

Topic: Focus on proper understanding of the topic

Biased Media is a Real Threat to Democracy

outline:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Media and Democracy
- 3) Biased Media Effects

- 3.1, Media ethics
- 3.2, Media as a form of information giver, cannot misguide the public.
- 3.3, Media should be independent

4) Media as Irrelevant Arguments

- 4.1, Freedom of Speech & media
- 4.2, limits of freedom of Speech
- 4.3, Media should not be biased but to criticise the government policies.
- 4.4, Role of media to creating an public opinion.

5) Media and upholding the freedom of speech right.

- 5.1 Media and democracy are goes hand and hand.
- 5.2 Media and state institutions.
- 5.3 Freedom of speech upheld in courts.

6) conclusion:

Weak understanding of the topic  
Discuss with arguments that how biased media is a real threat to democracy

## Introduction

The freedom of the Press is a relative concept varying with the shift in political balance or imbalance. Usually the effective agencies for protecting free expression are the community and the government. In a democracy the community acts by routing social conflict through ballot box and encouraging the method of discussion, the government should see that discussion and conflict are not transformed from discussion to violence.

The biased media have many effects. Such as the media is a institution which informs the people of the current situation of a area or a country. This can create a negative public opinion regarding the state institutions, which can lead to dis-trust of public or private institution by the general masses.

The media should uphold its ethical standard by not being a biased media. According to a Supreme court case (2012 SCMR 1950), the court held that it is the responsibility of media personnel to make their positive contribution, so that the life, liberty, property and

dignity of citizen were protected. The media responsibilities are, Accuracy and truthfulness; fairness and impartial; independent; Sensitivity and respect; privacy; and Accountability. These all ethics should be upheld by the media institutions and as well the media personnels.

The journalist should uphold the fairness in their reporting. The journalists in time of reporting should be honest, transparent and consistent in their reporting. The media houses and especially the journalists should be courageous enough to search for the truth, even if they facing pressure. Moreover, they have an impact on the society, they should contribute positivity to public discourse. A journalist should not be biased and should promote the honesty, fairness and respect of truth. The journalist should not take any personal favour, bribes, and other types of favour in form of reporting.

In this 21st century media is become a important institution for a state. The media should be independent enough to report the truth. However, the media is heavy dependent upon the advertisements funding which can lead

The media should be still dependent in time of reporting the news.

For example

If media personnel reporting a scam and the other party gives them an advertisement favour, while to avoid the scam it can lead the mass to be unaware of the scam, it the media to be called dependent.

The press is considered the fourth pillar of the state. It plays a vital role in educating the general masses, informing and making them aware of the latest happenings related to economics, social and political development in the country, and is internationally level as well.

In the **freedom index 2022**, Pakistan ranked 157 out of 180 country in terms of freedom of press. However in **press freedom index 2024** the Pakistan ranks 152 out of 180 countries. This show that some point are gained by Pakistan to uphold the press rights.

As far as the freedom of speech is concerned, The **Article 19** of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, states that everyone has the right to freedom of expression and opinion.

United Nations made it necessary for every state where democracy exists to give its subjects the right to speech. It allows people to hold their opinion, without any interest, influence and biasness. In general, give an opportunity to the people to criticize the government's wrong policies, raise their voices against any uncivil act of the government or any community.

The Supreme Court of Mexico held, that "freedom of expression" is "central to the constitutional and democratic rule of law".

In Pakistan, Article 19 of the constitution of Pakistan 1973, which protect the right of speech, but with the certain limitation and exceptions. The scope of Article 19 shows that people of Pakistan can easily share their opinion at any forum. Its restrictions are the, that one don't hurt the public interest, dignity and national security of the state.

In a democratic setup, it is just like a water drops, which nourish the tree. The honorable Supreme Court remarked that, in a case.

Moreover, there are some limits of Article 19. As the Apex court discouraged and drawn red line. In many cases, it is held that any element of Extremism in the form of hate literature, wall challenging, threatening, or content contrary to the injunctions of Islam or undermined the Security Pakistan should not be premissible.

However, in this electronic age, article 19 permits press and electronic media to publish any facts before the public as long as the right of other are not being hurt. Giving honest and unbiased reporting. On the other hand the media is promoting the political agenda and spread of disinformation which can wrongly guided the masses.

The media should not spread dis or mis information, However they can criticize any piece of work or the government on their actions which are wrongly taken. Moreover, the dis or mis information is add in the **PEMRA** which can lead one to be punished with heavy fine, if anyone promotes mis and dis information.

In a Supreme Court case (PLD 2023 S.C. 431) it held that the word 'tolerance' is an essential preambular constitutional value that assumes more significant in the context of freedom of information and right to information.

The media develops the public opinion. The mass what they see and hear and in the end make a public opinion regarding that topic. If the media get biased then people cannot make a well positive public opinion, as because their opinion will be biased, and it will contain zero accuracy in that opinion.

The freedom of speech and expression is a fundamental right of every citizen which is protected by the constitution of Pakistan. In a case it was observed that the article 19 of the constitution does not give unbridled license to press to publish any material which may harm reputation of a person. On the pre-text of freedom of speech newspapers cannot be allow to play with character and dignity of a respectable citizen. Moreover, the freedom of speech also apply to the critics works.

In term of democracy and media, the Pakistan also passed a law which inserted in the constitution of Pakistan 1973. The Article 19-A i.e. Right to information, every citizen shall have the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulate and reasonable restrictions imposed by law.

In a case the court observed that, article 19-A of the constitution regarding access to information in all matters of public importance are also subject to regulations and reasonable restrictions imposed by law. The court widen the view of expressions with tolerance which is an essential part of democracy.

The Ex-Chief Justice (Ismar Ata Bandial) in a case of Supreme court observed that, Article -19-A is used in matters which are of public interest or important. The article 19-A cannot be used for the personal or individual capacity or even a small group cannot exercise this article. The matter should be a larger community or public at large. Further, the article 19-A allows public review to the working of the public authorities. So the democracy and



media goes hand and hand.

The state branch of legislation have the privilege to the freedom of speech to uphold the democracy. The Member of parliament have some privileges in term of freedom of speech in parliament. As per Article 66 of Pakistan constitution which states that, subject to the constitution and to the rules of procedure of parliament, there shall be freedom of speech in parliament and no member shall be liable to any proceedings in any court. This is to that the parliamentarian discussed any report, paper or any proceedings. If it is not directly but indirect connected to the democracy. However, the members of parliament just have limited freedom of speech in the parliament but not outside of parliament.

The court uphold the freedom of speech, at the same time the court take charge contempt of court as per 204 article of Pakistan constitution. In Supreme court case (PLD 2014 S.C. 367), court quoted the Lord Denning remarks, we don't fear of criticism but fear not to loss the dignity in any were, that is why the contempt of court is necessary

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that sometimes for the sake of court we use contempt, to punish the other person.

In the end I want to say that the media should not be biased in terms of all kinds of publications, reporting and should uphold the democracy. The biased media is a great threat to the democracy. However, in terms of democracy it is being upheld by the supreme law of the land. The media institutions and persons should uphold the media ethics and should report the truth without any biasness.

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