

ROLE OF MEDIA IN DEMOCRACY: DOES GLOBALIZATION AFFECT MEDIA'S ROLE IN THE CONTEXT OF BANGLADESH ?

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to analyze the effect of globalization in determining the role of media in a democracy from the theoretical points of view. The paper is basically based on reviews of secondary literature. The findings of the study substantiates that media can play a lead role for the establishment of democracy in its true sense. Media can act like a bridge between people and the government. But in the era of globalization, the role of the media has been changed a bit. The power of globalization and the institutional change that the world has been facing strike the media sector as well. In discussing globalization and media, an attempt has been made to conceptualize all the themes in the perspectives of Bangladesh . The problems, the media of Bangladesh have been facing in the age of globalization will be discussed in this paper. Are the problems in the media sector created due to globalized media or are there any other issues involved in the case of Bangladesh ? These questions will also be answered in this article. What is necessary at this stage is to ensure free press for performing the democratic role of media.

INTRODUCTION

Liberal democracy became a major form of governance throughout the world in 1980s with conquer of apartheid and colonialism and with the fall of Soviet Union . The world experienced the rise of liberal democracy with the declination of some authoritarian regimes which had been called by some scholars like Samuel P. Huntington, John Keane (1991), John Street (2001) as the 'third wave' of democracy. The pace of globalization of media and technology also extended during this period. During this decade, solidarity movement in Poland , the 'Call to People Power' movement in Philippines , Student protest against communist government in China became a symbol of democratic struggle worldwide. Due to the globalization of television news, these events were circulated globally and helped international audience to witness what was happening, why was happening and how was happening? (Shelley, 2001:155). Mass media which constitute the backbone of democracy has a powerful role to play in the process of democratic development not only in the Western liberal democracies but also in the newly-born democracies and in least-developed countries. Media through offering information, shoulders the responsibility of making people think about an issue.

The new media communication is used to persuade active political citizenship which also offers new channel to access to the central operation of democracy, e.g. information provision, voting, deliberation, creating public sphere etc. (Tambini, 1999:305-306). In the era of new media and globalization, mass media have the opportunity to carry out an effective role in a democracy. However, the question is to what extent media performs its role effortlessly in the globalized world? Taking this into consideration, this essay intends to explore the role of media in a democracy and also tries to elucidate to what extent globalization and other factors have strengthened or/and undermined the role of the media in the process of democratic development with special reference to Bangladesh . Secondary data has been collected in the form of various

published documents such as journal articles, paper articles, books, newspapers and internet browsing to write up the paper.

MEANING OF MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

Mass media are the methods of communication such as, language, design, facial expression, print, radio, television, mobile phone, billboards and musical instruments etc to dig up large number of people at the same time. For example, television, when it broadcasts, it goes elsewhere and the people of different places can watch it (Berger, 2002:21-22). In the broadest sense, the media squeezes the television and film entertainment industries, a vast array of regularly published printed material and even public relations and advertising. However, in this electronic age, some new tools of communication become prominent as new media' which includes the Internet, mobile phones, fax lines etc.

Similarly, democracy is a system where people can alter their rulers in a peaceful manner and the government is given the right to rule because the people say it may. The word 'democracy' was coined by ancient Greeks in the 5 th Century BC which means 'rule by the people' that comes from the Greek term '*Demos*' (the people) and '*Kratos*' (rule). Berger in an article defines democracy as "the decision making power by the majority of the people exercised by way of a process that is based on equal rights of participants" (Berger, 2002:21-22). When all features like informed participants, freedom of expression, right to access to public information, rule of law, checks and balances of power, human rights, respects for minorities, respect for women, balance of resources are present, then it can be called democracy.

ROLE OF MEDIA IN DEMOCRACY: FROM THEORETICAL POINT OF VIEW

As a backbone of democracy, mass media can play a vital role in the political structure of each country through disseminating information, enlightening voters, protecting human rights, creating tolerance among groups and helping government to be transparent and accountable. In the present context, the role of the media in a democracy will be discussed from two perspectives.

