

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF IRANIAN PRESS (1979-2004)

Bilqees Seema Bhatkali

ABSTRACT

This research paper includes an analytical study of Iranian Press that covers 25 years, from 1979 to 2004. This period is very important in Iranian press history because of fast and unexpected happening of socio-cultural and political events such as fall of Shah's Empire, emergence of Islamic republic regime, Iran-Iraq's eight years long war and its reconstruction era, presidential elections of 1997, the Press Law of 1985 and then Amendment to it in July 1999 following ban on press publications. The content analysis of qualitative research method was applied in this research paper. The contents of some selected newspapers were also considered as patterns of Iranian press including Kayhan (International), Tehran Times, Ettalaat, Entekhab, Hamshari, Iran Daily, Salam, Akhbar-e-Eghtesad, Asr-e-Azadegan, Zan, Sobh-e-Emrooz and Neshat. Iranian Press Law of 1985 was the second Press Law in post Islamic Revolution period, ratified on March 19, 1986 and executed on January 31, 1987. It was drafted to define responsibilities on press, its rights, and formatting a Supervisory Board of Press. As it was made during the period of Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), it caused restrictions on Press Freedom due to security issues. Mohammad Khatami became the president of Iran in May 1997 that led 226 publications to receive their licenses during 1997. The new Parliament amended the Press Law in July 1999. This amendment and its implementation caused the ban on publications and at least 13 newspapers within one week of April 2000 were closed. This ban continued till following year and 44 other publications were also closed. In 1999, press closures were clearly factional and linked with the publication support for the reformists, such as "Salam, Neshat and Khordad, later Zan and Hoviat-e-Khish."

Thus, the establishment of Association for Iranian Journalists (AIJ) and Iranian Women Journalists Association (ROZA) are the most important and positive efforts of Iranian Press in this period.

Keywords: *Iranian Press; Islamic Revolutionary Movement; Iran-Iraq War; Press Law of 1985; President Khatami's Era; Ban on Press.*

INTRODUCTION

The constructive role of Iranian press prior to the emergence of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the map and world of politics during the Islamic Revolutionary Movement, and its characteristics in post Islamic Revolution is focused in this research paper. The world has witnessed how Iranian press went under a drastic change due to Islamic Revolution in 1979. This revolution not only overthrew the kingdom of Reza Shah Pahlavi but also changed the history of Iranian people culturally, politically, and internationally. The situation of press during this drastic change and the various aspects of press, its past, and projected role in Islamic Republic of Iran is highlighted in this research.

In Islamic Republic of Iran, more than sixty government and public owned newspapers and magazines are published including two women newspapers. Persian is the official language, but some publications are published in English including four newspapers. Neda-e-Islam magazine is in Urdu and one newspaper is also published in French. According to the official statistics of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, there are 2000 journalists including 300 women journalists in Iran. Iranian press has man-dominated working environment and only few women hold executive and decision-making posts.

According to the article nineteen (19) of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Iran in 1975;

- “Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interferences” (ICCPR 1966).
- “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other mediam of choice” (ICCPR 1966).

The role of Iranian Press in pre and post Islamic Revolutionary periods

is so important and should not be ignored. Islamic Republic of Iran has become a regional power in Middle East. The events like eight years led Iran-Iraq war, the reconstruction policies of the country, propagandas of western media against Islamic Revolution, resistance to “Cultural Invasion” and “Brain Drain” made Iranian press aware of international political strategies, as well as responsible before the national and Western media.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To familiarize world especially Pakistani media with Iranian press; its historical background, status, achievements, and failures.
- To highlight Iranian journalists’ contribution to Islamic Revolutionary Movement and their efforts to take stand, resist against western media’s propagation and economic sanctions imposed by world powers after Iran’s growing nuclear program.
- To describe problems and difficulties of Iranian press and finally its struggle for Freedom of Expression after amendment to Press Law of 1985 in July 1999.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The analytical study of Iranian press includes both the “knowledge of” and the “knowledge about”, by covering the drastic political change within the sphere of Islamic Revolution and the emergence of an Islamic Republic state of Iran on the world’s map. In the pre and post Islamic revolutionary periods, Iranian press has been an important source of communication and information for people to exchange their knowledge and make useful efforts to change the political environment. It played a constructive role in reconstruction era of post Islamic revolution of Iran, despite of western media against Iranian Press Law and policies, restrictions on press freedom and protest growing crackdowns on journalists. There are many books and articles that have been written about Iranian press which mostly address the historical background, introduction of publications and journalists, education of journalism and bans.

