

Devaluation in Indian Journalism

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Abstract:

Through this research, the researcher has tried to investigate crises of devaluation of social responsibility, values and credibility in mass media. Inclusion of internet, Google and social media has damaged traditional media like radio and television channels to business competition and to sell their product to their customers.

The Researcher has studied the contents of various media, the circulation figures and viewers' strength in India, particularly in Maharashtra. The contents published in media are mainly focused to cater various factors in the family which are entertainment and not those which create opinion. Introduction of breaking news force readers to focus their mind in another issue.

Media is losing its power as fourth estate in democracy and has become a product in consumer market which has resulted in losing its credibility and has devalued its value to satisfy its customers. This business approach has affected the society.

Keywords:

Mass media, social media, newspaper, value, communication, Journalism

Introduction:

Communication and language plays a vital role in the progress of the society since development of human-being as a social-being. The language helps human-being to educate him with knowledge. Though human-being remember symbols, when such symbols are understood by all the persons in the society. One can communicate oral or written, his emotions and thoughts through language. Such knowledge can be stored in printed form which is updated and can be transferred from one generation to the other.

The Indian oriental knowledge in Vedas is remembered orally for 4000 years. Oral chanting is supposed to be the authentic one. But when written language came into existence, the knowledge got stored in the form of Pothi. Such knowledge was gathered and imparted in the Universities like Takshashila and Nalanda which helped to develop the Indian culture and progress. As both these places were destroyed, there was a great fall back to India's progress.

Newspaper being the oldest mass media in print form, has played the major role to mould the masses. Through language, human-being understands surrounding facts and knowledge which helps him to update himself and to face the change in human behavior, technology and social engineering. As Lokmanya B.G.Tilak has rightly said that, "Regarding public issues, the Journalist should write his independent opinion without fear. There is possibility that while performing his duty, he will face few bad experiences. – Ref. Lokmanya Tilak Sukti Sangrah by S.V. Bapat, Publisher Kesari Mahratta Trust, Pune

This study is to know the changes in the devaluation of journalism newspaper contents and its effects on the society which has resulted in bringing down the credibility of media.

Statement of problem:

The statement of the crises is "The study of journalistic pattern in mass media and its effects on social responsibility".

Objectives:

1. To find out the changes in the newspaper contents as a consumer.
2. To understand the social responsibility of mass media and its crises of ownership
3. To find the hurdles in mass media while performing its journalistic responsibilities.

Method used in the present research:

1. To understand the relationship of mass media and its effects on society, the Researcher has studied various books and literature available on Mass Communication and society or mass media and its social effects along with issues of Daily Kesari
- . The authenticity is tested by interviewing few Editors and Marketing Managers of media and circulation figures from Audit Bureau of Circulation.

The study is based on secondary data apart from few interviews. The Researcher has applied all the data available on internet and Inflightnet.

Need and Importance of research:

The Research was carried out to bring awareness among the young Journalist to know the value of the contents used in media and its effects on the society.

1. To understand power of mass media.
2. To understand social responsibility of mass media.
3. To differentiate between two aspects, i.e. as a consumer product and as a tool to mould the opinion.

Implementation of Research Methodology:

After carefully studying books, references and articles about media and society, the Researcher has come to few findings in line with the research objective.

1. To find out the changes in newspaper contents as a consumer product:

Since inception, the newspapers were selling news and their views about surrounding events. But after competition with Radio and Television media, newspapers as well as television started inclusion of various articles or episodes that facilitated various readers in the family. As in India, only one newspaper is purchased in the family. So news papers design that content that can satisfy various segments in the family. Although the Press is considered the watchdog of democracy, sadly, there is scant regard for this truism in a country which is, ironically, the world's largest democracy. Client oriented newspapers or free flow of knowledge can dilute the object of fourth estate of social responsibility as money should purchase the space of campaign.[6]

The idea of Nioliberalism came into existence by Feder Highjek in 1935 regarding the open market. In another publication by Fredrick Gems, he has explained how this open market policy affected the culture. The Article by Stephen Metcalf in Guardian says “The idea that swallowed the world”. The idea of Nioliberalism leads to continuous competition. The same view point affects the readers mind set.

This view point has forced the newspapers to change their contents.

‘The Hindu’ is one of the leading newspapers in the South India. If we analyse their pattern of features and its contents, we can easily know the drastic change in the newspaper products which is prepared as a consumer product which helps newspapers to retain their readers. The newspapers do not cover agriculture, labour or rural news. That means, the national news papers do not cover 75% of the population in India. Various features published in the newspaper like mythological stories, crossword, quiz, cooking, are consumer oriented and not journalistic features. As mentioned by Lokmanya B.G. Tilak – printing colourful pictures on glossy paper and to entertain people is not the main objective of the Journalism. Today, newspapers are concentrating mainly to entertain their readers and keeping away their journalistic responsibility.

