

The Effects of Paid Media on Indian Democracy and Good Governance

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Abstract: The transparent role of the media in a democratic society is important. Media connects communities, people and government to ensure government control. This ensures accountability and transparency in government work. Media makes good governance possible, creates interests in people/society/country, and contributes to good governance. However, changes in history have raised doubts in the media. Democracy in India is one of the largest democracies in the world and it is important for people to understand the changing media landscape and nature. The role of paid media affects the existence and functioning of democracy. The phenomenon of paid media goes beyond the notion of individual media and the notion of corruption in some media houses. This study explores how the media can act as defenders of democracy? How the media represent the people? How can the media protect the interests of society and the country? How to ensure good governance?

Keywords: Paid News, Media, Culture, Governance, Democracy, Challenges

INTRODUCTION

India is one of the largest democracies in the world and has one of the world oldest media histories, from the late 18th to the 21st century. During the rule of East India Company in the 18th Century, Indian media was dominating by the Britishers for many years. Over the years the India media house have had been occupied by the private businesses to publish news, views and opinions of the India people. The India media house have had to evolve into private businesses to gather the public opinion, late on after independence government started to take control over the media and some media houses was set up the government. The private sector plays a major role in the growth of India media, most of them owned and controlled by private companies. When the Indian government launched its liberalization and globalization policies, partly liberalization in 1985 and globalization the 1990's, government participation started to decline, and government paving the way to liberalize the private sector and promoted media and inviting more sharing of private sector in media houses. Liberalization and globalization have opened a new chapter in the history of Indian media. After that, as the state monopoly on electronic media and offline media ended, state began to give freedom to private players to enter more freely Media has been changed a lot and structure and function media started to change. Competition between online and offline media started to intensified after 1990's, and online/electronic media strongly register their presence in the public and various news channels came into existence and play a vital role to get the attention of the public. Print/offline media started to

take a back seat. This raises the culture of paid media, in which electronic media spreading the news on the basis of payment. They broadcast the news and establish the news in the public more strongly. The work of free opinion in transparent manner without prejudice and fearlessly is important in democracy to analyze the action of the government for the welfare of the people. But the paid media have dented the basic tenants of pillars of press. The main objective of media is to act as a watch dog to monitor the activities of ruling government and assess the governance, raise the public opinion, to protect the public interest and to expose the malpractices of government and administration.

Governance:

The term "Governance" has been used since human civilization. The meaning of the term Governance has been changed with the passage of time. Different authors/expertise defines this term in various manners and no consensus arises amongst them. The term Governance has been used in different connotations and according to the conditions. World Bank precisely defines this term in two fold manners: one in respect of the use of Political power to regulate the government and another emphasize on the use of power in managing the resources for development. Governance relates also to the mechanism of decision making power in the best interest of the people. It is the act of governance through which the actions of individuals or groups exercise control of power on systems. It can be exercised in various manners and respects and for many objectives. But the governance always connotes the ways of managing the systems in the best interest of the public or people. It shows the method through which the government runs and system operates. Governments exercise actions and install mechanism, design policies and programmes in the national and social interest and taking care of society and nation at large. In India, the concept was firstly elaborated by Chankaya in Arthashashtra. He mentioned the characteristics of a good king, thus, in the happiness of his subjects lies in his happiness, in their welfare his welfare, whatever pleases him, he does not consider as a good, but whatever please his subject he consider as good. Mahatma Gandhi has given the term "Su-raaj literally means good governance

Good Governance:

The term "Good Governance" is firstly defined by Aristotle dated back to ancient Greece. According to Aristotle, " the notion was created only for life, but live for the good life. " Like Aristotle, a good life is to be associated with the good governance. Political thinkers such as Hobbes, Rock, and Rousseau also stated the importance of Good Governance through the social contract origin. John Locke argued that governments should protect the interests of the people or the trust in them for as long as possible. Good governance stems from the concepts of satisfactory democracy, transparency in government, acceptance of people, become people voice, equal distribution of wealth, reduction of income inequality and equal opportunities for all, and equal right for all. The World Bank defines the Good Governance as, "how the power is exercised in the management of a country economic and social resources for development." According to the World Bank, "good governance is essential components to sound economic policies and is central to creating and sustains an environment which fosters strong and equitable development." Good Governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of the society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. It is an approach to the government that is committed to creating a system founded in justice and peace that protect individual human right and civil liberties. It is measured by eight factors, rule of law, transparency, participation, equity and inclusiveness, consensus oriented, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, and accountability.