This research paper focuses on an analytical study of Iranian Press (1979-2004), which is the most critical and historical period in Iranian Press. It covers 25 years of ups and downs of this period. As a theoretical framework, the researcher has divided it in three categories of mass communication theories; Gate Keeping Theory, Agenda Setting Theory, and Framing Theory. These three theories are most relevant to this research work.

Researchers focused on the changes in the gate keeping practice of the Iranian Press due to the revolution which caused ouster of Shah and brought a fundamental change in the whole environment of Iranian Press. Gate Keeping Theory was used to regulate the flow of information. This theory was introduced for the first time by Kurt Lewin in 1947 and he applied it to the food chain. White (1993), turned this theory towards journalism in 1950, further McCombs and Shaw (1972), took it differently, as they observed the effects of the decision of gate keeper. Raza Shah Pahlavi's fall can be referred as a "source" of gate keeping theory and Iranian Press, as it's the "regulator" for flowing of information. When we consider Iranian Press as a whole and the Revolutionary Movement, the events become familiar with the gate keeping theory.

In the drastic changes in Iranian Press in the post Islamic Revolution the Iranian Press experienced its degree of freedom and hypothesized those changes as the improvement in their profession. This emerged as a hope for press freedom which brought all these situations under the Agenda Setting Theory. The Agenda Setting Theory presents media power and its influence on the society. It also tells what issues are important for the society. Walter Lippmann (a columnist of newspaper) introduced this theory in 1922, by concerning, "the media has power to present images to the public as it desires" (Lippmann, 1922). McCombs and Shaw (1993), prepared a research study and investigated the campaigns of presidential elections in the following terms of 1968, 1972 and 1976 by focusing on information and awareness. This research study was helpful to understand the mass media's significant influence on what the voters considered had been effective in solving the major issues. This theory helps to comprehend Iranian Press' role in Iranian society and its influence on political communication system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The events of Islamic Revolutionary Movement and post Islamic Revolution went under sharp observation, interpretation, and professional know-how as a study, and its research circle widened. Framing of news stories by focusing on national and regional events, particularly the Muslim world, shows the changing tendency of Iranian Press towards new dimensions that lead them exercising professionalism. Iran-Iraq's long lasting eight years' war which ended in July 1988; and led the country, nation, and press towards another drastic change was not an ordinary war. The interpretation of foreign media about Imam Khomeini's agreement to the peace resolution as a withdrawal from his revolutionary principles, analyzing

that Iran would shortly form alliance with Western states was a challenging issue for the Iranian Press. What Iranian Press did during this long period of war may be considered as “Framing Theory.” The concept of Framing has expanded to organizations because the theory of framing depends upon how the media focuses on certain issues and events and a field of meanings that media works within it.

Iranian scholar, professor and Journalist Dr. Mehdi Mohsinian Rad has divided the events of post Islamic Revolution period into ten categories. He has drawn an imaginary model which is based on a careful study of seven volumes of daily Kayhan (reprinted) including events from 26-10-1357 to 1-7-1359 (14 Jan. 1978 to 21 Sep. 1980). According to this model, people’s unity is reflected into their mass march towards Islamic Revolution. From the beginning of the victory of revolution, the executions of supporter of Shah’s regime and anti-revolutionists started widely and continued for the next few years. Indifference between leaders and supporters of Islamic Revolution had been arising from time to time. The conspiracy of foreigners against Islamic Revolution had started from the beginning of the revolutionary movement which resulted in the first bombardment of Iraq on Iranian rural and border areas; later it reached to its peak and lasted almost eight years of war. In between, the insurgency and clashes took place and prevailed throughout the country. The assassinations of revolutionary authorities started, and eight persons were killed during the period of this model. According to this model study, executions of Shah Regime’s supporters and anti-revolutionists indicate the highest; and the clashes between Revolutionary authorities and press, the lowest graph of events during this period (Mohsenian-Rad, 2006).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The manifest content for this research is taken as any item on Iranian Press appearing anywhere in newspapers and magazines namely; news stories, editorials, articles, as well as visual sources of news stories, articles/features. All the items were broadly categorized on political orientation or cultural orientation including event-wise content analysis of Iranian Press; Islamic Revolution, Iran-Iraq war, reconstruction era, election of May 1997, and ban of press publications after amendment to Iranian Press Law in 1999. This research paper is based on qualitative analysis of Iranian press in pre and post Islamic Revolution. It includes some contents of two dailies Kayhan (International) and Tehran Times from the early months of 1979 (post Islamic Revolution) as the patterns

