

## **Chapter 14**

### **Asia**

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Reporters sans Frontières has repeatedly declared Asia to be the most demanding continent for journalists and their news organizations to operate within, and, in some countries, even simply to survive. The many reports issued by Reporters sans Frontières and other global agencies – such as the World Association of Newspapers, Freedom House, and Committee to Protect Journalists – regularly show Asia to be the region with the highest number of murders of journalists per year, a pattern which persists even when Asian–Arabic states and Central Asia are not included in the definition of ‘Asia’. The reports describe numerous physical, legal and economic threats, as well as serious political repression and restrictions that journalists face as they attempt to function as watch-dogs, agenda-setters and gate-keepers for their societies. The statistics and examples provided within these reports, however, do not provide the full picture. Most Asian nations also host vibrant media cultures in which journalists play an important role in supporting social and democratic processes and activities.

An exploration of the roles, operating conditions, and challenges of Asian journalists is significant not just for their impact upon governance and democracy within Asia. Issues in the region have broader implications for global journalism and democracy, especially given the great and exponentially increasing geo-political consequence of China and India. Furthermore, an understanding of such issues is critical to ensuring that initiatives by aid agencies to develop the mass media are tailored to work effectively in the cultural, economic and political conditions specific to Asia. International aid agencies spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year on training, equipment and other forms of aid to help build the capacity of Asian journalism, but sometimes these programs provide little substantive identifiable improvement in the overall quality of journalism in the countries concerned.

This chapter will describe some of the over-arching issues that affect the journalists’ contributions to governance and democracy in the world’s most populous continent, while also recognizing the diversity of cultural, religious, economic, political and media systems between and within Asian nations. This vast continent covers almost one third of the world’s land area and is home to more than 60% of the human population. The chapter will discuss issues that affect the thirty-three countries in South, East, Southeast and Central Asia. <sup>1</sup>

## Political and economic influences on Asian journalism

The full range of political and economic systems exists within Asia. This includes Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Singapore, fully developed, liberal economies that are rated as the top two societies in the world on the conservative Cato Institute's Economic Freedom index.<sup>2</sup> Asia contains the world's largest single-party communist or socialist republics, including China, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos, as well as former communist nations like Mongolia and Cambodia. Post-Soviet nations are represented by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It also includes the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, absolute monarchies headed by Islamic sultans, such as Brunei, the military junta of Burma, and nations which have alternated in cycles between military junta-leadership and parliamentary democracy, such as Thailand.

Regardless of their differences, Asian nations share a common history in that all have undergone enormous political, economic and/or social evolution or restructuring since World War II. The majority are still relatively new states that were created or substantially reconfigured after throwing off colonial or occupying forces post-WWII, or, in the case of the Central Asian nations, when they seceded from the former Soviet Union. In new nations and transitional societies, such as those in Asia, journalism plays a particularly important role in creating what Benedict Anderson calls "imagined communities."<sup>3</sup> The news media helps geographically bound populations to form, extend and reshape their understanding of themselves as citizens of a national community who have joint interests and common values.

Asian nations that attained independence after WWII are also made up of many disparate communities that initially had little in common with each other apart from their shared history of 'belonging' to the same colonial power. For example, the government of the Republic of Indonesia, formed in August 1945, faces the challenge of creating cohesion and shared identity among a population of 300 distinct ethnic groups dispersed across approximately 6000 islands, 742 different languages and dialects, and six main religions. Unsurprisingly, Indonesia's national motto has become *Bhinneka tunggal ika* (Unity in diversity).

Given this diversity, Indian-born post-colonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha poses a question that has long been pertinent to Asian journalists. How can communications establish positive representations of the nation and contribute to the effective functioning of communities when, "despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination," the populace may have values, understandings and priorities that "may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable?"<sup>4</sup> The next section will explore how

theories about development journalism, peace journalism and Asian values have been used in attempts to answer this question.

### **Development journalism and peace journalism in Asia**

The term 'development journalism' was coined in Asia. It has been particularly influential in the post-colonial nations of South and Southeast Asia, although the concept of development journalism has been independently developed or copied by numerous nations worldwide.<sup>5</sup> As the name implies, 'development journalism' simply refers to news, features, analysis and current affairs that help to support processes of socio-economic and political development. However, it is far from simple to prescribe how development journalism should work in practice. There are at least five major interpretations of the concept.

The first interpretation of development journalism is relatively non-political, and emphasizes that journalists need well-honed skills in agenda-setting. In contrast to the focus of most journalism on spot news and breaking events, this form of journalism prioritizes reporting about long-term trends, unfolding issues, processes and problems occurring in national development. Complex issues need to be explained in simple terms, thus enabling communities to understand the issues and respond effectively. This understanding of development news can be seen in the practices of the global DEPTHnews (Development, Economic and Population Themes News) service that was established and remains centered in Asia.<sup>6</sup>

The second interpretation emphasizes journalists' nation-building role by encouraging 'positive' news stories about community development initiatives, such as attempts to bolster the economy, build stable societies, foster harmony within and between communities, and strengthen consensus between diverse groups. Such journalism would also report on crises and social problems, but in a way that identifies the causes and possible solutions, so that citizens are not overwhelmed by negative news that suggests their societies are being buried by intractable problems. Supporters of this approach are often influenced by modernization theories, which envisage that journalists are important channels for conveying the insights of government and other elites to the comparatively unsophisticated and unenlightened masses to help build a modern, rational, urbanized, entrepreneurial culture.

The third interpretation positions journalists as the government's partners in nation-building. Journalists promote the development policies of their government leaders, who are seen as the drivers of development. The common rhetoric of this form of development journalism talks about the media's 'freedom to' support development rather than 'freedom from' political or other external influences.

Supporting this approach, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad explained that freedom of expression may need to be restricted for the sake of prosperity, nationalism and unity: "For a society precariously balanced on the razor's edge, where one false or even true word can lead to calamity, it is criminal irresponsibility to allow that word to be uttered."<sup>7</sup> The partnership approach was adopted across most of Southeast Asia in the 1970s to 1980s, although its influence waned as Singapore achieved a fully developed economy and other countries like Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand underwent substantial political reform. China and other socialist Asian nations rarely use the term development journalism, but they adopt very similar language and tenets.

