

# The Role of Media in Indian Democracy

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## Abstract

Without media or free press democracy cannot be successful. In simple words democracy is the government of the people, for the people and by the people. In this sense for the active and vigilant participation of free press is essential in a democratic society. It is voice of the people. It plays an important role in the shaping of a healthy democracy. Media is considered a heart of democracy society. As an important source of information it aware the people in all countries of the world. The media is generally considered as fourth pillar of democracy. It makes people conscious of different happenings from grounds such as sports, politics, economic, and social, etc. Media is like a mirror also which illustrations the basic reality and sometimes it may be harsh. The present paper is an attempt to examine the role of media in Indian democracy.

**Key Words:** India, Democracy, Media, Corruption.

## Introduction:

In simple words Democracy is defined as a government of the people, for the people and by the people. Media is considered as the fourth pillar of democratic society<sup>1</sup> after executive, legislature, and judiciary. Democracy and media walk hand in hand. Media strengthens not only the democratic values and norms but also quickens the speed of development. The recent years saw a greater interface between the common man and media. It is the media which has become a part of the life of those people of India, who are mostly dependent on it for various wants including information and entertainment. Media keeps the peoples awakened and there is no denying the fact that it has become one of the major instruments of social change.

During the British rule, the role of media was quite different. In the name of security of the State, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century people were deprived of the basic info and transparency in the process of governance was a distant dream. The print media during the freedom struggle of India played a foremost role and got a confidence booster. It is well known fact that most of the freedom fighters were well familiar with journalistic knowledge and many of them were said to be journalists. Media largely influenced the India's freedom movement. Subsequently after India's independence, the responsibility and role of the media was improved but during the period of emergency (1975) the activities of media were strongly controlled<sup>2</sup>. Even strict orders were issued against the media houses and media independence was completely crushed. However, the role of media during the post emergency period strengthened again as well as it came much closer to the hearts of the common people. The political, social, economic and cultural areas of India were reflected in the newspapers which eventually paved the way for strengthening the democracy and the government of the people of India. Now-a-days, besides the print media,

the electronic media, particularly, the television programs and internet brought revolutionary changes in the pitch of news broadcasting and scrutiny.

### **Objectives of the study:**

1. To build conceptual framework of the study.
2. To examine the role of media in Indian democracy.
3. To study why role of media is important for the development of democracy.

### **Research Methodology:**

Since the nature of the research paper is theoretical; hence the data has been collected through secondary sources, for example, reference books, internet, journals, etc. have been widely consulted to develop the plan of the research paper.

### **Constitutional Status of Press/Media in India**

After the independence of India when the constitution was being drafted, the question aroused before the constitutional makers of India that whether or not to have a separate provision for press like in Constitution of America, or to include the freedom of press in right to speech and expression as in constitution of England.

In this context, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar the Chairman of Drafting committee powerfully argued that, “The press is simply another way of describing a citizen or an individual. The media has no superior privileges which are not to be given or which are not to be exercised by the voter in his separate capacity. The executive of press or the editor are all citizens and therefore when they select to write in a newspaper they are just exercising their right of freedom of speech and expression and in my decision then no special mention is necessary of the freedom of press at all”<sup>3</sup>. Hence in Indian constitution the right to press was inserted in freedom of speech and expression i.e., Article 19(1)(a). Free press is the need of democracy and is more important for the huge democratic country like India. In India in the absence of any exact article in the constitution for free press, it was the judiciary who promoted and safeguarded the independence of press.

### **Role of Indian Judiciary in Protecting the Independence of Press/Media**

The court in *Romesh Thapar*<sup>4</sup> VS State of Madras case has alleged that right to circulation is as important as right to publication. In *Sakal News Papers VS Union of Indian* indirect effort by Government to restrict the freedom<sup>5</sup>, by passing the News paper (Price and Pages) Act 1956, which empowered the government to regulate the space for advertisement, was struck down by judiciary as it, would have direct impact on circulation.

