ROLE OF MEDIA IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PRINT MEDIA

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Role of Print Media in Social Development

Development cannot happen in isolation whether it may be in micro or macro level. So, there is a need for a strong tool to connect people instantly so that the knowledge transfer is never ending and instant. Media for development uses to convey messages on issues such as health care, poverty reduction, good governance, environmental protection and community development, socio-economic and cultural development. Today the world is becoming a small place to live in and share knowledge, ideas and passing over valuable culture to the next generation, all the above said things is possible through social networking and media. For example, as our present honourable Prime Minister of India is sharing his views and observation through media in 'Man Ki Bat' episodes where people from across India participate and listening to him regarding different areas. Every aspect in the society has positive and negative externalities so we need to see how these negative externalities can be balanced and surpassed through positive externalities to reach development in all dimensions.

The relationship between media and social change is an intriguing study, showcasing the profound impact media exerts on shaping societies. Media, in its various forms, is an influential force contributing to and reflecting the ever-evolving societal norms and behaviours. Through this exploration, we can uncover the intricacies and depth of the symbiotic relationship between media and social transformations.

Meaning of Media:

Media is a powerful tool that can be used to promote social change. It can be used to raise awareness of social issues, mobilize people to take action, and hold those in power accountable. The media can play a role in social change in a number of ways. It can:

- **Raise awareness of social issues:** The media can use its platforms to raise awareness of important social issues, such as poverty, inequality, and discrimination. This can help to educate the public and build support for change.

- **Mobilize people to take action:** The media can be used to mobilize people to take action on social issues. For example, the media can be used to promote protests, boycotts, and other forms of activism.

- **Hold those in power accountable:** The media can be used to hold those in power accountable for their actions. For example, the media can investigate and report on corruption, human rights abuses, and other forms of wrongdoing.

Print Media Still Relevant in a Digital Age:

Despite the widespread shift toward digital platforms, print media remains an influential part of the media landscape. Newspapers, magazines, and printed advertising continue to serve key demographics, especially among older audiences and niche interest groups. Print media offers a tangible, trusted source of information that digital formats often struggle to replicate, with readers valuing the credibility and depth of coverage in print publications. Moreover, magazines and specialty publications continue to thrive in areas like fashion, lifestyle, and luxury, where the high-quality visual presentation that print offers is unmatched. In an era of information overload, print's curated, in-depth content still appeals to audiences looking for more than just fast, digital headlines.

The Indian print media industry is projected to experience robust growth in 2024, with advertising revenues returning to pre-pandemic levels. Print remains resilient in India, and industry experts anticipate rapid growth, emphasizing the credibility and effectiveness of print advertising for brand recognition.

India's tryst with journalism started in 1780 with a scandal sheet that opposed the East India Company. Till 1947 more than 120 newspapers were launched in all Indian languages and all had a cause; speaking out against British imperialism and initiating social reform. Commercial concerns were non-existent. Freedom fighters and social reformers wrote and edited newspapers and post-

Independence the participation of the press in nation building continued. The adoption of neo-liberal policies by India in the decade of the 1990s meant the integration of the Indian economy into the global economy. The media was an essential ideological part of this integration into the consumer economy. Nation building, social inequality, concerns of the citizens on the fringes of society, minorities, Dalits, tribals, and women receded and the media gave more space to the 'feel good' 'soft' stories that supported the neo-liberal economy. There was less space for meaningful debate and discussion, scrutiny of government policies, systematic opportunity to scrutinize and criticize government policies (Rao, 2009:116).

The Press: India published more daily newspapers than any other country in Asia, covering a range of languages and cultural diversity that is unparalleled in the world. In 2000, there were over 27,000 newspapers and periodicals in India published in 93 languages. Some 5,000 dailies are read by over 100 million readers in 14 languages (Kripalani, 1997). But in a nation with a high rate of illiteracy (40 per cent), the effects of these newspapers and periodicals are limited to an elite audience. Indian newspapers are owned mainly by individuals or by private firms and, in this sense, are relatively free from government control (Singhal & Rogers, 2001:54).

Impact of Print Revolution in India

1. The print revolution brought a huge impact on India. Starting in the 16th century from Goa to spreading in every state and eventually, every big city in India printing revolution has come a long way. With more than 500 years of history of this journey, the print revolution had affected every citizen of then and present-day society with its impact on religious, cultural, educationist, official work, and vernacular press.

2. The print revolution produced books and newspapers in large numbers so they become more affordable and accessible to a wider audience. This helped in the spread of education and literacy among the middle class and urban population.

3. The print revolution played a crucial role in promoting social reform movements, such as the abolition of sati, child marriage, and untouchability. Newspapers played an important role in creating awareness about these issues and mobilizing public opinion in their favour.