of Iranian Press. Other ten dailies and periodicals including *Ettelaat*, *Entekhab*, *Hamshari*, *Iran daily*, *Salam*, *Akhbar-e-Eghtesad*, *Asr-e-Azadegan*, *Zan*, *Sobh-e-Emruz* and *Neshat* were also selected as the patterns of Iranian Press for post Islamic Revolution Era (1979-2004). Iranian National Library of Tehran was used in meeting the selection criteria. Kayhan International and Tehran Times dailies were selected for the research. These dailies are the largest English editions in Islamic Republic of Iran. The articles were selected on two bases:

1. Initially all the available articles on the websites of the selected newspapers were searched out and pooled.
2. The random selection was done by studying a variety of editorials, columns, and articles; this research study has taken into view a wide range of perspectives being offered in the Iranian newspapers which are as follows:

Table 1.

	Name of Publication	Type	Status	Managing Director
1.	Kayhan	Daily	Conservative	Mr. Hossien Shariatmadari
2.	TehranTimes (Eng)	Daily	Conservative	Mr. Abbas Saiim Namin
3.	Entekhab	Daily	Moderate	Dr. Taha Hashemi
4.	Ettelaat	Daily	Centrist	Mr. Seyed. M. Do'ayi
5.	Hamshahri	Daily	Satirical	Mr. Morteza Alviri
6.	Iran Daily (Eng)	Daily	Reformist	Mr. Feredoun Verdinejad
7.	Salam (<i>banned</i>)	Daily	Reformist	Mr. Mousavi KhoeiNiha
8.	Akhbar-e-Eghtesad (<i>banned</i>)	Daily	Reformist	Mr. Ahmed Safai-Far
9.	Asr-e-Azadegan (<i>banned</i>)	Daily	Independent	Mr. Garshasbi
10.	Zan (<i>banned</i>)	Weekly	Reformist	Ms. Faezeh Hashemi

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Press Freedom in Islamic Republic of Iran has been a hot issue for Iranian press and foreign media. In fact, this issue happens to be the bone of contention between law makers and press. Iranian press considers Press Freedom to be the core issue for its publications and their survival.

Determining the status of this issue has been contentious and a challenging job for both parties; press and law makers, public opinion regarding this issue comes at second stage. What is important in this scenario? That is, Iranian government's preference of maintaining portrayal of Islamic Republic of Iran and taking national prestige and security into consideration regarding every matter. Iranian Press underwent rapid changes and took sharp turns after revolution. Their

changes were carried out in the light of new press laws and amendments therein. One cannot understand diversion, improvements, and mutations without taking in account the new Iranian Press Laws. Here is the summary of these changes and their backgrounds. Iranian Press Law of 1985 was the second Press Law in post Islamic Revolution period which was ratified on March 19, 1986 and executed by law on January 31, 1987. This Press Law was drafted to define responsibilities on press, its rights, and formatting a supervisory board of press. As it was made during the period of Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), it caused restrictions on press freedom due to security matters. This period shows a clear picture of decreasing number in the circulations of Iranian newspapers.

Iran has been following the policy of “Neither East nor West” since the evolution of Islamic Revolution. The Press Law was also aimed at preserving and strengthening that policy and destabilizing Imperialistic culture by propagating Islamic culture and values as well as specifying principles of Islamic Republic of Iran. Constructive criticism based on logic and reasons was emphasized by the Press Law of 1985 as the right of the press. Iranian Press Laws have been critical issues in international political context. As world see it in contradiction to Press Freedom. In other words, Press Freedom has been highly controversial topic for Human Rights Watchdog. Western media’s propagation against Islamic Revolution and Press Freedom are frequently highlighted in social media. However Iranian press has played a vital role in creating awareness of international strategies and political interventions among its nation and keeping them alert and committed to their country and national interests by observing the provisions of existing laws and regulations.

