

ROLE OF MEDIA IN ELECTIONS

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Abstract: This paper is an attempt that how media is immensely crucial for a vibrant democracy of which election is the hallmark for democracy's success. It is well known that media is the fourth pillar of democracy, and being the friend, philosopher and guide of electorate and democratic institutions it assumes utmost importance to have free, fair and transparent elections. In a representative democracy, elections, being the practical aspect of democracy, are the means to realize and achieve political power and that itself became means to fulfill national interest since political party/parties in power guide a country in a specific direction. In that sense, relationship of elections and national interests is of huge importance, simply because free, fair and transparent elections determine the nature, content and future of any democratic nation. Media is a medium to disseminate information to all stakeholders; to inform and enlighten citizens about their rights and duties; to provide a platform for discussion and debate on local, national and international issues; to enhance knowledge; to build perception among electorate towards a particular candidate or party/parties; to highlight the vital role voting in elections, etc. All such information and activities have vital imprints on voting behavior of people and elections. This paper will examine the what, why and how of media and fair elections through its critical and contemporary approach and is also dismantle the issues, challenges and reforms need to brought in both in media and election system. For example, corporatization of media, paid and fake news, partisanship of editors and TV anchors, model code of conduct in media, biased news, etc. are plaguing Indian media which are adversely impacting elections in India and hence

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national interests, particularly the democracy and constitutional ethos. Since there are complementarities between free and fair media and free and fair elections, both reinforce each other and vice-versa - good media results in good elections and hence active and vibrant democracy and bad media consequently lead to bad elections and pseudo-democracy. Hence, vigilant and lively media is vital for democracy to survive, thrive and deepen its roots.

Key words: Journalism, Democratisation, Socialisation, Electoral politics, Opinion polls, Exit polls, Media trial, Political communication, Rhetoric, Elitism

Introduction: Media plays a vital role in a democratic country like India wherein public opinion and perception matter the most in elections. Media, being the ‘fourth pillar of democracy’, ‘the messenger’, is said to be the mirror and modulator of public opinion. Media are the main means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing, and the Internet) regarded collectively. Is Media just including the press or else have wider sphere of domain? The term ‘media’ is an umbrella term which includes three layers viz. the TV broadcast, the print media and the digital media. Cinema, short films, biographies, music, etc. are also the part of mass media. Media are of utmost significance in a vast country like India having a democratic political order. Despite significant growth in social media, the TV broadcast or news channels, newspapers and journals are still the mass public opinion makers in the country. In democracy ultimate sovereignty lies in the people and the state tries every possible step to mould public perception in its favour. Besides the ministry of information and broadcasting which publishes the 'views of government and enunciate its policies and programmes takes media’s help either by hook or crook is undertaken by the government. The press, national and regional, publishes news and views on all burning topics of regional, national and international importance. In elections, it becomes an arena for public debate and sometimes even a check against the abuse of power and political pluralism

The ruling party needs media to propagate its views, policies, and programmes amongst the masses. Media act as a double edge sword, pro-people and anti-people; pro-people when it saves and develops people’s rights and democracy; anti people when it destroys and demeans people’s rights and democracy. Media by default or nature groomed to question the establishment but when it starts disobeying its duty to not to question the government - its credibility decline; Also, it appears anti-people when fearless, unbiased and pro-people

journalism is not taking place. This kind of journalism is not only against media profession but also against national interests. Since questioning the government directly led them to be answerable and responsible to the citizen's needs and demands. Thus, keep asking unfavorable and uncomfortable questions to the government would enhance the democratic processes in any democracy. But the sad and unfortunate scenario is that media in India forgot its duty and professional ethics if one ignores few media houses and internet platforms like social media. Otherwise majority of media houses bowing their head and hand before the authority. This is completely against democratic ethos, is this way media in India going to save the democracy?