4. The print revolution played a pivotal role in the growth of the Indian nationalist movement. Newspapers and journals became platforms for nationalist leaders to articulate their vision of a free and independent India and to mobilize public support for the cause of Indian independence.

Print Media Companies Adapting to Digital Disruption:

Print media companies are increasingly embracing a hybrid model, combining the strengths of print with digital platforms to reach a broader audience. Many traditional print publications now offer digital editions, mobile apps, and online subscriptions to complement their physical copies. Some have developed integrated media strategies that include multimedia content, podcasts, and social media outreach, expanding their presence beyond the printed page. Additionally, innovations in print technology, such as personalized printing and augmented reality (AR) integrations, are creating interactive print experiences that blend the physical and digital worlds. These adaptations are helping print media companies stay competitive in an increasingly digital market.

Current and Old Age Social Issues Prevailing in India

India is the biggest democracy in the world, which has taken giant strides in the last few decades, but still, everyday issues continue to threaten the nation's progress. Listed below are some.

Corruption: Corruption is India's most widespread endemic and must be dealt with swiftly and wisely. There is no telling how much money has been lost due to this. Though most of us are concerned, when the time comes to act, we, the people of India, must not be found wanting.

Illiteracy: The rate of illiteracy in India is concerning. Even though 74.04% of people were counted as literate in the 2011 census, there is a significant disparity between rural and urban areas and male and female populations. Villages are in worse condition than cities. Despite establishing several primary schools in rural India, the problem persists. Many people who are considered literate are unable to read or write. As a result, educating only children will not solve the illiteracy problem because many adults in India are illiterate.

Poverty: As per the NITI Ayog (now Planning Commission of India), the proportion of India's population living in poverty has decreased from 37% in 2004-2005 to 22% in 2011-12. In 2011-12, 22% of the population (one in every five Indians) was impoverished. According to the World Poverty Clock, this figure is expected to fall to 5% by 2022. However, in India, villages house 80% of the poor. The poorest areas are Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, and Chhattisgarh. According to World Bank data, 43% of the poor belong to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe (2016). The government must address this disparity immediately.

Although the economy has clearly shown evidence of growth over the past 20 years, this growth has not been uniforming across all industries or regions. Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have slower growth rates than Gujarat and Delhi. Nearly half of the population lacks access to adequate sanitation

facilities, adequate roads, and a secondary school in their villages. Communities also lack a reliable water source. The government-designated organizations do not even maintain a list of the poor in some societal segments, like as Dalits. They belong to socially and economically disadvantaged groups. The system of government subsidies, which has leaks in the distribution network, exacerbates and further complicates the issue.

Women's Safety: Even after several measures to uplift the standard of living of women in India, when it comes to women's freedom and safety, India lags. Domestic Violence, rape, and the portrayal of women in media, among other issues, should be addressed immediately.

Gender Issues: In India gender issues, discrimination against women is nothing new. Women have been mistreated like slaves and denied fundamental civic rights ever since the country's independence was declared. Recently, the Indian government has taken a number of steps to improve the plight of women, especially in the rural and underprivileged areas of society, as a country cannot operate at 100% efficiency while only 50% of its workforce, i.e., males, are employed. Some of the gender-related issues are: **The Gap in Gender Parity:** India dips 28 ranks to 140th in the recently issued WEF Global Gender Gap Index for 2021. The Economic Survey 2017–18 study states that there are 63 million missing women in India. Women who are missing are those who have died as a result of infanticide or foeticide. The pandemic has reportedly affected women more severely than men. Policies are required in fields like artificial intelligence and blockchain as well as in developing ones like healthcare, information technology, education, and agriculture, all of which have significant female participation. **Unpaid Work by Women:** Several political parties recently pledged to pay women for unpaid household tasks in their election manifestos. Women make up 75% of the whole unpaid population, per a McKinsey analysis. Less than half of the global average, or 17% of the GDP, in India is contributed by women. By advancing infrastructure and technology, bringing some unpaid labour into the mainstream economy, and providing women with basic amenities, it has the ability to lessen the constraints that women face. By giving men various incentives and disincentives, it might also redistribute labour between men and women. **Sexual Harassment at Workplace:** The Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act was passed by the government in 2013 with the goal of defending the rights of women in all occupations.

Unemployment: Unemployment is now widespread among young people. This is also referred to as joblessness. Furthermore, if you are looking for a job, a Google search is the best place to start. The Indian government must take the necessary steps to eradicate it, including increasing government and

public sector job opportunities. It must also support private-sector industries that can provide jobs to those who truly deserve them. According to data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, the unemployment rate reached 8.10% in February 2022. This is a high rate of unemployment for a country like India. If it is not addressed immediately, it will pose a challenge to our society and economy.

