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Abstract
The General Zia-ul-Haq regime has been significant in the study of press-government relations due to problems in polity which not only affected the economy of Pakistan, but also affected the functioning of press. This paper highlights the effects of political, economic, and social conditions on the functioning of press during the eleven years long regime of General Zia. Under structural-functionalist approach, it is assumed that the press functions as a sub-system in an overall social setting and significant changes in the any sub-system like politics, economy, and the demographic factors have noteworthy impacts on the press. Not only this, the problems in these social sub-systems (politics, economy etc.) result in increased impediments in the way of institutionalisation process of the press. This assumption takes roots from the structural-functionalist approach. Under these assumptions, it has been studied in the prefatory pages of this paper that how did General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq come in power and what developments occurred during his initial days. The most important aspects in this study are the effects of political upheavals on the functioning of the press.

Keywords: Press-Government Relations; Structural-functional Approach; Descriptive Analysis; Media in Pakistan; Institutionalization of Media

I. Introduction and Background
It was a time of deep despair for the nation. The Government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had nothing left with but to surrender to the demand of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) for re-elections. It happened so when the coalition of nine opposition parties demonstrated against the alleged rigging in the general elections of 1977. When the charismatic personality image of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was completely tarnished, he, under the growing pressure of the opposition, agreed to hold fresh elections on October 15, 1977, by making void the recently held elections where he earned a heavy mandate.
General Zia-ul-Haq proclaimed the third Martial Law in Pakistan by saying that the precarious political situation made military intervention inevitable. Depriving the nation of another chance for election, he came much before scheduled election on July 5, 1977, by proclaiming himself as a savoir. The Lahore High Court convicted Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto for the murder of the father of a dissent PPP politician. Later, the Supreme Court upheld his death sentence, which was carried out on April 4, 1979.

Promising to hold elections in ninety days as required by the constitution, General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq posed himself as a very sympathetic person who held no intention to stay longer in power. He claimed that he was in power not because he was covetous, but because he was Islamizing the country. He argued that Pakistan was attained in the name of Islam; hence it can ‘survive only through Islamization’ (Khan, 1995, p.377). He came to rescue the nation and after completing his assignment, he would silently disappear from the political horizon of this country, he assured the nation. Such an outlook of the military leader earned him enormous popularity among the masses and they considered him no less than a messiah.

In a bid to Islamize the country, on the ideological forefront, propaganda had been swelling to let people know that the government of an individual is the spirit of Islamic system and General Zia-ul-Haq seemed to be the only person who could ‘uproot the strong evils from this country’ (Ali, 1993, p.21). The Islamization appeared on the political scene of this country as a ‘new reality’ as it never happened to occur in the history of this country. And on the back of introducing this new reality was Pakistan’s army that had since long proven itself as ‘a monolithic political factor which was willing, ready and able to play a role in national life commensurate with its self image of being the most important component of the power structure’ (Hussain, 1990, p.iv).

Interestingly, the corrupt political leaders at the time of national crisis or situation like that of a Martial Law go into their dens for hibernation. Nonetheless, their role should have been much different. But, this only reason does not provide sufficient incentives to the military men to come and erode democracy from the country, as even the dictatorial rules are not free from corruption. The Zia regime, for example, was very famous for the ‘corruption of its government machinery and political elite’ (Ahmad, 1993, p.85). According to the ‘Survey of Corruption’ arranged by the Gallup Institute of Pakistan in 1984, the majority of population opined that corruption had increased to 75% from that of 50% ten years back (Hussain, 1990, p.28). In addition to that, the Committee on the Study of Corruption that devised 1049 special questionnaires for selected citizens and organisations conducted another similar study. The findings of this study were disappointing. Only 55 replies were received. Out of 39 Federal Ministers and Advisers, only one responded to let the committee know the reasons of corruption. Only 4 senators out of 88 replied while 5 out of 194 MNAs responded about the menace of corruption (Ibid).

II. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The predicaments in the institution of politics have since long been adversely affecting the functioning of other social institutions of this country. As no institution of a society can function smoothly in complete isolation, the weaknesses and problems cruise into the other organisations too, so these problems should be seen in the context of social system. Especially in case of powerful institution of politics, the process of reaching
effects to other corners is much rapid. This is what the structural-functionalists claim that no activity should be explained on its own, but as a part of larger whole (Menzies, 1982, p.13).

