

The Relationship Between Media And Politics In Modern India

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Abstract:

Media and politics relationship in the context of India is not only complex, it is also significant. According to the rules of democracy, the media has been largely accepted globally as the fourth arm of governance and it stands out in a strategic place in the political arena. It serves as a primary tool of electioneering, ideology propagation and control over the activities of the government. The Indian media has gone a long way back with its earliest roots in the anti- colonial campaigns up to the print media, emergence of radio broadcasting waves, and the latest uproar that is linked to the digital revolution. The new mediums have sped up the flow of information, and the sphere of political communication has grown with each new medium. As it stands today, media plays a decisive position in election contesting and in the shaping of political discourse that allow leaders and parties to increase and amplify their public status, drive forward programmatic advances and incapacitate opponents. These trends have enhanced political effects of the media. Nonetheless, there are obdurate accusations on the editorial impartiality. Media reporting often has the bias, which can interfere with the results of the election and therefore should be studied systematically. The current argument uses scientific research and current case studies to explain how much media-politics interactions influence the Indian democracy. The stress is put on the demands of media independence and respect of journalistic neutrality.

Keywords: Media, Politics, Democracy, Election Campaign, Biased Reporting, Impartiality

Introduction:

The connection between politics and the media in modern India is deep, as well as powerful. The importance of the media has been stressed by the implications of the media as the fourth pillar in Indian democracy informing the general population of the governmental policy, election campaign and social interest. Through this, the media ensures creation of awareness in the people and they are stimulated to actively participate in the democratic processes. As a result, the media has become part and parcel of the political arena and advises as well as makes decisions such as on elections, governmental procedures, etc. The medium is perhaps one of the most important tools in campaigning, promotion of political philosophy, and shaping opinion amongst voters, since its territory is increasing. The political parties convey their agendas and ideas of policies whereas the opposition parties carry out counter-narrative so that the electorate is sufficiently informed on the happenings of policy plans and party functions. However, the growing impact of the media is the reason that its editorial independence and neutrality should be preserved. Media would threaten to democracy in case they go more toward their inclination or simply give in to politics. The current study tries to explain the relationship between media and politics, its roles and its necessities to report impartially thus clarifying the overall effect of the same on India democracy.

History and Development of Media:

The historical evolution of media in India is impossible without the freedom struggle- struggle where print media became a key source of information distribution and information creation which led to public awareness. Embryonic publications played the role of conveying a platform through which independence leaders expressed themselves with respect to politics. Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, and other leaders, used newspaper and periodicals extensively in mobilizing the mass anger against the British rule. With independence came a split in media outlets since new mediums emerged which came to dominate politics and society and the first one was radio and followed by television. Doordarshan Low cost Penetration The Doordarshan service of the state started in the 1950s and offered government controlled media through which the official policy and programming could be broadcast. By the 1980s Doordarshan was covering the whole country in terms of news, coverage through public affairs programs and electoral campaigns, thus making its shape in the politics of India. The environment in the media has been redefined by the onset of cable television and later followed by the flood of the internet in the 1990s. Private media broadened the landscape of politics and in the 2000s the accelerated proliferation of the internet and social media led to the emergence of the social networking sites. These online places provide political players with the unprecedented ability to connect with the constituents and to disseminate ideological frames. In the contemporary world, the dimensions of digital media, social media, and the internet are inseparable parts of India politics, determining the electoral campaigning, policy discussion, and opinion formation, as well as, contributing to increased citizen involvement.

Media and Democracy:

The linkage between media and democracy is also vital and cannot be separated. It acts as one of the key tools of enlightening the community, identifying the activities of the state and ensuring transparency in elections. This becomes an important role in the Indian heterogeneous political environment since the country is linguistically, culturally, and socially plural. Media does not only publicize facts concerning decisions taken by governments and policy incentives, but it also offers forums of questioning. Political parties take advantage of the news channels, print media, and, to an increasingly larger extent, digital media to gain the vital platform in expressing their ideological views. Media is taken to be a part and parcel of the strategy of a party during any form of electoral campaign, as a vehicle to increase the intensity of the message and to know the mood of the people. Such exposure in media promotes informed views of the citizens towards candidates, their reforms and incumbency performance and in that way, fairer election choices are facilitated. Besides, once governmental or oppositional organizations have nothing to say about certain points, the media often becomes the vital intermediary, revealing the holes in the policies and the maintenance of the watching eye. Democratic system presupposes that the key advantage is the freedom of the media. In the event that the press so falls to the pressure, the channel of information so far correct and by the same token, the sanctity of continued democratic process may be jeopardized. Therefore, it is crucial that independence, neutrality, and disclosure of the media is practiced continuously in order to meet its democratic art.

