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### FINDINGS

The media is an integral force in the modern democracies in advancing a just world order to its population. Tracing the history of concepts like “objectivity,” “fairness,” “accuracy,” “freedom of the press,” globally, and the rich history of freedom of press debate in India in the introductory chapter of this research was with the intention to see if the media coverage studied here of the three conflicts (caste conflict, class conflict and national security conflict) did stick with such high principles of journalism or not. The summation of this research would point out a significant and measurable separation of today’s journalism practices in India from such high principles. Withering away from the 1793 French Declaration of the Rights of Man of “the unstrained communication of thoughts and opinions being one of the most precious rights of man,” or the idea of John Mill on the function of the press as “to provide a forum for the continual contestation of truth which was a necessary feature of the democratic process” or the Enlightenment era ideas of press freedom as “objectivity” as “balancing the opposing sides of an issue” or achieving objectivity by the journalists “keeping neutral their wants, tastes, and moral or religious beliefs and curbing wishful thinking and concern himself with proof based on first-hand comparison of reports by credible witnesses” are clearly evident in all the cases studied in

this research. Such a departure was also evident from the freedom of press tradition of Indian press history that once argued for journalism “to communicate ideas and complete truth that would lead to the emergence of a national consciousness” or “the press to be fearless, defy consequences and publish ideas even when it is in disagreement with them just for the purpose of securing that freedom”, or the post-Independence idea of press for “nation building, and symbol of social change”. With departures from the ideals and principles, the media in India has embraced the fifth phase of Post-Privatisation of “information as commodity,” and the size of the media houses, concentrate ownership, profit orientation, reliance on the primary sources and agents of power like government and business etc shape and condition the media coverage and different sides get represented in a highly uneven fashion. Hence, in the instances of mediatized conflicts studied (caste conflict: *Indian Express* and the case study of an upper caste mob torching 55 Dalit houses in Gohana, August 2005; class conflict: *Times of India* and the case study of the workers strike at the Honda factory, Gurgaon July 2005; and national security conflict: *Hindustan Times* and the case study of the attack on Indian parliament, December 2001) the media tend to favour a particular side of the conflict, which always was the status quo side. The reporting of conflicts lacked “fairness,” “accuracy,” and “objectivity” the founding concepts on which the very institutions of media and journalism stand. The way the media covers crucial social conflicts in the areas of class, caste and national security will have an impact on the shape and the nature of the democracy the country would inherit. A more equitable representation of the array of views and voices that surround each conflict, however small or localized or globally linked they are, is mandatory for the survival of a democratic society.

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