

Role of the Media in Democracy

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Abstract

Democracy is commonly defined as a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Freedom and democracy walk hand in hand. We live in society today where the media plays a pivotal role in how we see the world. Media acts as an interface between the common man and the Government. It is a very powerful tool with the ability to make and break the opinion of people. Media through its various means of newspapers, television and cinema is what rules the heart and minds of people. Transparency and accountability are a must for proper functioning of a democratic system. The nexus between corruption and democrats intertwined by politics seems to snatch the serenity and peace of our country. Media plays a crucial role in shaping a healthy democracy. It is the backbone of a democracy. Media makes us aware of various social, political and economical activities happening around the world. It is like a mirror, which shows us or strives to show us the bare truth and harsh realities

of life. The media has undoubtedly evolved and become more active over the years. It is the media only who reminds politicians about their unfulfilled promises at the time of elections. T.V, news channels excessive coverage during elections helps people, especially illiterates, in electing the right person to the power.

Keywords

Documentaries, commercialization, barrel, gadgets, bombardment, democracy, consciousness

Introduction

Media constitute the fourth pillar of democracy. The role of the media is vital in generating a democratic culture that extends beyond the political system and becomes entrenched in the public consciousness over time. Media plays a key role in shaping a healthy democracy. It is the backbone of a democracy. Media makes us aware of various social, political and economical activities happening around the world. It is like a mirror, which

shows us or endeavours to show us the bare truth and harsh realities of life. The media has undoubtedly evolved and become more active over the years. It is the media only who reminds politicians about their unfulfilled promises at the time of elections. T.V news channels excessive coverage during elections helps people, especially illiterates, in electing the right person to the power. This reminder compels politicians to be up to their promises in order to remain in power. Television and radio have made a significant achievement in educating rural illiterate masses in making them aware of all the events in their language. Coverage of unfair misconducts of village heads and moneylenders has helped in taking strict actions against them by attracting governmental attention.

Impact of media

Media has become the life line of modern entertainment industry. It not only provides information but also helps in the dissemination of ideas to every nook and corner of the globe. The impact of media is really noteworthy. Excessive coverage or hype of sensitive news has led to communal riots at times. The illiterates are more prone to provocations than the literates. Commercialization has created a

stiff competition in media. In order to outdo each other print media has often gone one step further in publishing articles, cover stories, etc. on sex. Media experts say this is one of the means of attracting readers who are stuck to T.V. news channels, which have cropped up swiftly in a recent past and they believe this is a cheap form of journalism.¹

Positive Impacts of Media on Society

Media is a way of communication in the modern world. Media is divided into electronic media and print media. Newspapers, magazines and other weekly editorials etc. are included in print media while Television, Radio, Cable TV Network, internet etc., are included in electronic media. Individual become more informative about the national and international current affairs. They are introduced to the local news and events and events that enlighten them and play an important role in the formulation of the public opinion. With the advent of electronic media images and videos are beamed across the world via television and the mobile gadgets. People can access information at the click of the button.

¹ <https://iasexamportal.com/essay/An-Essay-Role-of-media-in-a-democracy>

FOURTH PILLAR OF DEMOCRACY:

In Indian context the mass media is considered as the fourth pillar of democracy.

- In democratic countries media has a massive freedom.
- Some of elections results across the world are influenced by the reports of different media channels
- The media has a greater role in democratic countries since it raises the voice of the people against government.²

Transparency

Media has helped to make the working of a nation extremely transparent. According to the experts, it is the fourth pillar of democracy after the government and the people. Common man can air his grievances without any problem through the social media so the higher authorities of the ruling class can take action for their good. Unlike the past when decision making was marked by opaqueness, the functioning of the modern government is inspected lock stock and barrel by the media.

² <https://www.quora.com/How-does-mass-media-influence-democracy>

Source of entertainment

Television, Cinema halls and print media are crucial in projecting the soft power of the society. They help to make the local culture and tradition popular among the viewers. In addition, people can watch movies, documentaries and entertaining content to feel rejuvenated as well as happy.

Social message

Media has become a boon for the developing world as it has focused on the social ills of the society existing in the countries. Majority of people are not aware about the practices that are detrimental to the society. Television and social media highlights the issue in detail and keeps the people updated. Once the government takes stock of the public opinion, it can proceed ahead and ban the practices that are harmful to society. Issues such as poverty and child labour are effectively addressed by the media group around the world.