Press and Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)

Iraq the neighboring country of Iran attacked this country on 21st September 1980 due to the uprising new crises of defense and security. On the 5th June 1981, *Mediatory Council of Press* that had held talks between government and proprietors / license holders to solve the conflicts suggested to Islamic Revolution Court of Tehran, to place ban on newspapers; consequently the court banned 6 newspapers and weeklies affiliated with the opposition groups. Thus, at the end of spring of 1981 newspapers and periodical of Iran decreased to 62 (Kazim, 1998, pp. 40-141). After that only 4 daily Persian newspapers of Tehran continued their publications; 2 of them were morning newspapers named *Jamhuri-e-Islami* and *Sobheh Azadegan*, and two were evening newspapers including

Ettilaat and Kayhan. Besides these 8 weeklies had been publishing which were as follows: Suroosh (affiliated with IRIB); Javanan-e-Emrooz, weekly Ettelaat; Rah-e-Zainab, Successor of Ettalaat-e-Banvan; Zan-e-Rooz (affiliated with group of Kayhan Press); Ommat (Speaker of Struggling Muslim Movement); Ettehad (affiliated with Toodeh Party); and Ettehad-e-Mardom (Nemati-Aghdam, 2002). At the beginning of the decade of 1980, three religious publications under the titles of Pasdar-e-Islam and Hozeh (both affiliated with Office for Islamic Propagation Organization), Monthly Noor-e-Elm (affiliated with "Jameah Modarraseen" (Scholars' Society), and Kayhan-e-Andeshah magazine (Kayhan Group of Publications), with scientific philosophy and religions content published in Qom in the same year (Bahrapour, 2005). Survey of subjects and contents of religions publications in 1987 indicates that subjects like politics, sociology, book critics, and philosophies had been increasing gradually and were entirely reflected in Pasdar-e-Islam and Kayhan-e- Andeshah publications (Bahrapour, 2005).

Iran-Iraq War and Effective Role of Press

Reporting of events and providing news of battle field had been a tough and risky experience for press during Iran-Iraq war. It is worthy of stating that 26 journalists martyred while performing their duties during 8 years of this war. During this era, the professional journalists and writers showed their tendency and interests towards the subjects such as sports, cinema, social activities, caricatures, family affairs, economy etc. All their journalistic activities were nonpolitical, and many professional publications came into existence. During these years of war, young writers of publications/press were trained by scientific and regular education who paved the ground for bringing change and moving towards progress of this profession and enhancement of quality and contents of publications (Qasemi, 2001, p.134).

Amendment to the Press Law of 1979

One of the most important events during Iran-Iraq war was amendment to the Press Law of 1979; then the ratification of second press law in 1985 after Islamic Revolution. It was characterized by chapters about the duties of publications, their rights and predication of establishing "Press Supervisory Board" (Ansari - Lari, 1996, pp. 151-152). During the war between Iran and Iraq the number of publications decreased in comparison with pre-war times. In fact, this Press Law limited the press activities considering the prevailing conditions of war and security issues (Sharif,

1998). From 1980 to 1988, eighty (80) publications took declarations from the General office of Press, Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance (Ansari-Lari, 1996, pp 151-152). In this period, number of circulations of newspapers and magazines decreased. For instance, circulation of daily Kayhan and daily Ettelaat decreased to one fifth even less than it (Kazim, 1998, pp. 26-27). On the other hand, number of publications of resident Iranians in foreign countries increased rapidly. During these years of war, most of the supporters of Pahlavi regime and anti-Islamic Revolutionists initiated into the publication of newspapers and magazines with political tendency and propagation against Islamic Republic system. During the period of 1978 to 1989, the 88 political newspapers and magazines published in foreign countries totally of which Western Germany had major share. 1987 was at the peak of their activities (Mahdi,2000). But these publications gradually changed their political contents into cultural issues at the end of Iran-Iraq war.

