

BUPHA CHANGKAEW : DECREE 42 AND CONTROL NEWSPAPER BY DIFFERENT GOVERNMENTS. THESIS ADVISOR : PROF.SUKANYA SUDBANTHAD,B.A.(Hons.),M.Comm.(U.of Washington). 274 PP.

Newspapers enjoy the greatest freedom compared to other media in Thailand. Freedom of the press sometimes leads to the violation of personal rights and privacy. As a result, regulations restricting press freedom were first introduced during the reign of King Rama VI. More press control bills, including Decree 42, were later promulgated by different succeeding governments.

Decree 42 was issued during the time of political uncertainty by the National Reform Council. It was criticized as a disgraceful bill that severely curtailed freedom of the press. The stipulations of this bill overlapped those of many other codes, and empowered press officers to arbitrarily control the press without due process of law. However, the uses of Decree 42 by various governments differed markedly.

The results of the study indicated that the differences in utilizing Decree 42 by different governments were due to (a) changing political, economic and social situations, (b) personalities of the top executives, and (c) the social irresponsibility of the press. Control of the press by decree 42 took various forms for example the closure of newspaper, the revocation of editors and publishers' licenses, and warnings.

The press fruitlessly sought the repeal of Decree 42 during the Thanin regime. During the Prem government, it was amended to permit the press to appeal to the court if not satisfied with press officers' rulings. The press continued to fight for the abrogation of the decree. The effort bore fruit during the Chatchai government when it was finally abolished on November 18, 1990.