Research methodology

This research is based on the Primary as well as secondary analysis of published already data. Primary data was collected by taking the interviews from the public and gather their opinion and incorporated their views in the research. Secondary data have been collected from reports of various agencies of government, newspaper, offline and online media reports, books, journals, reports of non-governmental agencies. This research paper evaluates the reviews and available literature in this direction which facilitate to establish the fact of paid media. The research articles also have analyzed article published in various journals and reports of media houses published in this respect. The main objectives of this research paper are stated as:-

1. To evaluate the role of media in democracy and good governance.
2. To evaluate the effect of role of paid media on democracy and governance.
3. To observe the role of government and regulation in this respect.

Role of Media in Democracy and Good Governance

The media plays an important role in building a sound republic and good governance. Media play vital role in republican society and establish norms for good governance by providing real time and true information to the public at large. Media contribute in three manners in promoting democracy and good governance; to act as observer of functioning of state and central government, administration, facilitating condemnation, transparency and public investigation. The media role has always been to undermine elections and act honestly as a forum for political debate in the country. The media serve as the editor of decision makers and to strengthen the capacity of governments to address poverty and the common problems of society. Media seeks clarification from the administration and resolve complaints and review policies of government and monitor government functioning; judge the act of political system or political parties, act as a watchdog of public officials, detect out bank corruption and malpractices of decision makers. They can play an important role in resolving public grievances. Media/press may detect out confidential information which are critical for public and which may harm the public interest and creates opinions of the public at large and review the accountability of the authorities. Media is not playing their role properly and media houses turn their holy institutions into businesses. Media is involving in manipulation of facts and truth and not presenting the fact to the public properly. Media engage in violation of the right of people which further damaging the country at large. Media criticisms the leaders and government objectively and evaluate the functioning of the government in a prejudice manner and trying to exploit the system for their own cause. In spite of all the criticism, media carry out the debates and rise the public opinions through debates on critical issue and dialogues with the stakeholders, creates awareness amongst public, fill the gap between the government and society, and force the government to take care of public interest. Media act as the channels of communication and represents various stakeholders of society and trying to understand the public voices in fair and balanced manner. Media or press truly acts the pillars of democracy and protecting democracy.

Paid News and Media: - Effects of Paid Media on Democracy and Good Governance:-

Paid Media refers of publication/advertisements/circulation/favoring/fake news by payment or publication of articles in newspapers, magazines, and electronic media or advertisements in offline and online media, circulation of fake news, offering favourable for the people/political parties/administrations by payment. Media become a business, and profit maximization is the objective of media houses, rather than looking after the welfare of the people. Corruption of Journalists and Media Houses is not only confined to them, but its need to be understood in the

broader context. Society and stakeholder are responsible for the corruption and enhance the incredibility of media. More tight regulations are required to control the media in this respect and ethical consideration should be followed more precisely and ethical issue should be dealt in proper manner, otherwise it undermine the democracy and deteriorate the true democracy. The reports indicates that paid culture of media has started to penetrate deeply and started to become a disease and distort the real sense of accuracy and transparency of providing information and news to the public at large.

The advocacy of privacy is also important to understand and this vitiates the process of transparency and blaming the media to go beyond the privacy, but the media houses breach the privacy for maximizing their interest, as they firstly look after their own interest and return and then to the public. The media houses do the agreement for advertising with businesses and corporation for looking after their interest and mutually agreed to not to harm of the interest of them, but in that way they damage the interest of the public.

A media group branding strategy is not in the interested of nation or investors or other stakeholders, because they do not make fair, transparent and wise decision. Fake and paid news may pose threat to the society and nation and harm the interest of the people at large and may distort the concept of free and fair press, which is important for democracy and good governance.

The Election Commission has accepted the Indian Press Definition of Ministry of Information provided that any information or analysis, whether in case or in kind is distributed view printed or electronic media. Any such kind of acceptance in terms of money or in kind shall be adjudicated as paid advertisements.

Recommendations to amend in the Representation of the People Act, 1951 for Paid News as an Offence: - The committee in its letter dated 3rd February 2019, and twice made recommendations to the government and Minister of Law and Justice. India's People Representative Act Of 1951 was amended to free the publication and conspiracy of paid news engaging in promotion of candidate fighting elections and which further adversely affect the future of other candidates. This is adjudicated as an election crime and must be penalized.

Recommendation relating to the declaration of the name, address and other details of printed materials and documents:-It has been clarified that the legal provisions of section 127A of the R.P. Act of 1951 requires the publication of election advertisements, pamphlets and other promotion tools. Its mandatory to print the name and address of the publisher, and printer, otherwise face imprisonment. Article 171 H of the Indian Penal Code prohibits

The incurring of expenses for advertising without the authorization of competing candidates, including the disclosure of announcements of designated advertisements in newspaper, and the disclosure of the amount paid for such advertisement.