Government owned Publications during Iran-Iraq War

Government started its own publications during Iran-Iraq war which resulted in affiliation of press with government and executive authorities. It was not in favor of independent publications. For instance, in 1985 sixty (60) government-owned newspapers and magazines had been published of which 46% were issued by Executive Offices (Minoo, 1992, p.208). Press was not self-dependent during the war between Iran and Iraq. As a result, press became government spokesperson practically and its role of supervision and assessment of actions of governing bodies was overshadowed (Asadi, 1992, p.81). In this era, we find acute reporting of news and events for security reasons. Photojournalism of Iran performed vital role in interpreting important events of war and presenting breaking news at national and international levels. Iranians photo journalists, especially those who were working for international news agencies in Iran presented the events and news of Iran for global society very well (Pour Yavari, 1990). During this era, due to the war and internal tensions and political satire lost its charm and the press began to focus on socio economic issues. It stopped concentrating itself on political affairs of country. Press had been criticizing America, Israel, and Baas regime of Iraq strongly (Sadr, 2002, pp.84-85).

In addition, since December 1984 a new trend began in satire. Keumars Saberi Momeni in Gol Agha magazine and the article of two columns in

daily Ettelaat under the title of “*Do Kalameh Harfeh Hesaab*” (some meaningful talking) tried to show that they could highlight and analyze national and global issues without losing prestige and values.

This introduced new trend of political satire to the public and satirized some critical issues (Sadr, 2002, p.1381). During these years’ number of religions, cultural and political publications magazines also increased. Women’s publications were also stopped under the influence of war. Only 9 of exclusive women publications started publishing their issues. The most important of them were: Shahid-e-Banvan, Tarjuman-e-Bunyad-e-Shaheed, and Enghelab-e-Islami which published in November 1981. Mahjubah magazine in English, Kausar a literary and artistic periodical of women published in Tehran in 1987. Al Tahireh magazine in Arabic was published in 1988 in Tehran by Islamic Thoughts Foundation for foreign countries (Masoomeh, 1992). One of the characteristics of this era was the contemporary publishing of weekly Kayhan-e-Hawaie affiliated with Kayhan Organizations in Iran, Washington, and some other cities of Europe and Asia which resulted in increasing of circulation between 35,000 to 40,000 in 1986 which was less than 1000 in 1982. After a while, daily Ettelaat (London), and dailies, Qods, Ettelaat, Khorasan and Hamshahri were published world-wide (Reza, 1999).

Press and Post War Era

War lasted in Iran-Iraq for eight years; from April 1979 to March 1984. Iraqi deployment of toxic chemical weapons against Iran was investigated and declared its implication on March 21 officially by a United Nations team of experts. It was delegated by the Secretary General on March 29, 1984. Security Council condemned the use of chemicals which had left 3500 victims. The end of 8 years’ war between Iran and Iraq was a start of new era for the journalists. In this era, in addition to economic reconstruction (1989-1997), cultural and political fields also had some significant changes. During the “Reconstruction” era which began in 1989 with the first year of 5 years economic, social, and cultural development program and continued till 1997. Two years before the end of second development program, interference of government was extremely included in agenda and successfully implemented in economic field more than others. In cultural field, on the contrary to this agenda, government was still implementing press policies and system of delivering of financial aids to press, was effective (Bahrapour, 2001a).

Some of the constructive activities had been as follows:

- Formation of Managing Board of Critics, Writers and Film Interpretation of Iranian Press.
- Establishment of Press Cooperative Company.
- Beginning of professional education in press.
- Establishment of “Center for studies and Research of Media” in order to do research on press and journalism.
- Formation of Association for Sport Publications of Iran.”
- Admission of students in continuous education of Mass Communications and conducting seminars on problems of Iranian press (Qasemi, 2001, pp.135-157).

The main factors of increasing the number of publications are as follows:

- The basic factor was socio-cultural changes in Iran and world during these years which caused communications revolution at international level, becoming public opinions important, human resources development and dominant change in public, increase in population and urbanization, development of qualitative and quantitative higher education and growth of political alliances (Bahrapour, 2002). The qualitative and quantitative growth of publications indicate that press has become a part of public life as an important source of information and contrary to development of mass communications it has been resisting for holding its higher stand. From 1988 onwards government’s efforts for giving financial aids in the form of foreign currencies played important role in strengthening financial roots of press (Naderan & Abdoli, 2001). In post Iran-Iraq war era, there had been some problems and difficulties that were challenging for press. It included non-compromising situation between political parties and government over status and performance of press and publications especially independent publications (Bahrapour, 2001b). The scientific, literary, and specialized magazines had extra ordinary growth; for instance, 162 declaration licenses were issued for these kinds of publications in 1991 (Fareeba, 2001). Youth magazine *Funoon* with scientific and professional methods, published in 1989.
- Some of the publications of that period had been *Koodak Va Naujavan* (affiliated with *Kayhan Org.*), *Salam Bachaha* (a magazine of Office for Islamic Propagation Qom Educational Center),