Society is seen as being a bound, self-maintaining, self-regulating system that exists in a hostile environment, the various parts (the social institutions) are adapted to each other so that they work harmoniously together to preserve the social whole (Ibid, p.19). However, sometimes the social whole is threatened by the inherited weaknesses of an institution or situational factors that may arise from time to time in a society. Seeing social system as a functional unity in which everything contributes to the maintenance of everything else, it may be inferred that every activity can have consequences, which may be functional (tending to maintain the structure) or dysfunctional (tending to breakdown the structure) (Ibid, p.22).

In line with the structural-functionalist approach, the analysis of political changes, particularly the effects of those changes on press as an institution, is the major concern of this study. Since long it has been the hypothesis of media giants and communication experts that the media systems are closely related to the kinds of government in which they operate and are enslaved-tied to the philosophies of governments (Servaes, 1989, p.48).

III. Hypotheses
To study the press-government relations during General Zia-ul-Haq regime which was the longest Martial Law in Pakistan, following hypotheses have been devised:

H1: A weak military or unpopular government as that of General Zia-ul-Haq considers press as its enemy.

H2: Increased economic development is a strong predictor of increased media development which results in less stress and less government control of the press (Weaver, 1985, pp.113-5).

H3: Introduction of oppressive rules and regulations to control the activities of the press sufficiently reduces the chances of development of the press as an institution.

IV. Method
This is a descriptive research in nature which explores the relationship between the variables in our hypotheses. These are descriptive in nature, for instance, weak or unpopular government, press as an enemy and institutionalization of media. These variables are adequately discussed and described citing relevant literature while exploring the relationship between them.

V. Politics and the Press
A long experience of the nature of press and government relations in Pakistan reveals a state in which the press is more often regarded as ‘anti-to-government’ entity. At the initial stage of every military government, it has been observed, the media institutions had an opportunity to take a sigh of respite with the government’s announcement of ‘press to function freely’. However, most of the time without any blunder on part of the press or the presence of any extraordinary circumstances, the press had to encounter chains either in shape of ‘press advice system’ or more impudent system of censorship.
This happened to be the case in the Zia regime, when the declaration of *Injum* and *Yadgar* was restored and an announcement was made to ease the obtaining of declaration of a newspaper (Niazi, 1987, p.176). This appeared to be a goodwill gesture for the press and it felt an immediate relief as the previous democratic government had more commonalities with authoritarianism.

Moreover, giving the press a feel of being free, unrestrained and allowing it to perform its duties, General Zia-ul-Haq declared that ‘no restrictions can be imposed on publication of facts and the press can take anyone to account’ (*Dawn*, August 16, 1977). As the time passed, the authoritarian government developed an antagonist attitude towards press and took it as an enemy to the subsistence of military government. Considering the press as incompetent to deal with the delicate matters of national solidarity and immature to take care of social order, the military government introduced press advice system on October 18, 1977. Declaring it a ‘blessing in disguise’ and assisting the press to avoid coming into direct conflict with government, the press advice system was taken as an ‘institution’ that can help it save from the mischief of Press laws and Martial Law Regulations (MLRs) (Niazi, 1994, p.xiv). The government also believed that the press as a whole was devoid of any commitment for professionalism. It lacked the sophistication to understand or realise the possible consequences of the news contents it produced. Consequently, the activities of media organisations were reduced to ‘handout, telephone and utterance based journalism’ with no or a little room for investigative and interpretative reporting (Ibid, p.221). This system further minimised the chances for institutional development of the press.

Taking another instance to furthering the curbs on freedom of the press and hindering its institutionalisation process, and as a result of strengthening hold on the reins of power, the military government of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq imposed pre-censorship on the press on October 17, 1979. It was the time, when the government second time postponed the elections as per requirement of the constitution. In such a situation when unconstitutional rule was going to be prolonged and military junta was setting new destinations; the media institutions either should have been taken into confidence for support or gagged to avoid dissent voices. And the later was done successfully. To support this hypothesis some of the anecdotes are given in the following lines.

Imposing pre-censorship, the military government using MLR 49 attacked the media professionalism by claiming that this action has been taken as a ‘pre-requisite for Shariah, democracy and stability’ (*Dawn*, October 18, 1979). Given reasons for the introduction of pre-censorship clearly portray that how did the government think of the pressmen. It ratifies the claim of the military governments throughout the world that ‘only the Government knows and respects people's best interests’ (Graber, 1993, p.27). This act resulted in suspension of publication of five dailies, six weeklies and two monthlies (Niazi, 1987, pp.175-6).

