Impact of Media on Society and Law

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Abstract: Media is often considered as a primary source to impart information and make people aware about the happenings of the world. It provides the first hand information about the events and the occurrences and hence having great influence in society. Media has the capacity to mould the thoughts of people at large. Media has become a part of life of people as they are dependent upon media for information and entertainment. Any news shown by media is believed to be true. Laymen never get chance to find out the true picture behind every story being shown by media. It is very important to regulate the role of media in order to regulate the conduct of society. No doubts several legislative policies are there maintain law and order of society. Still the role of media upon society and law can never be overlooked. There were many instances in the past where media had acted as open Courts and had given their opinions about the various issues in incisive manner. These opinions have directly influenced the decision makers. The role of media is to act as a watchdog and to keep check and balance over the various policies framed by the democratic bodies. The purpose is to raise public awareness and to analyze the effect of information upon the attitudes and habits of individuals. The author through this paper tries to find out the true purpose for the creation of media, the authenticity and reliability of information provided by media and the influence of media on Law and its implementation.

Keywords: Media, Information, Society

1. Introduction
Media is an important segment of today’s world. It is a source to convey information, entertainment, news, education, or promotional messages. Media acts as watchdog to protect public interest against malpractice and create public awareness in this era of liberalization, privatization and globalization. News or any information from every corner of the world is easily available to people because of media. Without media, the news of government schemes and benefits would have never reached the target audience.

Media is a double edge sword which creates awareness and encourages people to act in a progressive manner in Indian society; it can be in the form of TV, News channels, Newspapers, Radio, journals, magazines and most internets which are increasing at leaps and bounds.

In present scenario, media is proved to be the basic foundation for development of society all over the world, more importantly this is very true in the context of bigger democracy like India.

The Media plays a constructive role in today’s society in increasing public awareness, and collects the views and information, and attitudes towards certain issues. Media is the most powerful tool of communication in emerging world and increase the awareness in the real stage of society. People through television, radio, books, magazines and the newspaper collect the information and some knowledge. While disseminating such information, media has to present very responsible role in our society.

Media is also considered as a mirror of the society. The main objective of it is to form, educate and entertain the people. But these days many media sources have solely become the voice of some political parties. The news shown by these platforms are mostly against the parties which they are not supporting. On the other hand honest media communicators also exist. They often put their lives at risk to inform us about an event or activity. These events/activities may be in the form of a terrorist attack, natural disaster and sting operation to eradicate the social evil, viz. corruption and/or other crime related news. Thus, these forms result in creating awareness amongst the society.¹

2. Meaning of Media
“Media” means plural form of medium and medium means communication, and it means mode of expression.² The word media comes from the Latin plural of medium. The traditional view is that it should therefore be treated as a plural noun in all its senses in English and be used with a plural rather than a singular verb. In practice, in the sense ‘television, radio, and the press collectively’, it behaves as a collective noun (like staff or clergy, for example), which means that it is now acceptable in Standard English for it to take either a singular or a plural verb.³

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² Monika, Effects of Media in Our Indian Society, 4 IJERT 131, 131 (2013).

³ Introduction, Concept of media, available at https://www.lexico.com/definition/media
Certain aspects of the media compromise institutional and technological systems of production and delivery. Additionally, various contexts for the creation and receipt of information are involved, along with the co-modification of symbolic form. It also involves information dissemination, a method of communication from one person to many, through which goods produced in large quantities are made available to a wide range of audiences. However, each type of media has unique qualities in terms of audience, accessibility, and reach.

Print media like newspapers and magazines influence people, such as politicians and policy makers who often turn to print media for their news, intended to reach general public. Radio is available to a broad audience which is suitable to communicate local information. It has an entertainment function but also a venue for serious discussions. It is having strong ability for interaction with call-in shows.

Television is medium for serious news or for entertainment, depending on the outlet; some talk shows and news broadcasts are intended to entertain and to inform, which require strong visuals for the effective communications.

Internet is the online media, like blogs, and social media. It is very effective in developed countries for communication and receiving the information, but low rate of accessibility. In developing countries, it can quickly disseminate (accurate or inaccurate) information globally.

The word “media” derives its meaning from the Latin medium, which means in the middle. In media entrepreneurship the media, refers to traditional mass communication system and content generators as well as other technologies for mediated human speech. This would include traditional publishing (newspapers, periodicals, or books), traditional electronic media (broadcasting, broadband, cable, or satellite), motion pictures, video gaming, recorded music, advertising, and adaptations of the Internet for any of these media. The term media used to denote a section of the media specially envisioned and designed to reach a very large audience such as population of a nation state it was coined in the 1920 with the advent of nationwide radio networks, mass circulation news paper and magazines, although media was present countries become the term common.