Paid News of Notional Expenditure recommends being included in the candidates election expenses in accordance with the standard of Media procedure:-In order to treat the news and paid advertisements on TV/Cable Networks owned by political parties or their officials/public officials in a unified manner, the committee had indicated to be executive director that six months before the expiry of Lok Sabha or State/Union Legislative assembly, depending on the circumstances, the executive direction will obtain a list of rate television channels/broadcasts c or transmitted in the state/union territories and their rate tables and send them to the committee.

Constitution of Committee By Election Commission: - A committee should be established at the ECA level to review the recommendations letter received from the state-level, and to recommend and review the recommendations letter received directly in the committee.

Comprehensive policy on paid news dated 27th August 2021: The commission had formed a committee in this respect and committee issued comprehensive policy mentions that district level committee shall be formed and committee shall review all newspaper and electronic media in the district in order to restrict the ill effects of paid media and prepare and submit reports in this respect. It's the responsibility of the organizing committee to notify candidates in time in respect of paid news and candidates shall reply within a time span of 48 hours after the notification.

Reporting Format for paid News:- The committee had designed two types of format for election for reporting the news cases to the committee, and the reports shall be submitted on weekly basis in format one and a detailed final report of all evidenced in regard to the paid news in format two on the date of filling of nomination.

Time period considered for Determination of Paid News Cases:- As per the article 77(1) of the People's Representative Act of 1951, it is stated further that the conditions under which paid news can be considered from the date of filling of nomination of candidates.

Annexure 4A of Annexure 15: Instructions regarding the tracking Election Expenses:- This Annexure is relating to the guidelines of candidates advertisement in online and offline media owned and operated by political parties. This introduces a clause to permit the candidates to include their own expenses of online and offline media owned by political parties or their officials. The Media Monitoring and Certification Committee (MCMC) shall comply all the provisions of the statute and orders of election commission and closely watch the content transmitted in the channel in order to identify the content of specific nature published and a due process shall be followed, payment of nominal fees in accordance the channels standard schedule rate. Accordingly, candidate's election expenses shall be included in the candidates account, in addition of any amount not paid actually

Election Commission guidelines on dated 4th June 2019:- The election commission had reiterated its earlier stand that the name of candidates shall be published on the websites of the respective political parties. The confirmed cases of paid news shall be declared on CEO's websites as a measure to check its spread during the election time.

Measure to be taken by Press Council of India (PCI) and News Broadcasters Association (NBA):- This is responsibility of Press Council of India and News Broadcasters Association to put restriction on fake and paid news and strategy/ policy must be devised to restrict such kinds of practices and to take action against online and offline media involved in paid news. The cases of paid news should be reported to PCI and NBA, and both of these agencies should devise appropriate measures to restrict paid news culture.

Corruption in Media/Press is an old and persistent problem found worldwide, and Indian media is not different. However, it has been found that the nature of corrupt practices prevailing everywhere; and media is a part of society and in turn affected by the society. Being a part of society, media is not immune from the corrupt practices. But in comparison with the legislative and executive pillars of democracy, media has minimum impact of corruption and still having ethical considerations. Indian media have been trying to keep away from corrupt practices, otherwise they know that this distort their images in the public and once the image distort, the said media house become out of the society. However, there are few cases which malign the entire media houses. They are very careful in maintain the integrity and dignity and reputation. Recently, corruption has been found in individual journalism. Media houses have been known for creating the value for the society, but now a day's they wish to earn profit and they are becoming the profit making institution for the media corporation and forget

