

Biased Media is a Real Threat to Democracy

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by Yuval Noah Harari

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The Essay

Media is providing full coverage to ongoing Israel and Hamas conflict, covering its all aspects from repercussions to solutions. However, this conflict has completely exposed the biasness of Western media. The Western media paints a brighter picture of Israel and justifies her atrocities in Gaza. Similarly, it describes the innocent people of Palestinian people, fighting for their rights, as terrorists who violating the peace of the world. In this way, the biasness of media poses serious threats to the rights of the people of Gaza. Similarly, the biased reporting of media threatens the foundations of democracy in various countries. To put it briefly, biased media has become a dangerous threat for democracy. It influences public opinion and the perception of voters in the favor of a specific leader. As a consequence of this, it

maligns the images of opponents' leaders in order to restrict them from winning elections. Moreover, it favors the leader who is in power and controlling everything including media. It not only promotes the positive picture of dictators but also legitimates their anti-democratic rule. Additionally, the biasness of media promotes specific electoral campaigns, undermines fair democratic competition, and assists populist leaders. In the same manner, it widens the gap of political polarization that impact democracy negatively. Since these repercussions of biased media have not been descended from the heaven, these can be mitigated by adopting certain steps. These steps include the eradication of the influence of power-holders on media and the promotion of unbiased media. Consequently, the biased media poses some serious threats to democracy by promoting anti-democratic practices. However,

these threats can be mitigated by adopting certain strategies.

The biased media is a term used for highlighting the biased role of media. This biasness ^{can} be observed in media reporting and news coverage. According to Noam Chomsky, media biasness occurs when media prefers certain leaders, individuals, and events over others. He argues that media provides more attention to these leaders and events [How the world works]. Therefore, the biased role of media in politics, economics, and society comes under the dubious role of media. Simply, the biased media favors certain things while showing contempt for other some things.

To begin with, the biasness of media influences the opinion of public. It moulds the public opinion in the favor of a particular leader. This process of moulding the opinions of people affect democratic process.

A renowned Israeli historian, Yuval Noah Harari, has argued that the manipulation of public opinion through media directly affects the democracy [21 Lessons from the 21st Century]. Therefore, media biasness impacts negatively the democratic process of a country by moulding the opinion of its people.

In the same manner, the biased media shapes the perception of voters. It shapes their perception to vote for a certain leader while ignoring other leaders. This process of media biasness also undermines the democratic process of a country. In this regard, the example of Donald Trump seems very reasonable. During 2018 elections, Trump has extensively rely on media for shaping the perception of voters in ~~its~~^{his} favor. Consequently, the biased role of media forms the perception of voters and impacts democracy.

Another threat of biased media to democracy is that it maligns the image of opponents. It spreads false narratives about opponents that discourage people to vote them. As a consequence of this, the democratic procedure gets unattainable repercussions. For instance, India has Hindu majority population in comparison to Muslims, Muslims, Sikhs and other minorities. The BJP (Bharatiya Janta Party) has spreaded a false propaganda on media against opponent party Congress. The BJP has remained successful in projecting the anti-Hindu image of Congress in India. Hence, biased reporting ~~now~~ affects democracy by maligning the image of opponents.

Along with this, the biased media favors the leader who is in power. Contrary to this, the biased media does not favor the leader who is not in power. This one-sided approach of the media entirely impacts the

democratic structure in a country. The case study of Pakistan brilliantly explains this phenomenon. In the country, the leader who is in power gets fair support of the media. On the contrary, the leader who is fighting for capturing the power remains unable to get proper attention of the media. For instance, when Imran Khan was in power, the media hesitated to criticise him. Now, he is in jail, and media is unleashing criticism against him. Therefore, the biased media negatively impacts democratic norms by favouring the power holders.

Apart from this, the biased media promotes the positive picture of dictators in comparison to democracy. The biased media describes dictatorship as a blessing for the people while ignoring its dangerous consequences. This is a blatant violation of democracy at the

hands of media. Unfortunately, the biased media is also performing this heinous duty. In North Korea, the biased reporting of media shows negative picture of democracy in the favor of the dictatorship of Kim Jong. Resultantly, the biased media poses a significant threat to democracy by favoring dictators.

