

Role of Media in Nation Building

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In any democratic country the media plays a vital role in creating, moulding and reflecting public opinion. Over the years the media became so powerful that it soon acquired the status of "Fourth Estate" as it was aptly described by the British politician Edmund Burke. It also became so indispensable for the democratic functioning that Thomas Jefferson who was also the third US president (1801-1809) said, "were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter". For the same reason our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru declared "I would rather have a completely free press with all the danger involved in the wrong use of that freedom, than a suppressed or regulated press". In fact, the media touches almost every aspect of our public life.

Media plays a very important and crucial role in enlightening and educating the people. The media can aid public involvement through advocating issue and transferring knowledge, skills and technologies to the people. Awareness about various rural development programmes, propagation of family planning could be spread by using the media. It made farmers aware of the new and improved methods of agriculture and protection of the crops. Media plays very emphatic role in awakening people against many

evils prevailed in the society like child marriage, killing of female unborn child, the evil practice of child labour etc. Through educational programmes, it can cover many students in a single platform. The University Grants Commission telecasts educational programmes benefiting the school and college students all over India. Media can ignite scientific temper among the students for development of science. The Government can use the media more effectively to make it an instrument of social change.

Media has exposed a number of corrupt practices, hidden deals, thus putting a check on the cancer in the form of corruption in the society. The various news channels keep the vigilant citizens updated. They organize debates and group discussions about the current political issues in order to enlighten the people about the democratic process. Media serves as a bridge between the government and the people. The government's policies and actions are conveyed to the people, and the latter's views are forcefully expressed to make the authorities aware of the public feelings. It makes the policy makers aware of the wrongs that may otherwise escape attention. During the election period, the media can play very important role by publishing the bio-data of the candidates, which makes the general public aware about the candidates, to whom they are planning to vote. An impartial and fearless

media is the basic requirement for the success of democracy.

Now-a-days media has become so powerful that it is in a position to make or break governments. It is usually conceded that John F. Kennedy might never have been the American President, were it not for his brilliant performance on television. The same is true about Barak Obama who led his Democratic Party to victory because of the dynamic confidence he projected over the internet. Heavy media emphasis on news about excess of Emergency brought about a change in the government in India. Even a powerful President like Richard Nixon was forced to leave the White House due to the exposure by media in the notorious Watergate scandal.

The media has a distinctive role to play in bringing communal harmony which in turn will preserve the secular fabric of a democratic country. It also serves to highlight those issues which violate human rights.

Media has led to the promotion of business through advertisements. The telecasting of latest updates about techniques of economy management are providing fruitful to trade and commerce.

In the present era of IT Revolution, globalization and liberalization, the advent of internet and e-mail, has shrunken the globe to such an extent that the world can now be called a 'global village'. Media is helping global culture to be evolved. Through T.V. we journey across the globe in instants, see the people, their way of living, their fashion and tastes with out own eyes. Thus emerging on the horizon the concept of the global village.

Two serious issues confront the media. First, the media is ushering in a cultural revolution, which is threatening the social and cultural integrity of the nation. The vulgarity displayed in the

advertisements, the serials and the music videos should be checked because they reach the audience directly in home. The perverse depiction of women as glamorous props and objects of titillation and portrayal of rape as an exciting and adventurous act is considered in no small way to be responsible for the increasing atrocities against women. The present day goondaism, falling in love affairs by college and school boys and girls, opting revealing dress by the girls are some of the perverse effects of the present day movies. These are something which the media has to guard against.

Second, there is an increasing tendency in a section of media to project trivial things in life, fashions of the rich and the over privileged, and to aggressively advertise a consumerist lifestyle beyond the reach of the majority. This happen to the exclusion of the attention paid to the problems of the masses, there sufferings and aspirations. A re-look at the role of the fourth-estate is the need of the hour. The media should work towards stories that generate confidence about creative potential of the grassroots. The media should be a partner in national development.

One may conclude that despite these aberrations, the media does play a role in nation building. The owners and managers of the media must realize their responsibility towards society and aim to provide information that is clean, transparent and reliable. There are many things that are wrong with the society, and the media should engage itself in the betterment of society and the nation as a whole. By addressing itself to the needs of the people, it can strengthen the very root of democracy.

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