India is a developing nation with religious roots that is also impacted by Westernization. The following difficulties that modern India has to deal with are: Healthcare, Pollution, Overpopulation, Poor Sanitation facilities, Poor Infrastructure, Cyber Crimes, Mob Lynchings, Drug and Substance Abuse, Declining Fertility Rates in India, Youth Suicide, Healthcare Infrastructure, High Unemployment, Pollution, Religious Tensions, Environmental Issues, Overpopulation, Virus diseases such as COVID-19 Pandemic, Economic Challenges-High Prices in basic commodities, Agricultural Protests, Political Unrest, Cybersecurity and Privacy and Infrastructure Development, etc..

Classification of Social Issues in India

The list below provides a general classification of the principal social issues in India: (1) Gender Issues in India (2) Poverty Issues in India (3) Caste Issues in India (4) Migration (5) Health Issues in India (6) Education Issues in India and (7) Other Issues.

Social Development: Concept and Meaning:

Concept: Social development is a process of change that improves the well-being of individuals and groups in society by addressing various aspects such as poverty, inequality, human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. Social development plays a vital role in achieving sustainable development. It has been promoting the realization of human potential and dignity, fostering social inclusion and cohesion, enhancing social capital and innovation, and contributing to economic growth and environmental protection.

Social development is a broad and multidimensional concept that refers to the improvement of the well-being of individuals and groups in society. It encompasses various aspects such as poverty eradication, social inclusion, social protection, social justice, human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. Social development is closely linked to the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as well as to the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015.

Meaning: To examines social change in society, social development is a broad notion that studies the overall transformation of people or groups through purposefully initiated policies. It should be highlighted that development and change are distinct concepts; unlike the latter, the former refers to a change that is intended or wanted. In this sense, we can assert that while not every type of change is development, every development is a type of change. Moreover, there are even different notions of development. For example, there could be a socio-cultural dimension of development and even an economic dimension to it.

However, when we talk about Social Development, we tend to emphasise the qualitative aspect of change in the social structures and processes. Each and every society is made up of certain cultural values, norms, traditions, customs, culture, etc. all of which must be carefully analysed to examine the social development of a society. In this view, social development studies and deals with the production and perpetuation of social and economic inequalities, the moral development of society's most vulnerable people, the provision of proper housing and sanitary facilities, and the general expansion of other social welfare amenities, etc.

Different Approaches to Social Development:

Furthermore, we now have *'the sociology of development'* to study different approaches to Social Development. Some of those approaches have been discussed below:

- **Development from the top:** Top-down development, as it is called, in this developmental approach, the apex bodies of administration plan and formulate the development schemes. This approach, however, has numerous flaws, as it might fail to involve the beneficiaries directly.

- **Development from bottom:** Bottom-Up approach, as it is called, unlike the first development approach, this second approach takes into consideration the needs of beneficiaries by giving them the opportunity to project their needs and requirements.

- **Sectoral development:** The development of a specific sector of the economy, such as the agricultural or industrial sectors, is referred to as sectoral development. For example, post-independence Indian planners emphasised the expansion of Indian businesses.

- **Area development:** When we try to shift our attention to some specific underdeveloped area or region, we are actually adopting an area development approach. For example, we might use this approach to improve the standards of living in rural communities in some particular areas.

- **Target group development:** This approach focuses on some specific target groups, such as child labour, women, small farmers, etc. This method of development is perfectly demonstrated by the example of the reservation policy for SC/STs.

Characteristics of Social Development:

Some of the main characteristics of social development are:

- It is a process of change that involves the interaction of social, cultural, political, and economic factors.

- It is a normative concept that reflects the values and aspirations of society, such as dignity, equity, diversity, and participation.

- It is a holistic concept that considers the interrelatedness and interdependence of various aspects of human well-being, such as health, education, work, and security.

- It is a dynamic concept that adapts to the changing needs and contexts of society, such as globalization, urbanization, migration, and technology.

- It is a participatory concept that involves the active engagement and empowerment of all stakeholders, such as individuals, communities, civil society, governments, and international organizations.

Role of Social Development

Social development plays a vital role in achieving sustainable development for several reasons:

It addresses the root causes and consequences of poverty and inequality, which are major challenges for human development and social cohesion.

- It promotes the realization of human rights and human dignity, which are essential for human potential and social progress.

- It fosters social inclusion and social cohesion, which are key for social stability and peace.

- It enhances social capital and social innovation, which are important for social resilience and transformation.

- It contributes to economic growth and environmental protection, which are necessary for social prosperity and sustainability.

Impact of Social Development

Social development has a significant impact on various aspects of society, such as:

- **Individuals:** Social development improves the quality of life and well-being of individuals by enhancing their access to basic services, opportunities, and resources. It also strengthens their capacities, skills, and confidence to participate in social and economic activities.