IDEAL ROLE OF MEDIA IN A DEMOCRACY

In an article, Berger identified four conceptions of an ideal role of media in a democracy. Frederick S. Siebert's (1956) 'Four Theories of the Press' persuaded Berger to a greater extent in this identification. These four conceptions offer imminent into the political facets of journalism and its association with media and media systems (Berger, 2000:83). On the other hand, Street (2001) illustrates the role of media from three perspectives and divides democracy into three types such as liberal (discussed in introduction), direct and deliberative. In the liberal democracy, the press should be free and responsible (Street, 2001:252). Liberal conception perceives media as encouraging the poor and distressing the contented and publishes such news that someone does not fancy publishing. Media is liberated from political forces, owners, advertisers and other related interests.

The watchdog role of the media can be implemented here. Media also assists government to be apparent and answerable to the people by circulating news and views (Berger, 2000:84) which offers a platform for interest groups to announce their anxieties and disputes. For instance, some newspapers like *the Prothom Alo* in Bangladesh are trying to do this sort of job by organizing different round-table meeting on different important issues. However, the changing conditions, such as globalization, ownership pattern, commercialization, political pressure, etc. have made this role more intricate. The major problem associated with this type of democracy is that the participation is influential for the purpose of assortment of representatives. Benjamin Barber and many other critiques disparaged this model for accentuating individual liberty at the expense of the collective goods.

On the other hand, citizens are believed to be involved in the public affairs in the direct democracy. It is such an ideal type which means the mutual apprehension of a common good, 'us' rather than 'me'. In direct democracy, the task of the media is described as the need to generate a sagacity of shared uniqueness and media becomes involved in fashioning a sense of community through exchange of ideas and providing a disciplining mechanism to sentinel against free riding (Street, 2001:267) that creates a anxiety between two roles because one desires open discussion and the other wants propaganda. For instance, direct democracy has resulted in the ascendancy of misinformation and the silencing of conversation in the former Soviet Union . To avoid these inadequacies, this type of democracy has to emphasize media's discursive role with the state being expected to facilitate via subsidy and a regulatory framework that foster the coming out of relatively independent media. This revised version of direct democracy was pinched on early twentieth century which was called 'associated democracy' due to its' over prominence on increasing power to autonomous associations. In this reconfiguration of democracy, the key term dies down to power, propaganda and information. Although the ideal of this democracy have turn out to be central to Western political thinking, however, this has never been functional as a nation-state level.

In deliberative democracy, citizen's sharing in the democratic process must be steered by shrewdness, voting, for instance, should not simply reflect the given preferences but rather follow on a process of all through interface and opinion construction. The media, particularly new media such as the Internet and mobile phone have been contributing to the deliberation system through teledemocracy.

Above discussion substantiates that media and democracy are strongly allied. In the process of democratization all media have a crucial role to play as bastion of democracy – the free flow of news and information is fundamental to the working of democracy.

SOME METAPHORS TO DISCUSS THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN DEMOCRACY

The following six metaphors with examples assist us to comprehend the actual role of the media in a democracy.

Watchdog Role of the Media:

Effective watchdog is crucial in fledgling democracies where the institutions like legislature, judiciaries and other bodies are incapable against the potent or vacillating people. In such a situation, media remain as the only check against the exploitation of power. One of the burning examples of the media's watchdog function is the 'The Watergate Scandal' against Former US President Nixon. A recent allegation report of corruption by *The Prothom Alo* and *The Daily Janakantha* against the then Minister in Charge of Gas and Mining Ministry in Bangladesh in January 2006 compelled the minister to resign from his post. Such role of the media can facilitate to diminish corruption and can strengthen democracy.

Media Can Create Public Sphere:

Hebermas was the pioneer of the term 'public sphere' in media. Habermas was thankful to Kuhn who described public sphere as 'an institutional framework and set of practices which encourage wide and inclusive public debate about issues of social and political importance' (Randall, 1998:3). Moreover, Keane (1991) also defines public spheres as 'micro, meso and macro' levels.

However, public spheres entails a multiplicities of voices that serves as a channel between governors and the governed and as an ground for public dispute that leads to more good policy and decision making. For example, in 2005, the government of Pakistan initiated a debate through media for building a dam in the country. The media arranged a lot of discussions by inviting experts, people from civil society organizations and political leaders etc. After a long debate, government decided not to build a dam in the proposed place and decided to build it in an alternative place.