It describes the various ways through which we communicate in society. Because it refers to all means of communication, everything ranging from a telephone call to the evening news on television can be called media. When talking about reaching a very large number of people we say mass media. Local media refers to, your local newspaper, or local/regional TV/radio channels. Thus media refers various means of communication, its aim to reach a very large population, such as the entire population of country.

3. Role of Media

Mass media is a tremendous source of information for individuals as well as society. It shows and demonstrates how things actually work. The media plays vital role in broadening the thinking of citizens, by empowering them with knowledge. In a country like India where there is significant rate of illiteracy, it is the duty of media to impart knowledge and broaden their views.

- Media is a potential means to influence, control and encourage innovations in society. It is the primary means of transmission and source of information essential to the working of most social institutions.
- Media provides the arena where many affairs of public life are played out both nationally and internationally.
- Media is a major source of definitions and images of social reality. Thus it is also the place where the changing culture and the values of societies and groups are constructed, stored and most visibly expressed.
- Media is the primary key to fame and celebrity status as well as to effective performance in the public arena concerning individuals and business enterprises.
- Media is the source of an ordered and public meaning system which provides a benchmark for what is normal, empirically and evaluative way. It is here that the deviations are signaled and comparisons made in terms of the public version of normalcy.
- In addition, the media is the single largest enterprise primarily focused on leisure time activity and entertainment. It also helps in organizing and interrelating the rest or leisure.
- As a result of its multifarious activities, media is a major and expanding industry, providing employment and a wide range of potential economic benefits to itself and the other business enterprises through advertisements and other promotional avenues.

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4 John Thompson, Communication and social context, The media and modernity: A social theory of the media, available at folk.uio.no/hanneml/documents/notes/thompson.doc
6 Hoag Anne, Measuring Media Entrepreneurship, 10 IJMM 74, 75 (2008).
7 Supra Note 2
8 What is media? Definition and meaning, available at https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/media-definition-meaning/
9 Supra Note 2
11 Test for restrictions to be imposed, Role of Media in Indian Democracy, available at https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/106032036501111 chapter5.pdf
12 Reasons for the growth, Media Contours and Evolution: The Legal Regime in Pre- Constitutional India, available at https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/1060380570606 chapter%202.pdf
4. Impact of Media on Society

The mass media occupy a high proportion of our leisure time. People spend most of their time watching television, and they also find time for radio, cinema, magazines and newspapers. For children, watching television takes up a similar amount of time to that spent at school or with family and friends. While school, home and friends are all acknowledged as major socializing influences on children, a huge debate surrounds the possible effects of the mass media and findings both in favor and against effects are controversial. The possibility of media effects is often seen to challenge individual respect and autonomy, as if a pro-effects view presumes the public to be a gullible mass, cultural dopes, vulnerable to an ideological hypodermic needle, and as if television was being proposed as the sole cause of a range of social behaviours. Media has a great impact upon society in following areas:

Access to Information

Access to media means access to fact and document which help one acquire information and knowledge. Media act as officer of news and views have a decisive role of preparing the human race for the 21st Century. Media organization and communication hardware expand access to information. The world became closer and cohesive due to transmission of information. Within seconds information reaches every nook and corner of all countries. Everyone knows everything happening everywhere.

Role as Public watchdog

Media have played a leading role in shaping, guiding and reflecting the public opinion. The functions of media help to establish democracy. A well developed media system, informing and teaching its citizens, helps democracy move towards its ideal state. In the current corrupt society, media plays a pivotal role in exposing the corrupt activities taking place in Government, trade and profession and make the public to think and act accordingly.

Guardian of Democratic System

Access to media means access to public opinion. So it is essential for preserve and protects democratic system. It is advantageous for both the leaders and masses. Leader can address masses depending upon their convenience. They reach widely dispersed masses simultaneously through the media. One of the chief advantages of media access is that it helps to correct distortion in facts, views and attitudes.

Means of Entertainment

The media has monopolized the leisure industry. Literature, music drama, dance sport, interaction with resourceful persons, culture entertainments etc. which are popular among public. Especially Hindi news channels are offering more of entertainment than the reliable information. Various shows having devotional, astrological contents, studio debates, bollywood, television news, food, fitness shows etc. are being telecasted over different news channels. Media creates a tempting content regarding every current affair in order to gain the attention of audiences.

Source of Education

The press and the media have an educating role, which gives the institution of the press, a very high influence and the power. The press can be most important educative factor. The educative power of the press being admitted, and the special position of comment in it being recognized, follows that the State of the country is often an indication of the extent to which comment has been used effectively. Finally, the press in India certainly has the capacity to educate. If it is left free and has a will to perform the duty of educating the people in general, it is within its reach. The success of the democracy entirely rests on mass enlistment. Without educated people it cannot survive. Educating the ignorant masses on large scale is a tough task. Only press or the mass media can achieve this goal. The human society is undergoing tremors of communication revolution. The flood of information has opened new vistas of generation and dissemination of ideas. The press is a power for benefice of the whole people. Communication has become a vital need for collective entities and communities. If they are not properly informed, society as a whole today cannot survive. Self-reliance, culture identity, freedom, independence, respect for human dignity, mutual aid, participation in the reshaping of environment, these are some of the non-material aspirations which all seek through communication.