- **Groups:** Social development supports the empowerment and participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as women, children, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, ethnic

minorities, indigenous peoples, refugees, and migrants. It also fosters the recognition and respect of their rights, identities, cultures, and contributions to society.

- **Society:** Social development enhances the social cohesion and harmony of society by reducing the gaps and disparities between different groups. It also promotes the values and principles of democracy, justice, solidarity, and cooperation among all members of society.

Importance of Social Development:

Man is a social animal and his thoughts are shaped by social interactions. And it is social development that enables people to adapt to members of various social groupings for better functioning of society. Society deeply influences a person's thought process because everything is acquired from society. In order to keep up social ties, one must abide by the law of society and learn from it. Social development enhances the ability of people to tolerate or make peace with other peoples' viewpoints. For a "holistic" approach to development, some sociologists say that the psychological, social, and moral elements must be considered. For them, social development is crucial since it improves all aspects of life, including physical, psychological, social, and cultural well-being. Some sociologists also believe that social growth leads to improvement in social quality, which in turn promotes social cohesion in society.

However, contemporary sociologists like Yogendra Kumar believe that a striking result of improper development planning also results in dissatisfaction among people, which worsens the issue of violence and lawlessness in the nation. Despite this, social development is an important process for introducing new patterns in people's preferences. Developmental policies can assist people in enhancing their well-being and realising their full potential if they are implemented wisely. Hence, developmental policies and strategies must be applied intelligently to yield the desired results and to bring the ability for people to become the best versions of themselves. Studying social development is much more crucial in sociology since it promotes more fruitful discussions on the relative significance of the material and cultural foundation of social development.

Role of Press in a Developing Society:

That the media have to play an indispensable role to play to in a modern state is by now a self-evident fact. But journalists, political leaders and educationalists have failed to apply their minds to apply this vital subject of communication and society, which is attracting increasing attention of intellectuals in the rest of the world, whether at UNESCO or other political and academia forums.

The media have a two way of role to play in a modern society: on the one hand, **of ruled informed of the rulers', policies, actions and activities** and, on the other, **of bringing the feedback, to the rulers from the ruled and making them aware of the reactions and responses of the people to policies and actions.** The media, further, are an instrument of exchange of messages, i.e. views and information between different sections of the communities, between rural and urban sectors, between industry and labour, between the majority and minorities, so as to help people to make their own decisions on basic issues. That is what the democracy is all about.

Media and the Third Word:

In a developing country the media have the additional role of sharing with the government a responsibility for the task of nation-building, for which communication is indispensable. Hence, the demur expressed by several veteran Indian journalists against the "adversary role" prescribed for the Press in the declaration issued by a panel of the International Press Institute (IPI) in the name of the Indian Press some months ago, following a visit to this country and discussions with Indian editors and journalist.

In this area the news agency plays a basic role in serving as a communication link between the government and the people and feeding the Press and keeping the government and the people informed about each other. Hence, the top priority given by UNESCO to the development of a national and indigenous news agency in every country. Each country's media structure is, however, dictated by its own special needs and objectives. While, broadly speaking, all developing countries have similar and common media requirements and objectives, each country may have special problems and needs.

In the process of development certain sections of people in India are social excluded from the advantages of developments and development programmes. Since it is a known fact that social exclusion can lead to economic poverty and it is quite interconnected with sociological conditions. In the process of exclusion, the people cut themselves from information and assistance to overcome the problems and finally isolated. Tribals are more isolated from the main streams of the society. Exclusion had profound impact on the quality life of the poor, who are socially segregated, stigmatized and marginalized from the institutions of social development. Social inclusion of certain groups and uplift through directive principles of state policy is an inclusive strategy of the government. Developmental programmes are another kind of measures in order to achieve inclusive growth among the excluded social categories in India. There is a great need of inclusive policies yet

to be introduced to protect the marginalized and discriminated groups in Indian society. Social justice to weaker sections through legal framework is an essential requirement for the upliftment of these vulnerable groups in India (Rao, 2011:73-74). All these issues and requirements can be highlighted by the various Medias to the policy frame-workers to build the strong and just India.

Media in our Life:

Information is power. It is a source of knowledge. Modern age is the age of information. Information plays an important role in each and every sphere of life. It is rightly said that Iraq War was not a war between America and Iraq, but it was a war between two parties, one equipped with information and the other deprived of all information. Hence, the result was a natural outcome. We are living in an age of information revolution. Newspapers, radio and television are all well-known resources for getting information. Although mass media as a subject of study is not very old but its history is as old as the humanity itself. Mass media and journalism have evoked into a strong force, over the years. Print media was the first phase followed by radio and television and later on internet and websites. In fact, in broader sense, media has two different segments. One is print media and the other is electronic media. Electronic media may be more popular than print media, due to its visual power. But, print media has lasting value. Journalism and mass media deal with a wider range of information comprising collection, writing, editing, proof reading and publication. With the invention of new communication technologies, the power of mass media has grown in stature. The mass media shapes our perceptions and views of social reality by presenting only some aspects of reality and by continuation repetition of images and messages. We can say that the role and content of mass media has changed dramatically, playing decisive role in reinforcing particular culture by constructing new images and meanings by setting agendas for public opinion through selective themes and views (Tamakuwala, 2010:121).

