

An Evaluation of the Fourth Estate of Democracy in India

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Abstract: *Media is known as the fourth pillar of Democracy because it acts as a watchdog for the other pillars. It is known to provide credibility and maintain a check on the work and responsibilities of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. Additionally, the Media questions their authority from time to time and ensures the work is in favour of the public interest. Therefore, as aware citizens of a democratic country, Media is our closest window into the work of our Government structures. Moreover, citizens of India can maintain transparency with the system and also make their choices in public participation activities like elections*

Keywords: Democracy, Media, Citizen, Expressions, Journalism, Society, Communications, Rights, Freedom of Speech, Indian, Corruption, Regulations, Government, Restrictions, Fourth Pillar

I. INTRODUCTION

Media holds a strong power and responsibility in a democratic society. They are the ones who can influence the thought process of millions of people. A media that is free to put forth harsh and genuine realities of the society, independent from all political and religious influences and powerful to make the guilty suffer is proof of effective democracy. The great importance and power of the media make people to consider it the fourth pillar of democracy. It is considered as the eyes, ears and mouth of the people. The freedom of the press is not explicitly mentioned in the Indian constitution but it can be derived from Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution i.e. freedom of speech and expression. However, along with time, media deviated from its ultimate task of providing authentic information and started playing the game of TRP. Media trials is also an emerging issue. In the present time, the media is just a puppet of political and religious dominant people

Aims and Goals of the Study:

1. To search the role of media in democracy, whether it is unbiased and truthful.
2. To enable to understand that the fourth pillar should act as the voice for the millions of voiceless in India.
3. To evaluate media got to play judiciously the Article 19 (1) (a) of our constitution to remain accountable to the common mass.
4. To search whether free media can connect the common readers or viewers and make them conscious about the burning problems of the Country.
5. To ensure that the fourth estate plays the role of a watchdog to raise questions and to criticise the wrong policies taken by the establishments.
6. To search shelter the fact-checking Medias are in existence in democracy.
7. To study the various Dimensions of Media.
8. To study the fourth pillar of Democracy.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Every research is necessary a specific methodology so for the present research has used specific methodology. For the collection of data, the researcher has used the secondary source. The study is descriptive in nature. Secondary data required for the study are collected from books, journals and other Government websites, periodicals, and reports etc.

Functions of Media as the Fourth Pillar of Democracy:

Democracy is a regime of people's rule over their nation through their elected representatives. The Media is responsible for keeping a check on social, political and economic activities and informing the citizens about the same.

In addition, here are some top Functions of Media:

- Report electoral results and votes in each constituency.
- Highlight the progress or devastation incurred by various policies, parties & organisations.
- Likewise, covering agendas and campaigns of every election.
- It promotes the investigation of malpractices and illegal activities in the society or organisation.
- Moreover, by performing its role, it helps people to make an informed choice.
- The Media also showcases the competition between the electoral parties along with their claims and debates.
- Furthermore, it provides a platform for people to communicate their concerns and opinions freely.

III. EVOLUTION OF MEDIA

Media 4th pillar of democracy is also known by certain terms like "watchdog in a democracy", voice of people", but really does it serve as voice of people. The influence of media among general people cannot be ignored; it helped a feudal society to convert into modern one. During India's struggle for freedom leader like Mahatma Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak etc. used media extensively to make their movements and protest successful and it really played a vital role in making India free from British rule. Earlier in the rural areas radio was used by people to gather information about weather (especially farmers), warning related to flood which is helpful to fisherman etc. As time passes medium was started changing, electronic media started replacing print media and televisions become popular in rural as well as in urban. Now the scenario is totally different from what it would be in 90's, now even a kid is excess to all the information with one click and this fast and easy accessibility to every information influence the life of human being in negative as well as positive way. In 21st century no one can imagine their life without media (whether print or social media). Media has a close watch on every individual; every step of person is being scrutinized by media. Media now has gained such creditability among masses that it now misusing that to make money in the market or in the world where money making is the only motive. Every day, I read newspaper, I get frustrated by listening or reading one sided story, no one bother to make aware people about the real story. Rather than giving useful and produce knowledge, it focuses on influencing and controlling audience mind to believe in it wants them to.

IV. MEDIA & FUNCTIONING DEFECTS

Few years a union government had issue some regulation regarding license for news channel. Under the constitution of India, freedom of the media is part of the freedom of speech guaranteed by Article 19(1) (a). However, no freedom can be absolute, and reasonable restriction can be placed on it. One of the basic tasks of the media is to provide truthful and objective information to the people that will enable them to form rational options, which is a sine in a democracy. But are the Indian media performing this role properly? "There are some defects of media:

Distorted Facts

Media often twist facts. There are several incidences which I have read in the newspaper like in the case when judges had to disclose their liabilities and assets in that column, it was written that justice Misra has two daughters to be married. Later it was revealed that Misra never intended to consider their daughters to be liability and it was written in the newspaper to create sensation among masses.

