Environmental Aspects of Media in Today's Scenario

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INTRODUCTION

"Whoever controls media, controls the mind."

-Jim Morrison

Diversified lands, geographical conditions, cultures and yet we stand together. Together in all situations, at all times! All the citizens governed under different laws yet we are one. We differ in our dialect yet we speak the same words, we proceed in different directions yet we aim at the same target. India, the land known for its most varied culture and lifestyle. A southern subcontinent with the most differentiated weathers and peoples still holds itself intact to its roots of emergence and continues to spread these roots for its expansion and establishment. And its process to expand and get itself known to the world for what India really means to its people, media, in its varied forms, has helped a lot. Media, since its coming into existence, has highly influenced the Indian society. For a country so diversified like ours, media plays as a vital tool to spread cultures and bringing distant people close to each other. Media, since its evolution, has had a major propaganda to make people aware of the happenings across the globe and to integrate them into one another to ensure a strong foundation of democracy. Media has also facilitated in building up strong international relationships amongst countries and also warned them of upcoming or potential threats to mankind. With the development of technology in media, it has spread to each every household of the nation. From being a source of information for the policy-makers to being a major source of development and a public critique of government's functions, media has marked itself as an indispensable part of the society.

As the saying goes, *"everything has its own pros and cons"*, in the similar way media too has its drawbacks. The major concern is that these drawbacks have affected the global as well as Indian society in such a way that situation has brought up to concerning national security. As it has people connect to each other and share their opinions on what they want their world to be like, there are others who sought to disrupt this peace talk and impose and inculcate their venomous thoughts into young minds. There are some who promote their religious teachings in order to spread peace, then there are others who take these teachings as violative or insults of their own religion and divert a peaceful preaching into religious tension. Spreading hatred through media is nothing new to us. We witness it every day, be it on our Facebook accounts, Twitter accounts, visual media or print media. Though these attempts are made to look like a decent task or

'*Karma*', but in reality these are to provoke other communities and create chaos in the society up to an extent as creating a law and order situation.

There are various ways and aspects in which media has the lives and lifestyle of the Indian society. It has, in all its forms, exploited the means to reach out to people and influence their day-to-day lives.

LEGISLATIVE POWERS TO MEDIA

Media is a fourth pillar of the democracy and an all-time watchdog of the public. A globally known fact that a strong media constitutes better governance of the democracy and ensures social security to all its citizens. In India, media has gained a distinctive status regarding its functions and has exclusively this power and status to come up with the highlights of the government and its ordinals and how they affect the society in determining their future leaders. Like every other entity, media draws its rights and duties from the Constitution of India. The Constitution guarantees media its rights exclusive right to "**freedom of speech and expression**" under **Article19 (1)**with minimal restriction so as to allow media to portray its power in its optimal capacity and exercise it for the betterment of the society. Since the coming of the Constitution into existence, it has enunciated the roles and definitions of person, natural or legal, and has set limitations or restrictions on the exercise of these rights.

In the landmark judgment in the case of *RomeshThappar vs. State of Madras*[3],PatanjaliSastri, J., rightly observed that, "Freedom of Speech and of the Press lay at the foundation of all democratic organizations, for without free political discussion no public education, so essential for the proper functioning of the process of popular Government, is possible."

Similarly, in *RamlilaMaidanIncident,re,*[4] the Supreme Court held:

"The freedom of speech and expression is regarded as the first condition of democracy. It occupies a preferred position in the hierarchy of liberties, giving succor and protection to all other liberties. It has been described as a 'basic human right', 'a natural right' and the like. With the development of law in India the right to freedom of speech and expression has taken within its ambit the right to receive information as well as the right of press."

However, no right guaranteed in the Constitution is absolute in nature. It is subject to certain restrictions laid down in **Article 19 (2)**.

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[3]RomeshThappar vs. State of Maharshtra, 1950 AIR SC 124
[4]RamlilaMaidan Incident, Re, 2012 5 SCC I, 31, para, II

In *Union of India vs. Naveen Jindal[5],* the Supreme Court held that while the Iˢᵗ Amendment in the US Constitution gives an absolute right of freedom of speech and expression to the citizens, in India, there is only a qualified right regulated by the restrictions in Art. 19 (2).

MEDIA AFFECTING GLOBAL CULTURE

Media has evolved so dynamically that even before we realized, we were surrounded by it. It influences us in so many ways that many of the times we don't even realize that. It has facilitated in so many ways:

- It makes public the collective and useful information about the functions of the government and makes us aware of the happenings across the globe.
- It not only high points the glories of the hardworking citizens of the nation, but it never fails to spot the dark side of the Indian society.
- It makes a fair comparison of our nation with that of other nations and helps in shaping a better future for its people by promising a strong foundation in order to establish its country in the development map.
- Journalism is a profession regarded for its hard work and comprehensiveness and its people contributing the best of their skills for the betterment of the nation and society in general.

