for dissent. The print media was not of much value as 75 percent of the people were illiterate at that time.¹⁸ Activities of the journalists were also controlled by the party “by means of the publication of criticism in the journal *Zhurnalst*”.¹⁹

The Role of News Agencies

In the Soviet Union, it was impossible for any newspaper or magazine to collect information and then publish them on its own. Hence, the government established two news agencies- *Telegrafnoe Agents* –two *Sovetskogo Soiuga (TASS)* and *Agentstvo Pechati Novosti (APN)* to feed necessary and ideologically reliable information to the newspapers.

TASS was set up on 10 July 1925, but its history goes back to 26 October 1917 when the *Petrograd Telegraph Agency (PTA)* was captured by the revolutionaries. By 1920, Lenin removed its many editors because

¹⁸ Dalpath Singh Mehta, *Mass Media in the USSR* (Progress Publishers, 1987),p.13.
¹⁹ *Ibid*,p.50.

they were anti-socialist. He also changed the legal status of the agency in December 1917 attaching it with the council of People's Commissars of the Russian Federated Socialist Republic. Earlier, it was working under the Tsarist Council of Ministers. In 1918, the *PTA* was merged with the other parallel agency, the Press Bureau of the All Russian Central Executive Committee of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Deputies to eradicate the ongoing conflicts between the two for ever. In Telegraph Agency or *ROSTA*, there was a section *AGIT-ROSTA* for issuing bulletins to party workers. It was the *ROSTA* which converted into TASS after the birth of the USSR.

TASS was a government owned agency working under the USSR Council of Ministers. The main *TASS* Editorial Board for Union Information was to disseminate material received from headquarters in Moscow and from its correspondents located all over the Soviet Union. It was gathering and distributing news throughout the Soviet Union and the World at large.

With the help of various departments such as domestic news service, foreign news service, world distribution services, photo information service, sports desk and reference services, etc. It was expected that the information provided by the *TASS* must be precise, authentic, factual, meaningful, poetical, prompt and of professional standards. It held its monopoly until February 1961 when a new Soviet news agency *Agentstvo Pechati Navosti* (APN) was created.

TH-10937

APN was a public news agency. It was sponsored by the Union of Friendship Societies, as well as by the Union of Soviet Writers and the Union of Soviet Journalists.²⁰ With the motto of "Information for Peace and International Friendship", it used to disseminate Soviet propaganda abroad issuing bulletins pamphlets and other printed materials. The *Daily Review* (English) of the APN includes translations of the Soviet Governments official documents, speeches by statesmen and Party leaders, comments on international events in the Soviet national newspapers and articles on Marxist – Leninist theory, economics, science and art.²¹

In both the agencies, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was to decide any matter regarding editorial posts. Journalists were trained in the institutions run by the Party or Party attached institutions.



Expectations of Readers and Contents in the Press

In the survey reports it was found that although the media is viewed officially as an instrument of political education, the audience did not accept this view. The audience "see the media as sources of diversion and enlightenment and they are dissatisfied with the official view."²²

The Soviet people wanted to read the newspapers and magazines for quick up to date and current information, for articles analyzing the current situation, incidents and entertainment.

²⁰ Frederick Barghaoorn, *Soviet Foreign Propaganda* (Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 246.

²¹ Dalpath Singh Mehta n.18 p. 36

²² Gayle Durhan Hollander, *Soviet Political Introduction: Developments in Mass Media and Propaganda since Stalin* (Prager Publications, 1973), p.30

They did not like to read lengthy Party resolutions, reports of the CPSU General Secretary, economic articles and publications on Marxism – Leninism. International news was of much interest for the Soviet people. Readers ranged from “all age groups, all levels of educational attainment and all occupations”. Professionals were fond of reading materials relating to their professions and the young generation wanted to read short stories, art and literature. Education, occupation and income of the readers were the main factors to determine their choice and interests in the press. And, Soviet readers always expected news about “more human interest, practical information and entertainment.”²³

The Soviet press was mainly based on the principle that anything said or written which does not conform to the official Party line or which criticizes the government or Party figure or institution” was a punishable crime.²⁴ Accordingly, the Soviet press usually ignored the analysis of the existing problems. It never examined them in depth and involved itself in the search for ways of resolving them.

The Soviet people knew nothing about crimes, drugs, accidents, natural disasters, occupational injuries, official organs of censorship, security intelligence, travel schedule of the political leaders, income and purchasing power structure at home and abroad, arms sales, moral or crime problems in the armed forces, hostile actions against Soviet citizens abroad and special payment and education or athletes through the press.

²³ Ibid., p. 187

²⁴ Ibid., p. 186

The Soviet authorities did not allow to publish any material which did not suit the Party and the Soviet regime. After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (1979) some changes were made in the field of press for the presentation of 'scientific' point of view.²⁵In spite of the changes, to some extent the presence of advertisements, beauty tips, secrets of success remained important features of the Press.

In the field of international affairs, the press was carrying the views of the countries supporting the Soviet proposals and thoughts. After Stalin, the press started publishing some materials on culture, health, medicine, popular science and political economic subjects but never published opposing points of views or multiple explanations of a phenomenon. Interestingly, it is necessary to note here that the Soviet press generally took only positive aspects of the system as well as the society.

The Height of Secrecy: Unpublished Events and Literature

Prior to the introduction of Gorbachev's policies of reforms i.e *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*, the Soviet media was not allowed to expose any anti-party facts . Hence, significant documents and other news items remained unpublished. Even the famous speech of Nikita Khrushchev of the "Cult of Personality and its Consequences" at the Twentieth Party Congress of CPSU in 1956 was passed in silence by the Soviet media."²⁶ The ouster

²⁵ Joseph L. Noguee, n. 13, p. 37

²⁶ Ravi. M.Bakaya, n.10, p. 71

of Khrushchev in 1964 was also an important event but the Soviet Press did not take the matter seriously.

Khrushchev was compelled to disown his memoir "*Khrushchev Remembers*", published in the western press. The same thing happened in the case of Svetlana, daughter of Joseph Stalin. Her first book of memoirs could not be published in the Soviet press.²⁷

The views of the so-called dissidents or conflicting opinions were not allowed to publish in the press. The religious materials, reports of non-official, voluntary and other charity organizations, Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of 1939 and its secret clauses, the Soviet-German Friendship Treaty and the involvement of many highly placed Soviet leaders in the corruption, like Brezhnev's son-in-law Churbanov and many other materials did not find place in the press. Many social problems and news relating to natural disasters and accidents were not given coverage in the Soviet press. Even the proceedings of the Party and the government and other institutions were also used to be kept secret. For example, the critical debate over the 1936 Draft Constitution of the USSR could not be printed for the masses.²⁸

It is also remarkable to note here that the forced labour camps during the World War II could not get their place in the print media.²⁹

²⁷ Gayle Durhan Hollander, n.22, p. 22

²⁸ Ellen Wimberg, "Socialism, Democratization and Criticism: The Soviet Press and the National Discussion of the 1936 Draft Constitution", *Soviet Studies* (Glasgow), vol. 44, no. 2, 1992, p. 313.

²⁹ Edwin Bacon, "*Glasnost and the Gulag: New Information on Soviet Forced Labour around World War II*" *Soviet Studies* (Glasgow), vol. 44, no.6, 1992, p. 1069

Earlier the same behaviour was shown towards the cultural affairs, due to the height of the censorship.³⁰

Role of *Samizdat* (Underground) Publications and Western Media

The *Samizdat* (illegal underground) publications which were not allowed earlier, became very popular during Brezhnev era. Such publications came into existence and were strengthened by the Soviet Media.³¹ All such publications were working very secretly and inspired the Soviet people especially the urban intellectuals and citizens.

A journal *The Chronicle of Current Events* began in 1968. *Tetrad* *Phoenix 1961*, *Phoenix 1966*, *Sintaksis* and *Russkye Slov.* a literary political magazine were among the important *Samizdat* publications. *Crime and Punishment*, a periodical flushing out the criminals and culprits of the Stalinist era was also very important.

Soviet people could read an essay of Andrei Amalrik "*Will the Soviet Union Survive until 1984?*", *Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom* of Sakharov; *My Testimony* written by Anatoly Marchenko; Vyacheslav Chornovil's work on the prosecution, trials and imprisonment of many Ukrainian intellectuals in early 1966; *The White Book* of Alexander Ginzburg highlighting the trial of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuliy Danil and many other materials were published through the

³⁰ Michael S. Fox. "*Glaslit*, Censorship and the Problem of Party Policy in Cultural Affairs, 1922-28", *Soviet Studies* (Glasgow), vol. 44, no.6, 1992, p. 1045.

³¹ Gayle Durhan Hollandar, n.22, p. 193

Samizdat publications only. Such publications brought into light both new writings unpublished in the Soviet press, and important banned world literature.

The Alexander Harzen Foundation in Holland and People's Working Alliance in Germany were the main centres of *Samizdat* publications. During Brezhnev's period "many intellectuals and writers were persecuted, some were exiled and some were imprisoned for expressing opposing opinions."³² Their views could be available through *Samizdat* publication only.

For fulfillment of their requirements, the Soviet people started relying on informal communication or through verbal network. This informal source provided information about political happenings in detail during the 1940's.³³

The well-known Soviet media expert Hollander pointed out the fact that the Soviet system tried to stop the growing attitudes of faith towards Western media at any cost. The government jammed foreign media broadcasts and telecasts. Several print media outlets were banned. Even, people were not allowed to talk to foreigners and establish personal relations with them. But the Soviet people anyhow established their contacts with the foreign print and electronic media.

According to the facts during the pre-Peristrokia period, Western print media gained more and more success to influence the Soviet people.

³² Ravi. M. Bakaya, n.10, p. 72

³³ Gayle Durhan Hollander, n.22, p.181.

While on the contrary the success of Western media proved the incapacity and failure of Soviet media.

Expected and Actual Image of the Soviet Press

In the opinion of Soviet leaders the press was expected to fight against imperialism, racism, exploitation, suppression and state brutality etc. It was supposed to be active in promoting peace, progress and friendship in the country and abroad. The press was working in the interests of socialism and Marxist-Leninist ideals. Lenin described the press as the centre and the basis of political organization.³⁴ It was thought that the Soviet press would serve the interests of the people. Officially, the press was expected to play the roles of propagandist, agitator and organizer of the socialism.

By contrast, the image of the press was not as expected in the Soviet Union. Control of *Glavlit*, the CPSU and Government over the press, made it ineffective. As a result, the Soviet press had lost its credibility within and abroad. The Western media was of the opinion that there was no freedom of the press in the USSR.

Consequently, the Soviet press gradually contributed to develop a tendency of reliance on Western media among the masses. For Soviet people the newspaper *Pravda* (Truth) became "*Truthless*" and *Izvestia* (News) became "*Newsless*". No truth in *Pravda* and no news in *Izvestia*.

³⁴ Dalpath Singh Mehta, n. 18, p.6

This was the joke popular among the Soviet people. That was the real image of the Soviet press during pre-*Perestroika*-period.

Between the October Revolution of 1917 and 1984, the Soviet press enjoyed no freedom and worked mainly in the interests of 'official' socialism. As a result popularity of the press went down and gradually it was replaced by the Western media. But after the introduction of more freedom to the press through Gorbachev's *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* policies, the clash between official and popular image of the press became inevitable. Consequently, effective steps towards the press became the demands of the time. Those steps of Gorbachev's reform policies i.e. *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* are examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter – III

Gorbachev's Policy of Reform and its impact on Media

The assumption of Gorbachev as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 11 March 1985, brought about major changes in liquidating the Russian traditions of official state secrecy and control over the media. Gorbachev's radical economic and political reforms to reinvigorate the CPSU's authority affected virtually every sphere of the Soviet life. One of the most important policies was that of *Glasnost* i.e., (Openness) which permitted the Soviet print and electronic media to address various problems of the day. Gorbachev's policy of *Glasnost* had provided an impetus to the freedom of the press, and established pluralism of opinion in the former Soviet Union. As a sequel of *Glasnost* policy, the first Soviet law on Press and the other News Media was passed in June 1990 and it came into force in August 1990. This was the first law in the entire history of the Soviet media. This law remained in force till the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

This chapter deals with the meanings of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* and sheds light on the circumstances that led to the emergence of these two policies. It will be followed by the publication of many unpublished materials, openness in letters to editors and newly launched media outlets covering variety of news items. In this chapter an attempt has been made to point out some incidents of repression against media persons and media

outlets. It will also focus on debates and conflicts between the *Perestroika* leadership (which was enforcing the policy of *Glasnost*) and the conservative forces in the drive towards the freedom of the press.

***Perestroika* and *Glasnost*-Objectives of the Press**

Gorbachev's reform policies of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* played a significant role in the sphere of freedom of the press. *Perestroika* literally means restructuring, renewal or rebuilding.¹ And the word *Glasnost* means Openness or transparency. These two words were extensively used with the advent of Gorbachev to power.

Gorbachev was of the opinion that more development of socialism needs more freedom of the press. Thereby, the objectives of the very ideology of Marxism-Leninism could be achieved. This could be possible only through *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*.

From the very outset, Gorbachev committed himself to a policy of openness or *Glasnost*, embracing not only the print media but also radio, television and all areas of the creative arts. There were several reasons for this change. In the first place, Gorbachev believed that *Glasnost* would bring about a more energetic and constructive atmosphere in the Soviet work place, and would reverse the economic stagnation of the later Brezhnev years. Gorbachev said in a conference in December 1985 that "broad up-to-date and honest information is a sign of trust in people, respect

¹ M.S. Gorbachev, *October and Perestroika: The Revolution Continues* (Novosti Press, 1987), p.36.

for their intelligence and feelings, and their ability to make sense of developments".² He also said that "the better the people are informed the more consciously they act, the more actively they support the Party, its plans and programmatic objectives. People, he wrote in his *Perestroika* should know what is good and what is bad, in order to multiply the good and combat the bad; *Glasnost* would help them to gain a better understanding of the Soviet past and present and on the basis of the understanding, to participate in the restructuring efforts consciously".³

Gorbachev's reform policy particularly *Glasnost* (openness) was a kind of revolution for the Soviet society. The democratic norms, rules and values were expected to bring about humanitarian values in the economy, social and political relations and in culture. Hence, *Perestroika* was meant for providing individual dignity and the sense of freedom to the Soviet masses.

Perestroika was expected to provide a free ground to the people for the fulfillment of their democratic rights. This is the reason why Gorbachev stated that "there is no alternative to restructuring". It corrects the past mistakes to create a new social organisation with new work ethics.

The CPSU and the Soviet Government had established a dictatorial control over all the organizations and institutions of the society kind of dictatorial circumstances which led to the emergence of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* policies.

² Stephen White, *Gorbachev and After* (Cambridge University Press, 1992),p.77.

³ Ibid,p.77.

During the pre-Gorbachevian period, the wrong and unjust deeds of the Soviet Government could not be published. The introduction of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* in the Soviet system provided an opportunity to the Soviet people to know about the misdeeds of the Soviet leaders. The exposure of the Soviet system became the moral guidelines for the future.

The *Perestroika* leadership appealed to the CPSU to take on the conservatives. Gorbachev suggested openly that “the party should take the lead in revolutionary renewal”.⁴ By keeping such things in mind, Gorbachev started ignoring the conservatives and highlighting the supporters of restructuring.

Eventually *Perestroika* programme gained the support of common masses and exerted influence on the existing system. Evaluating its impact, *Pravda* wrote in 1990 that Soviet society is different from what it was in 1985 and the contrast is much greater than that between the society of 1985 and that of 30-40 years ago.⁵

The terms *Perestroika* (Restructuring) and *Glasnost* (Openness) are interdependent and inseparable. Openness could not be seen without restructuring the system and the system could not be renewed without the exposure of its demerits and shortcomings. This was the reason why the process of restructuring and openness were in operation simultaneously in the realm of Soviet media.

⁴ M.S. Gorbachev, n.1. pp.6-7.

⁵ “Performance of Perestroika goes well” *Pravda*, p.6.15 November 1989, *Summary of World Broadcast* (SWB), 12 March 1990, p.SU/0710 .