The overall human development is directly related to education. Media enable the spread of education through conventional as well as unconventional methods. Ignorance can be eradicated with adequate information supply. Media add new information to human knowledge. This is educative values. Media may also be educational in nature, for instance the public broadcasting stations which provides educational programming to national audience. Newspapers release special “educition Plus” supplement every week which contain material useful to student community. Various shows like DNA etc are shown by the news channels where the information is broadcasted after making a detailed research. Hence such information acts as a medium of education and adds to the knowledge of people.

Economic Growth

14 Impact of Media on Society, Concept of media, available at https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/19633707_introduction.pdf
15 Id.
16 Id.
18 Educating People through Media, Role of Media in Indian Democracy, available at https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/2365011111_chapter5.pdf
19 DNA: Daily News and Analysis, A Show hosted by Zee News Editor-in-Chief Sudhir Chaudhary.
Media can be used for both the social and business concerns. They can include advertising, marketing, propaganda, public relations and political communication. The market for goods expands and economic growth takes place through advertisements in media. Information relating jobs in different fields are available through media to public. The needed skills are being taught through media for instance farmers learn the methods of modern farming; workers get information to master technical skills; people in general learn more about how to keep themselves healthy and strong. A health media keeps a wealthy nation on development track.

Media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions on variety of important issues, both the information that is dispensed through them, and through the interpretation they place upon this information. They also play a large role in shaping modern culture, by portraying a particular set of beliefs, values, and traditions as reality. That is, by portraying a certain interpretation of reality, they shape reality to be more in line with that interpretation.  

Media as a mean to bring Change

Using mass media, people’s attitudes and habits can be changed. For example, all of us have mistaken or wrong notions about various diseases like leprosy or HIV/AIDS. Mostly people think that by touching people suffering from these diseases would be infected. You might have heard on radio or watched television programs or read messages which tell us that by touching an HIV/AIDS patient, we do not get infected. Similarly, for eradicating polio there are special programs and messages disseminated through the media. They inform people about the need for giving polio drops to children and about the day that is declared a “polio day.” Special arrangements are made to give polio drops to as many children as possible on polio day. Change would also mean things for the better. Similarily media has cleared all the misconceptions of people about COVID-19. The symptoms and precautionary measures regarding the virus are telecasted by every news channel for larger good. Along with this the media is putting in its best efforts to bring the truth statistics about the number of sufferers with this disease.

When behavior pattern change in large numbers and is visible and sustained, it results in a social change. Once there is a deviation from culturally inherited values, it may result in a rebellion against the establishment system, causing a change in social order. 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 Facebook 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.

5. Media and Law

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. The media has helped to shape the 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.

The media serves as a watchdog for the government, reporting on every administrative activity and informing the public about what is going on in the world around them on a daily basis. The Constitution gives media professionals a freedom and a free awakened media is actually necessary for the government to run well. The media covers a variety of topics that have an impact on individuals, including not only economic changes but also the interaction between man and society. Because of this, people have become used to the media, and an independent media is essential to the functioning of the Indian democracy. Transparency and accountability are most proper functioning of a legal system. The nexus between corruption and administration connected by politics seems to snatch the serenity and peace of the country. Without a free press, legislative programmes of a State cannot succeed. A free press is highly important since it is the voice of the people, but it must continue to serve the people honestly and not succumb to financial or other temptations. The media is significantly influencing how people think. The fourth pillar of democracy is said to be the media. It increases our awareness of a wide range of activities, including politics, sports, and economic, social, and cultural ones. Similar to a mirror, it reflects the unvarnished reality, which can at times be unpleasant. However, it is quite important in influencing how the public thinks. The media has a significant impact on how democracy is shaped. It is known as the foundation of democracy. Through knowledge, it gives the populace more power. The media sets up the discussion of controversial policies and current events so that many points of view may be expressed.

Media as Instrument of Expression

Every individual person is a medium of expression. An individual interacts through the media to reach other individual and institutions. The media constitute the instrument of expression. Media is generally the agency for inter-personal communication.

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20 Supra Note 14

There are two kinds of communications. Personal communication mechanisms are one kind of media, while the other is print and electronic media.