### **Role of Judiciary in Restricting Freedom of Press/Media**

In India the judiciary protected the rights of press as well as constrained it in the interest of justice. The court in *Bihar VS Shailabala Devi* case speeches and expression<sup>6</sup> on the part of an individual which inflame or boost to of ferocious crimes such as murder, etc. will undermine the security of the state. The court in the case of *Dr. D.C. Saxena VS the Chief Justice of India* alleged if preservation of democracy is the foundation for free speech, society equally is authorized to regulate freedom of speech or expression through democratic action. The cause

is evident, e.g., that society accepts free speech and expression and also puts restrictions on the right of the majority.<sup>7</sup>

### **Responsibility of Median in Democratic Country**

Some of the responsibilities of media in democratic country like India are as under:

1. To train the common man with fair information. Media shall not stain the evidences; they shall present them as they are.
2. To play vigorous role in expansion the thoughtfulness of people, through allowing them with information. In India like other country where there is major rate of illiteracy, it is the responsibility of media to carry knowledge and widen their opinions.
3. To play a key role in introducing the proper way against the people who are reproached of any anti-social activities, irrespective of any political connection.
4. To foster the essence of harmony and brotherhood among the people, and mount faith in democracy and justice. If the media obeys firmly to its duties then the democracy will be appreciated in factual sense by the citizens of India.

### **Role of Media in Indian Democracy**

Media is considered the backbone of democracy, it playing very significant role in Indian democracy which is as following:

1. The media works as a watchdog of the government and carry every report of the action of administration thereby keeping the people informed about the day to day happenings taking place around them.
2. The media is considered as fourth pillar of democracy. It makes us aware of various activities like politics, sports, economic social and cultural activities etc. It is also like a mirror which shows the bare truth and sometimes it may be harsh.
3. The media also exposes loopholes in the democratic society, which ultimately helps government in filling the vacuums of loopholes and making a system more accountable, responsive and democratic friendly. Thus the democracy without media is like a vehicle without wheels.
4. Media acts as a bridge between the people and the government and also a very powerful tool with the ability to make and break the opinion of the people. It has the capacity to swing perceptions or evoke emotions. This is why it has gained faith of the public. Media, through its various means of newspapers, television and cinema is what rules the heart and mind of people.
5. The media has helped to shape the democratic society by giving emphasis to issues that are at one point in time, would have been considered strictly private such as child birth, child care, domestic violence, and sexual harassment.

6. Media in exercise of freedom of expression is essential to communicate the thoughts, views, ideas, philosophy, ideals and activities. Communication keeps society together and cohabitate. For healthy growth of civilization world, the free flow of information and ideas is essential.
7. Modern Methods of interpersonal Media communication include seminars dramas, public meeting and workshops etc. these are effective media methods to address small and medium gatherings, which can be used as grounds for advocating the Human Rights and building public opinion.
8. Media technology has got a crucial role in everyone's life today. Media has got a great job of bringing social change in whatever the topic covers from entertainment to all the ongoing issues. Currently there exists revolution in fighting against corruption in the country. People started realizing the corruption is the element to be eradicated. Internet and social networking sites like Face book and Twitter, along with traditional media like print and electronic are powerful weapons that curb the menace of corruption and lead to greater transparency in public life by policing India's situation vis-a-vis economic and governance, highlighting ongoing corruption cases and applying pressure on corrupt organization and individuals. The free distribution and wide reach of the internet and social media channels is critical in the fight to reduce corruption and renew the social fabric. This can give rise to virtuous cycle of transparent policy making, clean government and faster economic growth.
9. In any democratic country the media plays a vital role in creating molding and relating public opinion. Over the years the media became so powerful that it soon acquires the status of forth state as it was aptly described by the British politician Edmund Burke. It is become so indispensable for the democratic functioning that Thomas Jefferson who was the third US president (1801-1809) said, "Were it let to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers, without a government. I should not hesitate for a movement to prefer the letter".
10. Media today touches almost every aspect of our public life. Media plays a very important and crucial role in enlisting and educating the people. The media can aid public involvement through advocating issues and transferring knowledge, skill and technologies to the people. Awareness about various rural development programs, propagation of family planning could be spread by using the media. It made farmers aware of the new and improvement methods of agriculture and protection of the crops. Media plays very emphatic role in awakening people against many evils prevailed in the society like child marriage, killing of female unborn child, the evil practice of child labor etc. though educational programs, it can cover many student in a single platform. The university Grant Commission telecast educational programs for the benefit of the school and college students all over India. Media can ignite scientific temper among the students for development of science. The government can use the media more effectively to make it an instrument of social change. Media has exposed a number of corrupt practices, hidden deals, thus putting a check on the cancer in the form of corruption in the society.

## Conclusion

The Media is considered as fourth pillar of democratic society. For better working of democracy free press is must. But it does not mean an unrestrained press. The question here arises how and who to control press. The simple answer is there shall be an uplifting the standards of journalism can only be solution. Every reporter must honorably and willfully make an effort not to fall in any trap and raise the standard of journalism.

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