



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Law**

**EVOLUTION OF MASS MEDIA IN INDIA – AN OVERVIEW**

**KEY WORDS:** Media, Constitution, Democracy

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**ABSTRACT**

Mass media play a major role in informing the public and thereby shaping perceptions and through it a change in national agenda. They enhance literary levels of the society. The technological revolution of the last two decades has its impact on the generation, processing, dissemination and consumption of news. Every democratic setup in the social texture has an inseparable part that is the press, which has now expanded to include electronic media and new media. The legislative, executive, judiciary are considered to be three pillars of democracy and press is another equally important pillar to lend its valuable support to the system and hence it is regarded as fourth estate. Also under the Constitution of India, freedom of the media is part of the freedom of speech guaranteed by Article 19(1) (a). However, no freedom can be absolute, and reasonable restrictions can be placed on it. One of the basic tasks of the media is to provide truthful and objective information to the people that will enable them to form rational opinions, which is a sine qua non in a democracy. A process of 'social institutionalizing' changes the invented media fundamentally. Society 'institution-alizes' inventions by discovering new possibilities of communication; it adopts and formats new media.

**INTRODUCTION**

Indian media had evolved, realigned and reinvented itself to a large extent. The speed of media has resulted in bringing people across the world closer. The freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by the Constitution of India ensures the right to express one's strong belief and opinions freely by word, writing, printing, picture or electronic media or in any other form of expression. Media can be utilized for educational uses as patent in many countries. In Indian media used for educational proposes by both government as well as private groups. Mainly, Television was introduced in India by the Nehru government with the prime aim of establishing a medium for distance education; freedom implies the freedom of press in the absence of any separate provision of freedom of press in the Constitution. However, the freedom of press is not absolute. It is subject to certain reasonable restrictions. The Constitution also imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right to freedom of press in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence. Media provide news and information required by the people. There by educating them. This helps the Indian democracy to function effectively. Media informs the public about government policies and programmes and how these programmes can be useful to them. This helps the people voice their feelings and helps the government to make necessary changes in their policies or programmes. Media can entertain people. This acts as an agent of change in development. Media has brought people of the world closer to each other. Media promote trade and industry through advertisements. Media helps the political, democratic processes of a country and brings in positive social changes.

**Objectives of the Study**

- To trace the origin and development of Mass media in India
- In India, mass media acts as a major communication system laying an important role in society.
- Media is essential for information and education which is important for a vast developing country like India, in order to attain social justice.

**Methodology**

Law is distinct from other social sciences because of its normative character. To achieve the desirable goals, social and ethical values, the law not only regulates human conduct and relationship but also provides for stability and continuity of legal system. So the researcher in his work titled "Evolution of Mass Media in India – an overview" feels that the research

can be fruitfully carried out by the traditional or doctrinaire method.

**Facets of Media**

Mass media in its different forms have influenced human life in the present century. They have primarily provided information and entertainment to people across countries. Print media, being the leader over a considerable period of time now has swift competition from Television, which is reshaping many of the social responses. Radio apart from providing news and views has developed a flair for entertainment. There is also the new media with internet being its flag bearer. Internet has indeed made it possible to disseminate information and ideas in real time across the globe. The term 'media' are a composite of print, sound and electronic. Print media remains as powerful as ever along with newspapers, books, periodicals, etc. But Electronic media or cable television, telecommunications and satellite broadcasting offer a rich mix of all that is available around the world. There was a time when people used to write on palm leaves. This was before the discovery of paper. Some of the old manuscripts written on palm leaves are preserved in India, National Manuscript Library in Delhi. The Chinese were the first to invent the art of printing. They made wooden blocks to print letters. This was started during the period of the Tang Dynasty in 600 AD. The first printed book published in China was the Buddhist text, the "Diamond Sutra" by Wang Chick in 868 AD. Some copies of the Buddhist scriptures printed in 1377 are preserved in museums in China. Media is a fourth estate in a democracy, India in recent years has undergone rapid and in precedent changes in political, sociological, and economic aspects. These changes have also transformed the Indian mass media system. Mass media play a major role in informing the public and thereby shaping perceptions and through it a change in national agenda. They enhance literary levels of the society and the technological revolution of the last two decades has its impact on the generation, processing, dissemination and consumption of news. Every democratic setup in the social texture has an inseparable part that is the press, which expanded to include electronic media and new media. The legislative, executive and judiciary are considered to be three pillars of democracy and press is another equally important pillar to lend its valuable support to the system and hence it's regarded as fourth estate. Electronic media covers radio, television, desktop computer, game console, handheld devices. The Internet has revolutionized the computer and communications world like nothing before. The invention of the telegraph, telephone, radio, and computer set the stage for this unprecedented integration of capabilities.

