

ROLE OF MEDIA IN PAKISTAN

Introduction:

Media, may it be the print or its electronic counterpart, is the fourth pillar of state and in this capacity, it is playing a significant role in today's Pakistan. It has, time and again, proved to be pivotal to the development of the country. The multifaceted nature of media is determined by its involvement in almost every walk of life. It has a power to make things undergo transformation. Jim Morrison has rightly said, 'Whoever controls the media, controls the mind.' The media is, nowadays, the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because, they control the minds of the masses! Let's have a look at various aspects of influence of media in the following piece.

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Positive Aspects:

Peoples' Voice:

In Pakistan, media is a source of social modernization and a simultaneous window to outer world. It's playing a key role in highlighting socio-cultural issues of the populace of the country. Besides, it is emerging as an advocate of granting the people their fundamental rights. By bridging gaps based on cultural differences, it is leading to harness and foster national solidarity. Media has made headway and has gained popularity by vocalizing the public grievances and problems. It has an ability to influence public by disseminating awareness especially on political rights and responsibilities of the individuals. It is like a watchdog for government as well as non-government institutions.

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Societal Modernization:

Media is playing its peculiar role in bringing social modernization. In Pakistan, a huge change is being witnessed in society during past decade due to increase involvement of media. People have become more modernized. After being familiar with new trends prevailing around the world, the people have acquired more sophisticated ways of dealing with each other. They have become more socially active. They have developed a matured sense. This has enabled them to adopt new norms and values by remaining within the moral limits. This sense has made them socially responsible citizens and encouraged them to accentuate socio-cultural issues

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Presenting Soft Image of Pakistan:

Media has a significant contribution in disseminating education and information especially that is related to new technologies and developments. It also provides a medium for promoting distant learning where it harnesses sectarian harmony by presenting different points of view from renowned scholars from different schools of thought. By presenting a better image of Pakistan media is helping in attracting foreign direct investment in Pakistan.

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Highlighting Public Grievances:

Media is playing a promising role in highlighting socio-cultural issues. The issues like poverty, inflation, unemployment, illiteracy, inhuman behaviour of some tribal and feudal lords, etc., are highlighted by media. It has also been an ardent supporter and advocate of human rights. It's a known fact that human rights are being violated all around the world. In Pakistan, inhuman practice like child labour, gender discrimination, acid throwing on females, child marriages and honour killing also exist. Media has raised its voice against such ill-practices as well.

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Fostering Inter-provincial Harmony:

Media's role in fostering inter-provincial harmony is also laudable as well as pivotal. In Pakistan, various programs depicting cultural values and traditions of each province are aired by different channels. This promotes customs and traditions of each province and creates a psychological bonding. People develop more understanding toward their norms and values. In this way, they respect others' culture. This brings harmony which strengthens the social fabric leading to national solidarity.

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Public Trust in Government:

Media acts as a channel of maintaining good Public-Government relations. In Pakistan, it is taken as a source for informing government officials about the reaction of public related to their policies. It is performing its role in development of support communication services as well. The awareness on the projects which are supposed to be initiated for the betterment of people of a particular area is being disseminated by utilizing media. This helps in the form of acceptance of that program by the local residents.

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An Independent Watchdog:

Media's role as a watchdog for government and non-government organizations is also plausible. In Pakistan, both print and electronic media take the government and NGO officials to the task if they commit some wrong. Different media persons, being a responsible citizen, analyze the performance of different departments and give tough time to their officials for not performing up to the mark may it be the case of Pakistan Steel Mills, Rental Power Project or the issue of Arsalan Iftikhar, all were brought to spotlight by media

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Medium of Education:

Media is playing commendable role in education sphere. It is being utilized as a medium for emphasizing importance of education. In Pakistan, there are many campaigns which have been launched to stress the importance of seeking education. The mass campaign 'Zara Sochiye' is one of the efforts in this regard. Media is emerging also as a window which opens horizons of development, research and technology. In Pakistan, there are many institutes which disseminate technological information within as well as outside the country. For instance, Pakistan Museum of Natural History and Pakistan Scientific and Technological Information Centre (PASTIC), two important subsidiary organizations of the Pakistan Science Foundation, are playing their due role in disseminating scientific information.

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Medium of Education: (continued)

Media is also a source of distant learning all around the world. In Pakistan, media has become a part of educational institutes. It has rendered its services in the form of educational channels only dedicated for broadcasting educational programs. The online distant learning program initiated by Virtual University is one of such programs. This has enabled the students of this institute to take all the lectures through satellite channels of the institute. This has helped the students living in far areas to excel in education.

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Negative Aspects:

Despite all positive contribution toward society, there are certain flaws in the role played by media in Pakistan.

Useless Coverage:

Unnecessary coverage to events has become a trend now. Distortion of media content has too become a common practice. Lack of farsightedness of breaking any news story is further aggravating the situation. There is no denying the fact that media has a hand in every walk of life. These are some flaws which are destroying its positive image.

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Creating Hypes:

Presentation of distorted content is another flaw which is leading the audience and readers to lose trust in media. In Pakistan, there are many programmes being aired which try to twist and distort the facts for their own purposes. They never hesitate to follow these acts for creating media hype for their own benefit. They have only concern with program ratings which never allowing them to even think about media ethics and responsibilities

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Being Mercenaries:

Acting like mercenary is another negative aspect of media. In Pakistan, many media persons use this tool to their own benefit. They indulge in the practice of being on payroll of some politicians. There are many political parties who have their associations in both print and electronic media. They use them to achieve their political goals for dragging their opponents name in the mud.

This is against the true spirit of media.

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Irresponsible Behaviour:

Lack of farsightedness in breaking news is another omnipresent vice in media. Without evaluating the consequences of some particular news, every channel rushes in to break it first. For example, a renowned channel broke news at the time of Mumbai attacks that the culprit had its belongings to Pakistan without ascertaining the repercussions of their act. This kind of practice is similar to setting one's own house on fire.

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Irresponsible Behaviour: (continued)

These are certain flaws which should be overcome by taking concrete steps. Media policy should be formulated by the media organizations. Freedom with responsibility should be the slogan raised and practiced by both forms of Media. Moreover, some image-building measures should be taken at every level to make its appropriate use. So that misuse of media should be discouraged. A comprehensive media policy should be introduced by the media organizations themselves to overcome ambiguities in rules and regulations. Moreover, Pemra should be invigorated and made vigorous.

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Conclusion:

Concluding the arguments, it must be admitted that media is playing a commendable role in Pakistan and it cannot, at all, be negated. The ways with which it is contributing in the society are unbeatable but it is a known fact that its negative aspects overpowering the importance of media as a catalyst for bringing transformation for betterment in society

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That's All
Thank
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