Gorbachev was of the opinion that everything must be done in open daylight. In 1986, he stressed the necessity of openness in the press, “to release state control over cultural, intellectual, religious and other activities and to render the activities of state officials and organizations more open to public scrutiny through the media and thereby making it more responsive to criticism”.⁶

Earlier at the March 1985, Plenary Session of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) Central Committee, it was decided to expand openness. All the affairs related to the CPSU, state and society must be discussed openly and pluralism of opinion must be respected in the Soviet press. Openness in which pluralism of opinion is unavoidable, is also everything that is done in a constructive form.

Gorbachev emphasized that “openness in the field of press must be used with rationality to highlight the thinking of the people. It must be used to strengthen restructuring with devotion. Only then may the Soviet press present the real situation of the society inside as well as outside the USSR. Supporters of openness never favoured an irresponsible attitude towards openness. It is totally unacceptable when debates, meetings, the press and television are used for squabbles, insults and the pinning of labels.”⁷

The terms *Perestroika* (restructuring) and *Glasnost* (Openness) are devoted to each other. These two terms had exercised tremendous influence and impact on the Soviet press. The press was expected to be more rational and

⁶ . *The Europa World Year Book*, 1992, vol.II (Europa Publications Ltd 1992), p.2750.

⁷ M.S.Gorbachev, “On Progress in the implementation of the Decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the Tasks of Deepening Restructuring,” *Pravda and Izvestia*, 28 June 1988, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol. XL, no.26,27 July 1988,p.26.

responsible than ever before in the larger interests of the Soviet people and socialism. The press is supposed to be frank, truthful, courageous, bold and honest. It must not be one sided or biased. *Pravda* wrote that people need clear cut political and moral guidelines and to realize these the press had to play a crucial role in revitalizing the stagnant social system.

The primary duty of the press is to respect dignity, knowledge, work and ability of every citizen. And it was also expected from the press that an idler, a money grabber and an irresponsible bureaucrat will be rebuffed and unmasked. It was also expected from the press to avoid dogmatism, stereotypes and conventionalism and to propagate Leninist and socialist ideas rationally.

The press was also expected to highlight the achievements of *Perestroika* process regularly, so that conservative forces would be checkmated and rebuffed. People's participation in the restructuring and the necessity of restructuring in the press must be highlighted. Thus, it is very clear that the tasks and responsibilities assigned to the Soviet print media during the period of restructuring were completely different from those in the earlier period.

Publication of Suppressed Literature and Works

Gorbachev's policy of *Glasnost* paved the way for the emergence of freedom of press in the Soviet Union and it also provided a great opportunity for the publication of hitherto suppressed materials and literary works. With the introduction of Gorbachev's reform policies particularly

Glasnost a number of closed subjects and so called state secrets were given wide coverage in the press.

Izvestia Tsentralnovo Komiteta KPSS (News of the CPSU Central Committee) initiated the process of publishing unpublished materials of the CPSU and the Soviet state. Many materials threw light on the nature of *Glavlit* and the Party policy in cultural affairs.⁸ Solzhenistyn's works were also among the important published materials. The materials related to the discussion on the 1936 Draft Constitution disclosed the views of the opponents. Some materials unearthed the oppressions committed by the Stalin regime in the forced labour camps during World War II.⁹

Letters to the Editors.

The policy of *Glasnost* created a kind of open and debatable environment and the freedom of the press was completely freed from the shackles of the authoritarian Communist government. During the process of *Glasnost* "*Letters to the Editors*", played a significant role in the direction of the freedom of the press. The letters were selected in such an honest manner that even anti-Soviet and anti-Communist views projected in the letters were published. In their letters many readers supported exposing Stalinism and others were of the view that condemnation of the past was

⁸ Michael S. Fox, "*Glavlit*, Censorship and the Problems of Party Policy in Cultural Affairs, 1922-28", *Soviet Studies* (Glasgow), vol.44, no.6, 1992,p.1045.

⁹ Edwin Bacon "*Glasnost* and the Gulag: New Information on Soviet Forced Labour Around World War II", *Soviet Studies* (Glasgow),vol.44,no.6,1992,p.1069.

harmful. Publication of a letter, written by Nina Andreyeva, called “the anti restructuring manifesto” and *Argumenty i Fakty*, popularly known as “the postbag of *Perestroika*” were the positive results of democratization of the system.¹⁰

New Literature and Publications under Gorbachev’ s Era

The introduction of *Glasnost* (Openness) policy under Gorbachev’s regime paved the way for the conducive political environment wherein the freedom of the press was given boost to launch hitherto suppressed and banned literature and publications. Apart from the suppressed literature and publications, the openness policy led to the initiation of new media outlets carrying different works with several important issues, e.g., *NTR: Problemy i Reshenia* (The Scientific and Technological Revolution: Problems and Solutions)¹¹; *Trezvost i Kulttina* (Society and Culture)¹²; *Ogonyok* (Flame)¹³; *Novy Mir*; *Ekho Planety* (Echo from the Planet); *Protestant*; *Pravitelstvenny Vestnik*; *Izvestia Tsentraluovo Komiteta KPSS* (News of the CPSU Central Committee); *Digest 24 Hours*; and *Dostluk*; were some of the newly launched important newspapers and magazines. In August 1989, the CPSU Central Committee adopted a resolution titled ‘On Certain Question of Restructuring the Central Party Press’. According to the new

¹⁰ “Glasnost and the results”, *Ogonyok*, no.11,15 June 1988, p.6, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol.XL,no.22, 29 June 1988,p.24.

¹¹ A. Dru yenko, “Speaking about Openness”, *Izvestia* , 19 January 1985, p.2, *CDSF*,vol.XXXVII, no.2,February 6,1985,p.19.

¹² Yu. Makhryn, “Publication of New Literature”, *Pravda*, 30August 1985, p.2. *CDSF*,vol.XXXVII, no.35, 25 September 1985,p.9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.23.

resolution, a new newspaper *Rabochaya Tribuna* (Workers Tribune) was began to be published in 1990. *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta* became a weekly called *Ekonomika Zhizn* (Economics and Life).

Sovetskaya Kultura and *Uchitelskaya Gazeta* were also became weekly publications. Publication of *Dialog* started. The resolution further pointed out that the content of *Kommunist* and *Partinieya Zhiznu* would be reshaped.

Literary Gazette International; *International Protection of Human Rights and Freedom*; *Izbiratel* (Voter); restructured *Sema*; and *Sovetskaya Militia* (Soviet Police) were also very significant publications touching varieties of issues and topics.

Glasnost, one of the well known unofficial publications, was alleged that it was a dissident publication. But the editor of *Glasnost*, S.I. Grigoryants assured that “this was not a dividend publication. We want our articles to be objective”¹⁴ *Demokraticheskaya Oppozitsia* (Democratic Opposition), *Novodvorskaya*, *Press-bulleton nezavisimovo Sibirskovo inofrmatsionnovo agentstva* (Press Bulletin of the Independent Siberian News Agency) and *Svobodnoy Slovo* (Free Speech), etc. continued to publish anti-Soviet views. Yury Zhukov of *Pravda* pointed out the fact that “unfriendly foreign news media gladly make use of such publications”.¹⁵

¹⁴ N. Petrov and R. Topolev, “Banned Literature comes into existence”, *Vechernaya Moskova*, 7 August 1987, *CDSP*, vol. XXXIX, no.37, 14 October 1987, pp.6-7.

¹⁵ “Speakers told to stick to the Point”, *Pravda*, 2 July 1988, p.9, *Izvestia*, p.8. *CDSP* vol.XL, no.34, 21 September 1988, p.14.

Atrocities on Print Media

The policy of *Glasnost* had created a paradoxical political environment wherein, the hitherto suppressed and strangulated Soviet social system and the media (print and electronic) heaved a sigh of relief as a result of emergence of freedom of the press. On the other hand, the Soviet society had witnessed the unpleasant incidents of atrocities on media persons from different corners of the Soviet Union, e.g., illegal arrests of V. Berkhin, head of the correspondents office of the magazine *Sovietsky Shakhtyov* (Soviet Minor); abusive criticism of Nedelya due to the publication of one article (later it was found baseless and slanderous in nature) and suppression of Marxist journalists by the followers of *Perestroika*. These manifestations were severe setbacks to the freedom of the press.

During discussion on draft law on press and other news media, on 24 November 1989, photo correspondents' of *Pravda* and *Izvestia* were escorted out of the debate hall due to the tense situation. Physical attack on Ivan Petkov, of Central TV's own correspondent; and restrictions on subscriptions to several newspapers and journals by the Ministry of Communications also shook the entire media.¹⁶ The media persons, during the *Perestroika* period had to face the opposition and difficulties from various sides.

¹⁶ Tatyana Zaslavskaya, "*Second Socialist Revolution: An Alternative Soviet Strategy*", translated from Russian by Susan M. Davier and Jenny Warren (I.B.Touris and Co.Ltd, 1990), p.8.

Role of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*

In 1985, Gorbachev did not face any effective opposition of the conservatives. On 18 January 1985, A Druzenko, staff editor of *Law and Ethics* stressed the necessity of openness in the Soviet press and explained that information is order; and misinformation is chaos.

Soon after the assumption of Gorbachev as the General Secretary of CPSU on 11 March 1985, gave an interview to French Television and spoke in clear words that the press must cover human rights issues and debates related to it. Gorbachev himself talked openly about the well known Russian dissident scientist Sakharov to the French newspaper *L. Humannite*.¹⁷ On 24 November 1985, Valery Kondakov of *Sovetskaya Rossia* underlined the necessity of restructuring the field of 'administration' so that demands of the readers may be fulfilled.

The year 1986, marked a different political environment in which the conservative forces were on the rise and had given an effective opposition to the Gorbachev's reform programmes. The Eighth USSR Writers Congress, held in June 1986, provided a good opportunity for open discussion. G.M. Markov, first Secretary of the Board of the USSR Writer's Union suggested that the print media outlets should reconstitute their editorial boards to include only real writers and excluding ornamental writers. Several literary leaders strongly favoured openness in the press. For instance, Vozneseky urged the publication of works of poet Boris

¹⁷ Michael Bowdeaxe, *Gorbachev Glasnost and the Gospel* (Hodder and Strengthen, 1990) p. 23.

Pasrternak and writer Anna Akhmatova Sergai Zalgin advised learning classic Russian literature. Sergai Mikhalkov defended recently published Soviet literature. Yegor Isayev emphasized the need for hard-hitting criticism. Thus, the policy of *Glasnost* opened the Pandora's box to allow the people to air their voices and opinions through the medium of freedom of the press.

The process of *Glasnost* during its implementation had faced many ups and downs and the upsurge of conservative forces was a clear manifestation. One literary figure of the day Boris Mazhayev had alleged that the editor-in-chief of *Novy Mir* did not publish his novel *Peasant Men and Women* due to ideological differences. But the editor-in-Chief, Vladimir Vasilyevich Karpov said that the *Novy Mir* editors had followed the democratic way, so far as the novel *Peasant Men and Women* was concerned. He also warned against the mixing up of democracy and demagoguery. Y.M. Mishin, First Secretary of the All Union Lenin Young Communist League (YCL) Central Committee opposed the concept of restructuring and stressed that the time needs old style fighters for Party ideals.¹⁸

Aleksander Prokhanov stated that patriots of the Soviet society favoured the idea of a strong state, the idea of the socialist homeland. He demanded to fulfill their will. Anatoly Ivanov was of the opinion that writing about Communists should be the purpose of the publications.

¹⁸ Markov, G.M. "Report at the Eighth USSR Writers Congress", *Izvestia*, 15 July 1986, p.13, *CDSP*, vol. XXXVIII, no.26, 30 July 1986, p. 15

After these prolonged arguments and counter arguments the policy of *Glasnost* was opened the debate in the Soviet society. Daniel Grain, Vladimir Beekman, Olzhas Suleimenov, Yekaterina Shevelyova, Boris Olenik, Janis Peters, Yury Mushketik, Kerim Kurbannepesov., and many others strongly supported restructuring of the press and openness in the media outlets. Pointing out the anti-restructuring tendencies of conservatives, Olzhas Suleimenov suspected that ideological bureaucrats will not allow the writers to write the truth. He was in favour of honest and truthfull writings about the collectivization process of 1930's.¹⁹

On 1 October 1986, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published a dialogue between Streshnev and Shirokov. A newly elected Secretary of the Province Party Committee was in favour of renewal of the press and hoped that the new style would triumph immediately. But reputed philosopher I Kryvelev, never favoured reshaping and openness in the field of the Soviet press. To him it was an anti-Soviet concept.²⁰

In 1987, the conservatives became more confident and bolder in expressing their views against freedom of the press than earlier. Consequently, Gorbachev's continued his struggle against them with devotion and commitment.

On 13 February 1987, Gorbachev warned that there are opponents of restructuring, who do not know how to adjust to the changed atmosphere. He assured the media men that the Central Committee was

¹⁹ Ibid., p.16

²⁰ I Kryvelev, "Flirting with God" *Komosphlskaya Pravda* 30 July 1986, *CDSP*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 47, 26 December 1986, p. 4

convinced that journalists would work for restructuring steadfastly and tirelessly. Aleksander Varinsky of *Izvestia* pleaded that the journalists must tolerate and respect different opinions, views and ideas.

Ye.K. Ligachev, member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and Secretary of the Central Committee met the creative personnel of the television centre in Ostankino on 23 February 1987, and warned against the bourgeois propaganda behind the mask of openness and restructuring. He revealed that bourgeois propaganda brought up substantial forces to undermine Soviet people's faith in the rightness of the Communist Party's course and reality of the restructuring that was under way on a broad scale. He appealed to the media men to expose it.²¹

In February 1987, Gorbachev spoke on the need of openness and democratization. Speaking at a meeting with the Latvian Republic Party's Soviet and Economic Artists and also at the Eighteenth Congress of the USSR Trade Unions on 25 February, 1987, he was of the view that democracy could bring about order and discipline of high level.

However, some of the leaders in the month of March 1987, expressed different views. Addressing a meeting of the Secretariat of the Board of the Russian Republic Writers Union, they did not support misuse of openness in the press. S. Mikhalkov, Chairman of the Board and V. Dementyoy, Secretary of the Board, praised the opinion of Ligachev who had objected to unlimited criticism. Stressing the point of criticism, S.

²¹ Gorbachev, M.S., "Conviction is the Bulwark of Restructuring" (Speech at the CPSU Central Committee on 13 February 1987), *Izvestia*, 3 March 1987, *CDSP* vol. XXXIX, no. 7, 18 March 1987, p. 8

Mikhalkov said that criticism sometimes reaches a point at which we read in the press words of a very insulting nature directed at people who have done a good deal for the Soviet regime.²²

The renowned international commentator, M. Vulfan on 18 June 1987, in *Sovetskaya Latvia* opposed more openness. He wrote that taking advantage of the process of the democratization and the expansion of openness, "certain people are behaving in an unseemly manner, violating public order and openly expatiating on bourgeois – nationalist notions that are alien to us".²³

In July 1987, at a meeting in the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news media and the creative unions, most of the speakers favoured openness. In September 1987 at a conference of the CPSU Central Committee with the executives of the mass news and propaganda media Ye. K. Ligachev asked the media men to present history without distorting facts. He also warned against the growing menace of the anti-socialist and anti-Communist forces. He revealed that anti-Soviet forces want to destroy the USSR and urged the press not to be guided by these forces.

An interesting controversy began on 7 August 1987, in *Vechernaya Moskava*. N. Petrov and R. Topolev in their article criticized a *Samizdat* magazine *Glasnost* for blackmailing the people. In the article the writers tried to prove Grigoryants, editor of *Glasnost*, as a corrupt man. Infact,

²² Ibid., p.8

²³ Ibid., p.9

during the renewal of the press, such types of degrading articles were quite common. These articles were cited by the so-called hardliners to prove that the openness in the press was not needed.