The demolition of fourth pillar in a four leg democracy would lead to instability and demolition of other pillars as well. Those who are forgetting journalistic ethics are main culprits since democracy runs and functions as its pillar runs and functions. Since the theme of this paper restricts media's role in election hence detailed and comprehensive ramifications of media in society is not discussed otherwise media has all encompassing role in the society. From the time of election announcement to till the final outcome of election media is there - as an umpire, analyser, information collector and distributor, friend, philosopher and guide to the masses, hence, assumes utmost significance in the whole election journey as it well said, "Whoever controls the media, controls the mind."

Importance of Media

One, disseminator of information and builder of public opinion: It is a social and moral responsibility of media to present a factual and authentic picture of any incident to people without thinking much about profit seeking and material gain. Media through its news, documentaries, debates and talk shows not only inform and educate people but also influence and shape public opinion. In elections, public perception and image of the candidate and political party matter the most while forming an opinion to support or not to support the same.

For example, Anna Hazare movement for Jan Lokpal Bill, wide publicity of corruption charge against the then incumbent UPA government resulted in its loss of power; emergence of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and a clean and anti-corruption image of Arvind Kejriwal by the media, apart from other reasons, led it to the government formation in Delhi. That time the Congress party was heavily criticized and critically evaluated by media especially the electronic and print media. The negative environment in addition to other factors against the Congress

culminated in its biggest electoral defeat ever in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and mere 44 seats won by it out of 543. Throughout the day and night, political news and happenings dominate the entire spectrum of news domain on various platforms of media. The debates (whether propaganda or non-propaganda) like evening debate, primetime debate, and documentaries before elections shapes, reshape and alter the voters' opinion. The process of shaping and alteration of opinion happens through learning, conditioning and even brainwashing.

Two, a platform for debate and discussion and fourth pillar and watchdog of democracy, other three includes the legislature – where laws and policies are formulated; the executive – which implement laws and policies; the judiciary – which adjudicate laws and interpret the constitution. Media being the cornerstone of democracy, it is vital that it report information in a fair and unbiased manner. Ignoring this point will lead to severe damage to democracy as undisclosed any part of the story led to irrational and prejudiced judgment by the viewer and reader. Its tilt or inclination toward a particular political party/politician is a factor in elections outcome.

Three, informed and enlightened citizenry: As learning and development of understanding through media take place: sensible and alert citizenry is the product of sensible, rational and vigilant media. The general public especially the ignorant masses and less educated people are almost solely relying on the TV and print media for information and opinion formulation. Thus it becomes immense responsibility of media to be the “responsible media”.

Four, socialisation and democratisation: Socialisation is the process of internalizing the norms and ideologies of society. Simply, it is the activity of mixing socially with others and the process of learning to behave in a way acceptable to society. Media is one of the democratization factors that it propels actions of making something accessible to everyone. Democratisation involves moving towards more democratic political regime, including substantive political changes. Media through awareness and enriching the understanding of people make vital imprints in socialisation and democratisation process of the masses.

Five, development of civilization: Media through right information and making citizens informed and aware help build a society in the positive direction. However the reverse of above

may also possible if media play a distorted and destructive role instead of balanced and constructive role.

How free media is a precondition to democracy

Maintaining health of the nation is responsibility of the state, and media help along with its citizens. Building national character democracy unrest freedom of dissent not dissemination media is politics and politics is media pro people pro democracy anti power to think Horizontal penetration of right information is crucial for people to become informed citizenry who are aware of their rights and duties, and thus, contribute meaningfully in the society. The values of tolerance and selfless devotion to public interests are vital for sustaining and developing democracy. And that informed citizenry is formed due to education, capability building and having correct information about socio-economic, politico-cultural systems.

Why are media so powerful?

