

Social Responsibility of Alternative Media and Indian Democracy

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Abstract

Media always considered as fourth pillar of democracy. India has the largest democracy in the world, which usually put all its efforts in restoring the faith of masses in the system. Media being its driving force always supported or criticised time to time. Media constantly showed their presence in Indian democracy. Media not only performed their surveillance function but they also cater their duty of social responsibility perfectly. With the advent of new technologies the traditional media also shifted towards a relatively new alternative media that is (social media). Democracy also faces various crisis time to time and media always tried to find a path to overcome those crisis. Alternative media being the media of masses and by the masses have the factor of immediacy and proximity more than any traditional form of media, due to which it can circulate any piece of information rapidly as compare to radio and television as well. This paper actually examines that how this alternative media is performing their duty of social responsibility and how and what they are adding, towards Indian democracy. This research is based on qualitative research approach. Researcher would find out the role of alternative media towards democracy.

Keywords: Democracy, Alternative Media, Traditional Media, Social responsibility, Political participation

Introduction

Late years have seen expanding consideration being paid to the issue of new media innovations and improvement. Remote correspondence and the slow dissemination of more prominent broadband limit profoundly created versatile advances and the interchanges and data preparing energy of the Internet is being conveyed to all domains of social life, similarly as the electric network and electric motor appropriated vitality in modern culture. There has positively been acknowledgment that web-based social networking is playing a more essential and noteworthy part in social, financial and political improvement. The immediate or circuitous results of this expanding significance are presently pondered at abnormal state political gatherings and between heads of state. As such, the issue of online networking and its part in social advancement by and large is not any more just an inquiry that alludes to a one area or identified with a specific circle, yet it has turned out to be available in various circles as an intense factor of progress changing into new mass self-correspondence (Castells 2009:58-71). Mass Media often described as the fourth branch or fourth pillar because of the power it has. From the 17th century onwards the role of media in democratic governance was identified and recognized. Afterwards media always maintained a widespread thought that they usually work for the betterment of society and masses but at different point of time this notion proved to be wrong and due to which media failed to work for the justice of common people. Whenever any existing service, practice or belief could not work as per the set

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How to cite this article: Tyagi P, Pathak CC. Social Responsibility of Alternative Media and Indian Democracy. *J Adv Res Jour Mass Comm* 2017; 4(3&4): 141-145.

Digital Object Identifier (DOI): <https://doi.org/10.24321/2395.3810.201703>

ISSN: 2395-3810

standards, authorities tried to find out the alternatives or in simple words different angles to existing one, so that they can deal with the situations and issues. Paid news and paid articles are common these days, political parties political leaders use media for their own good. Paid news and its bad impact are visible especially when media forget their ethically aspects and focuses on money only. In this particular scenario alternative media represent some ray of hope by which weaker section of society can still believe that media will report against bad. The essentialness of the media can barely be overestimated. They transmit, make and store data and in this manner impact discernment, information and memory. They put their seal on legislative issues, economy and culture and are an essential piece of spare time movement and every day talk. Outstanding occasions, for example, wars and upheavals are bound up with the media, as are long haul improvements and interpretive examples like patriotism, religious and ideological groupings and sexual orientation parts. Found in this light, the media are not simply a virtual 'mirror' of something 'genuine', but rather are themselves an integral part of social substances. The family sitting before the TV and the government official perusing a daily paper are as genuine as the media themselves, their substance and their makers. They frequently appear to be imperceptible. However the basic demonstration of having faith in the media's energy can make individuals change the way they act and talk. These days, the media themselves routinely stress their own significance, and the part of the media in races, equipped clashes and in the public arena by and large has turned out to be newsworthy.

Alternative media is that different angle which actually contributing to society much more as compare to mainstream media. As discussed by Atton in his book on alternative media that alternative media is at the simplest level, we can start by saying it is something which is "non-mainstream". So in other words alternative media is those media which are not working as mainstream media but they are working according to journalistic ethics. Present paper focuses on alternative media and its impact on democracy.

