



## INDIA'S DEMOCRACY AND MEDIA'S SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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### **Abstract:**

The media's position in a democratic society has been a hot topic of discussion. India is home to the world's biggest democracy and a thriving media industry. The Indian media has recently been under fire for ignoring its social responsibility obligations. Large industrial conglomerates in the media sector challenge the survival of multiple opinions. Transnational media companies have expanded their wings in the Indian market after liberalization, pursuing their global objectives. It has come at the expense of an Indian media once regarded as a force for social change by promoting development projects aimed at the poor and marginalized. Though the media has served as a watchdog for government officials on occasion and has also assisted in participatory communication, there is still more work. The present article explores the media's social responsibility in Indian democracy in this connection.

**Key Words:** Public Sphere, Media, Social Responsibility, Democracy, Indian Media, Indian Democracy.

### **Introduction:**

The broad idea of "social responsibility," suited for sociological or legal reasoning, may be translated from the journalistic definition of "media ethics." There is considerable ambiguity between phrases like accountability, guilt, and responsibility regarding media ethics. Within journalism, accountability might be defined as the capacity to generate records, such as proof to back up what has been reported. Democracy is defined as a type of governance subject to public sovereignty in its broadest sense. In contrast to monarchs and aristocracies, it is fundamentally a people-run government. The democratic system's crowning glory is the freedom of speech and the space it provides for diverse points of view from different parts of society. A democratic system can only function to its total capacity if the general public participates actively, which is impossible unless people are well-informed about numerous problems. Any democratic society must have reliable information resources. Here's where the media comes into play a vital role in the development of Indian democracy. In the twenty-first century, mass media in many forms has impacted human existence. People from all across the world have benefited from their knowledge and enjoyment. Print media, which has dominated for a long time, is now being challenged by electronic media, changing many societal reactions. Radio has evolved a flair for entertaining and presenting news and viewpoints, resulting in widespread acceptance. Then there are new media, which is led by the Internet. People all around the globe may now exchange real-time information and ideas thanks to the Internet. In this way need to check the role of the media in real-time with their coverage of news and programmes to know its social responsibility.

### **Objective:**

- To find out the role of media social responsibility in Indian democracy.

### **Methodology:**

The present paper studied based on descriptive method of research. The data was collected from secondary data sources i.e., books, journals and open access sources.

### **Social Responsibility and the Media:**

The concept of social responsibility allows for a free press that is not censored. Nonetheless, the content of the media should be contested in a public arena, and the media should fulfil any duties coming from government action, professional self-regulation, or both. The normative perspective of the press contends that public interests must guide media behaviour. Freedom of publication, plurality in media ownership, diversity in information, culture, and opinion, support for the democratic political system, support for public order and security of the state, universal reach, quality of information and culture disseminated to the public, respect for human rights, and avoiding harm to individuals and society are the main public interest criteria that the media must consider.

The adoption of media as the fourth estate, a concept popularized by Edmund Burke in England, was firmly rooted in the social obligations required of media in the public arena. With the establishment of the 1947 Commission on Press Freedom, the social responsibility of the media became a hot topic of debate. It was founded in response to the American press's rampant commercialization and sensationalism and its dangerous tendency toward monopolistic behaviour. A revolutionary study, called "The Hutchins Commission's Report," was expected of the press regarding its commitment to social responsibility and journalistic standards. Media ownership is a public trust, and the media have obligations to society; the press should be free, but it must also

self-regulate; it must follow a professional code of conduct and ethics; the government may have a role to play in certain circumstances, and it should adhere to the professional code of conduct and ethics.

#### **The Public Sphere, Democracy, and the Media:**

Every democracy relies on independent, competent, and responsible media. They are tasked with educating, criticising, and provoking debate. Media informs people about social events and helps them make educated choices, allowing democracy to operate in its purest form. The media cannot be influenced by either the government or individuals inside it. To serve the public interest in a democratically ideal environment, a publication must have complete editorial independence.

It is similar to the notion of the public sphere, which emphasizes reasonable general discussion and dialogue. Individuals are allowed to speak openly about matters of common concern. One of the essential factors in establishing the public sphere is the media. In today's world, public debate media have shifted from being places for expressing widely recognized general interests to becoming places for the expression of specialized interests, according to Barnett. The public realm, which is necessary for a healthy democracy, may be manipulated to suit entrenched interests rather than the common good.

#### **Indian Democracy and the Media:**

In spirit, India's political system resembles that of liberal democracy. India's constitution clearly defines the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. The current party system is competitive, with the responsibilities of government and opposition being flexible. Press freedom, criticism freedom, and assembly freedom are also guaranteed. The success of Indian democracy has piqued the interest of researchers throughout the globe, prompting them to explore the secret of its survival in the face of adversity. India is diverse practically everywhere, even though it is not a developed country. Poverty, economic inequality, and wealth distribution have been perennial irritants.