A fourth interpretation of development journalism positions the news media as a watchdog. In this perspective, journalists must highlight problems and weaknesses in governance and ensure that governments are responsive to public concerns and opinions. Support for the watchdog approach surged after the Asian economic crisis of 1997, due to assumptions that lackluster financial journalism had contributed to the emergency situation failing to shine a light on entrenched corruption and the flawed economic fundamentals of the worst affected nations.<sup>8</sup> In the wake of the crisis, organizations like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and UN Development Program promoted watchdog journalism as a guardian of 'transparency,' defined as the timely release of reliable information about government activities. In a rejection of the philosophy that freedoms and rights must sometimes be sacrificed for the sake of development and stability, supporters of this approach argue that restrictions on free speech, free press and other civil liberties undermine good governance, which in turn disrupts development.

The various development journalism models are therefore based on fundamentally different assumptions about the best way for governments and communities to foster development and the correct role for journalists in mediating the dynamics of governance and democratic life. The propensity of Asian governments to support the journalism-as-government-partner philosophy has provoked vehement censure from critics who claimed that the ethic had been co-opted by governments as an apologia for dictatorial leadership and press censorship.<sup>9</sup> The interpretation of development journalism as a government-partner has never had much sway with liberals, who have been more influenced by Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen's often-quoted claims that famine has never occurred in a country with a free press.<sup>10</sup> The partnership model lost support even among some of Asia's less liberal governments following the 1997 economic crisis.

Despite its tarnished image, the journalism-as-government partner interpretation is still a powerful force in many Asian countries, even if the old jargon is no longer used much. Although much of the academic research and theorization that backed the journalism–government partnership model is now dated, supporters of the concept still draw strength from more recent theorists such as Indian-born journalist and researcher Fareed Zakaria. The path to development and increased socio-political freedoms, Zakaria contends, is best paved by helping countries to modernize their economies and to develop the provisions of “constitutional liberalism” – such as rule of law, institutions of governance, property rights, and social contract – that will protect individual freedoms, regardless of majority opinions or decisions. He argues that pressuring countries to introduce elections and other tools of liberal democracy before modernization occurs only leads them to become “illiberal democracies.”<sup>11</sup>

Given the many conflicts within and between Asian nations, several aid agencies and non-government organizations have promoted the concept of ‘peace’ journalism. Peace journalism involves avoiding demonizing language, and taking a nonpartisan approach, and a multiparty orientation. This contrasts with ‘war’ journalism, which is characterized by a focus on the present problems rather than their causes and solutions, an elite orientation, and a dichotomy of ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ actors in the conflict. Despite the development journalism rhetoric of harmony and order, a study of how Asian newspapers covered four regional conflicts – involving India and Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines – indicates that ‘war journalism’ frameworks are dominant.<sup>12</sup> To some degree, a war positioning is inevitable, given that journalists’ frameworks for understanding are intensely vulnerable to being shaped by the many threats of censorship and physical risk that they face.

### **Asian values in journalism**

The term ‘Asian values’ has been used since at least the 1970s to differentiate between Asian and Western principles of democracy and human rights, and to investigate whether cultural traditions contributed to the rapid economic development of Japan and the ‘Asian tigers’ of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. The concept of Asian values in journalism garnered support in the 1980s, as governments and media workers in post-colonial nations of South, East and Southeast Asia tried to identify and defend what they believed to be unique cultural attributes in the face of the West’s perceived economic and cultural dominance.

Asian values relevant to journalism include communitarian principles, willingness to forsake personal freedoms for the prosperity and well-being of the community, support for social consensus and harmony, respect for elders and leaders, and concern for ‘saving face.’ Islamic values also encourage

communicators to veil the deficiencies of others, and to speak to all people in a 'mild manner' and 'kindly way.'<sup>13</sup> The Asian cultural system, it is argued, "rejects the notion of an uninhibited and robust press that undertakes vehement, caustic and unpleasant attacks on government and public officials."<sup>14</sup>

Purportedly Asian values also underlie the patriarchal leadership style of many Asian countries, where government leaders regard themselves as guardians or custodians who control political decision-making and public information for the public good. This perspective is reinforced by the stereotypes that exist in most Asian countries about the poorly educated, rural-based subsistence farmers or laborers who make up the majority of Asia's population. The stereotypes imply that the unschooled, unsophisticated masses are prone to becoming inflamed, irrational or overwhelmed by too much or the wrong kind of information. In such cultures, politicians and bureaucrats are notoriously unresponsive to journalists' requests for information and often consider access to government information as a privilege rather than a right.<sup>15</sup>

Just as development journalism has been criticized as 'government-say-so' journalism, critics also complain that the Asian values debate has been manipulated by governments who have exaggerated the importance of respect for leaders and harmony in order to muzzle journalists and deny basic rights and civil liberties. Opponents also attack the concept of trying to develop a single set of values to encompass a region as diverse as Asia. A content analysis of posted stories on 10 newspapers' websites in East, Southeast and South Asian countries found that the argument that Asian journalism displays unique values "has some credence, but only marginally." The values of harmony and supportiveness were found to appear in stories about the Asian journalists' home countries, particularly in the Southeast Asian newspapers where press freedom was lower than in others that were studied. However, Asian and Western news agency reports showed as much conflict and critical reporting as each other in stories about international news.<sup>16</sup> Although there has been little debate about Asian values since the Asian economic crisis, the attempt to divide Asian from Western ideals and practices still strongly influences the understandings, philosophies and practices of journalism in Asia.<sup>17 18</sup>

### **The impact of technologies on Asian journalism**

The reports by Reporters sans frontières and other media monitors about violations of press freedom paint a gloomy picture of Asian journalism, since their charter is to spotlight violations and abuses rather than progress and innovation. By contrast, *Journalism Asia's* editors express the view that Asia's media are "blooming" as the continent finds itself "swept along in the global twin tides of social, political, and economic liberalization and the communication revolution." Although the editors take a

cautious view of how well the resultant democracy might actually work, they assert a commonly held view that communications technologies are “pushing nations to ever-increasing degrees of freedom and openness.”<sup>19</sup>

From a journalistic perspective, new communication technologies open many possibilities for enhancing democracy. Particularly important is the potential to boost journalism’s watch-dog and agenda-setting functions by helping both journalists and citizens to bypass censorship or other government controls on gathering and circulating information. Equally important is the prospect of extending the media’s gate-keeping capacities. The internet, for example, has been optimistically described as “a medium for everyone’s voice, not just the few who can afford to buy multimillion-dollar printing presses, launch satellites, or win the government’s permission to squat on the public’s airwaves.”<sup>20</sup>

A limiting force on the potential of journalists’ use of new technologies to enhance their watchdog and gate-keeping functions is the inequality of access both within and between Asian nations. Figures on internet access initially seem encouraging, with the number of internet users in developing countries worldwide quadrupling from 2000 to 2004, and with China and India among those countries recording dramatic increases.<sup>21</sup> However, some Asian countries are conspicuously lagging. The internet service in Turkmenistan, for example, remains among the most tightly controlled in the world, with only 1% of the population able to participate online.<sup>22</sup> Research also shows a vast ‘digital divide’ in countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand, where the internet mainly serves urban elites, the highly educated and expatriates.<sup>23</sup> Other critical factors that determine whether or not the online media will be widely adopted are levels of education, social capital formation, and political democratization and access to supportive infrastructure, such as telephone lines and reliable electricity supplies.