Despite these facilities, media has failed to exempt itself from the drawbacks of its uses. Unlike its positivity, what's more disheartening is the negativity that prevails in the media these days. It is because of this negativity that we're more vulnerable to technology than anything else.

Negative aspects as represented in today's scenario are as described below:

- It highlights false news means too or some news hurting the communal sentiments, creating violence in forms of communal or religious riots.
- It emphasizes and imposes one particular set of thoughts and compels people to follow it, leaving no room for people to discover themselves.
- Influences and manipulates wrongful acts so as to make them appear praise –worthy and adaptable habit for our youths.
- Socially active people are more vulnerable to abuse as their social intellect tends to attract abuse either on social media or physically.

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[5]Union of India vs. Naveen Jindal, 2004 2 SCC 510: AIR 2004 SC 1559

- It provides a way for people to intrude in your personal life and rob off your own privacy.

Media can sometimes shame a wrong person, who doesn't suffer alone but his family is dragged into this shame and making it difficult for them to survive any longer.

Case Study 1:

Not so long ago, Uttar Pradesh witnessed a highly flaming issue targeting two major representatives of a political party. Being the first in hierarchy, the top most leader made a statement in lieu of a statement made by one of its leaders, which was wrongly portrayed and manipulated by media to get a spicy news. This false proclamation by media and exaggerated by its leader caused an unbearable time for another person's family. His children could not attend their schools owing to the shame they would face. His wife was consistently questioned by media and she could not face public for a long time. But his wife showed courage and stood up to fight against the unjust and inappropriate news spreading across the State and with her efforts, media finally took the case off. Also the leader has to apologize as a public confrontation for his actions.

MEDIA: MOST VALUABLE TOOL FOR TERRORISM

It is a world known fact that it's the followers who make a leader successful. Terrorist groups too would have been nothing if they hadn't be having such a large number of followers who in their area of acquisition rule the territory. Their acceptance as to the commands of their leaders is a major factor that comes into effect when there has to be action regarding fulfilling their propaganda. Listed below are some of the activities of terrorist groups which use media as a vital tool to spread their ideologies as well as threat to those who tend to defend their nations from their wrath:

- Taliban, the group which is most extensively active in Jammu& Kashmir, in parts of Pakistan and in Afghanistan, though hasn't begun using media as a platform to convey themselves but considerably soon enough gathered noticeable followers. Following its activities on Twitter account of creating havoc in various parts of the world, its account was suspended and continues to be the same till date.

- Al-Qaeda, another terrorist group connected with Pakistan and active in Jammu & Kashmir, was the first terrorist group to recognize media as tool to achieve its

propaganda and too reach out to more remote targets. It's the first group ever to use global communications to communicate with their leaders worldwide. In spite of the high level security in communication sector in countries such as India and France, it still manages to circulate its forthcoming activities and targets and plan all along on the internet.

- It will be very ignorant not to mention the world's most deadliest and dreadful terrorist group of all times, ISIS. Known for its brutality, ISIS emerged as what it is today owing to the media on which it stood up to showcase its dreadful and threatening deeds. It is the most highlighted terrorist group having its own website and falsely manipulated videos and content which is assured to rise aggression in the people.

They targets mostly Indian communities in order to join them and establish their roots of terror in the society and get their jobs done of ruling the territory.

Case study 2

The Home Ministry, through a parliamentary panel revealed that Pakistan- based Sikh youths are being trained in ISIS. They are reported to be trained to be used as a tool the Indian government. Most of the stone-pelters in Kashmir Valley belong to Sikh community based in Pakistan. The bench headed by Shri MurliManohar Joshi, reported, "Most of the reported people are jailed cadres, unemployed youth, criminals and smugglers." They are emerging as new threats to the internal as well as national security. They are the reasons why there are tensions across the international borders with Pakistan.[6]

MEDIA ACTING AS A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY

Social media has abolished the geographical boundaries and reached each and every household creating a constant virtual connectivity amongst people. Also, bloggers have benefitted the most by media as they get a worldwide platform to showcase their writing skills. It also benefits them to develop their intellect and to explore the world through this virtual medium. Digitalization has helped people to explore the unseen parts of the world and feel the untouched reality.

But it is this inquisitiveness that steers them toward the dangers they're unaware of. The technology in the field of connectivity is so comprehensive that new developments come into

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[6]*Source:* Special Respondent, ISI Training Sikh Youth: Home Ministry, The Hindu, March 2018

effect even before we get to learn the older ones. The most deliberated topic amongst those related to media and technology is hacking. Although hacking deals with providing of various threats and its cures but it is often used and spoken interchangeably with cracking, the illegal practice of intruding into others' accounts or internet property and misusing them for malicious benefits and unlawful agenda.