Media can Act as a Fourth Estate:

Lord Macaulay was the pioneer of the term 'Fourth Estate' in 1832 and illustrated it as 'the emergence of the press to rival the power of the other three great estates; e.g. the Lords both temporal and spiritual and the commons' (Randall, 1998:3). Since then, the press has been widely known as the 'Fourth Estate', a co-equal branch of government that provides the check and balance without which government cannot be effective. For instance, we can refer to the initiative that was taken by the Government of Bangladesh in regards to implement changes in the system of education which was not accepted and supported by the educationists, civic society people and general mass of the country. It was protested from all corners of the society. Media through several reports, views and opinions cautioned the government which resulted withdrawal of the proposed system by the government.

Media can Act as a Mirror of Society:

Now a day, media ensures availability of information on what is going on in the country as well as in each parts of the world. The development of new communication media makes this job more tangible and constructive. Everybody can set both positive and negative aspect of an issue. For instance, the meeting of G-8 groups is covered by most of the media and the protest against these meeting is also covered by the media in the same way. This role of the media helps anti-corruption and good-governance and sometimes works for national reconciliation.

Media can Act smoothly in the Age of Information Super Highway :

The rapid growth of information technology such as Internet has opened up countless new channels for media. It can facilitate to generate communities, make possible dialogue between representatives and the represented. The mobile phone helps people to contact another people of different place immediately through SMS . In rural Bangladesh , many rural communities especially women are connected with village phone through Grameen Telecom . With this service, local communities including women turn out to be more efficient and obtain benefit having direct link to job, weather and health information which help them to be aware of everything (Norris, 2001:42).

Media can create a Market of Ideas:

Media always make people familiar with different ideas. With the initiation of satellite channel, this role of the media becomes easier. Now, people have the access to diverse programmes of different countries. At times, people can employ the success stories of another country to their community and can acquire advantage. It is now possible to take part in any debate through Internet which, in a sense, can help people becoming progressive and democratic.

Globalization and Media in a Democracy: Bangladesh Perspective

In this section, an attempt will be made to discuss factors that have strengthened the role of the media in the age of globalization and also identify threats that have been undermining democratic role of the media in the age of globalization.

Globalization :

Globalization is just to see the world with one eye and the apartheid of the privileged. It is the supreme myth of all that people invested their hopes and dreams in the expectation that the world would come together that was never been (Hirst and Thompson, 1996). Probably this is the view of the skeptis . However, the globalizers like Giddens (1990) and Castells (1996) considered globalization 'as a central driving force behind the rapid social, political factors that are reshaping modern societies and world order' (Rantanen, 2005:5).

Although media and globalization are not always connected mutually, however, both are related.

Marshall McLuhan made a connection by combining 'the medium is the message' with his 'global village'. Globalization has spread all over the world through media and communication which is referred to as 'mediated globalization' by Rantanen (2005:8). In order to connect media and communication together, Tomlinson defines globalization in the following way:

“Globalization refers to the rapidly developing process of complex interactions between societies, cultures, institutions and individuals world-wide. It is a social process which involves a compression of time and space, shrinking distances through a dramatic reduction in the time taken-either physically or representationally- to cross them, so making the world seem smaller and in a certain sense bringing human being 'closer' to one another” (Tomlinson, 1999:165 cited in Street, 2001:170).

It would be wise to discuss these relationships from political economy and cultural perspectives. Political economy is essential to explore how media confront or manipulate existing class and social relation and how different factors such as ownership, advertising and government policies influence media behaviour and content. Cultural study is indispensable to look at how globalization makes the world a 'global village'. However, instead of making detail elaboration about relationship among media and globalization, an attempt is made to have a rational discussion about how globalization has strengthened or undermined the role of media in a democracy.

Does Globalization Strengthen the Role of the Media in a Democracy?

1) From the cultural point of view global market reach worldwide due to the development of radio, TV, books, cinema, music and Internet which has also brought people together. The global media are now able to exchange their ideas, culture, concepts which have reduced the world to a 'global village'. For instance, it is now possible to watch the live telecast of the World Cup football match from less developed Bangladesh to developed USA which show the way towards democracy as everyone is receiving equal opportunity.