Even when a thriving online culture exists, the community may still not use the internet in ways that promote democracy. Countries that encourage widespread internet use in civil society to promote economic development and in government to assist with administration – such as Singapore and China – often score poorly on other measures of media and democratic activity.<sup>24</sup>

Asian nations usually dominate the list of countries that Reporters sans frontières describes as “enemies of the internet.”<sup>25</sup> China has arguably the best-honed system for monitoring and censoring the internet to restrict dissidence and suppress alternative views. Prior to 2003, the Chinese authorities supervised internet cafés and news sites, censored chat room and bulletin board contents, and blocked

certain websites. Given the impracticality of mass monitoring of the internet, China began its 'Golden Shield Project' or so-called 'Great Firewall of China' in November 2003, using automated technologies to conduct wide-scale URL filtering, IP blocking and DNS poisoning to prevent citizens accessing certain types of content. Even following extensive international criticism and complaints from the International Olympic Commission, China reneged on earlier agreements to allow the 30,000 accredited journalists covering the Olympics unfettered internet access. Although China lifted blocks on sites like the BBC, it enforced barriers to content relating to the Tibetan uprising and certain other topics with even greater vigor.

Despite the rhetoric of democracy that Western countries espouse, Western business leaders operating in Asia have proven willing to promote censorship and surveillance for commercial gain. Media magnate Rupert Murdoch is well known for his willingness to remove politically sensitive content or publish propagandist material in his Hong-Kong based Star TV satellite service, HarperCollins publishing house, and MySpace social networking site in order to expand his media empire into China. AOL, Google Inc, Skype, Windows Live Spaces and Yahoo are among many other international businesses willing to filter their Chinese services in order to satisfy government conditions for setting up a platform in the country. These international businesses regularly attempt to rationalize their censorship as the 'lesser of two evils.' Typical is a formal statement issued by Google: "While removing search results is inconsistent with Google's mission, providing no information (or a heavily degraded user experience that amounts to no information) is more inconsistent with our mission."

The internet may also promote what Robert Putnam calls "cyber-balkanization" as much as it does democratization in Asia.<sup>26</sup> Studies of communications about Islamic activism and ethnic and religious massacres in Indonesia, for example, illustrate how the internet has been misused by some social sectors to enflame violence, conflict between groups, and social breakdown even while other sectors are using it to encourage democracy, community harmony and social empowerment.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the challenges evident in many nations, examples of how journalists and other social actors have used technologies in almost all Asian countries to evade censorship and advance the boundaries of political discussion are multitudinous. The lengths taken to spread information are often painstaking and involve widespread cooperation. This was the case, for example, during the era of Suharto's presidency in Indonesia, when journalists and activists would send information via well-established networks to organizations in Australia, the United States and the Netherlands, which would upload the information abroad to reduce the possibility of the Indonesian authorities tracing the source.

Asian journalism can also be celebrated for its progressive uses of technology. The world's three largest newspaper markets in order of size are China, India and Japan,<sup>28</sup> where media organizations use vast and sophisticated networks of news gathering, production and distribution technologies. South Korean journalists have led the innovation of internet technologies to establish the world's largest, best known citizen journalism initiative, OhmyNews. This online newspaper has captured the public voice through the use of an open-source model in which freelance contributors, mostly ordinary citizens, contribute 80% of the content. OhmyNews is a politically influential news organization in South Korea, although it has been unsuccessful in attempts to replicate its model abroad.

East Timorese journalists are among those who also deserve honors for their achievements, but for overcoming a dire lack of even the simplest of technologies. After the 1999 independence referendum, anti-separatist militia destroyed most of East Timor's infrastructure, including that critical to gathering and disseminating news. The militia cut all telephone links, razed the offices of the main newspaper, torched all newspaper stocks, and damaged the printing presses and radio relay stations beyond repair. After a four-month period of media silence, intrepid Timorese journalists pooled a small supply of computers and used a hotel photocopier to print a daily 'newspaper' on A4 paper.

### **Envelope culture**

Salaries for media workers are poor in many Asian countries, leading journalists to seek supplementary forms of income, with the envelope culture being one significant source of funding. The envelope culture refers to envelopes containing money or other valuable gifts that sources of news give to journalists at interviews and press conferences. The countries with the best-documented envelope cultures include Indonesia and the Philippines, although envelope giving has been noted in countries as far afield as China, South Korea and Pakistan.

In Indonesia, the envelope has arisen since the late 1960s from cultures of gift-giving and patron–client relationships that sustain socio-political relationships.<sup>29</sup> In this cultural framework, journalists often like to portray themselves as passive recipients who accept envelopes mainly out of deference to the seniority of socio-political leaders, who might 'lose face' if their generosity was spurned. Journalists in countries like Indonesia usually claim that they will reject any envelope that is accompanied by a direct demand to slant coverage.<sup>30</sup> However, whenever the envelope culture exists, a proportion of journalists will exploit it for corrupt purposes. Filipino journalists have even coined the terms 'praise release' and AC-DC (attack and collect, defend and collect), to describe journalists who attack or defend reputations based on who is paying them.<sup>31</sup>

Not all journalists rationalize the envelope as being part of a culture of gift-giving. In many countries, it results from direct corruption and profiteering. This occurs in nations like Kazakhstan, where government and business figures pay certain journalists to write positive stories about their performance.<sup>32</sup>

Even if the envelope does stem from cultural traditions, it should be recognized that not all forms of gift-giving and patron–client relationships are automatically acceptable behaviors for journalists and other democratic actors. Most cultures have notions of public responsibility and define as inappropriate any behavior by public officials that deviates from accepted laws and norms, or involves misuse of public resources and powers (in contrast to use of one’s own personal assets) with the aim of serving private ends.<sup>33</sup> In paternalistic political systems, business and political leaders often blur the boundaries between the resources, powers and interests belonging to the general community and those of the private sphere of individual, family or clan interests. The news media’s ability to sound a sentinel over corruption, collusion and nepotism can be seriously complicated and compromised when journalists themselves straddle or cross these same boundary lines, because the envelope usually comes from public or shareholders’ funds rather than the source’s own money. A further complication is that envelope relationship creates a subtle psychological demand on journalists who do not want to injure the feelings or reputation of leaders who have been kind and respectful to them.