### Constitutional Perspective

The Indian Constitution does not provide freedom for media separately. But there is an indirect provision for media freedom. It gets derived from Article 19(1) (a). This Article guarantees freedom of speech and expression. The freedom of mass media is derived indirectly from this Article. The scope of free speech under Article 19 is very wide and embraces in itself the right of free press. Freedom of the press and media in India provides liberty to the print and electronic media, publish, circulate and broadcast any news or information, whether political or non-political, without fear of censorship or sanctions. Freedom of speech enjoys special position as far India is concerned. The importance of freedom of expression and speech can be easily understand by the fact that preamble of constitution itself ensures to all citizens inter alia, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. The constitutional significance of the freedom of speech consists in the Preamble of Constitution and is transformed as fundamental and human right in Article 19(1) (a) as "freedom of speech and expression". Explaining the scope of freedom of speech and expression Supreme Court has said that the words "freedom of speech and expression" must be broadly constructed to include the freedom to circulate one's views by words of mouth or in writing or through audio-visual instrumentalities. Freedom of Speech and expression means the right to express one's own convictions and opinions freely by words of mouth, writing, printing, pictures or any other mode. It thus includes the expression of one's idea through any communicable medium or visible representation, such as gesture, signs, and the like. Moreover, it is important to note that liberty of one must not offend the liberty of others. Patanjali Shastri, J. in A.K. Gopalan case, observed, "man as a rational being desires to do many things, but in a civil society his desires will have to be controlled with the exercise of similar desires by other individuals". It therefore includes the right to propagate one's views through the print media or through any other communication channel e.g. the radio and the television. Every citizen of this country therefore has the right to air his or their views through the printing and or the electronic media subject of course to permissible restrictions imposed under Article 19(2) of the Constitution. In sum, the fundamental principle involved here is the people's right to know. Freedom of speech and expression should, therefore, receive generous support from all those who believe in the participation of people in the administration. The guarantee of freedom of speech under following heads. Although Article 19 does not express provision for freedom of press but the fundamental right of the freedom of press implicit in the right the freedom of speech and expression. In the famous case Express Newspapers, Bombay (P) Ltd. v. Union of India court observed the importance of press very aptly. Court held in this case that "In today's free world freedom of press is the heart of social and political intercourse. The press has now assumed the role of the public educator making formal and non-formal education possible in a large scale particularly in the developing world, where television and other kinds of modern communication are not still available for all sections of society. The purpose of the press is to advance the public interest by publishing facts and opinions without which a democratic electorate Government cannot make responsible judgments. Newspapers being purveyors of news and views having a bearing on public administration very often carry material which would not be palatable to Governments and other authorities. The fourth estate shall not lose its exalted position by making a paradigm shift in the priorities of reporting, driven by corporate interests. Both the print and the visual media should not give a go-by to journalistic ethics and all that matters is sensationalism. This is an important factor to bring out a balance of media in society. In order to have a true journalism, media have a significant role in formulating public opinion and not ignore the protection of human rights which is a people's issue. The media groups should function like a community and should not try to destroy or dominate each other. This is dangerous to democracy. Media is like a watch dog to democracy.

### Recommendations

- The media are called the fourth pillar of democracy not just because of their responsibility but also the power they wield. The media rather than contributing to the loss of people's faith in the institution should endeavour to reinforce the trust in them.
- The media must help society in going through transitional period as quickly as possible, and by reducing the pain involved.
- Media must be a means for promoting modern scientific ideas creating scientific temper among the youth.

### CONCLUSION

The researcher has studied that The media have a significant role in formulating public opinion. Media is considered to be the 4th pillar of the society. The other three being legislative, executive and judiciary. It definitely plays an important role in the welfare of the society. No one can deny the importance of media in current world. Now we are calling the world as global village that is just because of media. 195. India in recent years has undergone rapid and unprecedented changes in political, sociological, and economic aspects. These changes have also transformed the Indian mass media system. Mass media play a major role in informing the public and thereby shaping perceptions and through it a change in national agenda.

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