2) Globalization fabricates homogeneity that means similar thoughts and principles, identical films and songs are carried into all parts of the world (Street, 2001:173-74). In a democracy, all people should take pleasure in equivalent advantage. For instance, we can witness similar movie in Bangladesh and Norway due to invention of satellite channels.

3) Globalization enhances ideas. With the advancement of Internet and mobile phones, it is now feasible to communicate ideas and information from one part of the world to another part. For instance, in Bangladesh, people having Internet connection can effortlessly share ideas with people staying other parts of the world. Moreover, it enhances communication inequality within and between nations (Herman, et al, 2004:133).

4) Free press is necessary for the successful operation of democracy. Due to globalization and expansion of global media, it becomes a problem for every government to control media. Before 1990, the government of Bangladesh used to control media by imposing several laws. But after the restoration of democracy in 1990s it turns out to be difficult for the government to control media and Internet.

5) Globalization increases competition among different media sectors and thus facilitates construction diversities of neutral programmes. In Bangladesh, there are 19 private TV channels and more than 10 are waiting for government approval. They are now contending with each other for survival. In such a situation, overall standard of the programme is mounting. Nowadays, different political parties, ethnic and religious groups can set up a website and invite deliberation as well as can raise their voice in a particular issue which is one of the key features of democracy.

6) The development of media and communication in the era of globalization affects the traditional pattern of social interaction, helps to build up a good social relationship and helps to realize other people and thus help to strength democracy. Thompson (1995) expressed his

opinion in the following way: “The development of new media and communications does not exist simply in the establishment of new networks for the transmission of information between individuals whose basic social relationship remains intact. Rather the development of media and communications creates new forms of action and interaction which has prevailed for most human history” (Thompson, 1995:8 cited in Rantanen, 2005:9).

7) The globalization carries some values such as rights of women and minority. These messages may remain as hidden but this can help human causes and agitate customary roles. In Bangladesh , the Grameen Telecom has set up ‘Village Phone’ service to the women of rural areas. The poorer women are getting the mobile phones and doing business. Their role in the society has now been changed from housewife to income generation. They have been taking their own decision regarding family .

8) Convergence becomes the new dimension of media in the age of globalization that can help make people aware about any event immediately. In Bangladesh , almost every daily newspaper has its Internet edition through which it offers news to the readers few hours advance than its paper version.

9) In the era of globalization, mass media can be used to encourage active political citizenship. E-mail is used for electronic voting to organize people in some issues that mean that it creates civic network (Tambini, 1999:306). For example, the White House offers people to send direct e-mail to the president's office in order to be acquainted with far-reaching information on government programme. This type of civic networking offers the clearest insights into the emerging patterns of political communication.

Except the positive aspects, globalization has some negative aspects which have undermined the role of the media.

Does Globalization Weaken the Role of the Media in a Democracy?

1) Globalization enhances convergence and in the same way creates media conglomerates like News Corp, Time Warner, Disney, Bertelsmann, and Viacom (Herman et al, 2004:52). Thus it creates global media market. It also creates uneven globalization in terms of economy and digital divide. The income gap between the rich and poor countries in 20 years has grown up from 30 to 1 in 1960 to 80 to 1 in 1995. Per capita income of this countries have fallen in more than 70 countries during this period. Half of the world's total population earn below US\$ 2 per day (Herman, 1999). In the point of digital divide, the picture is even worsening. In 2004, the developing world had 4 times fewer telephones than the developed world, 4 times fewer mobile subscribers per 100 and 8 times less Internet user penetration. Moreover, 87 percent of people live online in the postindustrial societies (Norris, 2001:15). That is why, it can be said that less developed countries can participate in the world market not by them but by the delivery systems created and maintained by the global corporations (Malm and Wallis, 1993 cited in Street, 2001:175).

2) Some experts such as Tambini (1999) claim that globalization of media and communication can create civic network. However, they criticize the role of civic network arguing that it can do

nothing to stroke the real problems for political citizenship such as globalization and social barring. Moreover, they claim that the e-democracy would assist the computer and media firms who will simply take over control of new media (Street, 2001).