Media are the most powerful tool in the world due to its mass communication and mass reach. The various types of media and their respective reach to diverse population is unparalleled, no other means have such advantage as media have. Thus, it is truly a mass mobiliser of public opinion. Political parties and politicians try to take advantage of it and use this tool in the competitive politics. Political parties need their message, rhetoric and policy outreach. The speed, wide outreach, information provider and information maker, opinion maker and modulator, opinion mobiliser, feedback channel, educational and change agent functions make it a very powerful tool. Media trial making innocent guilty and guilty innocent led it to so powerful that can change the course of electoral outcome in one's favour or against. Even the marketing of electoral strategies of political parties makes it very powerful in contemporary times wherein electorates are rampantly relying on one or the other media domain, however it was true for the older time as well, but the scale of marketing is so widespread in the present time. Its omnipresence and critical evaluation of political parties and candidates make it vital for election.

In this age the personal and party broadcasting, agent of viral marketing, ideological propaganda sharing and propagation at an unparalleled scale the media plays a critical role in the whole election process. The internet media especially the social media - social networking site, blogs, news platforms and youtube videos have tremendous impact on the psyche of electorate

and thus media's powerful role in election can't be undermined. Through the TV broadcast, print media and internet media media if not objective favour and disfavor or against a particular political party and politician. Hence media even in a way forward narrative of personality cult in politics – informally the 'Bhakti' in politics, and to put one political party in favorable position to the electorate, etc.

Issues

Politics of information: Media are crucial change agent in any democracy. In the age of ICT and information revolution, it is transforming the social, economic, cultural and political arena. There is positive correlation between total mass media content and total propaganda outpouring. Media through misinformation and disinformation unfortunately involving in ceaseless and clever bombardment of messages and such information are manipulated to influence and control the electorate. Politically favorable information to a particular political party is widely publicised whereas information and news contrary to its interest are masked or even distorted to the level it result in unconceivable and totally confused state of viewer and reader. Thus, the vested interests are protected and promoted.

Elitism: The elite media that influence the political agenda of other mass media, "The elite media set a framework within which others operate", and, "The real mass media are basically trying to divert people", said Noam Chomsky. ** The mainstream media generally inclined towards and favour the elite based political party/parties and their politicians and against the non-elite based political party/parties and politicians. The reason of this tilt is hidden partisanship and social composition of media representatives in addition to the social, economic and political interests. Whenever journalists' social background found similar to the elite politicians, they tend to prefer political party/parties having social, economic, cultural philosophy on the same page. These elite leaders are better treated and projected than their counter part i.e. non-elite politician and party. Scores of such examples can be cited in the Indian political system wherein scandalous and prejudiced information are circulated to the masses to malign the image of any unfavorable politician and/or political party. For example, Kashiram and Mayawati openly criticized media for propaganda against the BSP and called it '*manuwadi*' media in his speeches and campaign rallies to highlight the character of media in India (Dusadh, 2012).. Such an image

building creates perception among voters in the elections to vote against that particular politician and political party. Thus, media play a role of friend of elite class working to protect the class interests.

Accountability and credibility of media: Its credibility in the recent years has declined particularly of the news channels and print media. There is growing crisis of credibility in the Indian media as cut throat competition led them to resort to unwarranted means to remain in market, there focus is on financial gains and other vested interests rather the masses interests.

Attack on media: there is a clear difference between attack by a section of media and attack on a section of media, the former attack is for vested interest of media persons and its owner whereas the latter attack is for vested interest of political elite in general. These attacks and related killings of journalists, reporters, and other media persons culminate in self-censorship and results in chilling effect on the right to freedom of speech and expression and media. An environment of fear among media fraternity is absolutely disgraceful to any country that ultimately multiply to severe implications – social, economic, political and cultural - which go against the national interests. Similarly, attack by the media with prejudiced mindset, irrationally and for vested interests harms nation's interests.

How do media affect or influence elections?

Media affect elections in both ways – positive and negative. Positive in a sense it educates the masses of real issues – the issue related to national security, human development, the state of agriculture, health, education and sanitation in the country, the socio-economic and political challenges and threats before nation like poverty, hunger, crime against women, atrocities against the downtrodden section, growing inequalities, communalism , casteism, farmers distress, pain of labour class, etc. and enlighten people for their constructive role in society. The positive role of media is immense and uncountable because in each and every aspects of societal life media have impact – as an impartial analyser and watchdog, in theory, it critically evaluate the performance of incumbent government so that the electorate can form an informed choice for a candidate and political party.