V.M. Chebrikov, member of the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the USSR State Security Committee delivered his report. "A Great Example of Service to Revolutionary Ideals" at a Ceremonial Meeting devoted to the One Hundred and Tenth Anniversary of the birth of Bolshevik Revolutionary, Felik Edumunodovich Dzerzhonsky, criticising the freedom of the press, Chebrikov said that the Soviet press was "depriving bourgeois propaganda of the opportunity to capitalize on our shortcomings and unresolved questions".²⁴

In November 1987, Boris Yeltsin, the first Secretary of the Moscow City Communist Party Committee and a non-voting member of the Politbureau was dismissed from both the posts. The allegation against him was that he had criticized conservatives of the CPSU in the strongest words. This incident was taken as a victory of the conservatives in the matter of restructuring and openness.²⁵

On that occasion, V.A. Korotich, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Ogonyok*, pleaded for involving the employees of the mass news media in the struggle for the sources of restructuring. S.P. Zalygin, editor-in-

²⁴ V.M. Chebrikov, "A Great Example of Service to Revolutionaries Ideals" (Report at a Ceremonial Meeting), *Pravda*, 16 September 1987, p.12, *CDSP*, vol. XXIX, no. 37, 1 Oct. 1987, p. 8.

²⁵ The Europa World Year Book, vol.2, no. 13, (Europa Publications Ltd, 1992), p. 2751.

chief of the magazine *Novy Mir*, also emphasized that holding discussions and openness in the press, are very useful for the development of democratic atmosphere in the USSR.

Apart from the supporters of democratic restructuring, there were different opposite views e.g. on 10 February 1988, N.N. Chetverikov, Chairman of All Union Council on Professional Ethics and Law, pointed out that the main function of the journalists is to strengthen Marxist-Leninist ideology. He opposed the anti-Marxist ideas.²⁶

Some leaders who supported restructuring and openness, asserted that there was no need to unearth pre-*Perestroika* nationalities problems. They said that unearthing of nationalities problem would create a problem in the restructuring process of the Soviet society.

In a long letter to the editor, a teacher, Nina Andreyeva, expressed the opinion that the Soviet system needs no change.²⁷ The letter alleged that the restructuring were trying to destroy the Marxist-Leninist foundation of the Soviet system. The writer opposed any type of openness in the press. The author of the letter criticized the concept that the media men should respect pluralism of opinion. The letter emphasized the fact that democratization, Openness and restructuring must be stopped in the interests of preserving Marxism- Leninism and Socialism.

²⁶ Markov G and others "More openness, More Democracy, more Socialism", *Pravda*, 16 February 1988, p.12, *CDSP*, vol. XL, no.6, 6 March, 1988, p. 24

²⁷ Nina Adreyeva, "I Cannot Forgo Principles", *Sovetskaya Rossia*, 13 March 1988, *CDSP*, vol. XL. no. 13, 27 April 1988, p. 1.

Reacting to the letter, *Pravda*, on 5 April 1988 attacked the so-called *Anti-restructuring manifesto*. On 10 April 1988, a public affairs writer, Nikolai Bodnarok, commenting on the letter wrote in *Izvestia* that it showed the confusion in the minds of anti-restructuring people and their ideological spinelessness. On the same day Lyudmila Saraskina wrote in *Moskovskaya Novosti Portriate of the Enemy*. The article accused Nina Andreyeva of immoral views on repression and suppression under Communist regime.

The editorial board of *Sevetskaya Rossia* also agreed with the editorial of *Pravda* and apologised for "ill considered publication of the critical letter". It assured that all readers back restructuring though some are still confused.

Gorbachev at a meeting held on 7 May 1988, spoke in favour of freedom of the press. On that occasion, N.M. Gribachev, editor-in-Chief, *Sovetsky* suggested that journalism should be grounded in an accurate and verified facts. S.P. Zalgyin editor-in-Chief of *Novy Mir* pleaded for a responsive attitude towards public opinion and acceptance of it as a guiding force in public affairs.

On 23 September 1988, Gorbachev criticized the 'leftist and rightist forces, who were creating confusion in the society. He stated that the press should continue its struggle against them. He

told, "Restructuring is a living process and it is being carried out by living people."²⁸

In September 1988, Yury Zhukov of *Pravda* criticized many of the newly born independent papers. He gave several examples, in support of his arguments.²⁹ He opined that independent press, the so called *Samizdat* publications and West funded publications were trying to disintegrate the USSR. He opposed freedom and openness in the press on such grounds. He hoped that the coming draft law on the press would eradicate such publications.

On the other hand, Vladimir Alekyeyevich Boldyrev, Director, *Glacvilit*, in an interview, published on 3 November 1988, in *Izvestia*, argued that the system of classifying information as secret needed democratic control because excessive secrecy would help conservatives only. People, he warned, would begin to rely on Western news media, because that secret has negative effect on world opinion.

The year 1989, was considered to be the peak stage of Gorbachev's reforms and during this period, Gorbachev initiated a dialogue with all kinds of people and at every level on the issue of freedom of the press. Factual arguments put up by the hardliners compelled them to initiate a fruitful and meaningful debate on the issue. As a result, the discussions over

²⁸ M.S. Gorbachev, "At the New State of Restructuring" (Speech at the Meeting in the CPSU Central Committee with Executives of the Mass News Media, Ideological Institutions and Creative Unions, 23 September 1988) *Izvestia* 12 October 1988, p.12, *CDSF*, vol. XL, no 39, 26 October 1988, P. 8

²⁹ Debate over the Freedom of the Press, *Pravda*, 15 September 1988, p.11, no.11, *CDSF*, vol. XL, no. 34, 21 September 1988, p. 14.

draft of press law considered all the differing views and followed pluralism of opinion.

In the month of March, 1989, a split took place in the Moscow Writers Organization of the Russian Republic Writers Union. The dissidents alleged that the Writers Union was not promoting implementation of restructuring.³⁰ In the same month, Gorbachev accepted that restructuring was proceeding with some difficulties. However, he stressed the need for dialogue to sort out the differences among various sections of the society.

On 23 October 1989, Gorbachev met the *Pravda* editorial board, department editors and members of the newspapers Party Committee. On that occasion, he warned that some unpopular measures might be taken to avoid misuse of freedom of the press. He criticized a section of journalists involved in misguiding the common people about restructuring the system.

The Draft Law on Press and other Mass News Media was introduced in the Second Session of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 24 November 1989. A controversy marked its initiation as a day earlier another draft started circulating which had not been considered by the appropriate committees. B.N. Nikolsky, Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee on Questions of *Glasnost* and Citizens Rights and Appeals, referred to the new version of Article 43 of the second draft as a "veiled attempt to preserve censorship".³¹

³⁰ "Russian Republic Writers Union Continues Its Discussion" *Izvestia*, 20 March 1989, p.12, *CDSF*, vol. XLI, no.10, 5 April 1989, p.20.

³¹ "Debate over the *Glasnost* in Supreme Soviet", *Izvestia*, 25 November 1989; *CDSF*, vol. XLI, no.48, 27 December 1989, pp.9-10.

An article-by-article consideration of the Press bill began in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in June 1990. Introducing the draft, Boris Nikolsky stressed that under the conditions of an emerging multi party system the need for such a law becomes even more urgent than before as it enables new parties and movements to launch their own mass information organization and on the other hand bars all kinds of pirate publications.³²

Thus, we can say that the introduction of reform policies known as *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* by Gorbachev brought about a great changes in the Soviet society in general and the emergence of freedom of the press in particular. These two policies compelled the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Government to relax control over the press. Gradually Soviet press became bold enough and tried to fulfill all the requirements of the readers under the changed atmosphere of the Soviet Union.

At the same time the heated controversy and debate over the freedom of the press brought effective competition of ideas. Gorbachev had earlier tried to ignore the views of the opponents felt in 1989 the need for conducting a factual debate over the issue of freedom of the press, allowing the conservative forces to express their views without any hesitation and fear.

These policies of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* exerted a tremendous influence on the emergence of freedom of the press and established

³² "Introduction of Press Bill in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR", *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 20 May 1990, *Summary of World Broadcast*, SU/0788, 12 June 1990, p. SU/0788.

pluralism of opinion in the former Soviet Union. As a result of these two policies, the Soviet Press Law came into existence in August 1990.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter – IV

The Role of Media in Contemporary Central Asia

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991, paved the way for the emergence of five independent and sovereign Central Asian Republics i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Since then, all these five Central Asian republics have been engaged in the consolidation of democratic and political processes. The Soviet Communist system completely suppressed the democratic freedom in these countries. Hence, these Central Asian states inherited a fragile, tenuous political, economic and social fabric as a historical legacy from the Soviet Union.

With the independence in 1991, the Central Asian republics, inherited the censorship mechanism on media (print and electronic) as a part of Soviet political legacy, and the censorship is still in operation in these countries. In a modern democratic country, the media or the press is considered to be an important pillar on which the smooth and successful functioning of a democratic process rests upon. The free and Independent media plays a pivotal role in strengthening the civil society which is a *sine quo non* for the success of any modern democratic society.

The assumption of Gorbachev as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 11 March 1985 brought about major changes in liquidating the Russian traditions of official state secrecy

and control over the media. Since 1985, when Gorbachev introduced radical economic and political reforms to reinvigorate the CPSU's authority, the Central Asian republics as elsewhere in the former Soviet Union witnessed the emergence of various groups and movements clamouring for cultural autonomy which had never been addressed openly since the consolidation of the Bolshevik regime in the mid 1920's. The Gorbachev's reform policies affected virtually every sphere of Soviet life. One of the most important policies was that of *Glasnost* i.e. (Openness) which permitted Soviet print and electronic media to address various problems of the day. Gorbachev's policy of *Glasnost* had provided an impetus to the freedom of the press and established pluralism of opinion in the former Soviet Union.

The policy of Glasnost led to the publication of hitherto suppressed and banned books, literature and unpublished works. The Soviet bastion of official secrecy was blown up. Many unpublished material on CPSU, Soviet state, *Glavlit* (Soviet censor board) and the party policy in cultural affairs came to the light. To some extent, the Central Asian Republics had to implement the spirit of *Glasnost* and guaranteed democratic norms, primacy of human rights, social justice and priority of universal human values in international relations in the form of new law on the News media.

So far as the Central Asian republics are concerned, the absence of free and independent media (print and electronic) is hindering the political process in the region. All the Central Asian republics have continued with their home-grown versions of Soviet era despotic ways by shutting down

the independent media outlets in their countries. All the five governments are backtracking on their international pledges to promote democracy and civil society, which they made on the eve of their independence in the early nineteen nineties. The democratic governments with authoritarian tendencies have imposed several curbs on different areas of civil society that range from media curtailment, restrictions on the role of NGO's, intelligentsia and human rights groups, etc. The repression of political opponents and persecution of dissidents have become the order of the day.

The functioning of political parties to check the arbitrary tendencies of governments and to maintain a vigil and to play as constructive role is a prerequisite for a vibrant democracy. But in case of Central Asian republics the opposition parties are deprived of an opportunity to express their views and an appeal to the general public. Opposition political parties are always kept under strict surveillance and in some countries they are not given the freedom to organize the public and indoor gatherings.

The curtailment of freedom of the media in Central Asian republics is mainly due to the pervasive prevalence of corruption in the higher levels of the political system. The media's attempts to expose the corruption have always been meted out with harsh governmental repression. The corrupt attitudes of the leaders always prompt them to impose heavy handed controls on media to protect their reputations and vested interests. Owing to such situation, the role of the civil society is being affected in rejuvenating the civil, economic and political life of the people of Central Asia.

The ruling elites in these countries have curbed the freedom of expression (media) by applying the brutal and sometimes insidious methods because the governments want to enforce the censorship mechanism very strictly to further their own vested interests. They support freedom of the press in theory while undermining it in practice.

In countries like Uzbekistan *News Media* is still being censored even though, censorship is legally prohibited both by the country's Constitution and laws like "On protecting the professional activities of journalists" and "On the News Media" The censorship mechanism developed during the Soviet period is still in operation in Central Asia but it varies from country to country. For example, in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan media is relatively free but in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan it is under the control of the respective governments. In these countries, no page of the newspaper is accepted for printing unless a stamp by the State Press Committee inspectors.

During Gorbachev's period, editors were free to publish even banned material but today they cannot do so because censorship inspectors are committed to protect the so called state secrets. The very word *Censor* is banned in all the Constitutions of the region. Thus, the media censorship officials always violate the laws on censorship by arbitrarily deleting the information from the newspapers which does not serve the interests of the ruling elites. The media community on its part cannot afford to take on

these officials because the rights to shutdown the media outlets lie in their hands.

Thus, democracy, human rights, freedom of media, the development of independent private organizations, women's rights, market economy, privatization, educational opportunities, political pluralism...all these values tend to be safeguarded only on paper in these Central Asian Republics.

Due to the absence of free and independent media, the citizens in Central Asian republics are denied the objective and qualitative information. Thus, the people are deprived of participation in the political process. All these five Central Asian republics have legislations on media and the freedom of the press is enshrined in their constitutions and laws. But the reality is very different from the legislations. The legislations on media have remained as a toothless paper tigers. And there is a yawning gap between the theory and the practice.

All these developments need to be studied and analyzed as they are likely to have far reaching consequences for Central Asian Countries in particular and neighbouring countries in general. The main emphasis of the study will be on the role of media in Central Asian republics i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan since their independence. The changing role of media would be the focus of this study during the period of 1992 to 2002.

Political Culture of Central Asian States

“The collapse of Communism has been hailed by some as the ‘end of history’, the final triumph of liberalism and democracy over communist ideological rivals”¹. The last few years have witnessed a dramatic movement towards democracy in a number of East European and Soviet successor states. People formerly caught in the tenacious hold of Communism have now been given a meaningful universal adult franchise and governments based upon the rule of law, instead of class struggle, are now responsible before the electorate. In many parts of the world, the popular sovereignty is prevailing over the authoritarian tendencies of the ruling regime. And many of the pitfalls on the road of democracy have been avoided and people across the world are speaking of democratic consolidation and orderly changes of government in a number of states.²

While this new ‘wave of democratization has swept across many lands, the states of Central Asia --- Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan – have not yet been inundated with this rising tide. In fact, these states stand apart as an exception. In these countries fundamental political institutions have not been substantially altered. In all states, presidents, individuals who come from the upper echelons of the Communist establishment have gained wider powers to rule by decree with the force of Constitutional law. Parliaments and Courts are weak and are

¹ . Franis Fukuyama, “The End of history”. *The National Interest*, Summer 1989, p.3.

² . Kubicek, Paul, “Authoritarianism in Central Asia Curse or Cure ?”, *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 19, no.1, 1998 p.29.

routinely ignored. The civil societies are still in a nascent stage, traditional culture is still strong and opposition has been circumscribed or suppressed.³

Indeed, Central Asian societies do not have a history of democratic popular participation in politics. Popular sovereignty was not an issue in the khanates, where leadership was hereditary. Khans claimed their throne and asserted legitimacy on the basis of their lineage and upholding of the *Sharia* (the Islamic law). The *Ulema* were important players in sanctifying Khans and directing the population to submit to their rule. Popular sovereignty was alien to Central Asia. This remained true for the twentieth century experience of the region. The Soviet system did not allow the popular sovereignty to become a political reality. Soviet style democracy made a mockery of citizen's rights and free political participation. This experience formed the general basis of the elite's mentality. Authoritarianism is a common thread that runs through the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods of Central Asia.

For instance, the leadership in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan has retained its distrust of popular sovereignty. Despite of Constitutional guarantees, the leadership in these states has curbed freedom of information, expression and association. States exercise rigid control over the mass media. No debate over government policies is allowed. Political opposition is suppressed in an unceremonious manner.

³. Ibid., p.30.

Independent political parties are not allowed for registration.⁴ The concept of popular sovereignty, an anathema to rule of Khans and a sham under one party rule, remains irrelevant to Central Asian societies. The pre-Soviet, and Soviet experiences have left a legacy of authoritarian culture. The republican elites have inherited societies with minimal civic experience. In this social milieu states have tended to rely on tried methods of control, through for legitimacy purposes they prefer to highlight pre-Soviet symbols to signify a break with their Soviet past. This is clearly evident in state sponsored efforts to institutionalize respect for and obedience to elders in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This feature of indigenous culture is viewed favourably by the elite as it teaches passivity and subordination. Advocating obedience in relation to elders is directly linked to submission to authority. The formation of the Assembly of Elders (*Yaqshular Maslehaty*) in Turkmenistan and the official incorporation of elders (*aqsaqali*) in the Uzbek state hierarchy are two prominent example of this process.⁵ Thus, the Central Asian states have their own unique and distinct political history that is far different from that of western countries, and there is little that could constitute a 'democratic tradition'. The hierarchical, patriarchal structure of the family unit was traditionally replicated in political life in which people deferred to their leaders. Power at all levels is personalized often based upon tribal or clan connections, and this in turn contributes to

⁴ . Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Political Shape of Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey*, vol-16, no.4, December 1997, p.527.

