

strengthening the media is  
strengthening democracy in Pakistan

outline

I. Introduction

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**Thesis statement:** In Pakistan, the heartbeat of democracy resonates in the strengthening chords of its media, a dynamic symphony that empowers citizens, champions accountability, and orchestrates a harmonious narrative, forging a resilient democracy in the crucible of information.

II. Correlation between the media and democracy

III. Strengthening the media is strengthening democracy in Pakistan

(a) Media a crucial tool for information dissemination

(b) A source of public awareness about political, social and economic issues

(c) Educating citizens about their rights, civic duties and functioning of democratic institutions

(d) Encouraging civic participation

- (e) Reinforcing freedom of expression ✓
- (f) Monitoring government activities ✓
- (g) Promoting pluralism and conflict resolution ✓
- (h) Fostering human rights and social cohesion ✓
- (i) Promoting rule of law ✓
- (j) ~~Computing~~ ~~multinational~~ ~~groups~~ Shaping a positive international image, attracting investments and fostering diplomatic relations ✓
- (k) Doing unbiased election coverage to build public trust in the democratic process ✓
- (l) Addressing social issues and promoting cultural exchange ✓
- (m) Contributing in the formation of a national identity ✓

#### IV. Conclusion

Add few recommendations as how media could practically be strengthen in Pakistan

## ESSAY

Imagine democracy as a garden, with media as the sunlight - when strengthened, it nurtures the growth of informed citizens like blooming flowers. Strengthening media is not just a choice; it's the heartbeat that keeps the democratic pulse alive and thriving. So, there is a strong connection between the media and the democracy. The strengthened media ensures following things which lead to a strong democracy; firstly, it acts as an important tool for the dissemination of information, secondly, it spreads public awareness about political, social and economic issues and, thirdly, it plays an important role in educating citizens about their rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, the media encourages civic participation, and reinforces freedom of expression. In addition,

it monitors government activities  
Pluralism and peaceful co-existence  
can also be ensured through the  
vibrant media. Conjointly, the  
fundamentals of democracy having  
a significant worth like rule of  
law can be promoted  
through the robust media. Likewise,  
the strong media is helpful  
in building soft image of  
Pakistan. It empowers democratic  
process by providing a  
voice to the marginalized  
groups. Moreover, the strong  
media guarantees social  
cohesion, and shapes the  
national identity. In short, In  
Pakistan, the heartbeat of  
democracy resonates in the  
strengthening chords of its  
media, a dynamic symphony  
that empowers citizens, champions  
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a harmonious narrative, forging a resilient democracy in the crucible of information.

The symbiotic relationship between the media and the democracy is paramount. The media functions as the cornerstone of an informed citizenry, providing the necessary knowledge base for active political participation and decision-making. As noted by James Curran in his book "Media and Democracy," the media's role extends beyond mere information dissemination; it encompasses a critical watchdog function, holding those in power accountable and safeguarding the principles of transparency and accountability vital for thriving democracy. Thus, an independent and powerful media remains an indispensable pillar for the sustenance and progress of

democratic ideals.

Many points backs the idea of strengthening the media is strengthening the democracy in Pakistan, the first among them is, the media serves as a crucial tool for information dissemination.

The media in Pakistan plays a pivotal role in spreading information to the public, acting as a bridge between the government and the citizens. As highlighted by Adnan Rehmat in his book "Reporting Under Threat: Pakistan's Media," in a country where democracy is continually evolving, the media becomes an essential conduit for educating citizens about political processes, government policies, and societal issues. Therefore, dissemination of information empowers the people of Pakistan, enabling them to

make informed decisions, actively participate in civic affairs, and hold their leaders accountable.

Similarly, the strong media provides public awareness about political, social and economic issues in an unbiased manner. The media has potential to elucidate complex issues, raise awareness about societal challenges, and contribute to the development of a well-informed public. For example, the media's coverage of the polio eradication campaign. It played a pivotal role in disseminating information about the importance of vaccination, dispelling myths, and rallying public support for the cause. In addition, extensive reporting, televised debates, and election analysis provide citizens with crucial information about political

parties, candidates, and their policy agendas. In this way, the media encourages active participation, and fosters accountability within the democratic system through the spread of rightful information among citizens of Pakistan.

Furthermore, the robust media educates citizens about their rights, civic duties and functioning of democratic institutions. A pertinent reference is Asma Jahangir's "The State of Human Rights in Pakistan," where she emphasizes the importance of an informed citizenry in upholding democratic values. Through investigative journalism, talk shows, and documentaries, the media demystifies the legal and political landscape, educating citizens on their fundamental rights and responsibilities. This empowerment fosters an



active and engaged electorate capable of participating meaningfully in democratic processes. Thus, the strengthened media paves the way towards achieving civic rights, and executing civic responsibilities.

In addition, the vibrant media encourages civic participation, by providing a platform for public engagement and discourse. A notable case study is the media coverage during the Lawyers' Movement in 2007, a historic event advocating for the rule of law and judicial independence. Media outlets, including television channels and newspapers, extensively covered the protests, debates, and legal developments, generating a sense of civic awareness and participation. Citizens, informed

and inspired by media narratives, actively joined the movement, leading to significant socio-political changes. This exemplifies how a vibrant media can galvanize civic participation by amplifying grassroots movements and facilitating public dialogue.