Suroosh-e-Koodakan (IRIB publication), Aaftabgardan (exclusive edition of Hamshahri newspaper) and monthly Baran (Exclusive edition of Owghaf Organization) (Ali, 1998). The political and cultural publications in Persian had been publishing in foreign countries (mostly in Germany, “England, Sweden and France) and the major part of their contents consisted of standing against the Islamic Republic of Iran’s system (Mahdi, 2000). By the end of war in summer 1988 and after the demise of Imam Khomeini, in following year, political disputes and tensions aroused in press more than ever and effected the contents and targets of caricature in publications because of non-active existence of political parties and groups in the society, spokesperson of parties and existing thinking and political trends. Beginning of Gol Aagha magazine in autumn 1990 which had been a caricature magazine became a turning point in press publications. It led the press towards a political caricature movement. After a period, again caricatures of social authorities with observation of social and religions matters went under printing and for this reason political caricatures developed rapidly (Sadr, 2002, pp.51-52). The newspaper also included morning dailies of Tehran e.g. Salam in 1991, Hamshahri in 1993 and Iran in 1996 (Nemati-Aghdam, 2002). During the “Constructive Era” of Iran after long lasted war of 8 years, this country faced tension between government and judiciary over how to consider press violence. The other important events have been: Exhibition of publications, establishment of schools of journalism, formation and identification of Muslim journalists’ Society, elections of Society for Critics and Writers of Cinemas, and selection of Representative of press managing directors for Press Supervisory Board, establishment of the First Electronic Society of Iranian Journalists, and awarding annual rewards for selected articles (Qasemi, 2001, p.135).

Press and Khatami’s Ara

The election of May 1997 has been the most historical event of post Islamic Revolution of Iran and Iranian Press. Khatami stressed on a civil society, governmental accountability, and freedom during his presidential election campaign. He also promised a Free Press which provides every citizen with a voice to express his feelings and opinions about national issues and political interests of his country. In a free press Journalists keep an eye on the government services, corruption, and violation of civil

rights. Ayatollah Mohajerani became Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance who had a good reputation as a broad-minded clergy man. His appointment was a turning point in the Iranian Press that led 226 publications to receive their licenses during 1997.

It was a good start but eventually, some newspapers were also banned in the name of violation of vague and enforced regulations. This period has been very difficult for the press. The new parliament amended the Press Law in July 1999. The amendment to the Press law and its implementation caused the ban on publications and at least 13 newspapers within one week of April 2000 were closed. This ban continued till following year and 44 other publications were also closed one by one. The next Parliament wanted to come out from these crises by changing the Press Law. But it was not possible because the supreme leader Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei took stand against it and did not allow continuing this debate. So, the parliament stepped back in August 2000 before this dream would come true.

Iranian Press over the four years of Khatami's presidency was not in a stable condition. The journalists and publications faced more controversial situation during his regime. There were numerous closures which were showing red signals to this profession. President Khatami was a reformist politician. His era was a challenging time for Iranian Press and publications. His cabinet and other reformist politicians encountered controversial situations on "Independent Press" and this agenda ran into numerous difficulties which resulted in press closures and trials of journalists. They were mostly brought before the courts by the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), Iranian Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and State-run Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB). The publications which were closed in Khatami's era and the journalists who faced trials in his regime come under the Chapter 6 of Iranian Press Law of 1985 which defines Violations in its articles of 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 29.

Daily "*Jameah*" was the first newspaper which was charged and closed under the clause of Article 24 for revealing the secret speech of IRGC Commander's speech and publishing of an interview of a political prisoner. Thus, the closure of publications and trials of journalists spread all over the country and continued for next two years.

Ban on Press Publications after Amendment

Ban on press publications after amendment to the Iranian Press Law

on July 7, 1999, comes under the theory of gate keeping where not only individuals but also institutions are playing gate keeper's roles.

