**E-CONTENT**

**MJMC,  SEM-IV, PAPER-XIV (CC-402)  
  
 Topic : Press Freedom in India**

**Date : 17-01-2020, TIME : 2.00 P.M.-3.00 P.M.**

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**Press Freedom in India**

Former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee spoke at the opening ceremony of the World Congress of the International Press Institute (IPI), Jan 26-29, 2001, “A free and responsible press is an important pillar of the republican architecture, as essential for a healthy democracy as the legislature or the judiciary.”

Mahatma Gandhi, who was an eminent journalist in his own right, said, “ The sole aim of journalist should be service. The newspaper press is a great power, but just as unchained torrent of water submerges the whole countryside and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within.”

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru while defending press freedom, warned of the danger if it is used irresponsibly, “If there is no responsibility and no obligation attached to it, freedom gradually withers away. This is true of a nation’s freedom and it applies as much to the Press as to any other group, organisation or individual.” A free and vigilant Press is vital to restrain corruption and injustice at least to the extent that public opinion can be roused as a result of press investigations and comments. Information is indispensable for the functioning of a true democracy. People have to be kept informed about current affairs and broad issues — political, social, and economic. Free exchange of ideas and free debate are essentially desirable for the government of a free country.

Press in India has a special role to play as the guardian of democracy. If functions as an extraparliamentary opposition to strengthen the roots of democracy and democratic institutions and to keep the government in check. It has to guard against the erosion of democratic values and create a vocal public opinion for realising the goal of social and economic justice. Most of the raw material for parliamentary questions, motions, and debates comes from the daily press and this is an important tool on which a member often relies. In fact, it is generally the press that provides the background needed to bring the work of Parliament in tune with the demands of time.

Freedom of the Press is controlled by the nature of ownership. Some editors and journalists cannot have adequate freedom of collecting and disseminating facts and offering comments as they are under the pressure of the capitalist owners. It is further pointed out that free collection and dissemination of facts is not possible in the case of newspapers which depend to a large extent on revenue from advertisements as the advertising interests cannot but influence the presentation of news and comments.