Conjointly, in Pakistan, the media plays a pivotal role in reinforcing freedom of expression, a cornerstone of democracy. I.A. Rehman in his book "Unveiling the Truth: Journalism and the Citizens' Right to Know," delves into the intricacies of media's role in upholding democratic values. The media landscape in Pakistan, despite challenges, has been a platform for diverse voices, allowing journalists

and citizens alike to express their opinions on critical issues - like on social media platforms; the X, Facebook and many more. Despite facing constraints, the resilient Pakistani media continues to be a bulwark against censorship, contributing to the vibrancy and health of democratic course in the country.

Likewise, a strong media monitors governmental activities, acting as a vigilant watchdog to ensure transparency and accountability. "Media, War, and Terrorism in Pakistan" by Adnan Rehmat explores the multi faceted role of media in the country. Through investigative journalism and in-depth reporting, the media sheds

light on potential corruption, ~~mis~~ mismanagement, and human rights abuses. Moreover, the media's scrutiny of government actions, policies, and decisions is essential for a healthy democracy. So, by fulfilling monitoring function, the media contributes to the checks and balances necessary for the effective functioning of democratic institutions in Pakistan.

In the similar manner, the strengthening of media in Pakistan holds the promise of promoting pluralism and facilitating conflict resolution, crucial elements for a vibrant democratic society. A pertinent reference is the book "Media and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century" by Philip Serb, elucidates an intricate connection

between media and conflict resolution. In Pakistan, a diverse and robust media landscape can offer a platform for various voices and perspectives, fostering pluralism and inclusivity. Additionally, in the context of regional and internal conflicts, responsible and impartial media coverage can play a role in de-escalation and resolution. That is why the powerful and impartial media helps in creating pluralistic and tolerant societies.

Besides, the empowering of media in Pakistan holds the potential to foster human rights, addressing critical issues within the nation. Media acts as a megaphone for marginalized voices, shedding light on their struggles and championing their

rights. Drawing insights from "Media, Civil Society, and Democracy in Pakistan" by Shabbir Cheema and Shahid Javed Burki, a strong media plays a significant role in advocating for human rights by bringing attention to violations, marginalized communities, and discriminatory practices. Therefore, the strengthened media acts as a protecting shield for securing human rights.

In the similar fashion, the strengthening of media in Pakistan is indispensable for the establishment of the role of law. For example, the Panama Papers scandal, involving allegation of corruption and offshore wealth held by prominent political figures, garnered extensive media

attention. Pakistani media outlets played a crucial role in investigating and exposing the details of the scandal, prompting public outrage and demand for accountability. The sustained media coverage created pressure on institutions to address the allegations transparently and impartially. This case underscores how a robust media can act as a catalyst for legal accountability.

Further, the well-equipped media holds the power to significantly contribute to building a positive and soft image of the country on the global stage. Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy's book, "Transmedia Terrorism: Merging Social Media and Entertainment," highlights how

a robust and responsible media can showcase the diverse cultural heritage, economic potential, and societal achievements of Pakistan, countering negative stereotypes and misconceptions. By highlighting success stories, cultural richness, and progressive initiatives, media can reshape the narrative around Pakistan, projecting it as a dynamic and forward looking nation. In this way, it helps in attracting investments and building diplomatic relations which strengthen democracy of Pakistan - because economic strength is a basic ingredient for independent decision making.

In the similar vein, in the dynamic context of Pakistan, a robust media stands as a powerful force in



building public trust by doing impartial coverage of elections. For example, the coverage of the 2018 general elections by various media outlets in Pakistan. News channels, newspapers, and digital media outlets engaged in comprehensive reporting, analysis, and debates contributing significantly to public trust by providing awareness about the democratic process and the choices available to voters. This heightened awareness not only empowered the electorate to make informed decisions but also fostered a sense of civic responsibility and participation. Thus, it becomes evident that a strong media is instrument in cultivating public trust, a key component in the flourishing of democracy in Pakistan.

Similarly, the empowering of media is instrumental in addressing social issues and promoting cultural exchange contributing to the nation's development. An insightful reference is "Media and Society in Pakistan" by Dr. Tanvir Hussain, a robust media platform serves as a powerful agent to bring attention to social issues such as poverty, gender inequality, and education disparities. By shedding light on these challenges, media outlets foster public awareness and engagement encouraging societal dialogue and influencing policy discussions. Hence, the strengthened media is a catalyst for positive change and cross-cultural understanding on both national and global fronts.

Moreover, the robust media plays an important role in shaping the national identity of Pakistan. It is exemplified through the case study of the coverage of Pakistan Day celebrations, media outlets, including television, print, and digital platforms, extensively cover events, parade, and cultural activities on Pakistan Day. This comprehensive coverage not only highlights the historical significance of the day but also showcases the diversity of Pakistan's cultural heritage and unity among its people. Furthermore, the media through different programs and shows try to give a shape to Pakistan's identity which makes the whole nation one body. In this way, the strengthened

media shapes the national identity of Pakistan.

To conclude, the strong media ensures the vibrant democracy. It is because of a number of factors explained earlier in the essay. These include media - a source of information dissemination, a crucial tool for public awareness, and a gateway to public participation. Furthermore, the strengthened media reinforces freedom of expression, monitors government activities, promotes pluralism, fosters human rights, builds a soft image of Pakistan, conducts a comprehensive coverage of elections and helps in solving many social issues. Thus, the heartbeat of democracy resonates in the

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