**MJMC,  SEM-IV, PAPER-XIII (CC- 401)

 Topic : THE MEDIA AND IDEOLOGY.**

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**THE MEDIA AND IDEOLOGY**

The capitalist system is rarely criticised or challenged. Instead, Marxists suggest that owners shape media content so that only ‘approved’ and conformist views are heard. Miliband (1973) argued that the role of the media is to shape how we think about the world we live in and suggested that audiences are rarely informed about important issues such as inequalities in wealth or why poverty persists. Tunstall and Palmer (1991) suggest that governments are no longer interested in controlling the activities of media owners because they need their support to either gain power or hang onto it.

**SOME EVIDENCE ON THE IDEOLOGICAL NATURE OF OWNERSHIPAND CONTROL** Marxists are suggesting that media owners, wealth holders and the political elite are united in some sort of ideological conspiracy to brainwash the general population. However, it is almost impossible to scientifically gather empirical evidence that supports this hypothesis. Sociologists generally only have anecdotal evidence to confirm their suspicions that concentration of media ownership is damaging democracy. However, Curran’s (2003) detailed systematic examination of the social history of the British press does suggest that the evidence for owner interference in and manipulation of British newspaper content is strong. Curran notes that in the period 1920–50 press barons openly boasted that they ran their newspapers for the express purpose of propaganda that reflected their political views. Curran points out that even when engaged in investigative reporting, the majority of newspapers in Britain have supported the Conservative Party. Curran also notes that the period 1974–92 saw the emergence of Rupert Murdoch. However, Curran rejects the idea that Murdoch is part of unified capitalist elite but acknowledges that Murdoch’s newspapers are conservative in content and strongly supportive of capitalist interests. He argues Murdoch’s motives are economic rather than ideological in that Murdoch believes that right wing economic policies are the key to vast profits. Curran’s analysis of British newspapers suggests that both pluralist and Marxist theories may be mistaken in the way they look at media ownership. He argues the pluralist view that media owners do not intervene in media content is evidentially false. Curran argues that since 2000 there has been even greater intervention by owners such as Murdoch. However, Curran disagrees with Marxists about the motive for this. He notes that the actions of media owners are not collectivised, rather they pursue their economic goals in a ruthlessly individualised way in an attempt to obtain a bigger share of the market than their capitalist competitors.