⁵ . *Ibid.*, p.528.

corruption and limits prospects for the development of democracy. The individual is subordinated to the community, a belief arguably reinforced by the Soviet experience. The 'neo – traditional structure of Soviet Central Asia did not fundamentally change with independence, as the *nomenklatura* managed to preserve its position. Apart from this, low levels of economic development, traditional culture, weak civil societies, the leading role of the old *nomenklatura*, ethnic cleavages, low political interest and corruption have contributed a lot in aggravating the authoritarian tendencies in Central Asian Republics.⁶

Thus, an attempt has been made to analyse the authoritarian developments and tendencies in each individual Central Asian country which are given below.

Uzbekistan:

Uzbekistan's independence was not accompanied by a wholesale transformation of the republic's political structure. Islam Karimov, first secretary of the Communist party, was elected as president with 86% of the vote in December 1991, elections. According to new Uzbekistan's Constitution of 1992, the *Oliy Majlis*, the parliament would be the ultimate source of power⁷ but it has remained a rubber stamp as the president has accumulated powers in his hands. The activities of various opposition groups....democratic, religious and ethnic – have been circumscribed and

⁶ Kubicek Paul, n.2, p.30.

⁷ *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, Tashkent (Uzbekistan), 1992.

many organizations have out rightly been prohibited or pushed back to underground.

The dominant theme of post-Soviet political developments in Uzbekistan has been the emergence of an authoritarian presidential system.⁸ The president Karimov has the power to issue presidential decrees with the force of law, in turn circumventing the other branches of government and there are hardly any checks and balances on his powers. The president appoints regional governors (*hokims*) and regularly shuffles them to prevent any individual from acquiring a power base to challenge his authority. With the power of appointment and as leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the president is in an easy position to dominate parliament, which is composed mainly of PDP members and local government officials. In March 1995, he extended his term to the year 2000 in a referendum which he won in a Soviet style, with 98% of the vote. Before the votes were officially counted, Uzbek Radio claimed that the entire nation had 'unanimously' voted in favour of the president.⁹

Opposition parties are technically allowed, but this is done only to create a veneer of democracy. Those parties that are allowed to function such as the Motherland Party or the peasants Party, all openly support the Peoples Democratic Party of the president and are in fact little more than the extensions of the ruling party. Meanwhile, true opposition parties and

⁸ . Kubicek, Paul, n.1, p.31.

⁹ . Ibid., p.32.

groups are hampered by government restrictions. They include national – democratic movements such as *Erk* ('Will') and *Birlik* ('Unity'), whose leaders have been beaten by 'unknown assailants' and eventually forced into exile abroad. In 1993, these groups were finally banned on charges of conspiracy to overthrow the government and their adherents are still jailed for defaming the honour of the president Karimov.

Karimov justifies such undemocratic policies by pointing to the experience of neighbouring Tajikistan where a civil war continues among the forces representing former Communists, nationalists, democrats and Islamists.¹⁰ By suppressing the political dissident groups, Karimov has promoted a 'cult of stability' by claiming that his rule, even if considered harsh by some, is the only way to ensure social and inter ethnic harmony in the country.

The parliament of Uzbekistan on 5 April 2002, extended president Islam Karimov's term of office from five to seven years. It means he will remain in office at least until 2008. The question of extending Islam Karimov's term as president was put to a vote in a referendum held on 27 January 2002. An overwhelming majority of the public (about 92%) voted in favour of having the president govern the country for seven years instead of five. The Parliament on 5 April 2002, turned the referendum

¹⁰. Andrew. F. March, "The use and abuse of history : 'national ideology' as transcendental object in Islam Karimov's 'ideology of national independence", *Central Asian Survey*, vol. .21, no. 4, 2002, p.373.

results into a law.¹¹ Presently Islam Karimov has no real competitors inside the country. Opposition outside its borders is represented by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which is listed by the U.S. State department as a terrorist organisation and is, therefore, unlikely to play a significant role in national life. Moreover, in the wake of the January referendum, some amendments are supposed to be made in the Constitution. Presently Karimov is in his second term, the Constitution does not allow a candidate for third term but the Constitution is likely to be amended to accommodate Karimov for his third term as the president of Uzbekistan.¹² This is a clear manifestation of president's undemocratic and authoritarian tendencies.

Kazakhstan:

Guillermo O' Donnell's concept of 'delegative democracy' is rightly applicable to the dynamics of political developments in post—Soviet Kazakhstan.¹³ A delegative democracy is the one which meets the formal requirements of democracy but whose actual practice resembles that of an authoritarian state. It is grounded on a basic premise that the elected president is entitled to govern the country as he sees it fit, with little or no regard to other institutions that may try to check or limit his powers. Typically, presidents in delegative democracies present themselves above all parties and politics, as saviours of the nation. O'Donnell argues that

¹¹ . "Islam Karimov places great trust on Uzbekistan", *Kommersant*, 6 April 2002, *Current Digest the of Post Soviet Press* , vol.54, no.14, (2002) , p.17.

¹² . Ibid., p.17.

¹³ . Donnell G.O.. "Delegative Democracy", *Journal of Democracy*, vol.5, no.1, 1994, p.55.

historical inexperience with democracy and an acute socio-economic crisis provides the cultural and institutional context, as well as a pragmatic need that contributes to the emergence of delegative democracies. Both of these can be found in Kazakhstan, as well as in other republics of the region.

In Kazakhstan, president Nursultan Nazarbayev has attempted to construct an aura of democratic legitimacy while at the same time acquiring the machinery of a presidential dictatorship. As a former head of the republic's Communist Party, Nazarbayev was elected chairman of the Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet in February 1990, and after the disintegration of the Soviet union, he was elected (without opposition) as the president of the country in 1991. In April 1995, he extended his term to the year 2000 in a referendum with the support of 91% of the voters.¹⁴

In Kazakhstan, one finds all the norms that are associated with democracy i.e. basic democratic rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of press and freedom of political activity and free and fair elections have been regularly abrogated. In fact, in March 1995, the parliament was dissolved because the Constitutional court found too many electoral irregularities. In accordance with a new Constitution approved by voters in August 1995, the president now has the power to appoint all ministers (except the prime minister) without parliament's assent and can dissolve the parliament in case of 'severe disagreements' and issue decrees with the force of law. In addition, the president's 'honour and dignity' were declared

¹⁴ . "Kazakh Parliamentary election results". *Central Asian Quarterly*, vol. 3, no.1, 1996, p.4.

'sacrosanct', thus gives Nazarbayev legal basis for persecution against many of his opponents. The Constitutional court was also eliminated in favour of a Constitutional Council, whose decisions are subjected to presidential veto. The new parliament, elected in December 1995 is dominated by Nazarbayev supporters and it is likely to remain loyal and faithful to the ruling regime.¹⁵

President Nazarbayev has suppressed the emergence of strong opposition parties. Particularly, president has singled out nationalist or separatist groups, finding them guilty of violating a Constitutional provision prohibiting groups that attempt to promote 'social, racial, national, religious, class or tribal discord'. Prominent targets of the president have been the Kazakh nationalist party *Alash* and the movement *Zheltoqsan* which actively encouraged Russian emigration. Both of these have been banned. Leaders of opposition have been jailed and subjected to beatings.

Given the outburst of ethnic cleavages, the democratic and political liberalization would cause so much political mobilization on ethnic groups and that would promote more ethnic rivalism in a country like Kazakhstan.¹⁶ Hence, President Nazarbayev found a pretext in maintaining his unlimited powers by saying that the harsh and stringent methods and policies are needed to preserve the ethnic pluralism of the country.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.5.

¹⁶ Rabushka A. and Shepsle A., *Politics in Plural Societies: A Theory of Democratic Instability*, (Messill, 1972).

Kyrgyzstan:

Kyrgyzstan has got a better democratic record than any other country in the region. The former vice president of U.S. Al Gore described Kyrgyzstan as a 'bulwark of democracy in the region.'¹⁷ Under the stewardship of President Askar Akayev, Kyrgyzstan has established itself a reputation for democratic, political liberalization. After being selected as president by the Supreme Soviet in the autumn of 1990, he won a popular elections the following year, running unopposed but without apparent genuine popular support. He fought the elections again in January 1994 winning an extension of his term to October 1996.

In the aftermath of president Akayev's advent to the office, the economy started deteriorating and opposition grew considerable from the vested interests of the old *nomenklatura* and Kyrgyz nationalists. Owing to this situation the democratic progress of the country has been disturbed. After being increasingly frustrated with parliament's intransigence, Akayev engineered the dissolution of the legislature in September 1994, calling it an 'outdated Soviet relic'. The parliamentary dissolution was soon followed by other moves i.e. Constitutional amendments were passed to augment Akayev's powers. These powers include the powers of appointment with minimal parliamentary power, greater veto power to the president, and a right to disband the parliament is also vested with the president.¹⁸

¹⁷. Pannier B, "The Shrinking Shores of Central Asia's Island of Democracy", *Transition*, vol.2, no.7, 1996, p.56.

¹⁸. Kubicek Paul, n.2, p.37.

Nevertheless, the democratic record of Kyrgyzstan has been far better than other Central Asian republics.

Turkmenistan:

The president Saparmurad Niyazov was appointed as the first secretary of the Turkmen Communist Party in the late 1985. Though, he was appointed by Gorbachev to clean up Turkmenistan, Niyazov moved quickly to consolidate his own control over the republic. As the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, he embraced independence with much enthusiasm following a referendum in October 1991 in which 94.1% of the population gave him their backing.¹⁹ The Constitution of Turkmenistan republic was adopted on 18 May 1992.²⁰ During the transition process the state leadership under Niyazov acquired more authoritarian presidential form in nature. The republic's Constitution provides for extensive powers to the president. The president Niyazov subordinated all the democratic institutions i.e. parliament and other bodies to that of president's office and completely turned parliament as a puppet in his hands. The new Constitution of the republic gives the people socio, political, cultural rights and civil liberties which were denied during the Soviet period. The above mentioned rights and liberties are far from the rights and liberties available to the people in developed and democratic countries of the world. Nevertheless, a beginning has been made in this regard.

¹⁹ John Anderson, "Authoritarian Political developments in Central Asia: The case of Turkmenistan", *Central Asian Survey*, vol.14, no. 4, 1995, p.509.

²⁰ *Constitution of Turkmenistan* (Ashqabad, 18 May 1992), no.691-XII.

On 21 June 1992, after a short 'election campaign' Saparmurad Niyazov was elected as president with 99.5% of the vote. Following the election, the personality cult surrounding him started growing. He was increasingly referred as *Turkmenbashi* (leader of the Turkmen people). This title was aimed at the indigenous population and expected to invoke popular awe and loyalty. The Moscow press compared Niyazov's growing personality cult with that of Brezhnev in the late 1970's. This personality cult continued as parliament decided to officially name him *Turkmenbashi* in October 1993, and declared his birthday as a public holiday, with the depiction of his face on the new currency introduced in November 1993 and the Caspian Port town of Krasnovodsk was renamed as '*Turkmenbashi*'. In January 1994, a referendum was held on granting him a second term of office without having to fresh elections in 1997, as the Constitution required.²¹

Tajikistan:

The disintegration of the Soviet Union led to the emergence of independent Tajikistan on 9 September 1991. The newly born Tajikistan has been marked by the absence of civil society, nascent political and democratic process and the growing political instability.²²

Independent Tajikistan is not a democratic country. Its political and democratic processes are still in a nascent stage. The Communist Party of

²¹ . Ibid., p.511.

²² . Haffizullah Emadi, "State, Ideology and Islamic Resurgence in Tajikistan", *Central Asian Survey* (Oxford), vol.13, no.4, 1994, p.565.

Tajikistan does not enjoy a monopoly of power and the political system in the Republic is a replica of old Soviet order, because only a few people dominate the system and they still use methods, ranging from control of the mass media to the imprisonment or killing of opponents that were highly developed in the Soviet era. Despite the Constitutional guarantees, the human rights, civil, political liberties of the citizens are not protected in Tajikistan. The presidential and legislative elections were held in November 1994, and February—March 1995 respectively, but these were neither free nor fair. Till today the Communist party of Tajikistan remains the single largest party in the country.²³

The Changing Role of Media in Contemporary Central Asia

The assumption of Gorbachev as the General Secretary of the Soviet Union on 11 March 1985, and the subsequent introduction of reform policies of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* affected virtually every sphere of the Soviet life. The policy of *Glasnost* (Openness) played a crucial role in permitting the Soviet print and electronic media to address various problems of the day, and the policy of *Glasnost* also provided an impetus to the freedom of the press and established pluralism of opinion in the former Soviet Union. As a result of this policy, the Central Asian republics had to implement the spirit of *Glasnost* and guaranteed democratic norms, primacy

²³ Murriel Atkin, "Thwarted Democratization in Tajikistan" in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds), *Conflict Cleavage and the Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge, 1997), p.277.

of human rights, social justice and priority of universal human values in international relations in the form of new law on the News Media.²⁴ In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyse the changing role of media in individual Central Asian Republics.

Kazakhstan:

The history of Kazakhstan's media (print media or press) can be traced way back to the early twentieth century. In 1905, the Kazakhs for the first time entered into the political field by the means of the press. The actual Kazakh press was born in 1907. The first Kazakh newspaper was *Qazaq Gazeti* published in March 1907, in the town of *Troitsk* by Andreyev and Ishmokhammed Imambayev with Khaim Shumalov and Sasnovskiy as editors-in-chief. The paper was followed by *Dala* (The Steppe) a Christian newspaper published at Omsk by the orthodox Missionary Society.²⁵

In 1911, the first two important political organs appeared which had a more "revolutionary" tone. The first of these was the monthly paper *Ay Qap* published at the Energiya press at Troitsh and edited by a Kazakh intellectual Mohammad Dzhan Siralin. It had an excellent team of contributors – historians, schoolmasters, linguists and poets. *Ay Qap*,

²⁴ Phool Badan, *Dynamics of Political Development in Central Asia* (Lancers Books, 2001), p.154.

²⁵ Benningson A. and C. Lenercier Quelquejay, "The History of Kazakh Press", *Central Asian Review*, vol 13, no.2, 1996, p.155.

therefore, made an important contribution to the development of literature and the formation of Kazakh literary language.²⁶

Ay Qap was modernist in tone and campaigned for the emancipation of Kazakh women, denounced feudal morals and advocated the stabilization of the nomad tribes. It laid a particular emphasis on national culture and devoted a large number of studies to folklore and popular literature as well as to the ethnography of the Kazakhs. The second paper of importance to appear was *Qazaqstan*. This was at first published at Khanskaya Stavka (in Kazakh, Bukey Ordasy). *Qazaqstan* was an organ of the panIslamic and revolutionary intelligentsia and was published by Sultan Shahin Girey Bukeyev.²⁷

In 1912, the nationalist intellectuals formed a group which in March 1917 took the name of *Alash Orda*. From 2 February 1913, this group had its own organ, the bi-weekly paper *Qazaq*. This was the most important of the Kazakh periodicals from the point of view both of its quality and of its circulation. The policy of *Qazaq* corresponded to that of a national reformist party, its principle concern was with the cultural development of the Kazakh people and it campaigned actively for the development of the national language and literature. *Qazaq* was basically a leftist, moderately revolutionary organ which was quite indifferent to pan Islamic ideas and while it taking care to avoid inciting the Kazakhs to revolt against the

²⁶ . Ibid., p.155.

²⁷ . Ibid., p.156.

Tsarist administration, it broadly opposed the policy of Russian colonisation in the early twentieth century.²⁸ The *Qazaq* newspaper played a vital role in bringing about national consciousness among Kazakhs against the atrocious Czarist regime in the early part of the twentieth century. This paper activated the minds and souls of its readers just as the circulation of blood animates an otherwise lifeless body.²⁹ Thus, the Kazakhstan has the largest and oldest history of the press than any republic of the Central Asian region.