Communication and Development Theory:

Role of communication has been a subject of considerable speculation in development theory. Broadly speaking there are three schools of thought. *First,* there are those (including classical and neoclassical economists) who consider communication as an infrastructure in the process of development and therefore view it as a precondition for economic growth. *Second,* there are those theorists mostly non-economists who view communication as critical or integral factor in the process of social change and modernization. *Third,* there are those researchers primarily social psychologists focusing on micro-systems and media effects who consider communication as residual factor in the process of social changes to be studies on its own without much prejudice to its role in the

developmental process (Narula, 1994:14). Further Narula quotes about 'Quebral (1975) defined development communication as the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth and makes possible greater economic and social equality and the larger fulfilment of human potential' (Narula, 1994:18). Development communication is described as the systematic use of communication in support of national development. The individuals who conceived development communication / journalism in 1960s believed that there should be better trained and informed economic specialists among the communicators, since national development depends on economic growth; to cover fully, impartially and simply the myriad problems of developing nations. Development communication needs and expectations are subjective categories.

Opinion Creation:

The literal meaning of media i.e. middle describes it all. It stands in the middle of us and the world. It changes our perception about the immediate reality. For example: When President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf came to India, before being invited by our prime minister he was hated by us for inflicting so many casualties during Kargil war. But the way media built his profile and covered his itinerary in India he became a cult figure. In fact, the way he staged coup by holding a breakfast conference with our editors and later calling them to Islamabad to give piece of his mind and we took everything in our stride. That is how media influence our minds (Gupta, 2002:5).

Significance of Press:

When press was not there the rulers used to hold public meetings or send horse riders to announce decisions and decrees. It used to be a one-way process because there was no way in which public could express itself. Things changed with the advent of printing and newspapers which gave us the other point of view. Earlier everything was taken as destined or the divine wish. Because the political power was hereditary or by the force of sword or the gun. But when power changed hands from feudal ruler to those who produced wealth by their efforts and later formed ruling parties the press paved the path of democratic institutions. Today media plays an important role in changing the democratic rulers. The same goes for issues like health, education, human relations, institution of family and marriage. All this have happened after the newspaper assumed a fourth role for itself apart from information, education and entertainment and that is utility. The best example of this is the leading newspaper of Delhi called Hindustan Times. Though Times of India is giving a tough time to it still it continues to be the Bible for Delhi's consumer. It is better known for its classified columns rather than the news it contains in the left-over space after exhausting all the advertisements. Earlier the

utility factor was confined to advertisements but now more and more space is being given to education, counselling, health related information and job opportunities (Gupta, 2002:5).

Agenda Setting: Media can directly affect how people process information about political events, and this priming effect influences behaviour (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). By focusing on some issues and ignoring others, the media set the agenda for the campaign. The agenda alters the public's priority issues, then, are what the public focuses on when examining the stance of candidates. Thus, if a candidate is strong on many issues and weak on one, and the press gives that one issue high priority, then the public will think that issue is very important and therefore rate that candidate low (Potter, 2001:323).

Sociological Approach to Communication:

Whereas the nineteenth century was regarded by the historians as the age of remarkable political, economic and social transformation, known as the Industrial Revolution, the twentieth century may appropriately be called the age of the development of mass media. The development of the communication acts and the constant emergence of public relations as social techniques have been the unique phenomena of the present century. They constitute significant achievements of the twentieth century which have been perfecting the art of mass communication to convey information, and afford entertainment and education to a heterogeneous group known, as the public, through various intricate and highly refined media and techniques. In a sense the era of Mass communication is an outcome of the industrial upheavals of the previous century. Devices, such as the telephone and telegraph, which were the early scientific instruments of direct communication, followed by the invention of some more indirect social agencies, e.g. the press, the radio and the television (Prasad, 2005:29).

Media, Social Change and Social Responsibility:

The fundamental objective of media is to serve the society with news, comments and information on the matter of public interest, in a fair, accurate, sober and decent manner. It is supposed to play a crucial role of a watchdog, in the society. It also has the responsibility to help to build a strong nation, by promoting social justice, equality, stability, unity and peace to the society at large. Thus, media plays the role of communicator to inform people on issues that are important. Media has to educate, motivate, persuade and entertain people. Reddy (2002), expressed that, 'Media must have fingers on the pulse of the people and has a pious obligation not to jeopardize the welfare of the society.' Mahatma Gandhi once said that, 'The news press is a god just as an unchained torrent of water submerges the whole country side, devastates cops even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy'

(Rai, 2006:21). The primary function of media was to inform and educate public about the day-to-day happenings all around but now the primary function of media has become to sell audiences to advertisers.