Nonetheless, democracy has endured in the nation to this day. The function of the media in India, the world's biggest democracy, goes beyond just conveying information and entertainment. It must also include educating the populace for their social upliftment. The media must develop journalism in a nation with widespread poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment. Influencing the public's perceptions of the country's major issues is an essential function of the media. Entrenched interests, on the other hand, may manipulate public opinion to attain their goals

The media may manipulate the electorate and hence the vote result by concealing facts and projecting documentary concepts. Objectivity and integrity in the presentation of news and ideas may be completely eliminated. Public service broadcasting received a lot of attention after India's independence. It was used as a tool for social transformation. AIR (All India Radio) and Doordarshan, the country's public service broadcasters, were in charge of educational programmes in addition to providing information and entertainment. However, it should be mentioned that the country's public service broadcasting system was closely associated with the government. A monopoly media organization controlled by the government runs the danger of becoming the voice of the ruling class. The scenario changed as India's economy opened up to link with the global system. It signaled the start of a competitive media market, with public broadcasters competing with private firms. On the other hand, it created a new ownership problem.

The ownership structure of media worldwide, including in India, is concerning. Large corporation's own newspapers and television networks. A more significant concentration of ownership raises the likelihood of media being captured. In such a situation, media independence loses a place in protecting the owners' interests, who may or may not have social duties. The room for a diversity of opinions is shrinking, sending troubling signals to democracy. Bogart in 1995 claims that media ownership in many democratic nations has reached dangerously high concentration levels. Following liberalization, India now has significant transnational media organizations. These large multinational businesses control a substantial portion of the mass media market, including newspapers, television, radio, publishing, and the music industry.

As a result, international uniform material is now available across several media platforms. The rise of media corporations and their enormous presence has sparked concerns about manipulating ideas by a dominant few, which might be harmful to democracy. It grabs broader audiences; Media use in the conflict between competing political organizations is a troubling tendency that has evolved in the current media landscape. In truth, India is seeing this new phenomenon, with newspapers and news outlets adopting sides while reporting facts. The same event might be portrayed in two different ways in various newspapers or on two various television networks. Coronel claims that promoting hate speech instead of constructive discourse and cultivating a climate of distrust rather than social trust risks turning people cynical about democracy, which might lead to its collapse.

While analyzing the hazards of media developments, it is essential to note that the media in India has also played a part in strengthening democracy. As a watchdog of the democratic system, the media has exposed the system's flaws. Investigative reporting in the print and broadcast media has aided in exposing large-scale corruption that has stolen the country. The Indian media's high points include the Commonwealth Games Scam, the Adarsh Housing Society Scam, the Cash for Vote Scam, and the Bofors Scam. When the bureaucracy,

judiciary, or other public officials have breached the Laxman Rekha, voices have been raised throughout media and television networks. It is a huge step away from the prevailing structure regarding alternative media consumption. Participatory communication, rather than communication that flows from the top-down, is more critical in this case. Various television networks have also provided regular residents with the opportunity to voice their opinions as citizen journalists, fostering democratic involvement. Newspapers have educated the public by informing them about scientific and technological advancements. They have also voiced strong opposition to biases that hurt society. Radio has also been used to broadcast a lot of development news. Its cheap cost and widespread acceptability among the poorer parts have made it a powerful weapon for conveying public-beneficial views.

The medium's capacity to be more customized by allowing users to produce content makes it so appealing. However, there is a risk that advertising income will influence media outputs. Those with significant wealth can influence public opinion in their favour via the media. Such developments endanger democracy and jeopardize the media's independence. The current election campaigns include advertisements in newspapers, television, radio, and, on occasion, the internet. Candidates with more money have an advantage in being elected because they can purchase newspaper space and a lot of TV time.

**Conclusion:**

In today's society, media outlets have a certain kind of influence. In Indian democracy, the media has a duty intimately linked to socioeconomic situations. The current situation is not promising, and some issues must be addressed. Whether in print, audiovisual, radio, or online, media organisations must be more responsive to the general people. Professional ethics and ethical standards should not be compromised for sensationalism. The citizens of the nation benefit from the country's journalistic freedom. Mass communication has an important, if not vital, function in society. The procedures are being magnified due to the internet, opening the way for progress and increasing their relevance in society. Self-regulatory mechanisms in media organisations must be robust enough to prevent abnormalities from occurring. Organisations like the Press Council of India must stay alert to stop the rot. The danger posed by large media corporations is real. To address this issue, financially viable pluralistic media organisations should be supported. In a nation like India, the media should aim for community engagement as a goal.

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