3) Sometimes globalization undermines cultural identity and differences and squeezes out local culture and thus becomes a bad force for democracy. In order to understand the point, Benjamin Barber (1997) states:

“McWorld: ‘With or Without resistance, nations with proud traditions of film making independence like France, England, Sweden, India, Indonesia and Japan are in fact gradually succumbing to the irresistible lure of product that is not only predominantly American but, even still indigenous, is rooted in the glamour of the seductive trinity sex, violence and money, set to harmonizing score of American rock and roll” (Street, 2001:174).

4) Corporation control becomes another factor that can weaken the democratic role of the media. The rapid growth of information highway has opened countless new channels for media but also a few opportunities of those channels. Only few media conglomerates own the maximum channels and always try to make profit from that. For instance, Viacom estimated profit of \$105 million when it purchased Paramount in 1994 (Herman, 2004:53). The problem of profit is that they do special emphasize on entertainment rather than important issues. What is sold well – is the programme that they use to make. For example, Disney's 1994 ‘The Lion King' earned over \$300 million (Herman, 2004:54). There are two categories of conglomerates; i) General ii) Communication. First one has no direct relationship with media but has more interest and the second one has direct relation with the media (Street, 2001:126). However, both have the common interest regarding profit and power. The media sector of Bangladesh is also facing this type of problems. Moshaddek Hossain Falu possesses ownership of two TV channels and one newspaper. Moreover, he has some business industry in the country. His main objective is to monopolize business through entrainment programees and broadcast prejudiced news on politics.

5) Concentration of ownership is another problem for media to perform for democracy. Modern power structure of the media is that very few private corporations have possession of media. Only ten corporations dominate the news, information, ideas, entertainment and popular culture world wide (Sussman, 1997:125). In a study conducted by World Bank in 2001 on 97 countries demonstrates that, media monopolies exist throughout the world. Indeed, the media owners are very much conscious of their private benefits and using newspapers and broadcast stations to promote their business interest, cut down their rivals and advance their political and business agenda. In Bangladesh , in case of private TV channel and print media, this is the same. The owners of maximum private channels are mostly business conglomerates as well as rich political leaders. For example, Boushaki TV, NTV, RTV are owned by a minister and a Member of the Parliaments of ruling party. On the other hand, some of the newspapers of Bangladesh are published by gigantic business houses and therefore follow some sort of independent line. But their freedom is profoundly constrained as because of their financial obligation to the corporate authority that own and run the papers. For example, ‘The Daily *Prothom Alo*' along with English Daily ‘*The Daily Star*’ are representing Transcom International, ‘*The Daily Jugantor*’ is representing Jumuna Group of Industries and ‘*The Daily Independent*’ is representing Beximco, another industrial complex in Bangladesh . These owners are doing business and implementing

their own agenda. In Thailand , for example, former Prime Minister owned the only Independent TV Channel to have a monopoly of airwaves (Coronel, 2001).

- 6) The role of the Media turns out to be a problem in the way of commercialization. It leads to the crumple of journalistic standard. Packaged politics fits into the agenda according to the demand of the market. Sales and ratings for advertisers became important and thus hamper investigative reporting and increase the demand for accepting pre packaged materials thus increase the human interest and celebrities rather than serious analysis. In Bangladesh , advertisements are the main sources of income for most of the newspapers. The Grameen Telecom offers lots of advertisement to most of the newspapers. Although the call charge of Grammen phone is expensive, most of the newspaper remains silent knowing the fact that it would reduce the possibility of getting advertisements which would create problems in the publication of newspaper. This type of role of media instigates to harm the reputation of the media as a whole and diminish confidence in the public sphere.

The above discussion allows to pronounce that globalization sometimes, has some good contribution towards strengthening the democratic role of the media, however, in most cases, it undermines this role. Moreover, it can be said that globalization is not the only factor that has undermined the role of the media. There are several other factors which will be discussed here.

OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING MEDIA'S ROLE IN A DEMOCRACY

Political Control:

This is mainly the control of the government. Street (Street, 2001:103) states it as state control. Sometimes, the national government exercises legitimate political power to regulate media in the name of whatever political interests those governments claim to represent (street, 2001:171). This type of control appears from the government in the name of censorship, regulation, torture and harassment of the journalists, distribution of government advertisements and newsprints etc which is mostly evident in the less developed countries where government always remains terrified of the media. In some cases, control of media by the government is seen in the developed countries as well. Due to such tendency, journalists sometimes become afraid of bringing out investigative reports. For instance, few cases of government control will be cited here from Bangladesh as well as from other countries.

The Constitution of Bangladesh pledges freedom of expression and press in clause 39(1) and also kept the balancing theory in the second clause 39(2) by saying 'subject to any reasonable restriction'. This is almost true in the Constitution of Pakistan and Uganda . There are 25 restrictive laws to censor press freedom in Bangladesh which includes Official Secrets Act, 1923, Contempt of Court, 1973, the special Power Act, 1974 etc. In Bangladesh , government still wields indirect influence over the press by way of retaining control over 'favourable lists' of newspaper for state-owned enterprises advertisements and newsprint quota. While BNP were in power (1991-1996), the government withheld advertisements of state-owned enterprises to ' *Dainik Janakantha*' , ' *Ajker Kagoj*' , ' *Dainik Sangbad*' and ' *Bhorer Kagoj*' within a broad definition of objective journalism in order to penalize these newspapers for criticizing their state policy affairs. The incumbent Awami League (1996-2001) government ceased advertisements to

‘ *Dainik Inqilab* ’, ‘ *Dainik Dinkal* ’, ‘ *Weekly Jai Jai Din* ’ (Now becomes daily) , and ‘ *Weekly Evidence* ’ on the basis of impartiality in reporting, coverage of development activities and attitude against the spirit of Bangladesh's war of liberation. In the name of oscillate; the present four-party alliance government (2001-onwards) has ceased advertisements to ‘ *Dainik Janakantha* ’, ‘ *Bhorer Kagoj* ’, ‘ *Ajker Kagoj* ’ and significantly reduced advertisements to opposition newspapers. The following recent statistics will tell the trends of harassment of journalists in Bangladesh .

Table: 1: Attacks on Journalists from May 2005 to April 2006

Events	Victims	Murder	Injured	Attack	Arrest	Case	Jail	threats	Bomb	Others	Total
									attacks		
160	376	2	140	16	3	33	1	167	2	12	376

Source: Khairul, 2006:47

Moreover, 11 journalists were killed and more than 300 were assaulted in this regime (Khairul, 2006). In Uganda , police arrested Managing Director of privately owned Daily Tabloid (then Weekly) for publishing so called ‘pornographic’ news. In November 2002, the then president threatened to close all radio station that offer opposition leader opportunity to speak on air.

Foreign Ownership:

Foreign ownership is another factor that could weaken the role of the media. It came to the less developed countries in the late 1990s. In Malawi , there is a satellite TV channel named ‘Digital Satellite Television’ owned by a South African Company. Zimbabwe also experiences such foreign ownership. However, the main aim of the foreign ownership is to make profit. So they pay little attention to local cultural and democratic issues rather they have been gaining a lot of money from the countries.

The Rise of Spin Doctors:

This becomes a serious problem nowadays in media and journalism. More frequently, journalists are depicted as the keen victims of the dexterous exploitation practiced by political spin doctors . The political important news sometimes appears to be a negligible rephrase of a press release. Sometimes, same stories are seen in other newspapers with the same phrases and approaches. Several journalists do this type of things with an intention to get some sort of interests which is totally depraved from the journalistic point of view (street, 2001:47). This type of spin doctoring was seen in the USA when Clinton was the president. In Bangladesh , we have some journalists like spin doctors who did this thing quite frequently in order to get certain benefits from the government.

Tabloidization:

Tabloidization is not a very new term in media and democracy. The term is related to scandal too. In the tabloid newspapers, it is supposed to publish some sensational news, news of celebrities. It

ignores the investigative and analytical news that the reader want to know. This is detrimental for people's right to information. In Bangladesh we also have this trend in newspapers.

In-Built Weakness of the Professional Journalism:

It is a serious problem that the media is facing nowadays. The weakness of professional journalism will be discussed in five terms.