In Kazakhstan, more than 600 local newspapers, and magazines are published in Kazakh, Russian, German, Ukrainian, Uighur, Korean and Uzbek languages with an annual circulation of about 590 million copies. The official state publications of the country are *Yegmen Kazakhstan* which started publication on 17 December 1919, with a circulation of 55,000 and *Kazakhstan Skaya Pravda*, which started from 1 January, 1920, with almost the same amount of circulation as the former. Radio programmes in Kazakhstan are broadcast in six languages. The television programmes cover more than 90 per cent of the population. Although, the television and radio of Kazakhstan give more than 200 different programmes, yet under the Constitution of the Republic, freedom of mass information is undermined within the framework of the basic law of the country.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., p.157.

²⁹ Gulnar Kendirbay, "The National Liberation Movement of the Kazakh Intelligentsia at the beginning of the 20th century", *Central Asian Survey*, vol.16, no.4, 1997, p.495.

³⁰ Askar Zh. Shomanev, "Social Modernization of Kazakh Society", *Contemporary Central Asia* (New Delhi), vol 1., no.1, 1997, pp.15-16.

In Kazakhstan all the television and radio facilities along with printing facilities and supplies are owned by the government of the Republic. Media organs are being put under strict restrictions. Newspapers with questionable content have found themselves without easy access to paper or printers, while blatantly intolerant ones such as Kazakhs nationalist *Kazakhshaya, Pravda* and *Orda* have been banned. In one incident, two television news correspondents from Russia were denied entry for television facilities and their Kazakh press cards were revoked. They were prevented from transmitting further reports to Moscow after broadcasting a story regarding the difficulties that were being faced by the ethnic Russian press.³¹

In the weeks before elections of March 1994, the press suffered serious restrictions and was unable to criticize violations. Following an attack on electoral procedures, *Max*, a popular independent Television and Radio company was shutdown. A number of newspapers were forced to stop printing, because of paper shortage and mechanical problems at the state-owned printing facilities. Reports of intimidation of independent journalists were noticed in several cities.³²

On 22 March 2002, there were reports that the independent media outlets are shutdown throughout the country in a blatant and unceremonious manner. The citizens of Kazakhstan are being denied access to objective

³¹ Ian Bremmer and Cory Welt, "The Trouble with Democracy in Kazakhstan" *Central Asian Survey*, vo.15, no.2, 1996, p.187.

³² *Ibid.*, p.188.

and quality information and depriving the opposition of an opportunity to express its views and appeal to the general public. Eight T.V. companies and several national newspaper web sites are being blocked and attacked by hackers.³³ This is a clear manifestation of the violation of the freedom of the press provision guaranteed by the Constitution of the country.

The methods employed to suppress independent media outlets are characterized by considerable diversity. They are the exercise of the 'telephone law' to anonymous threats to settle scores with uncooperative journalists. Some "recalcitrant" T.V. channels or newspapers are being sued for enormous amounts of money for defamation of character. In addition, Kazakhstan has as many as fifty different governmental or quasi-governmental inspectorates, oversight agencies and disciplinary bodies which serve as checks and balance over the press and these bodies make life miserable for media outlets. Kazakhstan has several anti-media laws regulating the electronic media outlets. Under Kazakh law, fifty percent of a T.V. Channel's airtime has to be devoted to Kazakh language programming, and no more than fifty percent of the total programming can consist of rebroadcast foreign programmes, a category that includes Russian language programming.³⁴ Recently, a popular privately owned T.V. company called

³³ "Independent Media are being hunted down", *Izvestia*, 22 March 2002, p.4., *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol.54, No.13, 2002, p.13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.13.

TAN was shutdown. *TAN* complied meticulously with the requirements of Kazakhstan's cumbersome laws.³⁵

So far as the print media is concerned, Kazakh readers have recently lost the opportunity to read the newspapers such as *Republika* (Republic), *Vremya PO* (PO Time) *Nanchnyoms*, *Ponedelnika* (Let's start on Monday), *Republika –2000-* (Republika 2000), and *Soldat* (Soldier).

Members of Kazakhstan's Democratic Choice recently wrote a letter to U.S. President George W. Bush, and they plan to initiate hearings in the European parliament on freedom of speech in Kazakhstan. At a round table discussion of news media issues in early March 2002, members of independent parties and movements with the support of embassies and international organisations, signed an appeal to the republic's parliament. In their appeal, they asked the parliament to take a number of urgent measures to improve the situation with regard to the media; prohibiting executive branch authorities and presidential offices from interfering in the functioning of media outlets. They have also requested to amend the news media law to stiffen penalties for officials who harass, persecute or pressurise journalists and finally they once more requested the parliament to require government owned print shops to print independent news publications.³⁶

³⁵ . Ibid., p.13.

³⁶ . Ibid., p.14..

At a congress of journalists in Astana in mid-March 2002, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev sternly exhorted journalists to report more positive news. Instead of dissecting society's sore points, he advised reporters to talk only "about our stability and calm" which constitutes the foundation of the country's information security. He also indicated that any attempt to question the "lack of alternatives" to his chosen political cause was unacceptable. In his view Kazakhstan has absolutely no need for privately owned news outlets that "have become locked in endless media wars".³⁷

Presently, the government owns or controls about 80 % of all media outlets and the ruling regime considers that remaining 20 % pose a great threat to the Government. Due to such reasons, the government is continuing offensive against independent media in Kazakhstan.

On 23 March 2002, the offices of Kazakhstan's privately owned weekly *Delovoye obozreniye Respublika* (Republic Business Review) in Almaty burned down. The Weekly newspapers management suspect the hands of the government behind the attack. The ruling regime considers this weekly as an opposition publication. And, immediately after this incident, four unidentified individuals broke into the offices of another opposition newspaper, *Soldat* (soldier), beat up two reporters and stole equipment and personal belongings.

³⁷ Ibid., p.14.

The opposition movement, Kazakhstan's Democratic Choice has called these occurrences as a "war on independent media outlets that have the courage to tell the truth, a war on journalists, freedom of speech, and the right to one's own opinion".³⁸

On 20 June, 2002, Genredy Bondernko, head of the Pavoldar branch of Kazakhstan's Democratic Choice (KDC) sent a letter to the Russian authorities asking them to protect KDC from the Kazakh authorities. In his letter Mr. Bondernko asked President Putin, State Duma speaker and Russian Ambassador to Kazakhstan to give moral and political support to the opposition. In his letter he said that KDC supporters are being prosecuted on trumped up charges, the organisation is being prevented from assembling for peaceful rallies, and even indoor gatherings are prohibited. Party members have been placed under illegal surveillance, their personal and business phones are being tapped, and their mail is being opened. Mr. Bondarenko also said that "his party is seeking democratic and legal reforms in Kazakhstan so that all people irrespective of their nationality or social status can consider themselves as full fledged citizens with equal rights."³⁹

On 28 August, 2002, Sergei Duvanov, a well known Kazakh journalist who edits a newsletter entitled "Human Rights in Kazakhstan and the World" was brutally beaten up in Alma-Ata. The assailants threatened

³⁸. "Opposition News paper Office burns in Almaty", *Kaommersant*, March 23, 2002, p.10, *Current Digest of the Post soviet Press*, vol. 54, No.21, 2002., p.16.

³⁹. "Kazakh Opposition writes Letter to the President", *kommorsant*, June 20, 2002, p.20, *Current Digest of Post Soviet Press*, vol. 54, No. 25, 2002, p.18.

to kill him. The 52 year old journalist is a very popular figure in Kazakhstan and he has been well known for many years for his harsh criticism of President Nazarbayev. Back in 1997, this criticism prompted the authorities to shutdown a Television and Radio broadcasting company that Duvanov headed.⁴⁰

The Chapter III of the Constitution of Kazakhstan entitled "Civil Rights and Freedom guarantees the citizens of the Republic, the political, civil rights and freedom of expression and freedom of speech".⁴¹ But, the reality is completely different from the statute book. The Constitutional obligations have never been implemented. Hence, the onslaught on media is being carried out unabatedly.

KYRGYZSTAN:

As a sequel to the Gorbachev's policy of Glasnost in the Soviet system, the Kyrgyzstan's government provided the relative freedom in the field of mass media and also an opportunity for freedom of expression to the opposition and political parties in the republic. The Kyrgyz President, Askar Akayev issued a decree on media in 1993 which defined the status of television and radio. It goes..."Television and Radio should carryout state broadcasting policy, observe the pluralism of views and non-interference in

⁴⁰ "Opponent of Nazarbayev Beaten up in Alma-Ata," *Izvestia* 30 August , 2002, p.2. *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol 54, No.35, 2002, p.15.

⁴¹ "Kazakhstan: Republic Constitution", *FBIS Report : Central Euroasia*, nos. 48-54, 13 April 1993, pp.68-79.

the affairs of parties, movements and ministries".⁴² This decree of the President tantamounts to the transgression of freedom of speech and expression. In January 1993, the kyrgyz authorities arrested television journalists, Akhmadshokh Komila, Khairiddin Kosymov and Khurshed Nazarov. The objective presentation of information to their viewers was considered as a crime by the authorities. Later on, these journalists were beaten up.⁴³

In September 1994, parliamentary opposition was seeking to topple the republic's President Askar Akayev. However, the press generally reported in favour of the President. But the authorities controlled the uprising methodically and "knocked down" influential people from Akayev's staff accusing them of corruption. In the absence of strong opposition political parties, the press has occupied the opposition niche. However, some of the newspapers did report the events as they occurred and even went on to directly insult the President. This served as a ground for shutting down the former parliamentary newspapers *Svobodniye gory* (Free Mountains). The moderate opposition newspaper *Politika* (politics) was also removed from the political stage.⁴⁴

⁴² "Kyrgyz Radio and T.V. see threat to Independence", Kyrgyz Television, 9 June 1995, *Summary of World Broadcast*, Part-I, 13 June 1995, p SU /2328 G/1.

⁴³ "Repression against Tajik Journalist must be stopped" *Izvestia*, 4 June, 1993, p.2. *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol. 45, no.22, 30 June 1993, p.23.

⁴⁴ "Krygyzia : Large scale Presidential Manoeuvres", *Mokovskiye Novosti*, 11 September 1994, p.10; *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol 46, no.36, 5 October 1994, p.21.

In November 1997, the Kyrgyz Parliament approved a news media legislation. According to the law the journalist have no right to report the information concerning the persons who are under criminal investigation until a verdict has been delivered. It also prevented the media from entering either public or private premises without permission or from making public the information about the private lives of individuals. Journalists were also required to disclose the sources of information upon request.⁴⁵

In the opinion of Western experts, Kyrgyz publications are the most independent in all of Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan is often described as an “Island of Democracy” in Central Asia.⁴⁶ But in the view of Ambassador Jerzy Wiedaw of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s Bishkek office what really exists in the sphere of freedom of the press in Kyrgyzstan is “structural’ censorship. Among the attributes of this censorship he includes the state’s monopoly on paper, control over paper imports, increases in office rents, control over distribution, the channeling of advertising towards friendly media outlets and the barring of advertisements of unfriendly outlets and the filing of defamation of lawsuits that entail the payment of incredibly stiff fines.⁴⁷ The Kyrgyz journalists always complain that they have good legislation on the news media but they are not being implemented by the authorities. They attribute the failure for

⁴⁵ . “News Media Law”, *Keesings Record of World Events*, vol 43, no.11, 1997, p.41912.

⁴⁶ . Brudney A.A., “Kyrgyzstan : Island of Democracy”, *Contemporary Central Asia*, vol-11, no.2, September 1998, p.6.

⁴⁷ . “Democracy and the Media in Kyrgyzstan”, *Nezavismaya Gazeta*, 6 May , 2000, p.5, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol 52, no.19, 2000, p.18.

the non-enforcement of the legislation to the existence of old *nomenklatura* in power. To perpetuate their own vested interests the old *nomenklatura* does not enforce the laws on media.

According to the Public Foundation for promoting the Development of Democracy and supporting the News Media, the Kyrgyz press can be divided into four categories: pro government publications, which include *Slovo Kyrgyzstan*, *Kyrgyz tuusu* and *Erkin too*; the pro-Western *Times of Central Asia* and the magazine *Kyrgyzstan Journal*; and the pro-Muslim *Islam madaniyaty* and *Shariat*. There are currently a total of 415 registered print media outlets⁴⁸ in Kyrgyzstan (96% of them are newspapers), although no more than a third are actually operating. The largest and most influential are *Bishkek's Delo*. No, *Asaba* and *Slovo Kyrgyzstana* as well as the only daily *Vecherny Bishkek*, now virtually crushed under the weight of taxes. More than 60% of the newspapers are published in Russian.⁴⁹

Western experts acknowledge that, from political standpoint, Kyrgyz Publications are the most independent in all of Central Asia. However, their degree of effectiveness remains rather low. Moreover, attempts by government authorities to introduce censorship or other forms of control are triggering a wave of closings under the onslaught of economic problems and publisher bankruptcy. Only a fifth of the Kyrgyz print media are financially independent and belong to their editorial staffs. The rest are

⁴⁸. "Kyrgyzstan: introductory Survey" *Europa World Year Book* 2001, 42 edition, vol 11, (Europa Publications, 2001), p.2380.

⁴⁹. "Democracy and the Media in Kyrgyzstan", no.47, p.19.

owned by government bodies at various levels and non governmental organisations. Employees of the Foundation for promoting the Development of Democracy and supporting the News media say that this is partly due to the fact that perceptions of the press as an instrument of propaganda make every high official want to have his own newspaper, magazine, newsletter or T.V. show. Ministries, local administrations, and mayor's offices all have their own media outlets.

Electronic media are also trying to make their presence felt in the political arena today. Out of 17 registered television companies in Kyrgyzstan, only seven are actually on the air. The state television and radio company also broadcasts programming from Russian television and radio and Russian public Television. The Russian Public Television news programmes are extremely popular and Kyrgyz prefer them to local news programming. Most of the local programmes are broadcast in Russian and a small number are broadcast in Kyrgyz language.⁵⁰

There are 14 registered radio stations in the republic, with 12 of them are actually on the air. Most of them are broadcast in Russian language. All the commercial radio companies rebroadcast programmes from Russian stations (after all, about 70% of the people of Bishkek) use Russian as their principal language. And some radio companies carry international news as well i.e. *BBC*, *voice of America*, *Radio liberty* and *British News*. In remote and mountaneous districts of the republic, radio is

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.19.

the only medium available for advertising and political campaign during the presidential electioneering.

To put it in a nutshell, the entire situation in the sphere of freedom of the press in Kyrgyzstan can be summed up that the censorship mechanism and media regulating authorities are hanging as a sword of Damocles over the functioning of print and electronic media outlets. The strangulation of freedom of the press and the suppression of opposition political movements and dissidents have become a order of the day in the present day Kyrgyz republic. The strict surveillance over the media and the opposition leaders is hindering the emergence of strong civil society and ultimately the democratic and political processes are at the receiving end.

Tajikistan:

With the introduction of Gorbachev's policy of *Glasnost* (Openness), Tajikistan had to provide an opportunity for the freedom of speech and expression to the members of the opposition, religious clergy and to the channels of mass media (print and electronic) in the Republic.⁵¹

The initiation of *Glasnost* (Openness) policy resulted into the disappearance of *Glavlit* (Soviet Censor Mechanism) and the subsequent freedom of press allowed the expression of hitherto suppressed dissenting voices. The initial years of *Glasnost* policies provided ample opportunity to

⁵¹ . Hafizullah Emadi, "State, Ideology and Islamic Resurgence in Tajikistan", *Central Asian Survey* (Oxford), vol.-13, no.4., 1994, p.570.

the pluralism of opinion through mass media outlets but it was not completely free from the censorship mechanism in Tajikistan.

During the beginning of the *Glasnost* period, the opposition in Tajikistan started several newspapers of its own in the Republic. Some of them were published in Moscow to escape from censorship and were sent to Tajikistan where the authorities used to block their distribution. Opposition publications within the Republic started appearing. These publications had to face difficulties in getting materials published, hurdles in distribution, and sometimes had to face official harassment. Therefore, it was not certain to estimate the reach of these publications to their readership.⁵²

During the presidential elections of 1991, the opposition's efforts to publicise its views during the electioneering were sharply restricted by the ruling regime and the opposition's coverage of the mass media came under a strict surveillance.