There seem to be some common; responsibilities that apply to all (mass media). **Newspapers must:** (i) Lead in the search for truth; (ii) in a democratic society, help to make democracy work; (iii) help individuals and communities adjust to change and improve themselves; and (iv) remain free, independent and solvent. The history of the development of newspapers must begin with the first efforts to produce them. But better respective may be obtained if newspapers are discussed as a major development in the story of man's efforts to communicate with other men (Zachariah, 2006:3). The primary role and responsibility of the 'press' is to report what is going on as honestly and as accurately as possible, to inform the public of the good, the bad, the interesting as well as the not-too-interesting and, by doing so, to play a definite and constructive role in bringing about a better informed and more alert, interested citizenry. The mass media try to persuade as well as inform. The media's power to persuade, however, is generally exaggerated. People are more likely to be influenced by their friends and relatives than by the media. The media cannot easily change deeply rooted opinion. The media serve as watchdog over our society, and journalists believe they have a special responsibility to critically examine the performance of the government. They are often criticized, however for bias and a lack of credibility.

The Social Responsibility of the Media:

Over the long term, there can be no doubt that the conception of socially responsible news media has been influential and has come to stay. One of the best formulations of a guide for socially and ethically accountable journalism is offered by Professor Eugene Goodwin, a journalism is offered "a set of principles based on a journalism that serves the public by aggressively seeking and reporting the closest possible truth about events and conditions of concern to people, a journalism that collects and deals with information honestly and fairly, and treats the people involved with compassion, a journalism that conscientiously interprets and explains the news so that it makes sense to people" (Goodwin, Groping for Ethics in Journalism, 1983, quoted by Lambeth, 1986:6) (Bhat, 2008:128).

In keeping with the values of India's historical civilization, which has respected, cherished and conserved diversity and pluralism, and the universal modern values of enlightenment, democracy, secularism and justice, the following set of principles can be proposed as a template for socially responsible and ethical journalism in India. This follows Lambeth's schema, but makes suitable

modifications for specific Indian conditions. ***First,*** the principle of truth telling. This essentially means that the media must aim for factuality, accuracy, verification, 'anticipating the likelihood of error', providing context, background, reasonable interpretation, and careful analysis. It means also probing deep and investigating in a tough-minded and resourceful way to uncover facts of significance that are either concealed or are inaccessible for some other reason. ***Secondly,*** the principle of freedom and independence. Freedom of the press is a fundamental right not explicitly mentioned by the Constitution of India. It is derived from Article 19. The Supreme Court of India has held that freedom of the press is a combination of two freedoms, Article 19(1)(a), "the freedom of speech and expression", and Article 19(1)(g), "the freedom to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business". Experience teaches us that unfree, non-independent media cannot be accountable to society and cannot discharge their social obligations. Helplessness in the face of manipulation and establishment propaganda and the absence of credibility and believability are debilitating for the media, as the short-lived Emergency (1975-77) experience revealed in the case of the press, and longer-term experience continues to demonstrate in the case of state-controlled radio and television. ***Thirdly,*** the principle of justice. Conceptions of justice vary widely, from the classical liberal to the Rawlsian to the radical and revolutionary. No professional prescription can obviously be laid down for which conception the journalist or media organization must follow. ***Fourthly,*** the principle of humaneness. To ask for this consistently from the media is not to aim too high. It bears reiteration that the national media coverage of the Gujarat carnage has been praised for its "honesty, integrity … and humanness. ***Finally,*** the principle of contributing to the social good. Journalism must not become agitation and propaganda, but there is strong ethical and social justification for a journalism that contributes, within its constraints and to the best of its ability, to peace and to the resolution of conflicts in society. Journalism that stands for the social good must take a clear stand against raining down death, with high tech weapons, on masses of innocent people and devastating a country under the pretext of bringing about a "regime change" (ibid).