Similarly, the biased reporting of media legitimates the rule of anti-democratic leaders. It suppresses the feelings of democracy among the people of a country. Consequently, the democracy remains unable to find a way to prevail in the country. In this scenario, the case study of Chinese rulers seems very suitable. All Chinese rulers have attempted to portray democracy as a western agenda to undermine the feelings of democratic rule among people by using the media power. Currently, they have installed a

firewall for ensuring the biased and state-controlled reporting. Therefore, the biased reporting of media legitimates the rule of anti-democratic leaders.

The promotion of specific electoral campaigns by the biased media is another threat to democracy. The ^{biased} media provides mass coverage to specific electoral campaigns while ignoring others. As a result, these campaigns remain unable to get popularity.

This practice of media is against the basic norms of democracy. Unfortunately, this practice of biasness is rampant in India in the promotion of Hinduva-based electoral campaigns. Hence, the biased role of media violates the basic norm of democracy by circulating certain campaigns.

On the same ground, the media biasness undermines fair democratic competition & by promoting certain leaders. The biased media

Promotes certain leaders while ignoring other leaders. This destroys fair competition among leaders because one is not getting attention of public due to media-biasness. According to the report of The Guardian, Modi has invested billion of dollars in media for enhancing his popularity. This shows the biasness of media as a direct threat to democracy. Hence, the biased reporting of media undermines the fair elections among leaders which is a threat for democracy.

Apart from this, the biased media assist populist leaders to get success in the elections. The biased media circulates their populist narratives for gathering mass support for them. The threat of populism initiated by media undermines the pure form of democracy in a country. For instance, Recep Tayyip Erdogan has remained successful in elections due to its propagation of idea of

Khilafat through the biased media. In this way, the populist leaders impact democracy by using the biased media. Consequently, the biased media poses a threat of populism to democracy.

In addition to above mentioned threats of the bias media, another threat is that the biased media widens the gap of political polarization. The divergence of opinion, initiated by the biasness of media, results in weakening the democracy. A renowned author Muhammad Talaseem has argued that the divergence and difference of opinions, propagated by the biased media reporting, has impacted democracy in Pakistan [Political conflict in Pakistan]. Hence, the biased reporting of media enhances the political polarization that affects democracy.

There are case studies of two countries that clearly indicate the undermining of democracy through the biased media. Firstly, there is a case study of Türkiye. In the country, the media favors Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the president, over other political leaders. In comparison to Erdoğan, other leaders remain unable to get media attention in a proper way. Moreover, the biased media of Türkiye promotes the populist narratives of Erdoğan.

Secondly, India is an important example of weakening of democratic structure through media. The populist narratives of BJP (Bharatiya Janta Party) has demolished the democracy in the country. The state has been converted into authoritarian state due to the biasness of media and populism of BJP. In conclusion, these two countries are ^{the} best example of weakening of democracy through the biasness mass media.

The biasness of media poses dangerous threats to democracy. However, it does not mean that the repercussions of the biased media to democracy can not be mitigated. The adoption of certain practical steps can minimize these threats completely.

There are numerous practical strategies that could reduce the threats of + media biasness to democracy. Firstly, there is a need of eradicating the influence of power-holders on media. These power-holders should be restricted from exerting their influence on media. USA has adopted this approach after the case of Trump. Currently, USA media has been made ~~for~~ independent from the influence of power holders. ~~Simply~~ Secondly, unbiased role of media should be promoted in electoral campaigns. The media should not provide mass coverage to specific campaigns. Moreover, the media should provide accurate information to people. As a

result, the ^{media} ~~is~~ manipulation of public opinion would reduce significantly. For this purpose, Fact checking softwares and AI Artificial Intelligence can be proved very helpful. On the whole, ~~the~~ the threats of biased media to democracy and biasness of media can be minimized by adopting above mentioned strategies.

In conclusion, it becomes abundantly clear that the biased media threatens the foundations of democracy. The biased role of media has become a grave concern for democratic process. The biasness of media not only negatively impacts democracy but also promotes dictatorship. Consequently, it becomes apparent that democracy and the biased media can not go together. Fortunately, this grave problem also has a solution, minimizing its adverse impacts. The adoption of certain strategies such as ending influence of power-holders on media and promoting unbiased role of media can resolve

The problem of threats to democracy. As the problem of the biased media has been diagnosed, it will be tackled very soon. The day is not far enough when the biased media will be converted into unbiased media. This unbiased media will play its vital role in strengthening democracy.