The direct impact of the Gorbachev era reforms in Tajikistan was moderate in nature. Since the changes affected less reforms and more of tactical maneuvers which were intended to preserve the Communist party's hold on power under the changed conditions. After 1989, the Republic's officials took sane cautious steps towards reforms, but they were failed to satisfy people who sought more than token gestures. The press was under control in this period in the republic. During the legislative elections of February 1990, no opposition party had legal status. The regime sti'll

⁵² . Murriel Atkin, n.23, p.287.

controlled the broadcast media and ensured that advocates of change were denied access to it. The party's hold over the print media was still strong.⁵³

On 19 February, 1994, the Tajik president, Imamoli Rakhmanov took direct control of the Republic's broadcast media through a decree. According to the president, the measure was taken to ensure "objective and unbiased reporting" and "to stabilize the social and political situation as soon as possible."⁵⁴

The Government resumed control over the country's three newspapers on 13 April, 1994, under a decree issued by the Supreme Soviet Chairman (head of the state) Imamoli Rakhmanov. The newspapers which were taken under control by the Tajik authorities were *Jumhuriat*, the Russian language *Narodnaya Gazeta* and the Uzbek language *Khalq Ovozi*.⁵⁵

The late Soviet era regime in Tajikistan made several conciliatory gestures towards the Uzbek minority of the republic. Book stores, especially for Uzbek language publication were opened in three southern cities. A new Uzbek language weekly; two other Uzbek newspapers were already published in the Republic. For years, schools which taught in Uzbek language had operated in districts with a high concentration of Uzbek

⁵³ . *Ibid.*, p.283.

⁵⁴ . "Presidential Takeover of Broadcast Media", *Keesing's Record of World Events*, vol, 40, no.2, 1994, p.39864.

⁵⁵ . "Government Takeover of Press", *Keesing's Record of the World Events*, vol 40, no.4, 1994, p.39962.

inhabitants. Roughly a tenth of the Republic's radio broadcasts were in Uzbek language.⁵⁶

According to international observers, the legislative elections in 1995 were not fair since several opposition parties were not permitted to participate in the elections. The Tajikistan "regime's censorship of the broadcast and print media remained tight".⁵⁷ A circular was sent by the Tajik authorities to the republic's media in 1995, advising them to avoid providing any kind of information to local and foreign journalists unless they were cleared from the presidential press services.⁵⁸

The Democratic Party of Tajikistan condemned the censorship of media by the Tajik government and considered it as a gross violation of the rights of journalists and the press. According to the party, the introduction of censorship is unjustifiable and insisted on its cancellation.

During the period of December 1992 and August 1995, six newspapers were officially banned and over 20 were closed down. Within a period of three years, thirty seven journalists were killed and dozens were imprisoned and more than 100 correspondents were forced to emigrate from the Republic.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ . Murriel Atkin, n.23, p.299.

⁵⁷ . Ibid., p.301.

⁵⁸ . "Tajik Democratic Party speaks against Media warning" *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, 8 August 1995; and *Interfax Agency*, 7 August, 1995, *Summary of World Broadcast*, (Part-I), 10 August, 1995, p.SU/2380G/2.

⁵⁹ . Ibid., p.SU/238G/2.

In December 1998, the Tajikistan authorities marked the fiftieth anniversary of Declaration of Human Rights of United Nations by banning one political party. Tajikistan's Supreme Court debarred the National Unity Party from functioning in the republic. The Supreme Court's Press Centre released a statement saying that the decision was made in response to an official request from the Tajik Ministry of justice in which the ministry "emphasized the Party's involvement in staging an attempted military coup in the northern part of the country in early November 1998".⁶⁰

Tajikistan's authorities have demonstrated that they have their own concept of human rights. The pretext for banning the party was alleged indictment of the party in the military coup of 1998. But more than these allegations, it was the deliberate elimination of the party that prompted the authorities to influence the false judgement by the Supreme Court against the National Unity Party.

The political suppression and persecutions of media personalities and journalists is going on unabatedly in the republic of Tajikistan. On 7 July, 2001, Russian police officers detained Dododzhon Atovulloyev, editor in chief of the Tajik opposition newspaper *Charogiruz* at she:remetyevo- 1 Airport. The Russian police arrested the journalist at the request of the Tajik authorities, where Mr. Atovulloyev has been accused of insulting the

⁶⁰ "Tajik Paradoxes", *Nezavisiniaya Gazeta*, p.2, 16 December, 1998, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol 50, no.50, 1998, p.20.

president and calling for the violent overthrow of the existing order and inciting ethnic, racial and religious hatred.⁶¹

Opposition leaders claim that the specific charges against Mr. Atovulloyev are ridiculous. He is a graduate of Moscow State University's journalism department and the founder and publisher of Tajikistan's first independent newspapers i.e. *Charogi ruz*. After the civil war broke out in Tajikistan in 1992, Mr. Atavullayov migrated to Moscow and continued to publish a "newspaper in exile". His independent news paper criticized not only the authorities but opposition as well. Tajik ruling regime was particularly irritated by articles, some of them reprinted in Russian news media, claiming that prominent figures in the Tajik leadership were involved in narcotics trafficking.⁶²

According to the *kommersant's* sources, in the middle of 2001, Mr. Atovulloyev organised and chaired the Forum of Central Asian Democratic forces, held in Brussels and London. The 'Atovulloyev affair' has already attracted the attention of international organisations. The cases involving 'insulted presidents' are seen as politically manipulated cases by the ruling regime to weaken the opposition movements and the emergence of independent media outlets in Tajikistan.

⁶¹ . "Battle with Dissent begins in Russia", *kommersant*, 7 July, 2001, p.1. *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol.53, no.27, 2001, p.17.

⁶² . *Ibid.*, p.18.

Turkmenistan:

The Gorbachev's policy of *Glasnost* (Openness) made great strides in the arena of mass media in the late 1980's of the Soviet Union. But the policy did not exert much influence on Turkmenistan. During the period of 1985 and 1990 Turkmenistan was characterized by the shortage of both electronic and print media (Television and newspapers).

There are very less newspapers in the Republic. Some of these are *Ala Watan* established by Democratic Party *Halk Maslakhaty* (pro – government), *Turkmenskaya Iskra*, *Dayandh Turken Illi* and (Turkmen Nation). The Turkmen Government strictly controls the amount and nature of information to be made available to the people. There are no independent media in the Republic. The Constitution of the republic does not explicitly ban censorship on media but the entire electronic and print media is subjected to the stringent regulations of the committee for the protection of state secrets.⁶³

The early 1990's of independent Turkmenistan was completely marked by the strangulation of freedom of the press and the onslaught of mass media outlets in the Republic. For instance, in January 1993, the Turkmen Government arrested Miorbobo Mirrakhimov, a former Chairman of Tajikistan's national radio and television in Ashqabad.⁶⁴ In October 1994, the president, Saparmurad Niyazov, ordered the closure of

⁶³ . Phool Badan, n.24, p.160.

⁶⁴ . "Repression against Tajk Journalist must be stopped", n.43, p.23.

independent Russian language weekly, *Subbota*, citing a shortage of paper as a pretext.⁶⁵ Turkmenistan security agents also detained Valadimir Kuleshov, a correspondent of *Izvestia* in Ashqabad since 1985 and he was being accused of “anti-Turkmenistan propagandist”.⁶⁶

So far as the actual role of media in Turkmenistan is concerned, it is basically being used as an important instrument of nationalist propaganda and nation building. Most of the times, the official media used to extol the President of the republic of Turkmenistan. The high profile social title of *Turkmenbashi* (Leader of the Turkmen people) was conferred upon the president of Turkmenistan i.e. Saparmurad Niyazov. This title is used as the symbol of nation building. The president has been projected himself as the representative of the national solidarity. The main T.V. news programme called *Watan Habarlar Geplesigi* (national news) always focuses entire its programming over president's declarations and activities. The T.V. programme starts with a good wish and prayer for *Turkmenbashi* (leader of the Turkmen people). While speaking about the president the news bulletin of T.V. and Radio addresses as compassionate, merciful and esteemed president of the Republic. Similarly, everyday, large photos of *Turkmenbashi* cover the first pages of all newspapers. In addition to media propaganda, hundreds of places and institutions have been named or

⁶⁵ . “Closure of Russian—Language Newspaper”, *Keesings Record of World Events*, vol-40, no.10, 1994, p.40231.

⁶⁶ . Michael Ochs, “Turkmenistan: The quest for stability and Control” in Karen Dawisha and Bruce parrots, (eds), n.23, p.332.

renamed as *Turkmenbashi* all around Turkmenistan. *Turkmenbashi's* posters and sculptures decorate the main buildings of Ashgabat.⁶⁷

In recent years, the Turkmen authorities have increased their onslaught and suppression on both print and electronic media outlets. According to the *Nezavisimaya gazeta* sources, (29 August, 2002) Turkmen authorities have recently announced that the Russian newspapers or magazines will not be supplied because such publications have few subscribers and delivery system is very expensive. It was only a pretext. A few years ago the president of the Republic banned Russian newspapers, but later on he was forced to relent under foreign pressure.⁶⁸

The critical attitude of the Russian press towards the undemocratic tendencies of the president Niyazov invited his wrath and as a result, Turkmen state Television stopped broadcasting Russian programmes long ago and now it airs only brief and censored clips. The censorship manual of the republic prohibits not only materials containing any objective information about the prevailing political, economic, social and cultural trends or situation in the country, but also news bulletins about the overthrow of dictators and military coups in other parts of the world. President Niyazov fears that objective presentation of news information could lead to "unhealthy" associations and sentiments among the people of the Republic. Indeed, the people living in rural areas do not watch

⁶⁷ . Ahmet. T. Kuru, "Between the State and Cultural Zones: Nation Building in Turkmenistan, *Central Asian Survey*, vol 21, n.1, March, 2002, p.75.

⁶⁸ . "Caution, Information Doors are closing", *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 29 August ,2002, p.5. *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol.54, no.35 2002, pp.15-16.

Niyazov's television. Day after day, the official state television programmes proclaim that citizens are living in happiness and plenty, then broadcast joyful songs about the *Turkmenbashi* and shows joyful dancing. Then it proclaims again that the Turkmen are the happiest people on earth and it will be followed by more singing and dancing.⁶⁹

The cable televisions of the republic were banned recently. The step was taken because with their satellite antennas the cable companies were picking up mostly Russian T.V. which enabled them to acquire a rather large audience.

Theoretically, any resident of Ashgabat, for instance, can log onto the Internet. But even in the relatively prosperous capital city, only few families have computers. And given the average monthly wage, which is equivalent to \$30, internet use has become an unaffordable and costly luxury. Moreover, even those who do have computers and money are very much scared that their visiting web sites, e-mails and telephone conversations are monitored by the republic's intelligence and surveillance authorities.⁷⁰

Any ruling regime, if it is authoritative by nature knows very well that a lack of free flow of information can help the regime to stay in power as long as possible. That is precisely what Turkmenistan ruling regime is doing. For this reason, Saparmurad Niyazov's main efforts are directed at

⁶⁹ . Ibid., p.16.

⁷⁰ . Ibid., p.16.

sterilizing the Turkmen's intellectual world. In this process, firstly, Russian television programmes were banned from Turkmen state television. Then they were pulled from the Cable T.V. channels as well. But, Russian newspapers were still around to spread ideological contagion. Now, the regime has destroyed this last source of pernicious influence too. Moreover, private individuals were also barred from bringing Russian newspapers into Niyazov's domain. With this, the entire republic has plunged into a total information blackout.

Uzbekistan:

With the introduction of Gorbachev's policy of *Glasnost* (Openness) the hitherto suppressed mass media heaved a sigh of relief in the newly independent republic of Uzbekistan. The previously government owned and controlled media began to present information on a variety of formerly forbidden subjects and for the first time since 1920's a relative pluralism of ideas and opinions developed in the local Uzbek press. Apart from the official print media, several small and 'independent' newspapers such as *Birlik* (later *Mustaqil haftalik*), *Erk*, *Tumaris* and *Munosobat* were circulated openly. These independent newspapers shed their hitherto underground status.⁷¹

However, newly born relative freedom of the press quickly began to erode. As one editor of a large 'official' Uzbek-language newspaper put it:

⁷¹ . David Tyson, "The role of unofficial audio media in contemporary Uzbekistan", *Central Asian Survey* (Oxford), vol, 13, no.2, 1994, p.283.

“At the end of 1990 the government – appointed Censor who had been working at the paper and who had almost never censored any of our material was replaced. The newly appointed censor permitted no direct criticism of the government and we had to stop writing about the various opposition parties and movements. The same thing happened to all the state run newspapers and coincided with a crackdown on the political opposition. It was like we returned to Brezhnev period of stagnation”.⁷²

The mounting pressure of the government forced the newspaper *Munosobat* to cease its operation and *Erk*, another newspaper was subjected to strict censorship and eventually it had to drastically reduce its circulation and was later on intermittently banned from public sale. *Mustaqil Haftalik* (newspaper) was forced to go underground and later on it was printed in Moscow for the illegal distribution in Uzbekistan.⁷³

The two newspapers i.e. ‘*Mustaqil haftalik*’ and ‘*Erk*’ played a crucial role in the social and political spheres by presenting ‘alternative; information which otherwise could not have been obtained from the official government controlled media. These newspapers documented local events and trends which otherwise would not have received the coverage by the official press.

The adoption of a law on mass media in 1991 by the Uzbek authorities tried to suppress opposition movement. Article 2 of the law

⁷² . Ibid., p.183.

⁷³ . Ibid., p.183.

prohibited censorship. Article 4 of the law also prohibited “use of mass media...to propagandize war, violence, cruelty or racial, national or religious exclusivity to disseminate pornography or for the purpose of committing other criminally punishable actions”. The law guaranteed the right to organizations to establish mass media, registered political parties, public associations and religious association (Art 5). But in reality the Uzbek authorities did not provide the right to the individuals to establish mass media outlets.⁷⁴

The Government controls all forms of mass media outlets and is completely intolerant of any independent political activity. In the late 1992 the Uzbek Government tightened censorship not only of their own news media but also on Russian publications that were printed on decentralized basis in Tashkent and were distributed from there throughout the Republic and to neighbouring regions of other republics. The local censors used to be on duty every evening in the printshop of the SHARK. After reading through the pages of *Izvestia*, *Pravda*, *Kamosomolskaya Pravda*, *Argumenty –2- Fakty* and other publications transmitted from Moscow by facsimile, they simply impose a veto until a matter is cleared by the higher authorities.⁷⁵

At the end of 1997, the legislators of Uzbekistan gave a present to their “fourth estate”, i./e. a law on media. The new law on media, like the

⁷⁴ . William Fierman, “Political Development in Uzbekistan Democratization?” in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot, eds., n. 23, p.376.

⁷⁵ . “Uzbekistan has introduced Censorship of all Media”, *Izveštia*, 6 November, 1992, p.2, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol 44, no.45, 9 December, 1992, p.24.

previous ones – the law on protection of the professional activity of journalists and the law on freedom of access to information – is based on a postulate that is not being implemented in practice. It is spelled out in Art 4: “Censorship of the news media is not allowed in the Republic of Uzbekistan. No one has the right to demand that reports and articles intended for publication be cleared in advance, that alterations be made in their texts or that they be pulled from print (the airwaves) in their entirety”. This provision is also found in art 67 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan.⁷⁶

The various lofty provisions enshrined in different laws and the Constitution of the Republic do not have any effect on the existing institution of censorship. In the post -independence era the state’s control over the press has become much tighter than the Soviet times. Every page of every publication comes under intense scrutiny.

During Gorbachev’s period, editors were always free to publish even banned materials but in today’s Uzbekistan editors cannot do so, because Censorship inspectors are committed to protect the so called state secrets. The very word Censor is banned in the Constitution of the republic but in reality censorship mechanism is working in the sphere of freedom of the press.

⁷⁶ . “New Laws Are Not Making Life Better”, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 31 January, 1998, p.5, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol 50, no:5 1998, p.20

As a rule, newspapers or other publications with which the censor finds faults a certain number of times are shutdown. The Tashkent newspaper *Panorama* recently suffered this fate. Among all the Russian newspapers, only *Trud* and *Argumenty I fakty* are currently distributed officially in Uzbekistan. Recently, private Russian language radio stations are the latest to fall under the wheels of Censorship mechanism. The office for press of the Tashkent Province administration issued a decision suspending their broadcasting operations. According to an official of the state television and radio company, five radio stations were prohibited from broadcasting in Tashkent.