Analysing the government action of pre-censorship in this perspective, if newspapers could possibly poison the minds of people, then it would not have been much more than a small fraction of the population as the literacy rate at that time was 26.7% with Rs.2,400/- per capita income (*Pakistan Statistical Yearbook*, 1984) which by no way could threaten the stability of the country. While on the other hand, no support has been
recorded that controlling the press will stabilise society and promote development. No increase in educational, media, or economic development during this time period was found for countries in which government control of the media was increased (Weaver, 1985, p.116). However, in view of an authoritarian government, perhaps the propagation of democratic values or comments on certain aspects of MLRs might pose a threat to the government, but by no way to the state/country.

The given explicit reasons did not provide the government with any support that could assist it prove the claims. However, what seems appropriate is that the pre-
censorship was a transient phenomenon at a time when an autocratic regime with no or little public support was feeling most vulnerable and insecure’ ([Dawn](#), July 29, 1979). Hence; it could not afford to take chances.

The year of 1979 had been the period of profound happenings for the press as well as for the government. The military government, on one front, had been trying to muster public support for its actions, and it also had to make a final decision about the fate of deposed Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, on the other hand. To mum the support for the PPP leader that was mounting in the streets and was getting prominence in the newspapers, the government took stringent actions against the press and suppressed it to toe the line of the government. Finally it happened, when the government introduced amendments in section 499 and 500 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), further curtailing the right of freedom of expression of the media institutions.

This action had been taken to protect the ‘responsible citizens from the irresponsible journalists’; the military government justified the amendments in the sections 499 and 500 of PPC ([Dawn](#), December 24, 1979). The amended sections read, ‘....publication of defamatory matter against any person, even if it is true and in public interest would constitute a cognisable and compoundable offence... ([Dawn](#), December 19, 1979).

The situation that emerged was quite complex. If a journalist was responsive to the demands of the society and his profession, he could be held accountable under the amended laws. If, on the other hand, he toed the official line, he would not be fulfilling what the society and his profession expect from him. Even if it is accepted that the journalism in practice was far from responsibility; then the question arises ‘did the amendments aim at introducing the culture of responsibility among the journalists?’ While on the other hand, it has been conceived that the promulgation of laws/ordinances to keep press performing its functions creates problems in press like that of lack of professionalism, press responsibility etc.

Notable reason for irresponsible journalistic practices is the weak institutionalization of media which encourages the governments to set responsibilities for the journalists. Usually, laws and regulations are promulgated to make journalists responsible in their profession. However, a strong institutional development impedes this process and enables the media institutions to develop their own set of responsibilities by keeping in view the needs of the society as well as of the institution. Moreover, unlike free and democratic societies, ‘press responsibility is in the eye of the undemocratic government, not in the beholder’ (Merrill, 1986, p.51). If it likes press actions, they are responsible; if it does not like the press actions, they are irresponsible.
As the governments in Pakistan gain public support or feel the label of ‘illegitimate’ gets changed to legitimate or popular government, the stress between the press and the government also reduces. The military government of General Zia-ul-Haq gathered ample mass support up to the end of 1981. The process of ‘Islamization’ had been sped up and he himself got declared as the de jure ruler for the next five years through referendum.

The pre-censorship was replaced with self-censorship on January 11, 1982 when the government felt itself strong to hold on the political affairs and found an evident mass support to its agenda. The pressmen took it like a cool breeze. However, Zamir Niazi termed it as ‘the pen was unchained while the hand that wielded it was cuffed’ (Dawn, July 29, 1997).

As seen earlier in the light of our hypothesis, the promulgation and introduction of laws and MLRs/Ordinances to keep the press performing its rudimentary functions gave birth to many problems in the institution of press. The foremost, out of observable and unobservable problems, was the lack of professionalism in the journalists and the consciousness about the functions that they were supposed to perform.

Unlike institutional behaviour of the press in some of the developing and developed countries, the press in Pakistan has more often been a victim of laws, MLRS and ordinances, which sufficiently impeded its process of institutionalization. Otherwise, its role as a ‘collective organizer’ (Moragas Spa, 1983, p.509) or ‘a hammer and anvil of social solidarity’ can hardly be over-emphasized (Curran, 1985, p.19). Besides, the despotic restrictions adversely affected the professionalism of mediamen which defines their beliefs and values and help them regulate their activities.

The military government introduced MLR 4 to let the journalists learn what they should not publish. It prohibited the publication of any matter that may ‘promote feeling of enmity or hatred between different provinces, classes or religious sects’ (Government of Pakistan, 1981, p.15).