Syed Hussein Alatas notes that: “Extortion spreads to the professions once it is all-pervasive in government.”<sup>34</sup> Unsurprisingly then, various forms of envelope journalism and journalistic corruption are widespread in those Asian countries that suffer from entrenched corruption in the political–economic spheres and/or large, low-paid bureaucracies. The envelope culture thrived until the 1970s in Hong Kong and Singapore, but wilted as wages increased alongside a growing economy and strong anti-corruption laws and implementation of regulations. The experience of these two nations demonstrates that widespread envelope cultures can be eliminated, but it requires commitment and resources from newsrooms, ideally with mutually supportive attitudinal changes and reforms in the wider legal, political and social sphere.<sup>35</sup>

### **Watch-dogs, agenda-setters and gatekeepers**

A short case study of the so-called Saffron Revolution in Burma can help to highlight the principles discussed above about the links between governance and journalism. The Burmese government attracted intense media attention for its repression of anti-government demonstrations by students and political activists in August 2007 and by Buddhist monks and their lay supporters in

September 2007. In an attempt to control information, Burma's military junta relied more on harassing journalists and tightening their grip on 'old' communications technologies than obstructing the use of newer technologies. The regime warned journalists not to cover the demonstrations, tightened official censorship, increased its surveillance of journalists, and blocked telephone lines to the key news sources – the student leaders, opposition politicians and monasteries. The crackdown rapidly escalated after September 25, with one Japanese journalist being gunned down by a soldier, and approximately 15 Burmese journalists arrested. Despite high-intensity international media coverage, Burma's junta was slow to block newer technologies, only severing internet services, most mobile/cellular telephone connections and landline connections out of the country on a widespread scale on September 28. Despite the disruption to these services, the images and stories continued to trickle out to the world, often due to activists smuggling information across the border into Thailand.

Burma rarely jams international radio or satellite television services, and instead relies on counter-propaganda. In what might be regarded as a serious misappropriation of development and Asian values rhetoric, *The New Light of Myanmar* newspaper attempted to smear foreign news services, particularly the British Broadcasting Corporation and Voice of America. "Saboteurs from inside and outside the nation and some foreign radio stations, who are jealous of national peace and development, have been making instigative acts through lies to cause internal instability and civil commotion," the newspaper reported.<sup>36</sup>

The first and most obvious lesson to be drawn from this example is the way in which the Burmese junta attempted to crush the important watchdog and agenda-setting activities of journalism. Media reports flagged the serious failures in development processes in Burma, where the military grew richer while citizens suffer manifest distress due to the decline in the long-stagnant economy and the crippling inflation that followed the junta's removal of fuel subsidies in August 2007. Although the junta did restrict the flow of international news, the paramount priority was dampening the Burmese civil society by censoring local media and targeting news sources, reporters and editors.

The internet, mobile telephones and other new communications technologies greatly assisted in informing, arousing and mobilizing communities within and outside Burma, although the use of new technologies was not essential to this process. The Burmese, in common with citizens of many Asian nations, have proved creative at circumventing censorship by smuggling older technologies – such as videos, tapes, facsimiles, photographs, and printed materials – within and beyond the nation. The real contribution of newer technologies is speedier transmission. Rapid transmission helps to capture public

attention as ‘hot’ news erupts, and to create a mutually reinforcing cycle in which prompt and continuous updates about civil society activity intensify the already fiery pace of citizens’ democratic (and very newsworthy) activity.

The Burmese case also indicates that journalism’s watch-dog function of sounding the alarm about problems in government will do little to help nations where civil society and the checks and balances of misappropriation of power are weak. Journalists provided startling coverage of the earlier weeks of the first Burma uprising of 1988, with little impact on the final outcome. While authoritarian regimes would prefer to conduct repressive acts in secrecy, transparency alone will not empower local civil societies or global agencies to prevent their misdeeds. The media coverage could, in fact, have harmed democratic actors. Burma’s junta is recorded as having used images and stories from the media to help identify and punish participants in demonstrations and other democratic activities.

The Burmese junta’s behavior is an extreme example of the intense repression that some Asian governments will impose on journalists who do not follow their preferred models of professional practice, particularly when the nation is at flash point. Asian governments have proved intolerant even of development journalists who did not fit their preferred model of operation. The Indonesian government of then President Suharto displayed this during the mid-1990s, when it was increasing the number of permits allowed for Western correspondents at an exponential rate, but banned Inter Press correspondents from the country. Although the Suharto government espoused development journalism, it insisted on a government-as-press-partner interpretation. Inter Press’s emancipatory journalism model was confronting, and in fact more so than the liberal watchdog model of the Western journalists.

In the context of new and transitional Asian societies, blanket attempts by governments to hide their faults or community problems can be destructive – even in cases when the best of reasons to protect society are invoked. When people cannot obtain news through institutional channels such as the news media, rumor becomes “the collective transaction through which they try to fill in this gap.”<sup>37</sup> Almost all of the Asian nations where journalism is significantly affected by censorship or self-censorship are characterized by a flourishing culture of gossip, rumors and jokes with double meanings. These are informal means for developing awareness and understanding of events, issues and trends. East Timorese journalist Virigilio da Silva identified the risk associated with this culture when his country was struggling to recover after the destruction of infrastructure essential to journalism and many other facets of life in the wake of the 1999 independence referendum. “There is a news vacuum here and

rumours thrive because there are no newspapers,” da Silva observed. “Gossip through the grapevine can be damaging to nation-building.”<sup>38</sup>

When censorship prevails, Asian journalists have many weapons in their armory for conveying some, if not all, of the facts. Journalists in many Asian countries – such as Malaysia and Indonesia – are masters at using innuendo, allusion, metaphors, satire, and other ‘between-the-lines’ writing strategies to raise public awareness of issues. Ostensibly non-political stories – such as the ‘soft news’ seen in the social pages and lifestyle, arts and entertainment stories – are often used to present exposes and explorations of subjects that would be taboo in political or other ‘hard’ news. A ‘color’ story that lauds the panache of the fashions, homes or leisure pursuits of political leaders and their spouses may seem on the surface to be ‘fluffy infotainment.’ The story may also open astute audiences to unstated suggestions that these leaders are self-indulgent, superficial or profligate to pursue such splendor while the masses struggle to fill their food bowls, or that they are possibly engaging in corruption to attain luxuries with costs beyond their salaries. Word–picture combinations can also invoke subtly subversive meanings. Examples include the television stories that show visuals of plump politicians and bureaucrats dining at lavish luncheons, while they break from discussions about the malnutrition and food shortages suffered by their country’s poor. The notoriety that former Filipino first lady Imelda Marcos attained for her extensive designer shoe collection typifies the symbolism that the mass media can attach to seemingly non-political activities and attributes.