Paid News

Its one of the growing concern in the Indian media, that most of the news are paid one. They are showing us what they want to show us not what the real story behind the fakeNews. During the time of elections in order to increase vote banks, politicians spend crore of rupees to telecasts those news, which are helpful in elections and attract voters.

Absence of Real News

There is no real factor in most of the news. It only shows one aspect of the story and other remain in the dark light, which always remain inaccessible to general people. There are many incidences where one aspect is being depicted by media in order to create sensation among masses or make people emotionally weak in areas related to communal tension. Like there was a murder in the town of U.P related to land dispute between two friends, one was Hindu and another was Muslim and that lead to murder of Hindu pan, in this case media telecasted this incidence not as a land dispute but as Hindu-Muslim clash. There are many incidences everyday which are not at all real but are making people fool to mint money.

Tendency to Brand

The reality is that the 99% of people whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian are good. But media shows us that all Muslims are terrorists and evil and lead a difference in a country where unity in diversity is a slogan and appreciated by world at large.

Mountains Out Of Molehills

Last but not the least...the strange habit of Indian media where it makes mountains out of molehills has proved to be the final nail on its credibility coffin .Be it the intolerance issue or human poop falling from the sky... the Indian medias never fails to titillate and tickle our funny bones. Whether you're looking for this cave where Ram and Sita slept close to each other or the doorstep to the heavens, each of these news channels seem to possess all the answers... of course, credibility is not one of them!

The World Economic Forum, which released the report, has labelled the Indian media as the second most untrusted institution in the world. The survey was conducted by Edelman trust Barometer, who is in the media business for over 20 years now and has business in over 38countries. The survey showed that the trust of people of media, NGOs and business was in all time low and the credibility and motive of these institutions have been under question.

V. SOLUTIONS

- Government should make stringent laws and should cancel the license of media channels or newspapers, if they altered with the news or make money by telecasting or printing fake or brand news.
- There must be strict actions like imprisonment and fine, if such news is being published which play with the sentiments of people.
- Committees must be form in order to check whether media being independent and fourth pillar of democracy performing its function properly or not, or only play with the minds of people and make money.
- Consumers should also not trust in everything written in the newspaper or telecasted inthe TV., they must first try to know both the sides and then only reach to conclusion.

Analysis:

Democracy is defined as "government of the people, by the people, for the people," or "ruling of the people, through their elected representatives." The three pillars of democracy, the Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary, keep democracy balanced, but in this period, democracy is leaning toward the fourth pillar, the media. Thomas Caryle coined the phrase "Media as the Fourth Pillar of Democracy." The democratic system's merit is that it allows for freedom of expression and provides space for each individual. While media is used to keep people informed about diverse social, political, and economic activities, it also serves as a mirror to the world, reflecting the true and harsh truths of the world, as media is widely trusted and people always trust truthful and honest news. The media can have their own opinions, but they can post them in editorials for the public to judge. The major objective of the media is to deliver factual news to all types of viewpoints in front of the public, but the truth is not always displayed by the media, causing people to suffer and, ultimately, democracy to be lost. The media has been receiving a lot of contracts involving the transfer of shares between media and non-media companies, which leads in the dissemination of obfuscated news, a phenomenon known as the paid news syndrome. India is the world's largest media market and the fourth pillar of democracy. In the financial year 2020, India has over 143 thousand registered newspapers and Periodicals, a major rise

from the previous year, and there are currently 900 licenced private satellite television stations in the country as of February 2021. Despite this, social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and others exist today, and they are mostly used to display entertainment, politics, and business advertisements. The media may be thought of as a two-sided weapon: an accountable media and an unaccountable media, both of which have the ability to push the nation to new heights by providing strong support and also have the ability to destroy the nation. For a democratic country's system to function to its maximum capacity, public engagement is required, which necessitates the dissemination of information to a large number of people, referred to as mass media.

VI. CONCLUSION

The way, Indian media is facing the wrath of the society is undeniable. The media sector was once considered to be the most important aspect to raise the voice and to be listened too, but with the changing values and the investment of money in it, is hampering its credibility to great extent. The laws and regulatory bodies seem a bit flippant in order to curtail the negative aspects of media. The media has the power to change the perspective of a person about anything, it circulates. It has a great potential to influence individual thoughts and is capable of changing the entire dynamics through people who perceive various views from it. The wrong needs to be condemned and the good must be appreciated by the media on the basis of merit, it should lay more emphasis on a fair reporting in order to reclaim its lost credibility. The media is a vital cog for the masses and hence, it should give more importance on the core issues of the society and present the same before the society in a better way which should be more realistic and is free from all ill-effects that media, nowadays, bear. The media has to realize its fundamental freedom and should abide by the law, the media shouldn't usurp the functions of State as well as Judiciary and deviate from its objective and unbiased reporting. While it also needs to understand that any undesired control on media in a democracy, will also jeopardize the society at large hence, the law needs to be construed in accordance with the change of society which assures the people that media is aware about its rights and duties without infringing any provisions of law of the land in force.

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