Mohammad Khatami and Mohajerani followed the moderate tendencies and liberal policies during their office tenure. They were moderate had been popular among moderate and liberal minded people. But parliamentarians who were mostly conservative and hardliners criticized them for their liberal tendencies and efforts for establishing a free press throughout the country and "cultural dialogues" with foreign countries. Mohajerani resisted against all their opposition and finally became the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

Mohajerani led his office towards a Free Press. He strongly expressed his opinion in his statement before the parliament to a vote on his impeachment on May 1, 1999 that the freedom cannot be repressed by any law. Laws should be created in accordance to freedom, not freedom according to the laws. Two months later in July 1999, the Iranian Press Law was amended and passed in April 2000. It had 8 chapters including 48 articles and 52 notes. This amendment brought drastic changes in the history of Iranian Press and caused major ban on publications (Kayhan, 2000).

In the Amendment to the Press Law in July 1999, two chapters of Press Law of 1985 were changed as follows: Chapter 2 "Mission of the Press" changed into "The Press Responsibilities". Chapter 5 "Qualifications of Applicant and the Stages of Issuing License" changed into "Conditions for Applicant and the Stages of Issuance of a License". Two chapters were also added in the Amendment to the Press Law in July 1999 as follows: Chapter 7 under "Press Juries". Chapter 8 under "Miscellaneous" (Press Law, 1999).

These changes in two chapters of Press Law marked as initial measures in the history of Iranian Press. The amendments were strict for the press and made its freedom conditional within the sphere of certain responsibilities and only in one day 12 newspapers and magazines were closed and their licenses revoked. The apparent reasons of these closures had been moderate tendencies of press and its moral support for reformist leaders and their leanings. It had been a difficult time for Iranian Press to get through political crises and professional restrictions. All they had to face were the closure of their publications and the trials. In between, some other hindrances, existing in their professional lives were the public's expectations and demands for Freedom of Expression and response to their civil rights.

Following are the two tables regarding the closure of publications after Amendment to Press Law in July 1999 and onwards:

Table 2. Closure of Publications within 24 Hours after Amendment to Press Law in July 1999

Dailies	Weeklies	Monthlies
1. Guzarish-e-Ruz	1. Payam-e-Hajar	1. Iran-e-Farda
2. Bamdad-e-No	2. Aban	
3. Aftab-e-Imruz	3. Arzesh	
4. Payam-e-Azadi		
5. Fath		
6. Arya		
7. Asr-e-Azadegan		
8. Manateghe-Azad		

Table 3. Closures of Publications; April 2000-August 2001

Dailies	Weeklies	Monthlies
1. Aftab-e-Emrooz	1. Aaban	1. Iran-e-Farda
2. Ahrar	2. Ameen-e-Zanjan	2. Javanan-e-Qorveh
3. Arya	3. Arzesh	3. Kiyan
4. Asr-e-Azadegan	4. Ava	4. Payam-e-Emrooz
5. Bahar	5. Ava-e-Varzesh	
6. Bamdad-e-No	6. Bazar-e-Rooz	
7. Bayan	7. Cheshmeh	
8. Doran-e-Emrooz	8. Farda-e-Roshan	
9. Fath	9. Golbang-e-Iran	
10. Gonbad-e-Kabood	10. Gunagun	
11. Gozaresh-e-Rooz	11. Iran Javan	
12. Hambastegi	12. Hadis-e-Ghazvin	
13. Ham-Mihan	13. Hareem	
14. Manateq-e-Azad	14. Jahan-e-Pezeshki	
15. Mellat (reopened in July 2001)	15. Jameyeh Madani	
16. Mosharekat	16. Jebeh	
17. Nosazi	17. Khalej-e-Fars	
18. Payam-e- Azadi	18. Mihan	
19. Roozdaran	19. Milad	
20. Sobh-e-Emrooz	20. Mobeen	
21. Talieh	21. Nakhil	
	22. Payam-e-Hajar	
	23. Keseh-e-Zindagi	
	24. Sepideh-e-Zindagi	
	25. Sbh-e-Omeed	
	26. Tavana	

CONCLUSION

Press in Pahlavi Period

As we see from the beginning of Islamic Revolution, the efforts for regaining of Press freedom which had been taken from the people during Pahlavi era, started by the people and during the last few months of pre-Islamic Revolutionary period, the struggle for freedom of Press was deeply rooted in Iranian society.