Though, the Constitution and other laws on news media ban censorship on freedom of the press, the censorship mechanism is existing in practice. Uzbek journalists know what they can write and what is forbidden; they cannot criticize the government or the country's political leaders, comment on the activities of government agencies or offer their own views of events in the country or the world if those views differ from the official viewpoint.⁷⁷ The journalists also cannot afford to talk about the banned political parties, movements or their leaders. The problems of the country such as economic or political crisis, shadow economy, Mafia, corruption, a black market, poverty, unemployment or prostitution cannot be written or analysed by the journalists in the media.

⁷⁷ . "Not a Step Without Censorship", *Nezavisimay Gazeta*, p.5, 10 August, 2001, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol. 53, no33, 2001, p.18.

The republic's government has simple explanation for its control of media i.e. protection of state secrets. But in reality, most of the print and electronic media outlets that have been suppressed in the republic have not violated the provisions of the state secrets. All the times, media outlets are suppressed or banned on flimsy grounds.

According to human rights advocate Mikhail Ardzinev, the general state of the present media in the republic is compared to that of Uzbek society. Since the Uzbek society is not open and fluid in its social nature, hence, the media cannot be independent in its existence. It is very difficult to find even 20 newspapers that are published regularly. Out of 719 media outlets – including 507 newspapers and 157 magazines are registered in the republic, many of them do not last long, while others come out only once every two or three months. Moreover, the most popular periodicals are eventually shutdown on various pretexts.

The opposition press has been unable to function in Uzbekistan for long time now. It publishes its material from abroad. The Uzbek newspaper *Erk* (Freedom) is printed in Turkey and until recently the newspaper *Birlik* (Unity) and the magazine *Kharakt* were printed in Moscow and later on brought into Uzbekistan.

According to the *Kommersant* sources (14 September, 2001), recently human rights activists from Russia, Uzbekistan and the U.S. held a press conference in Moscow. They described the persecution of activists of Islamic organisations and the utter impoverishment of the people of

Uzbekistan. In the opinion of Lyudmila Aleksyeva, Chairperson of the Moscow. Helsinki group, the human rights situation is very worse in Uzbekistan. The independent journalist Inera Safargaliyeva said that pervasive censorship is prevailing in the republic of Uzbekistan in the sphere of mass media. Human rights advocate Vasila Inoyatova said that more than 7,000 Uzbek from different Islamic organisations are languishing in the republic's over crowded prisons and their living conditions are pathetic and miserable.⁷⁸

On 13 May 2001, Rustan Shagulyamev, Chairman of Uzbekistan's State Committee on the press who oversees the country's 800 newspapers and magazines met the editors of Uzbek newspapers and informed them that Erkin Kamilov, head of the Inspectorate for safeguarding state secrets has been dismissed from his office and Mr. Kamilov had been Uzbekistan's chief censor for the last 45 years. This statement caused great joy among Uzbek journalists. According to the calculations of Alo Khodzhayev, editor in chief of the *Grant Radio Station*, since 1 January 2000, the Inspectorate for safeguarding the state secrets has pulled 15 articles from the government newspaper *Pravda Vostoka* (Truth the East) alone⁷⁹

The dismissal of Mr. Kamilov has caused only superficial joy among the journalists. It did not bring about any concrete change in the existing censorship mechanism. The concept of 'state secret' has not disappeared

⁷⁸ "Human Rights Advocates attack Uabekistan", *Kammersant*, 14 September, 2001, p.7, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol.53, no.37, 2001, p.19.

⁷⁹ "Uzbekistanh Gets Rid of Chief Censor", *Kammersant*, 15 May, 2002, p.11, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol54, no.20, 2002, P.17.

with the dismissal of the chief censor. The censor has gone but the censorship has come to stay in the republic. Till today in the republic of Uzbekistan if any journalist or editor divulges any of the so called state secrets, he would certainly be put on trial and his media outlet will be closed down.

Apart from the developments in the sphere of mass media in individual countries, the Russian culture, language and the Russian print and electronic media have come under a great onslaught in the entire Central Asian states as a whole. The Russian delegation to the recently concluded session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva reiterated their concerns over discrimination against Russian speaking residents in all sphere of the society in the former Soviet republics in general and Central Asia in particular.⁸⁰ The delegation said that ethnic Russians are not allowed to take part in elections and their print and electronic media outlets are not allowed to function smoothly in the Central Asian republics. The delegation also said that given the inhospitable prevailing conditions in the republics, the emigration of ethnic Russians to the Russian Federation is increasing unabatedly. Apart from this, the rights, equalities and opportunities of Russians are being trampled upon by the state authorities in Central Asia.

⁸⁰ "Russians in Central Asia are Increasingly Isolated", *Izvestia*, 4 April, 2003, p.4, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol. 55, no.4, 2003, p.9.

And while Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are not rejecting the cultural legacy of the former mother country, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are pursuing the anti Russian policy in their republics in the region.

The situation of Russian culture is very grave in Uzbekistan. For instance, the term 'Soviet' is no longer in use here. Textbooks and teaching materials published before 1993 (most which are in Russian) are being withdrawn from schools and libraries. And it is not only ideological literature that is being confiscated, but also textbooks on foreign language, mathematics, physics, medicine and so on.

The picture is even more depressing in Turkmenistan. In 2000, a mandatory higher school entrance examination was introduced to test proficiency in the Turkmen language. Most Russian speaking residents of the country do not speak the national language (Turkmen) and hence, ethnic Russians are effectively debarred from getting higher education. Since Turkmenistan became independent, all Russian language newspapers at the city, district and province levels have been closed and replaced by Turkmen—Russian papers that give only about 10% of their space to articles in Russian language.⁸¹

Only one Russian-language newspaper remains in the republic i.e. *Neitratly Turkmenistan*, (Neutral Turkmenistan) but it too offers very little coverage of the life and problems of the Russian speaking residents. A presidential decree prohibits the distribution of newspapers and magazines

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 10.

from the Russian Federation. Out of Russia's various television channels, only *ORT* (Russian Public Television) is being broadcasted and that too for a few hours a day. Turkmenistan's own television system, broadcasts only 10 minutes a day in Russian language.⁸² Cable T.V. services carrying Russian programming are prohibited in the republic and Internet cafes have been shutdown, so people in Turkmenistan, unlike the citizens of other Central Asian republics, are deprived of even these alternative sources of information from Russia. In Kazakhstan, the quota of foreign television programming (Russian) has been cut from 50 percent to 20 percent of total airtime. The Russian T.V. channels are available in Kazakhstan on cable, but because of the prevailing high prices, the number of subscribers are less.

Thus, in post-Soviet Central Asian republics, the television and radio programmes in Russian language are declining and the Russian information space is shrinking rapidly. Ultimately it is the ethnic Russians who are living in the region are at the receiving end.

After having analysed various political and authoritarian developments in all the Central Asian republics, we can sum up by saying that the democratic and political processes in the region are still in a nascent stage. Democracy is considered to be the best form of government in the world. And it is only in a democratic form of government that the rights, equalities and opportunities of the citizens are ensured through the Constitutions and are implemented through the formally established rules

⁸² . Ibid., p.10.

and procedures through the statutory laws. The success of democratic form of government depends upon the vibrant, vigilant and strong civil society. In a modern democratic country, the civil society plays a vital role in serving the interests of the citizens of the land. Civil society acts as mediator between the citizens and state. It is the civil society in a democratic country which ensures the strict upholding of rights and opportunities of the citizens guaranteed by the Constitutions and civil society also protects the rights and opportunities of the citizenship from the possible and potential violations by the state and other institutions. Thus civil society protects the citizenship from the arbitrary and authoritarian tendencies of the government and acts as a constant vigilant and a check on the government. The free and independent mass media constitutes the crux of the dynamic civil society. So far as the Central Asian Republics are concerned, the absence of free and independent freedom of the press has created a big vacuum in the democratic and political processes of the region. The Central Asian Republics do not have any democratic history from the very beginning. Given the absence of democratic history, it is obvious that Central Asian republics do not have strong democratic political culture. During the Communist regime under Soviet Union, the Central Asian region as a whole, reeled under undemocratic and totalitarian Communist Party of the Soviet Union. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian republics emerged as sovereign independent nations and adopted Western oriented presidential form of democratic system. Till

1990, the democratic form of government was quite alien to Central Asian region. With their independence they adopted democratic form of presidential system. The Central Asian republics do have only 12 years of democratic experience. For obvious reasons, twelve years is a very short period in a country's democratic history and it is too early to expect these republics to develop a strong and viable democratic culture. Presently, the newly born democracy in Central Asia is in the hands of presidents who are the products of former authoritarian Communist system of the Soviet Union. The prevailing presidential form of government in Central Asian region is undemocratic and authoritarian in its nature.

The Soviet Communist era trained presidents of the region are perpetuating their own vested interests to stay in power for a long time. Hence, they are not in favour of rapid democratization of their polity in the region. Given the absence of democratic culture in the Central Asian history the region's democratic polity is still remained in a nascent stage and the civil societies in the region are being trampled upon by the authoritarian presidential regimes. The mass media as an important component of a sound civil society is being strangled by the ruling regimes in the region. Though, there are legislations on the freedom of the press and mass media in Central Asia, in practice, they are not being implemented and the statutory legislations on the mass media have remained as paper tigers and there is a yawning gap between theory and practice. Thus, the absence of democratic history in the past and the present nascent, fragile democratic

political culture are mainly responsible for the absence of a free and independent media in Central Asian Republics.

CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter – V

Conclusion

Freedom of the press or media is a strong indicator of the successful functioning of a modern democratic country. The free and independent media plays a pivotal role in strengthening the civil society which is a sine quo non for the success of any modern democratic society. So far as the role and presence of mass media outlets in Central Asian Republics are concerned, the democratically elected authoritarian regimes in the region are curbing the voice of free and independent media. The nascent and tenuous political process is responsible for the strangulation of freedom of the press in the region. The genesis of the present fragile and weak political and democratic processes in Central Asian Republics can be attributable to the authoritarian Communist regime in the former Soviet Union.

In the aftermath of the October Revolution, the Bolshevik party came into power and Marxism – Leninism became the official ideology of the Soviet state. After the consolidation of the Bolshevik regime, the main aim of the Soviet Government was to eradicate all bourgeoisie norms and values of the society. The media was one of them. The media was considered to be the most dangerous and potent apparatus of the bourgeoisie. Since the establishment of the Bolshevik regime in 1917 in the former Soviet Union, the media had been regarded as an instrument of propaganda for the Soviet Communist ideology rather than as a source of information for the general public. The Soviet Union had exercised its control over media, education,

and sports, social and cultural activities of the Soviet people. The main objective behind it was to propagate Communist ideology. There were no private owned schools, newspapers, and journals or radio and television. All these means of communications were owned by the state due to which the social and political life of the people had been controlled in general and the media in particular. The media was working under the complete control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The media had to get the prior approval from the censor board (*Glavlit*) before publishing any printed material. According to *Glavlit*, every published material should be in conformity with the existing Soviet system. Thus, the Soviet media lost its relevance in the eyes of the Soviet people.

The assumption of Gorbachev as General Secretary of the CPSU on 11 March 1985 brought about major changes in liquidating the Russian traditions of official state secrecy and control over the media. Since 1985, when Gorbachev introduced radical economic and political reforms to reinvigorate the CPSU's authority, the Central Asian Republics as elsewhere in the former Soviet Union witnessed the emergence of various groups and movements clamouring for cultural autonomy which had never been addressed openly since the consolidation of the Bolshevik regime in the mid 1920's. The Gorbachev's reform policies affected virtually every sphere of the Soviet life. One of the most important policies was that of *Glasnost* i.e. (Openness) which permitted Soviet print and electronic media to address various problems of the day. Gorbachev's policy of *Glasnost* had

provided an impetus to the freedom of the press and established pluralism of opinion in the former Soviet Union.

The policy of *Glasnost* led to the publication of hitherto suppressed and banned books, literature and unpublished works. The Soviet bastion of official secrecy was blown up. Many unpublished material on CPSU, Soviet state, *Glavlit* (Soviet censor board) and the party policy in cultural affairs came to the light. To some extent, the Central Asian republics had to implement the spirit of *Glasnost* and guaranteed democratic norms, primacy of human rights, social justice and priority of universal human values in international relations in the form of new law on the News Media.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 resulted into the emergence of five independent and sovereign Central Asian republics i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Since then, all these five Central Asian states have been engaged in the consolidation of democratic and political processes. The Soviet Communist regime suppressed the democratic freedom in these countries. Hence, these CARs inherited a fragile, tenuous political, economic and social fabric as a historical legacy from the Soviet Union.

With the independence in 1991, the Central Asian republics inherited the censorship mechanism on media (print and electronic) as a part of Soviet political legacy and the censorship is still in operation in these countries. The ruling elites in these countries have curbed the freedom of expression (media) by applying the brutal and sometimes insidious methods because the governments want to enforce

the censorship mechanism very strictly to further their own vested interests. They support freedom of the press in theory while undermining it in practice.

In countries like Uzbekistan News Media is still being censored even though censorship is legally prohibited both by the country's Constitution and laws like "On protecting the professional activities of journalists" and "On the News Media". The censorship mechanism developed during the Soviet times is still in operation in Central Asia but it varies from country to country. For example, in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan media is relatively free but in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan it is under the control of their respective governments. In these countries, no page of the newspaper is accepted for printing unless a stamp by the State Press Committee inspectors.

The weak and nascent freedom of the press (media) can be attributed to the absence of democratic history in the region. Indeed, Central Asian societies do not have a history of democratic participation in the politics. Popular sovereignty was not an issue in the khanates, where leadership was hereditary. Khans claimed their throne and asserted legitimacy on the basis of their lineage and upholding of the *Sharia* (Islamic law). The *Ulema* were important players in sanctifying Khans and directing the population to submit to their rule. Popular sovereignty was alien to Central Asia. This remained true for the twentieth century experience of the region. The Soviet System and its authoritarian rule did not allow the popular sovereignty to become a political reality. Soviet style democracy made a mockery of

citizen's rights and free political participation. This experience formed the general basis of the elite's mentality. Authoritarianism is a common thread that runs through the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods of Central Asia.

Given the absence of democratic history, it is obvious that Central Asian republics do not have strong democratic political culture. During the Communist regime under Soviet Union, the Central Asian region as a whole, reeled under undemocratic and totalitarian Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the Central Asian republic emerged as sovereign independent nations and adopted Western oriented presidential form of democratic system. The Central Asian republics do have only 12 years of democratic experience. For obvious reasons, twelve years is a very short period in a country's democratic history and it is too early to expect these republics to develop a strong and viable democratic culture. Presently, the newly born democracy in Central Asia is in the hands of presidents who are the products of former authoritarian Communist system of the Soviet Union. The prevailing presidential form of government in Central Asian region is undemocratic and authoritarian in its nature. And, the presidents of the region have their own apprehensions to democratize the polity of the region over night.

The Communist era trained presidents of the region are perpetuating their own vested interests to stay in power for a long time. Hence, they are not in favour of rapid democratization of their polity in the region. Due to

the absence of democratic culture in the Central Asian history the region's democratic polity is still remained in nascent stage and the civil societies in the region are being trampled upon by the authoritarian presidential regimes. The mass media as an important component of a sound civil society is being strangled by the ruling regimes in the region. Though, there are legislations on freedom of the press and mass media in Central Asia, in practice, they are not being implemented and the statutory legislations on the mass media have remained as paper tigers and there is a yawning gap between theory and practice. Thus, we can attribute the absence of free and independent media in the Central Asian republics to the lacking of democratic history in the past and the present nascent and tenuous democratic political culture.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Tashkent, 1992).

Constitution of Turkmenistan, (Ashqabad, 18 May, 1992), nos.691-XII.

“Decree by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Karimov on measures to enhance the role of T.V.and Radio in the social development of Uzbekistan”, *FBIS Report: Central Eurasia*, nos.92-99, 13 May 1996, pp.96-99.