From the very beginning to the end of election media play a pivotal role in defining and even setting the agenda for election. This agenda setting and/or propaganda setting are invariably done by all the media domains. For example, the recent Pulwama terror attack and the media coverage as well as the way it is presented is quite evident to support the present dispensation, and they are setting the agenda/narrative for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections for the BJP, said journalist Ashutosh Kumar (the wire, 2019). The starkest reality of overall influencing of election by media is the TV broadcasting – the news anchors and content editors seem joined as team players of political parties. In newspapers and magazines the editors have assumed the role of political mouthpiece of politicians. They either profoundly favour someone or vehemently criticize without applying rationality, fairness and common sense. The fact based analysis is sidelined. For instance, for democracy to succeed citizen ability and character, logical, rational choice, intelligent understanding of public affairs and formation of independent judgments media have huge role in democracy.

Again, the role and influence of media could be constructive or destructive as media is double edge sword, the way one operate media platforms its corollary outcome results. The countries where media freedom and plurality in media exists are far superior in the way how their government functions and citizens' interests are protected and promoted than the countries of less free media and less plurality in media. However, the fact remains that regulations (governmental or self) are necessary but not the containment, for example in the constitution of India, Article 19 (1): right of freedom of speech and expression incorporates media and its freedom but clause (2) impose some reasonable restriction upon the freedom of speech and expression “in the interests of... public order.” Media as an influencing agent in elections are as under:

- 1. Rational and impartial evaluator thus making the voter to have informed choice and empowering citizens:** Ideally media should a rational and impartial examiner of all the political parties – their ideology, past experience of governance, candidates and future plan of action/perspective for the overall development of the country. However, in reality that doesn't happen, but on the positive note some section of media conform to its duty of serving public and national interests and functioning as per the spirit of the constitution. Fair evaluations of political systems help people take informed decisions in the elections.

This actually deepen the roots of democracy, hence media's fairness results in robust democracy and empowered citizen.

2. **Political communication and rhetoric:** Media being the mass communication medium political parties and leaders use it as a tool to maximise gain in the electoral politics. Through media the use of rhetoric to maximize appeal and persuasion of the electorate is widely pursued. Media set narrative or political agenda in the elections owing to its widespread mass reach and publicity content.
3. **Perception and image builder:** malign, criticism of one but glorification and praise of other. In politics public perception with respect to political party and politician matter a lot since perception of leader in the eyes of electorate determines whether s/he support him or her. This is done through gatekeepers – gatekeepers are those which control of the flow of information. The gatekeeper can choose to accept or reject a piece of information for public consumption. Newspaper publishers, editors and reporters, television producers, press secretaries, government spokespersons, radio station owners and broadcasting executives have all been cited as examples of media gatekeepers.
4. **Propagandist:** Propaganda means the way ruling classes use the mass media to control or alter the attitudes of others. They do this via fake news, paid news, biased, and purely propaganda news, debates and documentaries. Even the level of media in India so decline that it resorted to monologue with the present dispensation*. As Dr Ambedkar had written in pre-independent India, though situation has worsened in contemporary time, “Journalism in India was once a profession. It has now become a trade. It has no more moral function than the manufacture of soap. It does not regard itself as the responsible adviser of the public” (Ambedkar, 1943). Such propagandas are designed to polarise voters and influence elections. Propaganda misled the voter, for instance, the airstrike of India in Balakot Pakistan and alleged killing of 300-350 terrorists by media without substantiating the source and not even based on any official statement. Such disrepresentation of facts, distortion of information and creation of completely vague and insensible information leads to an image, though incorrect, in the mind of the electorate that the government is curbing terrorism with hard hand and the voter get influenced. Propaganda is not just portraying one in good light but also showing the other in bad light

5. **Weaponisation of media to defeat political rivals:** as Malcom X described media, “The media’s the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that’s power. Because they control the minds of the masses.”
6. **Media as a partner of electoral strategy:** this comprises use of media – TV broadcast, print and digital or social media by the political parties to harness the communication ability and reach of media. In that personality cult in politics or ‘Bhakti’ of politician, shifting of blames, issue centric to personality centric politics, developmental agenda backside to non real issues politics, media trail in one’s favour or disfavor, status-quo of hegemony of the elite class, propaganda, etc are carried forward by the media’s various streams.