It should be noted that such stories should be classed as elite communications rather than truly mass communications. While the educated and middle-to-upper classes may have the skills, time and perseverance to read ‘between the lines,’ the implications may be completely lost upon poor and ill-educated people, who form the majority of Asia’s population. Such stories also often require ‘insider information’ before they can be properly understood.

### **The Principles in Practice: India and North Korea**

The next section of this chapter will involve an in-depth examination of India and North Korea. The extreme contrasts between these nations will be used to illuminate the issues discussed above, and the ways in which political and economic cultures have shaped and limited the roles and functions of Asia’s news media as agents for democracy.

North Korea's political structure is commonly described as an extreme model of Stalinist-style political, economic, social and information control.<sup>39</sup> In a rejection of Western values and in the wake of the Sino-Soviet split, the late president Kim Il-Sung developed a "socialist democracy" based on the theory of *juche* (translated as 'I myself,' 'independent stand' or 'self-reliance'). An estimated 90% of North Korea's economy is centralized, with a small market economy that has arisen mainly in response to the famine of the 1990s.

The Economist Intelligence Unit lists North Korea as the most authoritarian nation of the 167 countries that it monitors. Freedom to assemble, associate, and receive and impart information – essential for the practice of accurate, comprehensive and socially inclusive journalism – is almost completely circumscribed. The system of control is so far-reaching that citizens are not permitted to lock their doors at night, in order that security agents may check their activities at any time. Unauthorized assembly or association is defined as a potentially punishable "collective disturbance." Abuses have proliferated in this environment which allows no scrutiny of the domineering political and military powers.

North Korea's mass media has designated tasks of strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat, political unity and ideological conformity. The entire media system is directly controlled by the current leader, Kim Jong-Il, and journalists are carefully trained to extol his virtues. Journalists are also taught to laud North Korean socialism and display its superiority over other nations, the majority of which are deemed bourgeois and imperialist. Journalists have an elite status but can face harsh punishments if they offend the authorities, even inadvertently through minor errors. Reporters sans frontières reports that at least 40 journalists have been 're-educated' in 'revolutionizing camps' since the mid-1990s for mistakes such as typographical errors or misspelling a senior official's name.

The media system replicates the Stalinist model of an 'inner' and 'outer' circle. Korean Central News Agency, which forms part of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Korean Workers' Party, issues a number of special bulletins. *Bulletin No. 1* is distributed to top leaders. It contains news from local and foreign correspondents, as well as translations of every available report that is published abroad about North Korea. Less detailed bulletins are distributed to lower ranking officials, local party cadres, and institutions such as the army, police, and workers' unions, with content being deleted and edited according to the status and type of institution.

By contrast, the general population is only permitted to access the propagandist content of state-owned newspapers, radio and television services. However, much of the population has little

access even to state-owned newspapers, apart from the copies which are posted on public billboards and the stories that are read aloud through loudspeakers in factories and villages. Electricity shortages often prevent the public from tuning into radio and television bulletins. There has been a deliberate under-investment in telecommunications, with relatively few telephones per head of population and a ban on mobile/cellular telephones since 2004. Only a small number of internet kiosks exist, with the content heavily filtered.

The system of control includes a self-imposed isolation from most of the outside world. Borders are closed to foreigners, except for a small number of business-people and escorted tourists. Imported written material, CDs, DVDs and videos are banned from the general public, even if the material comes from China, which is North Korea's closest ally and largest trading partner and aid donor. The authorities also intermittently jam shortwave radio signals, although the energy crisis means that they cannot scramble broadcasts all day on every frequency. The domestic news media are strictly censored, and accessing international publications or broadcasts may result in detention of the whole family in a slave labor camp. Interestingly, some reports claim that North Koreans are increasingly defying government authorities by fixing radios and televisions to receive foreign signals, and that a large black market exists for South Korean CDs, DVDs and videos.<sup>40</sup>

The control of the information that flows out of the country is as equally tightly maintained. Foreign journalists are treated with suspicion as potential spies, and the Korean Workers' Party has reportedly denounced foreign media for purportedly aiming to destabilize the regime. Most of the foreign news about North Korea comes from the reports or interviews with aid workers or political figures who have visited the country, but such travel is rare. Even in the face of major catastrophic events, such as the severe floods of August 2007 that affected almost 1 million people, North Korea retains its secrecy and prevents outsiders from entering the country. United Nations relief workers were eventually granted increased access after the August floods, but only because of the UN World Food Program's strict 'no access–no food' policy.

Unsurprisingly, when Reporters sans frontières commenced publishing its 'World Press Freedom Index' in 2002, it listed North Korea as the least free of all countries for journalists to operate in. North Korea retained this least-free position until 2007, when it moved to the second least-free country, after Eritrea.

In stark contrast is India, the world's largest democracy and fourth largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity. Although India followed loosely socialist principles in the decades after it was declared an independent republic, India has implemented a far-reaching economic liberalization since 1991. This has included reduced control over private sector business activity and increased openness to direct foreign investment. Despite ongoing economic growth, development has been unbalanced across socio-economic groups and various regions. World Bank figures indicate that one-third (33%) of the world's poor live in India, and that 42% of Indians subsist below the international poverty line of \$1.25 per day.<sup>41</sup> Education and literacy levels vary substantially across regional, class and gender lines, with the overall literacy level of 64.8% comprising 75.3% for males and 53.7% for females.<sup>42</sup>

India's thriving media industry includes 1874 daily newspapers, 312 radio stations, 562 television stations, and an internet community of 60 million users. Newspapers are mainly privately owned by chains and conglomerates, and 95.7% of radio institutions and 98.8% of television institutions are held in private hands. Foreign investment is permitted, with caps on the percentage of foreign equity that is allowed. Community broadcasting is a very new phenomenon. The government approved a policy in 2002 allowing established education institutions to set up campus radio stations, with the first being launched in 2004. The Community Radio Policy of 2006 now allows non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations and non-profit organizations to apply for community radio licenses.