In a similar attempt to teach the journalists impartiality and objectivity, the MLR 15 was introduced that made the ‘attempts to incite public or a section of public to seek the territorial or administrative dismemberment of Pakistan’ as a punishable offence (Ibid, p.63).

The MLR 48 prohibited the publication of political news. The Government of Sindh also introduced an ordinance prohibiting the publication of news pertaining to economics and politics. Such a situation paralysed the entire media institution and left it with no option except to look for what the government wanted to get into the contents of tomorrow newspaper. This way the art of editing was reduced to ‘editing a newspaper by arithmetic’ (Rivers, 1969, p.196).

A series of closure of newspapers, arrests of journalists and forfeiture of security of newspaper organizations followed the introduction of these MLRs and amendments in PPC sections 499 and 500. These actions of the government further dented the integrity of the institution, which only existed in shape of journalists’ union and owners’ council. When the press advice system was introduced in the last months of 1978, the press as a
whole under the umbrella of PFUJ (Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists) and CPNE (Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editor) agitated against the system. The reaction of the press was strong; however, unorganised which did not bring any fruit to the institution of the press.

The introduction of MLR 48 also carried serious concerns for the press. Studying the text of MLR 48, it is found that the regulation imposes restrictions on political news. It sounds like giving a big portion of newspaper contents to the will of the government. Anything pleasing the people in power could have been allowed for publishing. Against such an odious violation of the right of the press, there is no protest on record by the press on the issuance of the order and no newspaper commented on the invalidity of the order. It depicts the high degree of incompetence on part of the press as an institution which did not take care of its fundamental rights.

Nevertheless, a few events are highly remarkable but indicate that the fragmentation of the institution was a result of some political ideologies within the press. The case of daily *Musawat* highlights this area of deep concern. ‘*Musawat*’ was a leading newspaper that propagated the ideology of Pakistan’s People Party (PPP). Soon after the following of military take-over, the newspaper was closed down on ‘political considerations’ (Dawn, October 30, 1977). PFUJ launched a strong agitation against the government action, which bowed it to restore the newspaper’s publication within a fortnight time. Again in April 1978, Lahore edition of the newspaper was banned. The press as a whole stood by the newspaper and a long protest was put forward by the PFUJ. Dozens of arrests were made and finally the newspaper was restored (Dawn, November 15, 1977).

Why was the reaction of the media institution so unique in case of ‘*Musawat*’? Its contemporary ‘*The Sun*’ was when closed down in Karachi, no such reaction is on record. It was perhaps the ‘political ideology’ of *Musawat* that was held in common among the media practitioners, which led them to stand by the newspaper whenever any action was taken against it. Had it been ‘professional ideology’, similar reaction of the press would have been observed on the closing down of other newspapers or on the arrests of the editors of other newspapers. Hence, it can be said that professional ideologies develop the press as an institution, while political ideology may develop fragmentation in the press and impede the growth process.

The gravest professional incompetence on part of the press is the presence of PPO (Press and Publication Ordinance) which was introduced in 1963. Interestingly, the validity of PPO was not challenged when Sadaqat, Amn, Tamir, Aelan, Mayar, Al Fateh, Nawa-e-Waqt, Nawa-e-Jang, Rahi, View Point, Kehkashan, Riasat, Razdan, Dhanak, Pakistan Forum, Hidayat and Zulfiqar were asked to deposit security under PPO (Shahid, 1997, p.324). Why so interesting, because the constitutional life of an ordinance is 120 days (The Constitution 1973, 1985, p.17). If the legislative body does not approve it as a law, its validity expires automatically. The PPO 1963 was neither made a law through constitutional procedure nor was it re-issued regularly with amendments as required by the constitution. Hence, the very validity of the ordinance was questionable.

The military government of General Zia-ul-Haq, inferring from the continued discussion, was unstable and had to cater to many problems in its initial days. It took the
press as an enemy and considered its freedom a threat to its existence. Consequently, a series of steps like amendments in section 499 and 500 of PPC, introduction of censorship and press advice system were taken that weakened the press or at least reduced the chances of criticism on its activities. Such steps sufficiently reduced the threats to the government; nonetheless, it also created a lot of problems for the press. The most important one was the dearth of professional behaviour. It has been found that the continued struggle of media with the political institution slowed down its professionalization process that could have transformed the journalistic community from an autonomous professional group to an adversary player (Jakobowicz, 1995, p.136). Though it was not all because of the steps taken by the General Zia-ul-Haq government, however, it contributed a lot to worsen the already deteriorated state of the press.