Social media and elections

The number of internet users in India is expected to reach 500 million by June 2018, said a report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) (Agarwal, 2018). 5 and active social media user in India are 250 million as of January 2018 6 According to "India Digital Future in Focus", a report by comScore Inc.**7 The report said 75 percent of India’s online population was younger than the age of 35, significantly younger than in other BRIC countries. These figures indicate the scale of influence of social media on elections, and even if one assumes the least possibility, the urban population (higher digital access than rural) i.e. approximately one third of total population – hence one third of legislature is directly influenced by the social media. However its reach will be at least 50 % of the total seats of legislature if not exaggerated.

Why social media is gaining significance in the elections? As it directly and indirectly affects the whole country or state in multidimensional way, especially the youth users of social media are particularly active on social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc. Political parties, politicians, activists, netizens are employing these social media tools to generate political narrative and counter narratives to gain the confidence of the electorate. They are having political communications with their party supporters, cadre and common people regarding their ideology, works and the future agenda of action. Nearly all political leaders have

joined social media platforms to extend their reach in least possible time and having a direct contact with the constituency. For example Mayawati and Priyanka Gandhi, who hitherto remain away, have recently joined Twitter for political messaging and communication, this is the power of social media. Politicians like Narendar modi, Rahul Gandhi, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Akhilesh Yadav, etc. are highly active that verified the huge importance of social media. Political parties and their leaders have twitter handles to share and inform about anything they wish to without holding any formal press conference, hence an innovative, efficient and cost effective mechanism to reach out to all is made possible by the social media platforms. Unlike elitist character of mainstream media it provides equal opportunity to all to spread one's ideas and information. Providing an open platform it has given a voice to the voiceless which were hitherto unheard. Both in support for the government and against the government could be discussed, debated, shared and uploaded in rational and constitutional manner without any fear or favour at such platforms with or without disclosing one's identity that is the unique feature of social media.

Social media is a part of the overall strategy and is an extended version of the campaign; political parties, leaders, their supporter creates messages, audios, videos to praise or condemn their favorite and rivals respectively. Multimedia, text and images go viral and trending on social media which have huge impact on the election outcome, sometimes the hate content, morphed pictures, audios and videos are circulated to defame any candidate, particularly the rival.

Social media is now-a-days used to make wave, fake or genuine, in favour of a specific political party. Political parties have special IT cells which works tirelessly 24*7 to put forward party's agenda before social media users. The rhetoric and the target messaging, and the agenda on which the election was fought are propagated. For example, the BJP utilized social media as a campaign tool in the 2014 general elections and achieved huge success. It was the social media's power that Arvind Kejriwal's AAP came with thuming majority in the 2015 Delhi assembly elections (Ali, 2014).

Through social media crowd-sourcing of manifesto, real time comments and sharing of tweets, information and videos are exerting great impact on the psyche of the voter. To social media expert Anoop Mishra, “More than 10,000 official WhatsApp groups have been created by a leading political party to slam its rivals on social media,” Duggal, a cyber expert, said “Political discourse is going to be impacted by social media influencers. There is no two opinion about it,..and the consequences of this can be very serious as social media platforms are being used to create a highly-polarised atmosphere in the country... manipulation of social media platform for personal gains must be brought under the ambit of law without putting barriers on free speech.” Fluid voters or undecided voters in every election and the number is huge ...influence them and get desired results thus social media is a critical tool successfully translate the undecided voters into tangible votes via social media campaigning (IANS 2019).