Media Influence on Politics:

The role of media in Indian politics is quite prominent and has been used as a major tool since the 1990s when social media and internet through television and print media reshaped the rules of the game in election campaigns. Via such media, not only political parties but also individual leaders build and sustains their images among people. The media brings into focus manifestoes by parties, candidate offers as well as visual

presentations during the electoral period thus influencing opinion and decision making by voters. These dynamics can be described by the 2004 and 2014 national elections. In the first one, the Congress Party went on to a surprising victory, partly because of the very favorable media image and a proper coalition policy. In the latter, Bharatiya Janata Party led by Narendra Modi received a broad mandate with the support of a massive media cover which underscored Modi as a leader and those who could develop the country. These depictions enlighten and inform the voters, as well as enable critical unfolding of politics. The constant tracking of political controversies, political scandals and policy issues create the drive of accountability again the Commonwealth Games scam case and the 2G Spectrum scam case have been explored extensively through the media and were put in the public eye. To conclude, the effect of media on politics is positive and negative.

Biased Reporting in Media:

Indian media houses are often accused of lacking neutrality, especially due to its involvement with political reporting. When the media which is broadly considered to be the fourth pillar in democracy favors a given party or thought it interferes with democratic procedures. This bias may arise when the partisan actors have influence on the journalistic works. Media groups that should favor a particular party or opinion are guilty of the absence of professional ethics and threaten the stability of democracy. In the Indian elections, favorable attitude takes place, and some media houses take a good position on one party and a bad tone on others. Such bias rages an electoral campaign, forms opinion of a population, and may affect an electoral decision. Once the news becomes biased, electorates receive misrepresented facts making it difficult to hold objective opinion. Biased reportage has the gravest impact and that is a violation of media independence and lack of objectivity. When news stations give preference to a political player due to commercial or partisan reasons, the health of democracy is damaged and it pulls apart the society. Therefore, the integrity and professional ethics are crucial to guarantee impartiality of media and confirm the democratic standards.

Media and Political Struggles:

The relationship of media with political authority is an ongoing, constitutionally-authorized phenomenon of Indian politics. The tension between these two spheres is especially aggravated when the press distorts the governmental behavior. The media also steps in when a situation does not demand anything to be said or acted upon by the executive when issues of national importance have come about and the executive chooses the path of reluctance to comment, the media comes along and comments on the issue and the controversy that ensues. In the past media activism has intensified the degrees of conflict between the state and opposition. In the high-profile 2G Spectrum scam and common wealth games scam the journalistic work revealed favorable doling of the national resources to the privatized industries and thus forcing the government to recognize failure on their part and bringing up a reformation. In the first instance, the press exposed abuse by both public officials and businesses, thus delivering a significant economic dent to the national treasury and providing the opposition with an effective platform on which it can challenge the integrity of the government. In the latter, the reporting on corruption in Commonwealth Games led to continuous protest, thus turning what seemed to be a marginal political issue into a socially distributed issue which triggered civil objection. In both cases, media played a decisive role of influencing the public opinion and mounting pressure on the administration to make itself accountable.

Media Impartiality and Reforms:

In consideration of such a vital influence, media neutrality is essential. An informed citizenry is based in a transparent, reliable and impartial reporting style thus strengthening the process of democracy. However, commercial and partisan interests can erode the editorial integrity, so that journalistic decisions are unreliable. Media independence and honesty must thus be saved. Media houses need to embrace strong systems of transparency and maintain very high standards of journalism. These actions would reform the confidence of the people and impose accountability as the practice of journalism would match with the norms of the institutions. At the same time the media ought to be de-politicized and de-partysed to allow it to report and analyze the news without any external interests. To achieve freedom of the media and independence it is necessary to have a robust, independent and self-regulating framework. Such a mechanism can make journalism navigate into the right democratic course by safeguarding institutions against partisanship (both internal and external). Thorough media reforms would therefore increase the level of credibility and strengthen the system of democracy.

Conclusion:

The interconnection between politics and media in India is critical and revolutionary. Media plays a central role in the electioneering campaign, political marketing and citizen sensitization, thus, enabling democracy. It spreads electoral news, makes up the public image of political leaders, and politically motivates citizens to make the informed vote. Additionally, by ensuring the investigation of the critical questions and analysis of governance, the Indian media exercises the control of the government, which is essential to the enhancement of the democratic institutions. However, there is continued suspicion of the media objectivity and favoritism in reporting as well as influences by other politics and economic interests aggravate this suspicion. Therefore, media should be independent and a balance should be achieved to perform its duties effectively. Media accountability in the country requires that it performs its roles with honesty and openness to ensure the survival of the Indian democracy, efforts should constantly strive to ensure that media practice is honed. Independent media will assume the opportunity to make the discourse of politics positive, as well as allow strengthening the democratic institutions.

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