The Role of the Press in the Nation's Development:

An eminent political journalist and analyst, N. Ram, the Editor of the Hindu and Business Line daily, Frontline magazine, and the Sport star weekly of the Hindu Group of Publications based in Chennai published his article on "Media Power, Roles and Social Responsibility – The Indian Experience" he says that – the power of the news media – the press, radio, television and, to an extent, also the web-based or online media – is a theme that figures constantly in the Indian public arena when contentious issues grip the public and political mind. Depending on the nature of the issue, its unifying or divisive effects and potential, and the kind of response, emotional, reasoned and reflective, it engenders among

large numbers of the politically aware and active population, media power is either hailed and endorsed, or complained against and criticized. In much lay public perception, media power stands apart, as a power in itself, an 'institution' whose real role, function and influence in society tend to get camouflaged by labels like **'forth estate',** which are applied to the press and, now increasingly, to all the news media. In the United States and Europe, theories have been put forward of the news media as a political institution that wields political power and plays a vital intermediary role in bringing "diverse actors and activists" together, in framing issues, in proposing or endorsing solutions, and in monitoring how such solutions work (Cook, 1998:192). In India too, such ideas about the power and role of the news media find reflection in public discourse. If the news media wields power in society, the limitations on that power, inherent in the nature of the media and in the nature of Indian society and politics, need to be accurately understood (Bhat, 2008: 94,96-97).

It is significant to note that newspapers in India would have larger circulation but for the fact that the majority of our population are illiterate. In fact, it has been estimated by the World Bank that by the beginning of the twenty-first century every second illiterate person would be an Indian. Nearly eighty per cent of the Indian women are illiterate and if males and females are taken together the percentage of illiteracy goes up to sixty-five per cent. It seems that Indian politician are not those serious to overcome the problem of illiteracy. India became a republic (in 1950) at the same time as South Korea where literacy is as high as 98 per cent, as against India's deplorable record of 35 per cent literacy. This is certainly an area where the government has totally failed the people (Padhy & Sahu, 2005:206). The circulation of the newspapers would go up if the people become more and more educated.

Undoubtedly, the press does a splendid job. It has, therefore, become quite indispensable for a society, particularly a democratic one. Rightly described as the **'forth estate',** it disseminates information, promotes public awareness, keeps the electorate informed, reflects the currents in public opinion, makes or mars democracy and plays a key role in the feed-back process. The guardian angel as well as major power of democracy, it shapes the destiny of the nation, exposes the evils like corruption, inefficiency, social prejudices and illiteracy, gives a faithful account of what is happening around the world and promotes unity and national integration. An interpreter of events and an effective entertainer, it highlights developmental works, acts as a watchdog of the people, reflects their feelings, articulates their grievances, protects their interests, arouses their consciousness, educates them and helps them in forming rational judgments. Eminent political journalist N. Ram further says that - the idea that media, and specifically the news media, can play a substantive and even a crucial role in the

formation of public opinion in society and in shaping public policy on major social, political and economic issues is an appealing one in intellectual and socio-political terms. The discovery that on vital matters such as mass hunger, deprivation and a sudden collapse of entitlements, timely and relevant information makes a qualitative difference to the way public opinion is shaped and official policy is made to respond is somewhat flattering to the self-image of professional journalism. In a sense, it begs a much larger question. It depends, obviously, on the kind of independent, or relatively independent, role that newspapers are allowed to play in society; and this in turn depends, equally obviously, on the political system and practice that prevails in the country in question (Bhat, 2008:116).

Press freedom provides the oxygen in a climate of a healthy democracy. It is a matter of common experience that the press can do well and perform its professional work smoothly if it operates in the open and competitive information market and does not itself throttle or vitiate the process of collecting, selecting and presenting the news objectively and truthfully. The Press Commission had therefore underscored that it is only on this type of free press that people can largely depend for the primary data of their political thinking. It is because of the freedom both from black laws or menacing pressures from without and the irresponsible journalism from within that the Forth Estate can function as a watch-dog, ombudsman, constructive critic, public investigator and expositor, philosopher, guide and even an entertainer of the society (Zachariah, 2006:70).

All our governments have preferred press freedom to be linked with social and fundamental responsibilities and the obligation to report objectively. Taking into consideration the constraints of the India model of democracy and socialism and the objectives laid in the **Preamble of the Constitution or its Directive Principles of the State Policy,** *the second Press Commission has advocated that the Press should be neither and adversary nor an ally of the government, but a constructive critic.* The press is a great social asset, for it has to serve the entire community of varying minds with its raw material for thought, as also to act as a watch-dog by exercising its role to warm and curb forces of repression, corruption and divisiveness. It is possible to have a free but responsible press and good, responsive and democratic government at the same time. In fact, the freedom of the press is the mother of all other freedoms. This freedom can be used to create a brave new world or to bring about universal catastrophe (ibid).

Media and the Marginalized:

The first print medium started in India in 1780 was the newspaper Bengal Gazette which was essentially a scandal sheet opposing the East India Company. Print medium become a strong medium of social reform and political awakening in the 19th century; prominent members of the freedom movement were associated with newspapers: Kesri, Mahratta, Young India, Navjiwan, Harijan and National Herald among others. Their content pertained to the political and social issues of the day. Their editors, owners, and journalists were committed to the freedom movement and the medium was used as a tool to achieve political objectives. Between 1780 and 1947 more than 120 newspapers were launched in almost every language but were characterized by anti-establishment, non-commercial hue. The post-emergency period saw resurgence in the print media, with investigative journalism, launch of news publications and rise of magazine journalism. The transformation of press into a business began with the growth of literacy, rise of capitalism and the spread of technology (Jeffery; 2000). The corporation of media started in the 1980s with the economic liberalization and entry of multinational consumer goods with a scramble for the advertising budget of the MNCs. To use the opportunities offered newspapers went for a major overhaul: marketing of newspaper as a brand, the editor became secondary to the marketing and circulation manager, content was tailored to the needs of the market.