Documents and Materials of Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, 25 May- 9 June 1989 (Moscow ; Novosti Press Agency, 1989).

Documents and Materials of 19th All- Union Conference of the CPSU, June 1988 (Moscow; Novosti Press Agency, 1988).

Documents and Materials of the 12th Special Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 11th Convocation (Moscow; Novosti Press Agency, 1988).

Documents and Materials of 27th CPSU Congress, 25 February 1986 (Moscow; Novosti Press Agency, 1986).

Documents and Materials of Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, 19-20 September 1989 (Moscow; Novosti Press Agency, 1989).

Documents and Materials of 28th Congress of the CPSU, 1990 (Moscow; Novosti Press Agency, 1990).

“Edict by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan: On creating a fund to support the Press of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, *FBIS Report; Central Eurasia*, nos. 120-126, September 1993, pp.93-125.

Gorbachev. M.S., “At the New Stage of Restructuring” (speech at a meeting of the CPSU Central Committee with Executives of the Mass News Media, Ideological Institutions and Creative Unions, 23 September 1988), *Pravda*, 25 September 1988, pp.1-2, *CDSP*, vol. XL , no.39, 26 October 1988, pp.7-9.

-----, “Conviction is the Bulwark of Restructuring”(Speech at the CPSU Central Committee on February 13, 1987), *Pravda*, 14 February 1987, pp.1-2, *CDSP*, vol. XXXIX, no.7 ,18 March 1987, pp.7-13.

-----, "Democratisation is the essence of Restructuring and the essence of Socialism" (Speech at a meeting in the CPSU Central Committee, 8 January 1988), *Pravda*, 13 June 1988, pp.1-4, *CDSP*, vol. XL, no.2, 10 February 1988, pp.1-9.

-----, "On Progress in the Implementation of the Decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the Deepening Restructuring" (Report at the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference, 28 June 1988) *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, 29 June 1988, pp.2-7, *CDSP*, vol. XL, no.26, 27 July 1988, pp.7-11.

-----, "On Restructuring and the Party's Personnel Policy" (Report at the Plenary Session of the CPSU Central Committee, 27 January 1987), *Pravda*, 28 January 1987, *CDSP*, vol. XXXIX, no. 4, 25 February 1987, 9-12.

-----, *Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World* (London; Collins, 1987).

-----, *Political Report to the 27th CPSU Congress : Documents and Resolutions* (New Delhi; Allied Publishers, 1986).

-----, "Restructuring is a Vital Affair of the People" (Speech at the 18th Congress of USSR Trade Unions, 25 February 1987), *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, 20 February 1987, pp.1-2, *CDSP*, vol. XXXIX, no.8, 25 March 1987.

-----, *Selected Speeches and Articles* (Moscow; Progress Publishers, 1986).

-----, *Selected Speeches and Writings* (Oxford; Pergamon Press, 1986).

-----, "Young People are a Creative Force of Revolutionary Renewal" (Speech at the 20th YCL congress, 16 April 1987), *Pravda*, 17 April 1987, pp.1-2. *CDSP*, vol. XXXIX, no.16, 20 May 1987, pp.9-13.

Human Development Report, Uzbekistan 1997 (UNDP Report Tashkent, 1997).

Karpov, V.V., "Improving Nationality Relations, Restructuring and the Task of Literature" (Report at the Plenary Session of the Board of the USSR Writer's Union, March 1988), *Pravda* 23 March 1988, *CDSP*, vol. XL, no. 11, 13 April 1988, pp.12-16.

"Kazakhstan: Republic Constitution", *FBIS Report: Central Eurasia*, nos. 48-54, 19 April 1993, pp.68-79.

"Kyrgyzstan: Republic Constitution", *FBIS Report: Central Eurasia*, nos. 99-105, 9 August 1993, pp.88-101.

“ Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Protecting State Secrets of the Republic of Kazakhstan”, *FBIS report: Central Eurasia*, nos. 106-113, 18 August 1993, pp.93-107.

“Law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: On the Nationwide Discussion of Important Questions of State Life” *Pravda*, 1 July 1987, p.4, *CDSP*, vol. XXXIX, no.28, 12 August 1987, pp.12-15.

“Law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: On the Press and other News media”, *Izvestia*, 20 June 1990, *CDSP*, vol. XLII, no.25, 25 July 1990.

Lenin. V.I., *Selected Works*, vol.2 (Moscow; Foreign Languages Publication House, 1950).

-----, *Selected Works*, vol. 1-3 (Moscow; Progress Publications, 1976).

Markov, G.M., *Report at the Eighth USSR Writer' Congress, June 1986*, *CDSP*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 26, 30 July 1986, pp.14-18.

Mikhalkov. S.V., “Report at the Sixth Congress of Russian Republic Writers, December 11, 1985”, *Pravda*, 12 January 1986, pp.1-4, *CDSP*, vol. XXXVII, no.52, 22 January 1986, pp.8-12.

“N.A. Nazarbayev's address at the Republication Conference of heads of administration and chairman of local Soviets of People's deputies on Constitution of Kazakhstan”, *FBIS Report; Central Eurasia*, nos. 1-7, 13 January, 1993., pp.93-105.

“On Certain Questions of Restructuring the Central Party Press [Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee], *Pravda*, 28 October 1989, pp.6-9, *CDSP*, vol. XLI, no.32, 6 September 1989, pp.21-23.

“On Measures to Strengthen the Physical Facilities of the USSR Journalist's Union and to improve the conditions in which it operates.” (Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Council of Ministers), *Pravda*, 20 August 1987, p.1, *CDSP*, vol. XXXIX, no.33, 16 September 1987, p.19.

“On the Magazine Kommunist” (Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee) *CDSP*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 34, 24 September 1986, 12-14.

“On the Press and other News Media”, adopted by the Supreme Soviet of Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic on 28 June 1991. [http:// www. Inter news. Ru\ books\ media\ kazakhstan 2. html](http://www.internews.ru/books/media/kazakhstan2.html).

Stalin, J., *Marxism and National Question, 1913* (Moscow; Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953).

-----, *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow; Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952).

-----, *Selected Works*, vol. 1-13, (Moscow; Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952).

“Tajikistan Draft Republican Constitution Presented”, *FBIS Report: Central Eurasia*, nos. 52-56, 18 May 1994, pp.92-103.

“The Law on Mass Media enacted by the President of Kyrgyzstan” on 2 July, 1992. <http://www.internews.ru/books/media/kyrgyzstan2.html>.

Secondary Sources

[a] Books.

Bakaya, Ravi M., *The Second Revolution: Democratisation in the USSR* (New Delhi; Patriot Publishers, 1989).

Bacon, Elizabeth E., *Central Asians Under Russian Rule* (Ithaca, New York; Cornell University Press, 1966).

Badan, Phool, *Dynamics of Political Development in Central Asia* (New Delhi; Lancers Books, 2001).

Balzer, Hariey D., *Five Years that shook the world: Gorbachev's Unfinished Revolution* (Boulder; Westview Press, 1964).

Barghoorn, Frederic C., *Soviet Foreign Propaganda* (Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 1964).

Benn, David Wedgewood, *From Glasnost to Freedom to Speech: Soviet Openness and International Relations* (London; Printers, 1992).

Boris, Rumer (ed), *Central Asia in Transition: Dilemmas of Political and Economic Development* (London; M.E. Sharpe, 1996).

Bourdeaux, Michael, *Gorbachev, Glasnost and the Gospel* (London; Hodder and Stranghton, 1990).

Churchward, L.G., *Contemporary Soviet Government* (London; Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968).

Clark, Susan L. (ed), *Gorbachev's Agenda: Changes in Soviet Domestic and Foreign policy* (San Francisco, London; Westview Press, 1989).

Cooper Thomas W. and Others, *Communications Ethics and Global Change* (New York; Longman, 1989).

Dani, Ahmed Hussan, *New light on Central Asia* (Delhi; Renaissance Publishing House, 1993).

Dawisha, Karen and Parrot Bruce, (eds), *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and Caucasus* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Dennis, E. Everette and Robert W. Snyder (eds), *Media and Democracy* (New Jersey; Transactions Publishers, 1998).

Dunlop John. B, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet empire* (New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 1995).

Dyker, David A. (ed), *Soviet Union under Gorbachev: Prospects for Reform* (London; Croom Helm, 1987).

Edward. Allworth, *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule* (New York, London; Columbia University Press, 1967).

Gorbachev, Mikhail S., *October and Perestroika : The Revolution Continues* (Moscow; Novosti Press Agency, 1987).

-----, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (London; Collins, 1987).

Graffy Julian and Nasking Geoffery (eds) *Culture and the Media in the USSR Today* (Baringtoke and London; Macmillan, 1989).

Hopkins, Mark, *Russia's Underground Press: The Chronicle of Current Events* (New York; Praeger Publishers, 1983).

Karimov, Islam, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty First Century: Threats to Security Conditions of Stability and Guarantees for Progress* (Tashkent, 1997).

Lane David, *Soviet society under Perestroika* (London; Unwin Hyman, 1990).

Laqueur, Walter, *The Long Road to Freedom: Russia and Glasnost* (London; Unwin Hymen, 1989).

- Macauley, Martin (ed), *Gorbachev and Perestroika* (London; Macmillan, 1990).
- Malhotra, Vinay Kumar, *Gorbachevian Revolution in the Soviet Union: Collapse or Renewal of Socialism*, (New Delhi; Anmol Publications, 1991).
- Mc Nair Brian , *Glasnost , Perestroika and the Soviet Media* (London; Rontledge, 1991).
- Mehta , Dalpath Singh, *Mass Media in the USSR* (Moscow; Progress Publishers, 1987).
- Mickiwiz, Ellen Propper, *Media in the Russian Public* (New York; Praeger Publishers, 1987).
- Pierce, Richard D, *Russian Central Asia, 1867-1917* (Berkely and Los Angels; University of California Press, 1960).
- Riajul Islam, Kazi A., Kadir and Javed Hussain (ed.), *Central Asia: History, Politics and Culture*, (Karachi; Institute of Central and West Asian Studies, 1999).
- Saifuddin, M., (ed.), *Lenin about the Press* (Prague; International Organisation of Journalists, 1972).
- Shams-ud-din, *Secularisation in the USSR*, (Delhi; Vikash Publishing House, 1982).
- , *Perestroika and Nationality Question in the USSR*, (Delhi; Vikash Publishing House, 1982).
- Sharma, R. R., *Soviet Central Asia: A Marxist Model of Social Change* (Delhi; Macmillan, 1979).
- Shireen, T. Hunter, *Central Asia since Independence*, (Washington D. C, London; The Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Praeger, 1996).
- Solan, Pat Ann, *Constitution: Basic Law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Draft* (London; Lawrence and Wishart, 1924).
- Tauraz Atabaki and John, O'Kane, (eds) *Post Soviet Central Asia*, (London; New York, The International Institute for Asian Studies, 1998).
- Vaidyanath R., *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics: A Study in Soviet Nationalities Policy* (New Delhi; People's Publications House, 1967).

Wheeler, G., *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia* (London; Weidenfelda and Nicolson, 1964).

-----., *The People's of Soviet Central Asia* (London; The Bodley Head, 1969).

White, Stephen, *Gorbachev in Power* (London; Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Yuriy Kulchik, Andry Fadin and Victor Sergev, *Central Asia after the Empire* (London; Pluto Press and Chicago with Transnational Institute, 1996).

[b] Articles and Journals

Abazov, Rafis, "Democracy in Kyrgyzstan: In the context of recent elections", *Contemporary Central Asia* (New Delhi), vol.4, nos.1-2, April-August 2000, pp.51-58.

Akbarzadeh, Shahram, "Political Shape of Central Asia," *Central Asian Survey* (Oxford), vol.16,no.4, December 1997, pp.517-542.

-----., "Nation Building in Uzbekistan", *Central Asian Survey* (Oxford), vol.15, no.1, 1996, pp.23-32.

Anderson ,John, "Constitutional developments in Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey* (Oxford), vol.16,no.3, September 1997,pp.301-320.

-----., "Authoritarian Political Developments in Central Asia: The Case of Turkmenistan", *Central Asian Survey* (Oxford), vol.14, no.4, 1995, pp.509-527.

Ataov,Turkkaya , "Central Asia on the Threshold of the 21st Century", *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* (New Delhi), vol.1, no.3, October-December 1997, pp.66-75.

Badan Phool, "Emerging Political System in the post-Soviet period", *India Quarterly* (New Delhi), vol.57, no.3, July-September 2001, pp.97-118.

-----., "Modernization in Central Asia", *Journal of Central Asian Studie*(Srinagar), vol.10, no.1, 1999, pp.9-32.

Bal, Idris, "Instruments of Soviet Control in the Central Asia", *Eurasian Studies* (Ankara), no.2, Summer 1996, pp.97-113.

Benningson A. and C. Lenercier Quelquejay, "The history of Kazakh Press", *Central Asian Review* (London), vol.13, no.2, 1966, pp.150-163.

Bialer, Seweryn, "Gorbachev's Programme of Change: Sources, Significance, Prospects", *Political Science Quarterly* (New York), vol.103, no.3, Fall 1998, pp.403-460.

Bremmer, Ian and Welt, Cory, "The Trouble with Democracy in Kazakhstan", *Central Asian Survey* (Oxford), vol.15, no.2, 1996, pp.179-199.

Brown, Bess, "Public Role in Perestroika in Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey* (Oxford), vol.9, no.1, 1990, pp.87-96.

Brundy, A.A., "Kyrgyzstan :Island of Democracy", *Contemporary Central Asia* (Oxford), vol.11, no.2, September 1998, pp.6-8.

Chenoy, A.M., "Political and Economic processes in Central Asian Republics", *International Studies* (New Delhi), vol.34, no.3, July-September 1997, pp.301-312.

"Closure of Russian-Language Newspaper", *Keesings Record of World Events*, vol.40, no.10, 1994, p.40231.

" Government takeover of Press", *Keesings Record of World Events*, vol.40, no.10, 1994, p.40231.

"Kazakhstan : Introductory Survey", *Europa World Year Book*, 42nd Edition, vol.2(London, 2001), pp.2261-2267.

Kubicek, Paul, "Authoritarianism in Central Asia: Curse or Cure?", *Third World Quarterly*(London), vol.19, no.1, 1998, pp.29-43.

"Kyrgyz Radio and T.V. see threat to Independence", *Kyrgyz Television* , 9 June 1995, *Summary of World Broadcast* (Part-1), June 1995, p.SU/2328G/1.

"Kyrgyzstan: Introductory Survey", *Europa World Year Book*, 42nd Edition, vol.2 (London), 2001, pp.2376-2382.

Matveena, Anna, "Democratization Legitimacy and Political Change in Central Asia", *International Affairs* (London), vol.75. no.1, January 1999, pp.23-44.

"New Media Law", *Keesings Records of World Events*, vol.43, no.11, 1997, p.41912.

Palat, Madhavan. K, "Emergence of Central Asia", *Indian Historical Review* (New Delhi), vol.18, nos.1-2, July 1991 and January 1992, pp.76-92.

Patnayak Ajay, "Challenges to State Building in Tajikistan", *Contemporary Central Asia*, (New Delhi), vol.3, no.2, August 1999, pp.33-39.

"Presidential takeover of broadcast media", *Keesings Record of World Events*, vol.40, no.2, 1994, pp.39864.

"Repression against Tajik Journalist must be stopped", *Izvestia*, 4 June 1993, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol.45, no.22, 30 June 1993, p.23.

"Tajik Democratic Party speaks against media warning", *ITAR-TASS news agency*, 8 August 1995 and *Interfax News Agency*, 7 August 1995, *Summary of World Broadcast* (art-1), 10 August 1995, p.SU/2380G/1.

"Tajikistan: Introductory Survey", *Europa World Year Book*, 42nd Edition, vol.2(London), 2001, pp.3791-3799.

Tyson, David, The role of unofficial audio media in contemporary Uzbekistan", *Central Asian Survey* (Oxford), vol.13, no.2, 1994, pp.283-293.

"Uzbekistan has introduced Censorship of all media", *Izvestia*, 6 November 1992, *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*, vol.44, no.45, 9 December 1992, pp.23-24.

"Uzbekistan Introductory Survey", *Europa World Year Book*, 42nd Edition, vol.2 (London), 2001, pp.4277-4282.