Review of Literature: A standout amongst the most troublesome issues confronting Western majority rule government today is the decrease in nationals' political engagement. There are numerous components that add to this, including crucial socio-social changes. This book condenses these unique circumstances and arranges itself inside them, while concentrating on the media's key part in forming the character of municipal engagement. Specifically, it analyzes the new intelligent electronic media as far as their municipal potential. Taking a gander at the advancement of the media scene, the book examines key thoughts, for example, citizenship, open circle, organization, character, pondering, and practice and offers a multidimensional

scientific system called "community societies." This system is then connected to a few settings, including TV, prevalent culture, news coverage, the EU, and worldwide activism, to light up the part of the media in avoiding and upgrading political engagement, as well as in adding to new types of political inclusion and new understandings of what constitutes the political.

Alternative media is not the new addition in the media shelf, so different scholars time to time directed comprehensively and broadly to examine the effect and role of alternative media. Alternative media are media that differ from established or dominant types of media (Mainstream Media) in terms of their content, production, or distribution. Alternative media take many forms including print, audio, video and Internet. Atton, explained that alternative media allow those who are most often under- or misrepresented in mainstream media to tell their own stories through their own media

According to Roger Silverstone (1999: 103) alternative media 'have created the new spaces for alternative voices that provide the focus both for specific community interests as well as for the contrary and the subversive'

Raymond Williams (1980) highlights three aspects of communication. For Williams, public communication could only be rigorously understood by considering the process of 'skills, capitalization and controls'. James Hamilton (2000) discuss about deprofessionalization, decapitalization and deinstitutionalization with the context to alternative media. Walter Benjamin (1982) argues that, in order for political propaganda to be effective, it is not enough to merely reproduce the radical or revolutionary content of an argument in a publication.

In other words, alternative media must be available to 'ordinary' people without the necessity for professional training an excessive capital outlay; they must take place in settings other than media institutions or similar systems. Such media will then have the potential to more closely reflect the practices of decentralized, directly democratic, self-managed and reflexive networks of 'everyday – life solidarity. John Downing (1984) considers radical media as the media of social movements, produced by political activists for political and social change.

Objectives

The major objectives of this research paper are:

- To evaluate role of alternative media towards Indian Democracy.
- To understand the relationship between alternative media and public opinion.
- To examine the role of alternative media among masses

Theoretical Framework

The Framework of this present research is based on Social Responsibility theory. Social responsibility theory is an outgrowth of the Libertarian Theory. This believes that Media should follow some professional standards and code of ethics while enjoying freedom of press also. Under the Social-Responsibility Theory, ownership of media is mostly private and practice self-regulation according to standards, codes and guiding principles. The media is relatively free of arbitrary government controls. The idea of this theory is that the media has a moral obligation to provide adequate information for citizens to make informed decisions (Jennifer Ostini).

Research Methodology

This research Paper used exploratory research as its research tool. Exploratory research, as the name states, intends merely to explore the research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to existing problems. In exploratory research the main emphasis of research is always on exploring the each and every aspect of the problem which is to be catered by the researcher in their research work, it may or may not possible that at the end of it researcher can provide clear conclusion. Exploratory research always have an added advantage due to its nature of flexible and adaptability. To analysis researcher used secondary data.

Interpretations

It is well defined that alternative media is a blend of all types of media, be it print, Electronic or new media here in this research also researchers collected data regarding all of them and summarized. To understand the importance of alternative media towards democracy and its value in creating public opinion researcher analysed different cases which were covered by different types of alternative media. These cases includes role of alternative print media, narrowcasting and also the new wave of alternative media that is social media

Social Media

Social media is the term which is usually used to describe the new generation of digital, computerized, or networked information and communication technologies. These can take many different forms, including internet forums, blogs, wikis, podcasts, and picture, music and video-sharing. Examples of social media applications are Google Groups, Facebook, youTube, and Twitter. Social media is the new advent in the media industry which is surprisingly so close to the democratic values and its essentials.

Social Media: A new Platform for sharing Opinion

- According to Pew Research center around 45% of social media users' shares and express their views and opinion about political shift and ideologies.
- This research further added that around 20% of these are regularly searching and Liking news and news based information on social media.

Social Media: Close to Democratic Values

Democracy is the system where people have the right to elect their representatives where masses have the power or in other words a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives. By these definitions it is clearly visible that democracy is a system where masses or common people have the authority and elected government would work for the growth of all sections of society especially to the weaker sections. Media with this system worked as pillar of surveillance and watch dog who continuously report regarding government functioning. To simplify this media need to have a check on each action taken by the government that whether they are working in right direction or not. But this democratic value is missing in mainstream media and social media on other hand showing great affection to this.

