Indira Gandhi’s reasoning

1. According to Article 19 (1) of the Indian Constitution, Indians have a right to a) to Freedom of Speech and Expression. The second part of Article 19 lists limitations and suggests that ‘States shall be authorized to make any law restricting the exercise of the freedom of speech and expression in the interest of the security of the state, friendly relations with other countries, public order and decency and good conduct. The State is also authorized to restrict press freedom ‘in order to check slanderous articles and promotion of disaffection towards or contempt of court.’

Indira Gandhi’s government used the ‘security of state’ and ‘promotion of disaffection’ as its defense for imposing strict control on the press.

2. Indira Gandhi’s justification for repression of the Indian mass media was based on three major assumptions:
   a. Economic productivity and social justice are more important than civil liberties and freedom of expression.
   b. The Press of India was acting in a manner that seriously hindered the state in its efforts to promote economic productivity and social justice.
   c. A drastic contraction of civil liberties and press rights will advance the state’s ability to promote those causes.

The main criticism received, was that the control of the press was so vital for development, why did she wait for over a decade?

Problems of Indian Mass Media System

India’s mass media system suffered from the following flaws, which made it vulnerable:

1. Lack of a well defined national mass communication philosophy and policies.

2. Lack of public awareness of the importance of mass media in a democracy.

3. Diffidence of the commitment on part of publishers and editors to oppose the government.

4. Dependence on the government for newsprint and advertising.