2. To understand the social responsibility of Mass Media and the crises of ownership :

During the last three decades, after 1980, there was conversion in ownership pattern of media groups. Many Indian business houses or political readers purchased media groups, like Reliance purchased E TV 19 channels, Birla's, Jain (Times) or political leaders like Pawar, Maran, Darda purchased the controls of various media houses or media owners like Zee TV were included in political parties. 'Badal' in Punjab, 'Sakshi' in Andhra Pradesh, 'Maran Brothers' in Tamilnadu, purchased the ownership of media.

These Media Owners or Industrial Emperors, have their vested interest with the Governmental schemes directly. So Journalists cannot write against the interest of their owner. They cannot criticize the Governmental policies.

As per P. Sainath – A famous Editor, "If the Government wants to privatize anything, no media will write against it. So you can not know the other side of the Government Policy".

This has restricted the role of media as a watch dog. Power of media with restriction to safeguard owner's interest devalues its role as a fourth estate.

There are many more restrictions on media like to censor news against advertisers, to carry paid news, etc.

These political and ownership restrictions devalue the term of freedom of the press.

These industrial tycoons decide what should be the policy of the Government and mould public opinion accordingly. This is the crisis in Indian Mass Media. This type of media structure has become compulsory structure for media life. As media affects the mindset of the society, any private interest helps to devaluate journalistic duties. Lokmanya Tilak has said, "Journalist is the job where every Journalist should keep away their personal interest". – Ref. Tilak Sukti Sangrah, Publication – Kesari Mahrata Trust. Lokmanya Tilak himself, in his last Will, converted his newspaper Kesari and Mahratta into a Trust. According to him media should be owned by a group of people who do not have any personal interest, for which the Journalist should not be compelled to divert from his duty of Journalist.

3. To find out hurdles in mass media while performing its journalistic responsibilities :

Journalism and media are different phenomena. Media is the business proposition where as Journalism idealism is to create public opinions for the welfare of the society. Journalism works as a watch dog and alerts public as well as the Government about their doings. Media works for fulfilling the demands and requirements of general audience. Today media`s role has become extremely crucial with so many disasters and catastrophes affecting world adversely including terrorists` attacks, natural adversity, fire outbreaks, political and many more. Considering the fact that they have an immense power to influence the masses, media faces aggressive competition to become more popular and economical.[7]

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak started small news papers like Kesari and Mahratta with a small circulation. But his writings put British Government on defense. Investigative reporting, publishing of various scams, natural calamities, import-export policies, make people and the Government aware about facts and figures which are helpful to make policies.

Today as 60% of media is controlled by such capitalists who have their interest in Government developmental projects. So journalism has become censored freedom of press. The news and views that appears in the newspapers are decided by its owners.

Another aspect is, new media like Internet, Twitter, Facebook, Google, Whatsapp, etc. which neither have any accountability nor have any journalistic values. But the same are used for publicity or anti publicity by the political parties. Digital media has one more dangerous element that they have access to your personal data and it is difficult to control it by present Law.

Now-a-days, the opinion polls, focused news, propaganda news are planned and slowly pollute the mind set.

One more objection on Monopolistic media is, as a business proposition it carries the news or articles for their clients or readers only. In other words, being customers` oriented Journalism. 70% of Indian population is neglected by the media. All of us are dragged to change our behavior towards turbo market.

A trend towards breaking news, melodramatic news and high society diverts our mind from present or main problems. Our mindset is trained to lose the memory or to forget the immediate past. We live in the atmosphere of race and competition. We forget the near past. Media forces us to accept new technology. We do not think whether such updation is required or not, whether it is profitable for our nation? Automation, computerization and artificial intelligence have costed us to 40% unemployment. These effects could have become possible because of media. Diverting public mind has become a usual practice by political leaders which leads to avoid serious talks on the natural important issues. Recently on can easily observe when Journalists started discussing farmer's issue. We were diverted to issues of Pakistan border. We talk unemployment, we start looking 'Chandra Yan'. When we start discussing on low GDP, suddenly encounter of rapist in Hyderabad is discussed and wrongly glorified so much so we forget all the basic issues which affect our lives. Our mindset is trained to forget the immediate past. We must remember Lokmanya Tilak's basic thoughts on journalism like, "We have not initiated our newspapers to protect the Government liking. Our criticism of Government may affect us but we are not sufferers to print our opinions freely, why we should start news paper?".

Conclusion:

This research was carried on to know the hurdles in mass media while performing its journalistic responsibilities. The entire study has studied the major shift of mass media approach from journalism to business oriented proposition. The Researcher has mainly focused on the journalistic democratic values.

1. Mass media has become consumer oriented product and changed its contents as per the requirement of the consumers.
2. The majority of mass media ownership is controlled by few Industrialists or Political Leaders which has resulted in devaluation of journalistic responsibilities.

3. There are many hurdles like business interest, monopolistic ownership, customer centric approach, devaluation of journalistic values, diverting views to breaking news, unrealistic discussions in journalism. This has brought down the journalistic values and have affected democracy and the society.

Recommendations :

Here are few suggestions by the Researcher:

1. Democratization of mass media should be supported.
2. Monopolization of media should be restricted by Law.

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