Many observers argue that Indian journalists have as much freedom as their colleagues in the United States and other Western countries, if they wish to use it. The Constitution of India guarantees freedom of speech and expression, and there is no direct system of censorship. Indian newspapers present much investigative and analytical journalism that is first-class, particularly about politics.

There are also complaints that many newspapers slant their coverage in favor of the narrow party and personal interests of the newspaper owners and their conglomerates, and that the profit motive leads them to neglect to cover issues relevant to the wider populace. John Vilanilam is one such critic.

In the economic system that prevails in India, social communication does not serve the bulk of the citizenry, but the dominant, private, selfish interests of about 10 per cent of the total population. Indian society is stratified along lines of caste, class, sex and ethnicity. The communication system in the country seems to be promoting the interests of the rich, the male and the members of the higher ethnic

groups, who try to imitate lifestyles in affluent societies without much regard for the large majority of the population who continue to be poor, illiterate and unaware of their human rights.<sup>43</sup>

Idealistic reporters who attempt to extend the range and repertoire of issues and sources that appear in the news are limited by the media industry's circulation wars. Indian journalists are now commonly appointed on a contract basis for a few years, with the criteria for their reappointment "not quality of work per se, but their ability to serve the economic interests of the owners as well."<sup>44</sup>

Private television has honed the technique of using hidden cameras to expose the corrupt or unethical behaviors of politicians, celebrities, sportspeople, and other public figures. Sensational news stories from such sting operations are plentiful and popular, but also controversial. Lawmakers have proposed amending the broadcast act to curb exposure methods that involve entrapment. Critics say that the government aims to protect the powerful, but there has been genuine public concern over the ethics of some stings. One contentious case provoked national outrage in 2007, when a journalist attempted to entrap a schoolteacher, allegedly as part of a vendetta against the woman, by inviting her to procure her students as prostitutes for a fake client. In their hunt for audiences, journalists have descended to other dubious and predatory behaviors. In one example, television journalists in the state of Bihar provoked a huge outcry in 2006 by purchasing gasoline and matches for a desperate man so that he could commit suicide on camera.

Despite being free of censorship, journalists' activities have also long been hampered by a strongly entrenched culture of government secrecy. Scholars and reformists have increasingly argued since the 1990s that a lack of transparency has fuelled government and judicial inefficiency, misuse of power, and rampant corruption. It is argued that this has hampered development, and "perpetuated all forms of poverty, including nutritional, health and educational."<sup>45</sup>

Progress in shining a light into the 'opaque' halls of government has been slow and uneven. The Indian government passed a Freedom of Information Act in 2002, but this proved weak and inoperable, and it was replaced in 2005 with a Right to Information Act. The newer act relaxes the Official Secrets Act and requires every public authority to computerize their records for widespread distribution and to publish particular categories of information in order to minimize the need for citizens to lodge formal requests for information. Although it is too early for firm measures of success of the new Act, India's Information Officer points to some positive indicators. These include as improvements in India's Transparency International rankings, surveys showing that the public perceives a decrease in corruption,

low corruption rates among development projects that NGOs have been involved in, and a slowing in the rate of rural to urban migration.<sup>46</sup>

The Right to Information Act reflects a new philosophy on development and communications, which India's Information Commissioner describes as "a citizen-centric approach," involving NGOs and civil society in decision-making, and that the "democratisation of information and knowledge... are vital for equalizing opportunity for development."<sup>47</sup> This suggests an increasing commitment to the watchdog and agenda-setting function that the news media and other information sources can serve.

Despite this fresh focus on development, the amount of development-related journalism created by Indian journalists has diminished in comparison to previous decades. Previously most Indian newspapers dedicated a full page to the development round, but in the liberalized economy, media organization's profit drive has increased, and the development page progressively withered in size to a half page, then to a column, and then to the point where it has almost completely disappeared. Similarly, issues about agriculture, poverty, hunger, drought, education and health affect hundreds of millions of people, but profit-making imperatives of newspapers have forced the demise of the 'rounds' or 'beats' in which journalists were dedicated on a full-time basis to these topics.<sup>48</sup> When journalists do cover these development-oriented issues, the stories are likely to have been initiated by the press releases of "media-savvy NGOs;" the journalists are then likely to simply telephone the NGO spokespeople "in their air-conditioned offices rather than trudging their way through the fields."<sup>49</sup>

A content analysis study by the Centre for Youth and Social Development quantifies the problem. A study of five Oriya-language daily newspapers and four leading English-language dailies for a six-month period found that Oriya dailies dedicated less than 4% of their space to issues relating to the poor, while the English dailies allocated less than 1.6%. The stories that did appear were dull, shallow and full of stereotypes.<sup>50</sup>

The broadcast media are particularly important in helping developing communities, given India's oral traditions of story-telling and low literacy levels. Radio, in particular, is the main source of news and entertainment. India's public service broadcasters, All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan, have been leaders in providing India with development-oriented programs, despite some consumers' complaints about the technical standards and entertainment values of the programs. AIR and Doordarshan operate autonomously from government influence. They are among the world's largest radio and television broadcasters, with many different services operating in various languages and across regions in India.