Positive Media influence on teens:

Help Develop Awareness:

Most teens live a sheltered life. But with exposure to various media outlets, they can

develop awareness about society and the world. This cultural and political awareness is vital if we want to groom a generation of socially responsible citizens. With news channels, magazines, social networking sites blaring about world happenings, teens can realize that there is more to the world than just what is happening in the hood.

Help Develop Social Skills:

Many teens are socially uncooperative. Media gives them the chance to tutor their social skills. It also gives them the chance to expand their social circle and develop new friendships. Other benefits include social confidence, heightened literacy in the media, and more social support. Social media diversifies your teen's social skills, which in turn helps him navigate successfully through modern society.³

Help Develop Reading And Writing Skills:

When a celebrity talks of her favourite book, your teenager might be desirous to grasp a book too. Not just that, if your teenager wants to be a part of blogs, chat

rooms, etc. she will need to improve her reading and writing skills.

Negative aspect of media

Creating wrong impression on the teens:

Media creates a very strong influence on the young people as they tend to believe whatever is shown on TV and social websites. As a result, they fall into the trap of bad habit and find it difficult to leave the addition. Excessive adult content can cause lots of problems to young minds.

Manipulating public opinion:

It is said that media should provide neutral news however the truth is hypothetical because all media houses have a certain bias in their narration. Due to allegiance to different parties, people are exposed to only one side of the truth. As a result, media has caused lots of social disturbances across the world resulting in political disorder. Manipulation of the psyche of the audience is a dangerous precedent and should be discouraged by the intellectuals. The judgement of the media is a double edged sword because one hand if used properly it can prove to be a benefit for the society and on the other it could sound the death knell of the social fabric.

³ https://www.momjunction.com/articles/positive-and-negative-influences-of-media-on-teenagers_00107975/#gref

Blind Imitation

When you try to imitate your role models from the glamor industry, do you give a thought to whether you are doing right or wrong? It is often seen that young girls and boys imitate celebrities blindly. The impact of media is such that the wrong, the controversial, and the bad is more talked about. Sometimes, little things are blown out of proportion thus changing the way they are perceived by the audience. Media highlights controversies and scandals in the lives of celebrities. The masses fall for this being-in-the-news and end up imitating celebrities without much thought. Those at a vulnerable age, especially children and teenagers, are highly influenced by anything that is put before them in a jazzy way. At that age, they are attracted to anything that's flashy and anything that can make news.⁴

Wrong Message

The negatives in society are highlighted with the purpose of awakening people about them. For example, the negative effects of addiction are portrayed through advertisements. Newspapers, television and the Internet are used to convey social messages. But unfortunately sometimes, the message is misconstrued. The

'awakening' does not reach everyone or it reaches the masses in the wrong way. So there is a section positively influenced by the media while there are others who take the wrong message from it. Media influences them negatively. What is shown with intent to 'spread a message' ends up becoming a bombardment of the bad, the ugly. The bad is overinflated and the good goes unnoticed. Depiction of the bad has a negative impact on kids not mature enough to interpret what they are being shown. It's not just media to be blamed in this case. Parents and teachers have a big role to play in selecting what the young should see and what they should not.

Media Addiction

The negative effects of media on children are manifested in terms of their changing mental setup and the declining quality of their lifestyle. Children should invest more time reading good books, studying, playing outdoors and exercising. Due to the oh-so-alluring media, most of their time is spent glued to the television, reading celebrity gossip, listening to something sensational or wandering aimlessly on the Internet. With a 'world' of information and entertainment waiting on the other side of a computer or TV screen, it's not unnatural for anyone to spend hours

⁴ <https://entertainism.com/negative-influences-of-media>

exploring it; it's addictive. This affects kids and teenagers the most, as they are exposed to things they might interpret wrongly or may not even understand at that age.

Conclusion

Media act as a substance for democracy and development, helping to make public participation meaningful. If media is honest and committed in its job, democracy is bound to function more efficiently and the loopholes present in any democratic system can certainly be worked to the fullest satisfaction of the people. Media is like a watchdog in a democracy that keeps government active. From being just an informer it has become an integral part of our daily lives. With the passage of time it has become a more matured and a more responsible entity. The present media revolution has helped people in making an informed decisions and this has led to

beginning of a new era in a democracy. On the contrary, if media is biased, corrupt and favours only a particular party or few individuals, it can prove to be very dangerous for the smooth functioning of democracy. No one can become perfect and one can only strive to become so. The same holds true for our media also. Certainly there is still a lot of scope for improvement by which the media can rise upon the aspirations of the people for which it is primarily meant.

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