First one is framing which is a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events (Fog, 2004:13). Sometimes, without going in detail of the story, the reporter writes in such a way that the deep rooted problems are not mentioned. It is actually happened due to the lack of journalistic education and training. In Bangladesh , we have three universities and one training institutes from where 150 graduates came out every year which is not adequate for meeting demands in the media market. That is why; the media groups are compelled to recruite unskilled journalists and thus this type of problems are seen very often.

Second one is bias which entirely conflicting to objective and true reporting. According to John Street , bias is 'to favour one interpretation or to sympathize with one cause' (Street, 2001:17). Sometimes, for political affiliation and other causes, the journalists write the story in such a way that does not expose the fact. It is a 'systematic favouring of one's position'. In Bangladesh , we experience several cases of bias reporting in some newspapers. For instance, *Dainik Dinkal* always publishes reports in favour of the then ruling government and on the other hand, *Dainik Bhorer Kagoj* always favours the opposition which is not helpful for democracy and media.

Third weakness is political partisan which is almost the same like bias. **Fourth one is the uses of official sources.** Intelligence is one of the major prerequisites for a man to be a journalist as he requires collecting in-depth information. In doing so, they entail to use official sources for information. For instance, if a journalist intends to accumulate information on corruption of a minister, he requires using officials associated with the minister. But if he fails to grip the sources; it will be impossible for him to find out authentic information. **Last one is self-censorship** which is very important for modern day's journalism as general public desire to know authentic information from the journalists. It is upto the journalists whether he/she will present accurate and filled information or not. Sometimes, a journalist should be concealed towards truth and objectivity rather than suppressed by the government and owner. Lack of such quality among journalist may impede the role of the media in a democracy.

Weakness of Media Itself:

There are economic and political structure and context of media institutions and the characteristics of the media that hindrance the role of the media in a democracy (Lichtenberg, 1990:103). These factors can be summed up as follows:

- Media organizations are often owned by large corporations with diverse interests of their own. Rupert Murdoch is a classic example of this.
- Media organizations are economic entities that seek to maximize profits. Rupert Murdoch's Star channel is a classic example of this. Star TV is delivered via the Asia satellite and has a

potential reach of 45 million viewers. It gives access to seven out of the ten fastest growing economies and to markets that are worth a fortune in advertising revenue (Street, 2001: 172).

- News media are susceptible to government manipulation, as governments seek to manage the flows of information.
- Characteristics of the media themselves determine how analytical and informative they can be. For example, television rely on moving pictures (seeing is believing) leads to an assumption that what they show is factual. But it is not always true in real sense.
- Media's daily routine is sometimes affects the role of the media. For example, time is money in television and space is money in newspapers. In a way, this sense of the media ignores the real news. Moreover, there is a tendency to ignore context and present raw and meaningless facts in the media. For example, media ignores the hidden interests of the powerful nations in covering some crisis such as Israel-Palestine conflict, Israel-Hezbollah conflict etc.
- Stereotyping roles of the media and generalization sometimes make the democratic role of the media difficult. Western news media, for example, have adopted particular stereotypical frames for looking at Africa as the country of disease, poverty, war, HIV/AIDS etc.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Media can play a lead role for the establishment of democracy in its true sense. Media can act like a bridge between people and the government. But in the era of globalization, the role of the media has changed a bit. The power of globalization and the institutional change that the world has been facing strikes the media sector as well. The free press is necessary for performing the democratic role of media. There are some factors that are contributing to the media for its role to play for democracy. However, there are a lot of factors including globalization that have been undermining the role of the media in a democracy. Now, the question is how far it is possible for media to perform its perfect role for a democracy in this environment? The following recommendations will help media to perform its democratic role effectively.

- Freedom of the press, speech and choice are necessary rather than regulation and scarcity;
 - Market monopoly should be reduced;
- Media should be open to all for enjoyment as well as for information but not for the private gain or profit of business and political leader;
- Public Service Media like BBC model should be set up. It would be a non-state media which both functions enduring prickles in the side of political power and serves as the primary means of communication for citizens living, working, loving and tolerating others within an indisputably pluralist society. It can be a non market and non state media institution;
- Journalists should be professional and should be self-censored; and

- The gap between information poor and information rich should be minimized.

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