VI. Economy and the Press

The relationship of economy is directly proportional to the media development, meaning by, increased economic development leads to increased media development which results in less stress and government control of the press (Weaver, 1985, pp.113-5). In developing countries, it has been found that the media ‘tend to be used to facilitate the functioning of the economy and to perpetuate the power of the rulers’ (Ibid, p.104). The obvious reason is that every government would like to gag the press, but would not like to have weak economy as the survival of the government is conditioned with the viable economy. So what is desirable for a military government especially in a developing country is the use of media institution as an instrument to boost and facilitate the economy.

Let us have a look at the economic conditions of Pakistan in the military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq. It will help us evaluate that the application of structural-functional approach on the subject of media development and its relationship with the economic institution.

The population of the country was about 75.5 millions in 1977 which reached 108.7 millions in 1989 making it the ninth largest country of the world (Ahmad, 1993, p.165). The per capita income when the military government took over was Rs.2,165 with annual growth rate of 3.1%. Such a dismal growth rate in per capita income ranked Pakistan very low on the index of developing nations (Ibid). The GNP crawled to US$380 in 1985 from US$350 in 1981 (Daily The Nation, Lahore, June 29, 1988; Daily The Nation, Lahore, March 18, 1988). There was an increase of only US$6 per year in the GNP, which depicts the level of remorse economic development in the first seven years of the military regime.

Another disturbing factor that contributed to the decay of economy was foreign and domestic loans. The volume of foreign loan increased from Rs.5.58 billions on July 1, 1981 to Rs.15.76 billions on June 30, 1985. The domestic loan also increased from Rs.62.37 billions to Rs.147.93 billions during the same period (The Nation, Lahore, March 18, 1988). On the other hand, almost 45% of total labour force of Pakistan was consumed by the textile industry alone. While, out of total 200 textile mills in the country, 86 were completely or partially closed due to political chaos, uncertainty and despotism on part of the government on the textile sector (The Muslim, Islamabad, April 12, 1982).
‘The economic development’, as discussed earlier, has a strong correlation with the ‘growth of mass media’ (Weaver, 1985, p.112). And, the growth of mass media may play an important role in the ‘reduced government control of the press’ (Ibid, p.113). The growth or development of mass media can be measured in various ways. It depends on the perspective or the issue in question, which determines the methodology of measuring media development. As the present study deals with relations of the press with the government, the interplay of various variables that may contribute something in shaping this relationship is of great significance.

This study undertakes the media development in three different perspectives. These are (i) the economy of the press (ii) the professionalism and (iii) the ownership dynamics. And, ‘media development’ is generally considered as the level of availability of mass communication products per person in any given country (Ibid, p.110). This notion does not consider the type or quality of information conveyed by the media, but only availability of information. The obstacles to ‘media development’ are noted to be the ‘market conditions’, ‘political insecurity’, ‘economic backwardness’, ‘linguistic diversity’, ‘illiteracy’, ‘technology and irresponsibility in the journalists’ (Boyd-Barrett, 1985, p.183).

**Economy of the Press**

To stay independent of outside controls, especially the government, ‘the media must be financially strong and profitable’ (Hachten, 1985, p.21). The factors that can make media institutions strong financially include advertising revenue and newspaper circulation.

Due to weak private sector and overall weak economy of the country, the press was dependent on the government advertisements. This factor played havoc with the press and made it a handmaiden of the military government and the bureaucracy. For instance, daily *Jang*, ‘despite the requests’ from the Information Ministry, played up the news items pertaining to riots in Karachi (*Daily Jang*, Karachi, February 23, 1983) and suffered. Similarly, daily *Jassarat* advertisement quota was also reduced by 90% (*Daily Jassarat*, Karachi, May 18, 1984) when it shifted from pro-government coverage to neutral stance in reporting and commenting on the government policies in somewhat adversarial tone.

This tool of control had been applied repeatedly on those newspapers which confronted the government and tried to play any undesired role. The government did not follow its own lines set for the distribution of advertisements among the newspapers. A separate division – Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) - is available for this job exclusively which provides broad guidelines to determine advertisement quota for the newspapers. However, the ABC’s lines were hardly ever followed by the governments since the independence of the country. This resulted in closure of smaller newspapers whenever the Government demanded fresh security under Article 24 of PPO (Shahid, 1997, p.324).