Problems and limitations in media

Corruption in media: The International ranking of India in Reporters beyond Border’s ‘World Press Freedom Index’ is 138th. This amply indicates the decline and performance of the fourth pillar of democracy. The standard of media ethics in India are on such a declining trend that it is sometimes regarded as the most corrupt media in the world. The corruption of ‘**Fake and Paid News**’ has become a huge source of income for news channels, social media platforms like promotion of institution, services, products, political parties and politicians. It is literally is manufacturing content, dissent, and opinion. P. Sainath asserted, “Paid news is the death of journalism.” Corrupt media persons without shame and sensitivity heavily do ‘**Biased and Partial Reporting**’. Media is a tool to orchestrate biased news which ultimately favors the political and economic interests of the powerful.

Corporatization of media and crossholding in media: According to P.Sainath*, rural affairs editor of The Hindu newspaper, “we are seeing a phenomenal convergence of corporate world, media world, political world, and finally business”, conglomeration happens to maximise profit. Contemporary India is witnessing rampant corporatization of media. Country’s media is under the control of its largest corporations. for instance, the Reliance conglomerate has widespread media holdings viz. news TV broadcasting (Network18 media) , newspapers and internet media; similarly other corporate house also hold significant stake in the media. The corporate media

stand for corporate interests rather than public interests and that's the unfortunate part of it. In such case media will not serve the truth but untruth. Siddharth Varadarajan** the founding editor of the wire said, "The corporatisation of the Indian media has had a negative impact on the quality of journalism over the last two decades". Hence, 'Corporatization of Media is not only an emerging but emerged challenge to ethical journalism'.

Propagandism: As it is well known that propaganda is a form of communication aimed towards influencing the attitude of a population toward some cause or position.

Media's indifference to socio-economic issues rather have TRP orientation , socio-economic inequalities, women representation, dalits true representation, crony capitalism, elitism in politics, human development indicators, education, health, employment, sanitation, drinking water, farmer distress, minority issues, atrocities on SCs, STs and women, communal violence etc are not getting due attention by media. Media, particularly TV news channels and print media/newspapers are not reflecting the inner sentiments and vital issues of the downtrodden section of the society. This kind of attitude by the so-called mainstream media is a blot on India's media community.

Irresponsible journalism and elite character: Media channels are increasingly becoming an entertainment channels, also the mass spread and promotion of superstitious values form the very early morning. This rather makes media an infotainment platform than acting an informative tool. A large section of media also promote unscientific thinking which is actually antithetical to the fundamental duties and constitutional spirit.

Over information on non issues and under information on the real issues: Media are not raising the real and relevant questions of people.

Unholy trinity of the political, business and media class: nexus of media people with politicians and capitalists that led to media as a lucrative business: Advertising being the commercial basis of most media leverages them to earn ample profits.

Media Reforms: The Key to Democracy

First, implementation of in-house code of conduct for media: It should be strictly instituted and implemented; penalty to media house/channel or newspaper or others if found grave

violation through an independent panel of inquiry. Since media violates its self-made ethics every day and it does not follow even its norms and ethics. The **Press Council of India (PCI)** built a code of conduct for journalists and news agencies and The News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) for the TV broadcasting but both institutional mechanisms failed miserably to implement code of conduct, hence there need to be restructuring the PCI and its power to penalize journalists and news agencies who violates code of conduct.

Second, media coverage audit: We argue that for evaluation of media organization, and verifying the validity and reliability of information is correct an independent media tracking body, members of which from within the media, social activists, teachers, lawyers, retired judges and other walks of life would evaluate the functioning of media. They act as a watchdog over watchdog of democracy. With such audit and subsequent action the problems of irresponsible journalism and propagandism could be easily done away with.

Third, laws to decorporatisation of media: Sharad Yadav in parliament advocated the urgent need of law to be made to regulate the ownership of media and cross-holding in media. Media have to serve the truth, it is there moral and professional duty – for them public and national interests should be supreme not the vested business and political interests.