their commitment towards the nation and society. Today, paid news are circulated in the form of sponsored news, and these sponsoring agencies spreading the news in such a manner that they find it as original in sense. Corruption has been institutionalized and organized in more rigorous form, in which media gets the funds to disseminate information on the behalf of individuals, entities, corporations, political parties, leaders, agencies and candidates participating in election. Attempts are made to pretend the paid news as original news and spreading amongst the public. Many times, various academicians and renowned journalists have raised this issue and indicating the dangers of paid media, but the issue remains to be unaddressed and government have not taken concrete steps in this direction. Once Honorable Member of Parliament Ms. Sushma Swaraj the opposition leader in the Lok Sabha raised the issue of paid news/media and its danger and spoke that its turn out to be a disease and kind of epidemic. Press Council of India earlier prepared the report and submitted to the government in this respect, but still waiting for action. In accordance to the standards of News publication, news must be reported in a clear manner and objective, fair and true, and should be free from and kind of advertisement and sponsorship. Sponsorship also affects the quality of news and they can cast an effect on the news to be reported. Distinction should be made between the fair and paid news. When news is reported for the benefits of specific politician/leaders/corporate giants by selling editorial space, certainly, it distorts the main object of news to be given to the public. It is very difficult for public to find out the true, false or fake news. It defeats the objective of fair, transparent, and true sense of media by giving misleading and misinformation and confuse the public at large. These corrupt practices undermine the essence of democratic structure of a country and defeat the purpose of conducting elections and form the government. Paid News/media is a serious threat to democracy and good governance; and distorts the democratic process and structure in various manners. Paid news harm the independence of media and media give up its independence. Media is nothing without independence and become of puppet of authorities and groups. Paid Media is trying to mislead the public at large misled the society/public and damaging the public/society/nation. This is also damaging the decision-making process of a democratic society. It's not possible for the people/society to judge the government without having correct and authentic information. Another more important role of media is to protect the human rights of people. When media fail to protect the interest of the public/nation/society, then it demeans the role of press. These days media has been regulated by the corporate houses, and media cannot perform its duties properly and forced to protect of the corporate houses first, and then afterwards they think about public and other stakeholders. This also leads violation of the rights of citizens/society. Paid culture undermines the entire democratic sets up of the country. The cultures of paid news are very active in the election process. Elections are not fought in a fair manner, money and muscle power have been use and increasing day by day. Candidates are reluctant to declare the expenditure/costs of fighting elections. Candidates violate the rules and conduct of elections rules and do not observe any code of conduct announce by the Election Commission of India. Money power prevails everywhere in media and have been shifted their attention on maximizing the return, not taking care of readers interest and public interest. These days, media fails to perform its duties properly and corrupt practices create the doubt in the minds of people and start to question on the news reported by the media. It's the time to rise up and follow the standards and observe the practices of fair, transparent and true reporting of news.

Conclusion

The media plays a significant role in building strong and sound good governance. Media play a vital role in republic society and establishing norms of good governance by providing real time and true

information to the public at large. Media connects communities and societies, people and government to ensure government control to the best interest of the people. Media become the voice of the people and keep raising the concern of the people regularly, ensuring accountability and transparency in government functioning. Media facilitates and contributes to establish good governance, generates public concerns, and protect interest of the people. Corruption of Journalists and Media Houses is not only confined to them, but its need to be understood in the broader context. Society and stakeholder are responsible for the corruption and enhance the incredibility of media. More tight regulations are required to control the media in this respect and ethical consideration should be followed more precisely and ethical issue should be dealt in proper manner, otherwise it undermine the democracy and deteriorate the true democracy. Press/media now a day's do not play their role properly and involved in manipulation of facts and truth and not presenting the fact to the public properly. Media sometimes engages in violation of the right of people which further damaging the country. Paid media harm the welfare of the people and started to look after their own interest, they started to adopt malpractices for maximizing their profit. It's the duty of the media to monitor the functioning the government and evaluate their policies framework in a transparent manner, but media manipulating the facts and harm the public interest. Paid media exploit the system for their own benefits. In spite of all these criticisms, the media is still crucial for the public and country. Media creates the opinion, spread awareness on critical issues, carrying out debates on public platform, face public outrage, fill the gap between the government and public at large, and force the government to take care of public welfare. Media act as channels of communication and represent the various stakeholders of society and trying to understand the public voices by listening their perception, thoughts, voices, regards them, and channelize their voices to the government. Media protect the democracy and facilitate good governance. Paid Media is trying to mislead the public at large misled the society/public and damaging the public/society/nation. This is also damaging the decision-making process of a democratic society. It's not possible for the people/society to judge the government without having correct and authentic information. Another more important role of media is to protect the human rights of people. When media fail to protect the interest of the public/nation/society, then it demeans the role of press. These days media has been regulated by the corporate houses, and media cannot perform its duties properly and forced to protect of the corporate houses first, and then afterwards they think about public and other stakeholders. This also leads violation of the rights of citizens/society. Paid culture undermines the entire democratic sets up of the country. There is a need to set up the mechanism for controlling of media either in terms of self-regulations or government agencies has to devise rules and regulations more strictly to restrict the paid news culture in India. This includes self-regulation of the media itself and advice from professional bodies such as universities, independent researchers, and civil society groups, the Indian Press Commission, Press Council of India, the Indian Election Commission, and the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority. The democratic functioning of parliament needs the participation from all the stakeholders and ensuring good governance. The media ensure to the public and having reasonability to lead by front to protect democracy and good governance. A free and fair press/media is the simplest prerequisite for good governance. However, it become very difficult day by day for the media to perform their duties in a transparent manner because of the heavyweights of political parties, influence of political bosses, business interest and market. The paid media jeopardizes the working of system and dent in the democratic system to some extent, but still there is hope from the media house to play their role in the welfare of the people and country, and to make the country safer and contribute to strengthen the democracy. Paid media is serious threats and even the political system of the country need to

under the consequential effect of paid media and begin to make more stringent laws and regulation to protect the national interest and societal interest.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no financial issues or interest of conflicts to declare.

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