In such a scenario the marginalized receded in the media as being illiterate or only functionally literate they were neither readers nor consumers of the brands and services advertised. The media ignore their concerns while those of the upper classes, castes and urban populace get priority. The front pages of newspapers cover the lifestyles of the rich and famous: industrialists, sports persons, film stars and models. Tabloidization and trivialization of newspaper content is seen the national across newspapers like The Times of India and Hindustan Times as well as vernacular papers like Gujarat Samachar and Divya Bhaskar (Rao; 2009:120-21). In brief priority to the marginalized sections of our society is absent in the media to a large extent.

Role of Media can highlight following concern Positions of our country in different fields to bring glory again, such as:

1. **World Happiness Report 2024: 126th rank,** published by UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).

2. **Global Hunger Index: 111** (slipped four positions as compared to last year), published by Concern Worldwide and Welt Hunger Hilfe.

   - **2023 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI):** India's Remarkable Progress in Poverty Reduction – 'India in the latest Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) update

showcases a remarkable achievement in poverty reduction, lifting 415 million people out of poverty in just 15 years.'

3. **Human Developemnt Index (2023-24): 134th** out of **193** countries (135 in 2022), published by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

4. **Global Peace Index 2023: 126th** (two places higher than its previous position), published by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

5. **World Air Quality Report (2024):** India ranks as the **third most polluted country.** New Delhi ranked as the most polluted capital city, published by IQAir.

6. **Corruption Perception Index 2023: 93rd** (85th rank in 2022), published by Transparency International.

7. **World Press Freedom Index: 161th rank,** published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

Role of Media in Highlighting Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

(1) No Poverty (2) Zero Hunger (3) Good Health and Well-being (4) Quality Education (5) Gender Equality (6) Clean Water and Sanitation (7) Affordable and Clean Energy (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth (9) Industry Innovation and Infrastructure (10) Reduced Inequality (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities (12) Responsible Consumption and Production (13) Climate Action (14) Life Below Water (15) Life on Earth (16) Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and (17) Partnership for the Goals.

Highlighting Five Year Plans and Annual Budgets:

It would be very much like readers of print media that if comparative budget allocations with actual expenditures of different areas of allocated funds in their daily or periodical publications will aware readers, create opinions, and later on may bring slowly but gradual social change and development at different political structures of implementing agencies like village panchayat, taluka/tehsil, district, state and central levels. It is very sad that timely allocated budget for different projects, schemes, programmes, activities are not implemented; then most of the fund is either deposited to treasury of the particular department and hence, social development is done unsatisfactory manner. In that case, print media should highlight grey area and highlight time and again for the same thing in the interest of development of different communities. It is said that 'pen speak more than words' and therefore, fearless journalism will bring positive of development in our country.

Conclusion:

As our country is celebrating its 75 years Independence, but as we look back and introspects from our heart and mind then, realized that still there a long way to go in the context of overall social

development in our majority of villages and most of the cities and towns. We are in the age of robot age where neo-liberal economy is scaling up like a rocket. Gap between haves and have nots are widening day by day. As we see different 'human indexes' in important fields then it is not only the role of media or press but we as citizen and specially professionals of different fields, specially social workers have to play their significant roles to address social disparities across our country. Still more we can play in construction of concrete policies, programmes, acts to bring real development and change at the bottom strata of our Indian society, specially the weaker or marginalized groups, who are still away from benefits of what is enshrined in our Constitution. If we are planning to real celebration of 100 years in 2047 then, focus should be given to constructive planning of Five Year Plans, Yearly Planning along with SDGs and many other international agreements to curb down social, economic, educational, political stigma of our country. The role of different medias, particularly press can address all these positive and improvement areas in a concrete and dynamics ways in their daily publications. Still print media is very much like by most of the people; well social media is now controlling different ways but most of the people like to read newspapers of their choices across India compare to other media. As print media has played significant role during pre and post Independence of our country; still need more creative and unique efforts from them like success story of different communities with photos in their languages would definitely attract readers. They should not have bias towards some communities or people but should give equal space in their publication would be sure to bring positive results on later stage. I have a doubt that if print media does not act timely with strategic action, then digital mass media may rule among present and future generation and print media may be lose their credibility as well may find readers' crunch.

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