Fourth, entry of foreign electronic media: Allowing entry of foreign electronic media in India, though it may have commercial ramifications, and could disturb India's social, cultural and political fabric. However, foreign media would increase competition; it would also destroy the indigenous elite monopoly; rejuvenate domestic counterparts, etc. all this would lead to qualitative enhancement in journalism and diversity in media space. The regulated foreign media should be allowed in Inda.

Fifth, dedicated 24×7 TV news channels in public domain: We argue that for discussing and examining various social, economic, political and cultural issues of national importance a dedicated 24×7 TV news channels are necessary and compelling that has significant impact on electoral politics. Such news channels must be in all important vernacular languages apart from Hindi and English. This step will provide a big boost in focusing on the real issue of poverty, hunger, unemployment, farmer distress, atrocities against SCs and STs, crime against women, state of education, health, water, sanitation and pollution, etc. confronting India and its masses.

Sixth, developing the non-elite media platforms: We argue that pluralism in journalist class is must be produced to destroy the elite monopoly over media profession particularly the TV and print media. True journalism that means building information society in true sense in the age of ICT is only possible with diversity of views and opinion and then synthesis of enlightened information.

Seventh, enforcement of IT laws, and other policies without containing the free speech: The election watchdog in India, the ECI should take due cognizance of paid news, propaganda news in the election time, deliberate misinformation and disinformation by media and stern action against them so that election influencing power in of media in a negative manner reduce considerably and have deterrence to indulge in such activities.

Conclusion

The fourth estate, ‘the corner stone of democracy’ – media in any country has profound significance in making informed and enlightened citizenry, a democratic culture through providing a platform for debate and discussion, but when it starts making the non real as real and nonissue as issue; when it becomes the propagandist; when it becomes mouthpiece of political party/leader, it becomes not the voice of relief but voice of thief.

Whether media comprehensively and deeply debated and are debating the issues of the poor and downtrodden. Just superficial touching the issues of maginalised doesn't uphold the moral and professional duty of media rather it exposes the true character of media which is anti-poor and anti- marginalized or in the other way pro-rich and pro- affluent in general. Media's nexus with political party means savior becoming destroyer of democracy since it erode the very spirit of democracy; when the questioner became the respondent or mouthpiece of political party it lays bed to fell democracy to asleep. Media's nexus with crony capitalist means double nexus i.e. a nexus between a business class and the political class have nexus with media or the trinity of corporate, politician and media. If one examine the content and coverage of media reports, it overwhelmingly neglect the real and burning issues of farmers, youth, poor, women, marginalized sections of society.

A comparative analysis of the developed and developing country, though country specific, press freedom, infrastructure, diversity in journalists, etc. in the former is far greater than the latter. In India the unfortunate part is that the emotions, ideology, partisanship of media persons, now majority, overwhelmingly undermine the professional ethics of media. Reporters without Borders* – for freedom of information – ranked India 138 in its ‘*World Press Freedom Index 2018*’, well below other SAARC nations except Pakistan (139), prepared on the basis of pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and infrastructure, this clearly present true picture rather exposes the independence of press in India and its functioning as free, fair and transparent information provider.

Today, we live in such period wherein media itself became a danger to democracy. Therefore, freedom of the press as a cornerstone of any democracy not only the duty of media persons and of government but also a critical function by civil society, intellectuals, and judiciary and the masses is utmost necessary to mend media in right direction. As harsh and critical media save and promote democracy but devotee journalism blow up the very foundation of democracy through subverting elections, subverting the minds of people and manipulating the real issues of the masses. Hence, the nation needs the media which incorporate pluralism or diversity of media operators and information makers, implementation of in-house code of conduct, implementation of IT laws, media coverage auditing penal, 24*7 channels and news platforms examining various socio-economic and political aspects of people and the nation for sustainability of democracy, and hence the national interests of India.

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