Despite the commitment of AIR and Doordarshan to reporting on development, India's newly established community radio services, with their use of local languages and creation of locally specific programs, have been able to provide and broker information in a way that has been beyond the capacity of the national broadcasters. Vinod Pavarala and Kanchan Malik's study of the early initiatives of community radio indicates positive outcomes. They describe improved participation, with powerful examples of marginalized groups sharing and discussing issues germane to their health and social well-being. They also present cases of deliberation, with community radio allowing communities to discuss problems and develop solutions that they can enact themselves or pressure the authorities to implement.<sup>51</sup> Community radio cannot solve community needs alone, however, and this is clear from a number of statements from skeptical citizens. "We have nothing to eat or drink," one cynical villager says. "There are no wells or roads. Kids are going hungry. What do we gain from listening to radio? Can a radio drama reduce our hunger?"<sup>52</sup>

The vigor and vitality of India's news media is ironically also the reason that journalistic life is punctuated by many physical threats and risks. The events of 2007 are typical, when two journalists were killed for exposing political nepotism and gangsters, respectively. Another three media workers died when a newspaper was firebombed, apparently by supporters of a potential successor to the Tamil Nadu chief minister who were angered by an opinion poll that favored the aspirant's younger brother. Despite freedom from censorship and Constitutional protections of free speech, the ongoing attacks on Indian journalists mean that the nation only ranks 120<sup>th</sup> out of the 169 countries on Reporters sans frontières' 'World Press Freedom Index.'<sup>53</sup>

India also experiences the problems typically seen in conflict regions. In the disputed Indian portion of Kashmir, journalism has been disrupted massively by the violence that has claimed more than 60,000 lives in 20 years. A small example is the month immediately following the mass protests of August 11–12, 2008. A cameraman was killed while covering a demonstration and at least 32 journalists were beaten. Television broadcasters were ordered to cancel news services on the grounds that news might incite further unrest. Journalists' movements were so badly hampered by curfews and economic blockades that at least half a dozen newspapers were unable to publish.<sup>54</sup>

## **Conclusions**

Asian journalism is characterized by a remarkable diversity within and between countries and regions. Those who aim to help strengthen the democratic contribution of journalism cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach. There are abundant examples of committed, creative and courageous journalists

who push hard to extend the forums for democratic discussion and to include a variety of frameworks, topics, speakers, and perspectives. However, human rights organizations are correct to identify Asia as a continent of multitudinous dangers for journalists and media organizations. In most Asian countries, journalists find themselves intensely gridlocked by political and economic conditions as well as government and community presumptions about the appropriate relationship between journalists, governments, and societies.

Despite hundreds of millions of international aid dollars dedicated to training Asian journalists, the reports conducted by Reporters sans frontières, Freedom House and other global agencies show little change in the over-arching picture of journalistic operations in many Asian nations.<sup>55</sup> Training of journalists may end up equipping them with skill sets that they simply cannot apply, unless there are concurrent efforts to reshape the perspectives, policies and behaviors of relevant individuals and agencies within government departments and civil society. Little progress will occur in countries with extreme repression of journalism and civil society, such as North Korea, Burma, and Turkmenistan, unless there is substantive change in the political leadership. However, in most countries, training and engagement with officials has potential to incrementally improve the transparency of 'opaque' bureaucracies and journalists' ability to access and report upon information germane to their societies. Training of journalists and other media workers must be contextualized to take into account the specific cultural, economic and political factors that shape and limit the media's performance, and how journalists might be best placed to negotiate around them. Such training needs to be sensitive to valid variations in perceptions of what kind of governance and journalism best serves development, without serving politically motivated rhetoric.

The ability of journalists to engage in independent and responsible reporting depends on the financial health of the media organizations that they work for. Consequently, much will also depend on training and support for the media managers, advertising personnel, and other employees to keep media companies operating effectively and profitably. Given the economic state of many Asian countries, assistance with equipment, financial support or other resources may also be needed. Experience shows that the adoption of equipment and other physical resources must be carefully planned to ensure that they are appropriate for the terrain in which they will be used, and that staff are adequately trained in how to use them.<sup>56</sup> Technologies also need to be appropriate to the resources, story-telling traditions and technological literacy of local populations. Sometimes support for older technologies, such as radio, may be more important than newer technologies such as the internet.

The case of the Indian media, where corporate goals are driven by strong profit motives, suggests that if media organizations are to become more inclusive of the needs of women, children and marginalized groups, then the corporate goals of media organizations must also be considered. Once again, training cannot be effective if it only includes reporters without also reaching the editors, managers, and proprietors who define and interpret the media organization's agendas and mission statements. Since state-funded media often have a very specific charter to provide news and information that assists with development and to serve less profitable rural and remote communities, the government media must not be neglected in this equation.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that this chapter excludes journalism in West Asia, which comprises both the Eurasian countries which are not purely Asian nations, as well as the Arabic states, which are discussed elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> Cato Institute. 2008. *Economic Freedom of the World: 2008 Annual Report*. Available at <http://blogs.uct.ac.za/blog/amandla/2008/09/16/economic-freedom-of-the-world-2008-annual-report.-cato-institute>.

<sup>3</sup> Benedict Anderson. 1983. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.

<sup>4</sup> Homi K. Bhabha. 2004 (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge. p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> The history, philosophies, and practices of development journalism is examined more comprehensively in Angela Romano. 2005. 'Journalism and the tides of liberalization and technology,' In *Journalism and Democracy in Asia*, eds. Angela Romano and Michael Bromley. London: RoutledgeCurzon.

<sup>6</sup> Floyd J. McKay. 1993. 'Development Journalism in an Asian Setting: A Study of Depthnews'. *International Communication Gazette* 51(3): 237-251.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 114 of Mahathir Mohamad. 1989. 'The social responsibility of the press.' In *Press Systems in ASEAN States*, ed. Achal Mehra. Singapore: AMIC. pp. 107–116.

<sup>8</sup> Leonard R. Sussman, *Press Freedom 1998: Global Warning: Press Controls Fuel the Asian Debacle*. Washington: Freedom House.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Rosemary Righter. 1978. *Whose News? Politics, the Press and the Third World*, London: André Deutsch.

<sup>10</sup> Amartya Sen.

<sup>11</sup> Fareed Zakaria. 1998. *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; and Fareed Zakaria. 2003. *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. New York: WW Norton.

<sup>12</sup> Seow Ting Lee and Crispin C. Maslog. 2005. 'War or Peace Journalism? Asian Newspaper Coverage of Conflicts.' *Journal of Communication*, June, 55(2), 311-328.