Low circulation of the newspaper was the second foremost factor that caused the poor economy of the press and ultimately made it an easy prey for the government. The poor circulation of newspapers had two-fold reasons. The most important reason was the overall poor economy of the country. According to the Federal Bureau of Statistic Report
1985-1986, more than 60% of the people were living below the subsistence line. The per
capital income in 1982-83 was only Rs.4,531 which is quite dismal as compared to other
developing nations. Such a poor economy could afford total newspaper circulation of 1.4
copies for every 100 persons; however, it was only 1.8 copies in Pakistan during the
initial years of Zia regime (Government of Pakistan, 1980). Another factor is literacy rate
which was only ‘26.2% in 1981’ that too was confined to ‘ten large and urban cities of
the country’ (Nawaz, 1988, p.336).

**Question of Professionalism**

Secondly, the role of journalists is very important in the study of press-government
relations as well as in shaping the press as an institution. Some experts argue that
‘specialized training’ be made mandatory for ‘career in journalism’ (Knudson, 1996,
p.885) to develop it as a professional institution, however, opposition to this notion also
exists.

Since the inception of Pakistan, there had not been any serious and sincere effort
either on part of the government or from the press to systematically develop
professionalism in the journalists. The importance of professionalism; however, can
hardly be denied in the process of media development. It seems to be the reason that
whenever any problem was inflicted on the press, a mixed response was recorded.

For instance, Mr. Meem Sheen, one of the most veteran journalists, paid glowing
tribute to General Jilani (a Martial Law Authority) and showered all kinds of encomiums
on him, and favoured the censorship (Daily Nawa-e-Waqt, Lahore, July 04, 1980). The
edifice of journalism stays on journalists, while most of them were easily controlled by
the military government, sometimes through threats and at some other time through
allurements. According to a senior journalist, General Zia-ul-Haq received thunderous
clapping from the journalists in a conference at Lahore, when he announced a ‘few more
plots’ for the community. They also enchanted the ear-breaking slogans of ‘Zia-ul-Haq
Zindabad’ (Zia-ul-Haq live forever) (Daily Nawa-e-Waqt, Lahore, April 24, 1982).

The relationship between the government and the journalists is like between
‘opposing attorneys’ (Rivers, 1969, p.91). It happens to be an adversary system. Such a
relationship is applauded and desired in undemocratic governments and is regarded as
‘virtuous’ (Ibid, p.154). Here, a journalist should see himself as an advocate shouldered
with primary responsibility of scanning the government and the politics. However, the
legitimacy of the adversary role should be determined on how the journalists act whether
as a custodian of civic virtue against the manipulative and deceiving power.

**The Ownership Dynamics**

The excessive military and repressive controls, since long, on the institution of
press did not allow it to grow in size. Up to the lifting of martial law in Zia regime and
the introduction of RPPPO in the Junejo government, there had been a marginal growth
in the size of the institution. Taking it from the bifurcation of the country in 1971, there
were only 117 dailies and 992 other publications in the country (Mujahid, 1973, p.210).
The newspapers with very small circulation and dummy in nature are also included in this
figure.
The ownership of media organizations in Pakistan was highly concentrated during the entire military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq. A few owners controlled almost 90% of the total circulation of the newspapers in 80s. Though most of the media owners had a professional background, but excessive government controls turned their role from a professional-proprietor to an industrial one. Over the time, they developed political roles to save their industries from the bad effects of politics and became power-manipulators by loosing grip on the professional aspects of the institution. The realization of being important components of the traditionally anti-establishment intelligentsia (Hussain, 1990, p.32) changed their views towards the people (the journalists) in their organizations. They ran the press as business, they were invisible and had been and still are extremely difficult to study being 'the super-elite’, but like to be ‘behind the curtain’ (Dreier, 1983, p.440).

VII. Conclusion

Society is a complex system of interaction of various institutions that exist in it. The survival of all the institutions is linked with the survival of an individual institution. According to the structural-functional theory of society, every institution in a society contributes to the subsistence of all other institutions.

Looking at press as an institution of a social system, it is necessary to have a look at the functioning of other social institutions as they all help it make or mar. However, some of the institutions are placed in a prominent status by the society and their functioning affects other sub-systems overwhelmingly. This happened to be the case with the institution of politics. It not only affected the functioning of press in the country, but also contributed to worsen the conditions of economy. Economy, on the other hand, appears to be another most important social sub-system that has to do a lot with the system of press. Press prospers or suffers with the situations of economy of any country. Consequently, the press in Pakistan did not prosper as a social institution in the country. However, it did not mean that the press is not a social institution. Rather, problems in other institutions had impeded in their institutional development process. Resultantly, it did not appear to have an outlook of a social institution even being of that status.

References