Media in exercise of freedom of expression is essential to communicate the thoughts, views, ideas, philosophy, ideals and activities. Communication keeps society together and cohabit. For healthy growth of civilization world, the free flow of information and ideas is essential. The right to freedom of expression, though it belong to every individual, institution and organization, becomes imperatively necessary in the media world which serves as the best communicator of information and the best instrument in expression. Exercise of right of freedom of expression is the professional duty and charter of work of media whether it is print media or electronic media. The media act as a mass communicator and have to enjoy this freedom for promoting public good and for informing the people in general as to the State of affairs in every sphere of life and activity throughout the State and indeed throughout the world. When freedom of expression is usually talked of, it is generally understood in the context of the freedom of the media and particularly the print media, though it may be pointed out that the freedom of expression stands, both with regard to its rights and obligations, on the same footing as that of an individual or institution.

Communicating People
Traditionally, India has many folk forms of communicating with people in rural areas. Harikatha is originally a religious media form in which the stories of Lord Vishnu were propagated. It is collective form of music dance speech and storytelling with comic interludes. It has tremendous effect in communicating the massage straight into the hearts of the people. Over period of time, stories of Shiva and Shakti and other Gods were being told in the form of Harikatha. Then, socially relevant messages were passed through this medium. In a remote village, there are neither roads nor any other communication like cable T.V., Harikatha continues to be only medium. The government controlled media like radio and TV, even today use Harikatha through broadcasting or telecasting. The Burra Katha is yet another form media for rural people. While principal artiste tells a historical story playing Tanpura, two assistants will support him with rhythm on their BURRAs, Oggukatha is similar form popularly used in Telangana Area. Mixing message with folk songs and singing them in a villager’s attire is another popular method, which was brought into effective use by balladeers like gadder. 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.

Fourth Pillar of Democracy
As the largest democracy, India considered a role for a large number of developing countries. We have State and central government elected by the people. India have a government run by our own elected representatives, known as Member of Legislature Assembly (MLAs) in the State and Members of Parliament(MPs) at the center Modern democratic governments have the following:
A Legislature, i.e. State Assemblies and Parliament, responsible for framing laws and decide the way we run our affairs.
Executives: the Governor, Chief Ministers who run the State and the president, Prime Minister and the Council of Minister who run the country.
A Judiciary: Supreme Court, High Courts and other courts which decide whether laws and the Constitutional provisions are followed by the elected governments.
These institutions run the government of the country for the welfare and development of all the people. In a democracy, the people should know what the three institutions, namely the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary is doing for the welfare of the people. The main role of mass media is to act as bridge between the people and the government. So, in that sense, media can be considered as the fourth institution in a democracy.
Every democratic set up in the present day social texture should have been implicated with a special inseparable part i.e. the press which now expended to include electronic media also. The executive, Legislature and judiciary are no doubt, three pillar of democracy in India. The media is another equally important pillar to lend its valuable support to the system and hence is regarded as “fourth Estate” the word “Estate” has been criticized for its seeming connection with dynastic hierarchy. But in fact it does not reflect any such imperialistic symptoms because of its multi-pronged functions in linking the three main systems and correlating them with the social needs to bridge the gulf between the governors and the governed.

22 Role of Media in Indian Democracy, Role of Media in Indian Democracy, available at https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/201365011111111_chapter5.pdf
24 Burrakatha: a traditional folk art form, where principal artiste use prose and poetry to narrate a historic story. He uses veena, a musical instrument. Two supporting artistes accompany with “Burraa” an instrument appearing like “dholak”. This is popular form of art in Andhra Pradesh.
25 Oggukatha: this is a varied form of Burrakatha, prevalent in Telangana villages of Andhra Pradesh. Politicians use forms during election campaign. Government schemes and programs are also published by field publicity wings and public relation department through these form of art. Both these forms can be played either on stage or in street.
26 Gadder: a famous balladeer in Telegana region, who spreads revolutionary message through folk songs. He writes lyrics composes the music and songs while dancing this effective tool of communications is the down to earth colloquial language.
27 Supra Note 23.
28 Id.
Conclusion
Media is a major source of creating public awareness and make every kind of information easily available to people. It acts as a mirror of society and show the true face of occurrences of the world. It has important role in widening the thinking of citizens and empowering them with knowledge. Media acting as a watchdog discloses the corrupt practices in different departments of Government and Private Institutions. It also safeguards the democratic society and keeps a check over the three organs. But sometimes being inclined towards a particular political party, it is not able to provide a real picture of every event or policy. At such places, it is not able to influence law freely. Media has also turned to be a source of entertainment. Many shows are telecasted on various news channels to seek the attention of greater audiences. Because of these reasons, media in certain ways forgets to serve the actual purpose for which it is created. Media helps in providing various educational programmes to national audience. It also helps in increasing the economic growth. Many advertisements in newspapers promote various products and provide job opportunities. Media makes a good connection between people and Government. It acts as instrument of expression of public will and carries every report of the actions of administration. It helps to change the attitudes and habits of people for betterment. Thus it can be concluded that media has a great role in influencing the behavioral patterns of people and also the legal policies through its transparent and accountable role.