- In the words of Lincoln democracy is the: "government of the people, by the people, and for the people."
- But the the mainstream media is not for the poor. Over 95% of owners of the mainstream media including print and television come from dominant backgrounds. So, Social media is close to democratic value more than any other media

Social Media and Indian Democracy

Social media, a relatively newer entrant in the field of mass media, has proved to be more democratic than newspaper and television. In Present scenario social media proved that it has more power to express freely as compare to mainstream media.

Alternative Print Media and Indian Democracy

The development of Newspapers in India is with the presentation of 'Bengal Gazette' begun by James Augustus Hicky in 1780 from Calcutta as a week after week two sheet paper. This Daily paper prepared for Indian opportunity battle and the battle against the social shades of malice in India by the method for progressive and edifying compositions.

A critical certainty identified with Indian Print Media

industry is that the majority of the Newspapers and Publications are claimed by private firms and in this way, they are free from government control and rather keeping a beware of the strategies and activities of government to guarantee a sound vote based system. Along these lines, the Newspapers have been a noteworthy player since autonomy in the welfare, advancement and improvement of the general public at territorial and in addition national level. In spite of the appearance of a few media aggregates and commercialization of media industry, Newspapers are assuming a key part in the everyday life of individuals of India and it is adding to a vote based shortage on the planet's biggest popular government (Thussu, D.K. (2007). To evaluate the role of alternative print media here are the few cases which were brought in picture by alternative print media while mainstream media was not taking any action on them.

Poora Sach

An Evening newspaper of Sirsaharyana who Published Letters of those two Sadhvi's in ram Rahim Case. in May 2002 when an unknown letter of Sadhvi leveling genuine claims of sexual misuse of sadhvis (female adherents) was flowed in Sirsa. The letter was routed to then Prime Minister, AtalBehari Vajpayee, requesting request against the DeraSachaSauda Chief, Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, blaming him for assault of sadhvis in the DeraSachaSauda arranged in Sirsa. This letter was distributed by Journalist Chhatrapati in his night daily paper "PooraSach" on May 30, 2002. There were not kidding natures of affirmations in the unknown letter of the sadhvi against the dera boss, which had driven the high court to arrange CBI investigation into the case on September 24, 2002.

Lankesh Patrike

LankeshPatrike is an Indian vernacular weekly published in Kannada language from Bangalore, Karnataka. Primarily worked for the weaker section of the society. Raise their voices and pen down the articles against government policies as well to empower the subalterns. Her editor GuariLankesh was shot dead due to her journalistic freedom and writing. Lankesh who had been a solid promoter of flexibility of press, in an association with The Wire had said that 'she was worried about the condition of opportunity of articulation in the nation'. She had likewise raised misgivings about how individuals are focused on in view of their philosophy. In her online networking posts, she had as of late hailed the issue of phony news and publicity.

Narrowcasting and Indian Democracy

Community radio has been characterized as a radio that is claimed by the group and communicate programs are outlined, created and transmitted to meet its improvement needs. Group radio is critical takeoff from unified radio

telecom worldview that India has been following for a considerable length of time. To understand the role of alternative media in Indian democracy researchers observed following community radio stations and their impact on masses and weaker sections of society.

- Deccan Development Society (DDS) at Pastapur, in Andhra Pradesh. With the help of UNESCO, an NGO called Deccan Development Society has given a dalit woman school education and helped her to "narrow cast" (or talk) her fellow sisters about local problems, health issues, social problems and tips on agriculture.
- Next successful initiative is NammaDwani (our voice) in Karnataka. NammaDwani, a Kannada initiative is successfully running since year 2000 in Karnataka. It is reaching out to three villages in the state through loud speakers narrowcasts.

Conclusion

To conclude this, researchers observed and found that alternative media is having large impact on Indian democracy as it is working for those issues also, which were kept untouched by mainstream media. So in few points alternative media is:

- Mainstream Media is owned by industrialists and capitalists while alternative media is generally people's media.
- Mainstream media has wider reach while alternative media has a reach to limited population.
- Mainstream media is not the media of weaker section while alternative media gives voice to subalterns.

Mainstream media is being media of powerful capitalist and industrialist usually do not cater the need of subaltern and they only present which can gratify their needs. On the other hand alternative media being a small media venture generally owned by a group of people so they understand the value of democracy and they work for it.

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