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- <sup>13</sup> See p. 185 of Imtiaz Hasnain. 1988. 'Communication: An Islamic approach.' In *Communication Theory: The Asian Perspective*, ed. Wimal Dissanayake. Singapore: AMIC. pp. 183-189.
- <sup>14</sup> See p. 4 of Achal Mehra (ed.). 1989. 'Introduction.' In *Press Systems in ASEAN States*. Singapore: AMIC. pp. 1-11.
- <sup>15</sup> See, for example, chapters 9 and 10 in Romano. 2003. op cit.
- <sup>16</sup> Brian L. Massey and Li-jing Arthur Chang. 2002. 'Locating Asian values in Asian journalism: A content analysis of web newspapers.' *Journal of Communication*. 52(4): 987-1003.
- <sup>17</sup> Cherian George. 2006. 'Asian journalism: Neglected alternatives.' In *Issues and Challenges in Asian Journalism*, eds. Hao Xiaoming and Sunanda K. Datta-Ray. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish. pp. 79-92.
- <sup>18</sup> Xu Xiaoge. 2005. *Demysifying Asian Values in Journalism*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish.
- <sup>19</sup> Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility. 2001. 'Press freedom a fragile reality.' *Journalism Asia* 1(1):1.
- <sup>20</sup> Dan Gillmor. 2004. *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People*. Sebastopol, California: O'Reilly Media. p. xiii.
- <sup>21</sup> World Bank. 2004. *World Development Indicators*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- <sup>22</sup> Reporters sans frontières. 2008. *Turkmenistan: Annual Report 2008*. Available at [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=25584](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=25584)
- <sup>23</sup> Madanmohan Rao (ed.). 2003. *News Media and New Media: The Asia-Pacific Internet Handbook*, Episode V. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.
- <sup>24</sup> Patrick Bishop and Lori Anderson. 2004. 'The evolution from e-government to e-democracy is not as simple as 1,2,3.' *On Line Opinion*. Available at <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=2109>.
- <sup>25</sup> Reporters sans frontières. Available at [http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=273](http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=273).
- <sup>26</sup> Robert Putnam. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster. p. 177.
- <sup>27</sup> David T. Hill and Krishna Sen. 2005. *The Internet in Indonesia's New Democracy*. London: Routledge; and Merlyna Lim. 2004. 'The polarization of identity through the internet and the struggle for

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democracy in Indonesia.' *Electronic Journal of Communication* 14(3-4). Available at <http://www.cios.org/www/ejc/v143toc.htm>.

<sup>28</sup> World Association of Newspapers. 2008. *World Press Trends: Newspapers are a Growth Business*. Göteborg, Sweden (2 June). Available at <http://www.wan-press.org/article17377.html>.

<sup>29</sup> See 'Chapter 11: The envelope please' in Angela Romano. 2003. *Politics and the Press in Indonesia: Understanding an Evolving Political Culture*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Chay Florentino-Hofileña. 2002. 'The ethical failings of a democratic press: The Philippine case.' In *Media Ethics in Asia: Addressing the Dilemmas in the Information Age*, ed. Venkat Iyer. Singapore: AMIC and NTU. pp. 51-65.

<sup>32</sup> Timothy Kenny and Peter Gross. 2008. 'Journalism in Central Asia: A victim of politics, economics, and widespread self-censorship.' *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13(4):515-525.

<sup>33</sup> See pp. 90–124 of Syed Hussein Alatas. 1990. *Corruption: Its Nature, Causes and Functions*. Aldershot, England: Avebury; and pp. 2, 40–45 of Robin Theobald. 1990. *Corruption, Development and Underdevelopment*. Houndmills, Hampshire: Macmillan.

<sup>34</sup> Syed Hussein Alatas. *op. cit.* p. 75.

<sup>35</sup> Angela Romano. 2003. *op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> *The New Light of Myanmar*. 2007. 'Some monks and people enter homes.' Myanmar Information Committee Yangon Information Sheet. 27 September. Available at <http://www.myanmar-information.net/infosheet/2006/070927.htm>.

<sup>37</sup> Tamotsu Shibutani. 1966. *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. p. 62.

<sup>38</sup> Sonny Inbaraj. 1999. 'East Timor: Journalists Rebuild Media as Well.' *Inter Press Service*. Wire report 22 November 1999.

<sup>39</sup> The information about North Korea is compiled from a large number of sources, including the North Korean government's website, the Amnesty International, Economist Intelligence Unit, Human Rights Watch, Reporters sans frontières, and the UN. Dated but useful references include Krzysztof Darewicz. 2000. 'North Korea: A black chapter.' In *Losing Control: Freedom of the Press in Asia*, eds. Louise

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<sup>40</sup> Sung Jin Lee. 2008. 'North Korean people copy South Korean TV drama for trade.' *The Daily NK*. 22 February 2008. Available at <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=3290>; and Il Geun Yoon. 2007. 'South Korean dramas are all the rage among North Korean people.' *The Daily NK*. 2 November 2007. Available at <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=2862>.

<sup>41</sup> Shaohua Chen and Martin Ravallion. 2008. *The developing world is poorer than we thought, but no less successful in the fight against poverty*. Policy Research Working Paper No. WPS 4703. Washington: World Bank.

<sup>42</sup> Office of the Registrar General and Census Commission India. *Census of India 2001*. Available at <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>.

<sup>43</sup> John V Vilanilam. 2005. *Mass Communication in India: A Sociological Perspective*. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks: Sage. p. 35.

<sup>44</sup> Arvind Sinha. 2006. 'Growing need of an alternative media.' In *Making News: Handbook of the Media in Contemporary India*, ed. Uday Sahay. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. p. 124.

<sup>45</sup> M. M. Ansari. 2008. *Impact of right to information on development: A perspective on India's recent experiences*. A lecture delivered at UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 15 May 2008.

<sup>46</sup> M. M. Ansari. 2008. op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> See Uday Sahay (ed.) 2006. *Making News: Handbook of the Media in Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<sup>49</sup> See p. 101 of Navneet Anand. 2006. 'What makes news: Development, no development, or none of it.' In *Making News: Handbook of the Media in Contemporary India*, ed. Uday Sahay. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp. 96-103.

<sup>50</sup> Centre for Youth and Social Development. 2003. *The vanishing poor: a study of the shrinking coverage of pro-poor issues in the print media*. Bhubaneswar, India: CYSD.

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<sup>51</sup> Vinod Pavarala and Kanchan K. Malik. 2007. *Other Voices. The Struggle for Community Radio in India*. London: Sage Publications.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>53</sup> 'World Press Index 2007.' Available at [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=24025](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=24025).

<sup>54</sup> This information comes from a number of sources, most particularly Reporters sans frontières.

<sup>55</sup> Kenny and Gross make this observation with specific regards to Central Asian countries, but it is also applicable to most of the region. See Kenny and Gross. 2008. *op. cit.*

<sup>56</sup> Krishna Kumar. 2006. 'International assistance to promote independent media in transition and post-conflict societies.' *Democratization*. 13(4):652–667; and Sam Miller. 2006. 'Journalism training in Sri Lanka: Meeting the needs of working journalists.' *Changing English*. 13(2): 173–178.