Press in Imam Khomeini / Ali Khamenei Period (1979-1989)

Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 brought a historical change in Iran's civil society and politics. Fall of Pahlavi kingdom and victory of Islamic Revolution caused the replacement of monarchy with Islamic jurists (Velayat-e-Faghih) system under clerics. In this system, they serve as Head of State and perform core responsibilities of the state. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini became Iran's Supreme Leader. He passed away in 1989.

Soon after Imam Khomeini's demise, the members of Assembly of Expert (Majlis-e-Khobregan) elected Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei as the new leader because in previous years, he had proved his competency for the post through his special morals, character, and knowledge. Iran owes its success from the period of stability and reconstruction under the wise leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei, who himself had been in office of presidency for two years.

Findings show the Iranian Press Law of 1985 was the second Press Law in post Islamic Revolution, which was ratified on March 19, 1986 and executed by law on Jan 31, 1987. It was drafted to define press responsibilities and rights and formatting a Supervisory Board of Press. As it was made during the period of Iran- Iraq war (1980-1988) that caused restrictions on Press Freedom due to security matters. This period clearly shows the picture of decreasing number in the circulations of Iranian newspapers.

Press in Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani Period (1989-1997)

After demise of Imam Khomeini in June 1989, Rafsanjani became head of the state. The post of prime minister was eliminated from Iranian constitution. Rafsanjani tried to move the country towards the progressive path in a positive global path. He strongly believed in investing in public and private sectors instead of opening opportunities to the state dominated sectors where economic liberalization ends. He wanted to launch a non-controlled and liberal economy based on a running system of technocrats and modified

women, the young and middle-class society. He was a moderate Iranian cleric who served two terms as president from 17th August 1989 to 1997 and stepped down officially after finishing his term. Rafsanjani has a great contribution to Iran's economic infrastructure and reestablishment of his country as a regional power of Middle East. Mohammad Khatami was the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance in Rafsanjani's period. He gave freehand to art, film, theater, books, and journals e.g. Zanan, and literary and intellectual journals such as Goftegu and Kiyān.

Findings show the Press started flourishing in this period because of liberal and moderate policies of Rafsanjani and Khatami. They attempted to facilitate underground economy through the activation of the press and revival of civil society.

Press in Mohammad Khatami Period (1997-2005)

After Khatami's landslide victory as the president in historical election of May 1997, he mainly centered on political and cultural issues, development, civil society and a policy of diffusing tensions and isolation with the outside world. Dialogue of Civilizations to replace confrontation of civilization and Independent Press were in his preference agenda.

Findings show the state of Iranian press over four years of Khatami's presidency was not stable enough and publications and journalists faced so difficult times and controversial issues. Numerous publications were closed, journalists were trialed and imprisoned after Amendment to the Press Law of July 1999. Salam, Neshat and Khordad, later Zan and Hoviat-e-Khish were either moderate or reformist publications. The establishment of Association for Iranian Journalists (AIJ) and Iranian Women Journalists Association (ROZA) are the most important and positive efforts of Iranian Press in this period.

The growth of communications and dynamic nature of social change resulted in an expansion of Press Freedom and political criticism caused all foreign observers admit that Iran has changed into a stable and distinguished democratic country in the Middle East. His call for the creation of an "Independent Press" made people thinks of his democratic nature and reformist thoughts. Iran is a self-dependent country and relies on its own resources (natural and human) and intellectual property economically. Despite sanctions of American and Western countries, imposed through United Nations and other international organizations, this

country is serving well enough its nation, enjoying the benefits of its self-dependent economy, and availing the existing opportunities. Expansion of freedom of Press and political criticism caused all foreign observers admit that Iran has changed into a stable and distinguished democratic country in the Middle East. Iranian press is trying to reverse its freedom that was gained after ouster of Pahlavi Kingdom by Iranian people. It is trying to protect its freedom by observing country's rules and regulations and avoiding the circumstances which may cause the restrictions on its "Freedom of Expression." Despite the harsh condition of geopolitical environment, Iranian press is playing a vital role within its national and professional grounds.

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