Section 43 of the Information Technology Act, 2000[7] clearly states down the difference between the two and lays down the punishment for intruding or extracting data or any confidential information, which if handed into any wrong person may lead to devastation and havoc in the society. Although there are provisions relating to the punishments awarded on impeachment of the directions violating the privacy of people. But still there are many incidents which go unnoticed by the public making their accounts more endangered or prone to cyber-attacks. Indian government has a number of national organizations concerning the national cyber security but most of world's renowned social sites is in the guidance of the private sector for whom social security and its maintenance incurs huge cost. Thus, it becomes difficult for the national organizations to dis-encrypt the encrypted messages sent via these sites which acts as a positive point for the anti-social elements to easily convey their messages without being caught in the eyes of the security officials.

Case Study 3:

The **Blue Whale Game** can be quoted as one the most appropriate illustration to cite in this situation to demonstrate the scenario. It depicts how the game showcased itself to be a game for all those who felt lonely and excluded and neglected from their family and friends. And ultimately it resulted in killing them by way of the tasks provided and most threatening fact about this game was that the gamers could not escape their tasks as they were kept a close watch on them. This is how social media affects the population and instead of helping these distracting youths, they aim at steering them off.

TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE AFFECTED BY MEDIA

The internet now a days is a very powerful weapon for public that can influence and shape the human behavior. There has been close connection between technology and culture. A culture

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[7]Section 43 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 – Penalty for damage to computer system- if any person without permission of the owner or any other person who is in charge of a computer, computer system or computer network, accesses or secures access, copies, or extracts any data, computer database information from such computer, computer system or computer network shall be liable to pay damages by way of compensation not exceeding one crore rupees to the person so affected.

will develop the technology based on human desire. Social media is the way in which people make perceptions and opinion for others. When we talk about technology it's all about social media which are now a day's often discussed as a single entity, because of their combined importance as they are the providers of entertainment and information and they have the power to mold public opinion and perception.

Media has become a platform for public to share anyone information. It has a big impact on our public because media moulds the story and sometime it even depict wrong news which influence people to make wrong opinion and perception. There are impacts of media one is good and bad when we say good impact it all about good source of information, easy to excess and the last to take any information we can go social media easily get it. But when it's a bad impact it has information but without any proof and action, hiding behind anonymity.

MEDIA: A KEY FACTOR IN RELIGIOUS RIOTS

Religion in India means a different territory within the widespread landscape of the subcontinent. There are various religions and cultures that govern the day-to-day lives of the Indian society. Anything said or conveyed or written against any of the culture will, for certain, arouse violence and riots in the locality whose flames will spread like a forest fire, burning the entire nation. India is the only country to recognize each and every religion and still making itself a secular country, a nation without religion. Even Pakistan, our neighbor has its national religion. But we the Indians stand apart and live together in a highly diverse society with utmost harmony. But not always does the circumstances remain the same. The Ram Mandir issue has been one of the most disputed and a major reason to arise differences between the Hindus and Muslims, and mostly they end up causing widespread riots all over the nations. It is during this time that certain political parties come up with their long-borne hatred speeches fomenting them. Those who do not take part in physical violence, hold strikes and *Desh-band*. Be it the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat, or the Muzaffarnagar riots in Uttar Pradesh, what remains common is the large scale destruction and loss of property and life. The most affected of the population are the lower and middle class people whose earnings and livelihoods are disrupted by the violence. Furthermore, it creates a huge burden on the ruling government to maintain law and order in the situation and to provide refuge to the people so affected and make sure that they get social security and also that their lives get back to its original pace as soon as possible. Not only these are caused by

people so acting with malicious intend but media too incites these communities to cause communal violence.Media recently highlighted a false news of a Muslim man eating beef which was a consequence of rumors spread in the locality. Instead of investigating the reality, media saw a scope in communalizing the news and made its way through. The same news triggered the communal violence in the area which again gained huge attention. And when it all turned out to be a rumor, media didn't put a step forward to apologize for its deeds. Although, media possesses a passive role or a secondary role in this context because it is still considered and proves itself to be a nationalized organ or mechanism of the Indian Democracy. No denial to this fact but it also cannot be overlooked that media most of the times, now-a-days works as a provoking organization for bringing up news which would not otherwise come up. It is as certain that media provokes as the fact that it is a nationalized and the most reliable organization in the country. It not directs the riots itself but with its venomous words and reports, it lightens the spark in various other regions of the nation leading a wide wild forest fire that burns the nation into flames and then they claim that India needs to be better place to live in, that the nation needs better leaders, where the proportion of fault is more their part. What media lacks to recognize is the turmoil of the nation and the mindset of its citizen towards that sort of situation. Media hasn't failed to analyze what its news what bring on.

IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON INDIAN POLITICS

Social media has influenced policies and this has been attracting much of interest of people in politics. And nowadays the political parties are using social media as their sword and as one of the most important channel for showing up their day to day public relation activities. The recent use of social media websites by the Indian government has been talked much a lot such use of social media and the general media can be witnessed by Mr. Suresh Prabhu who along with his team very efficiently used twitter for helping out the India Rail Passengers. The power of social media in political system was clearly felt and envisaged during the Delhi elections in 2015.

As AAP used the modern way of campaigning and reached out to public and the election results in those election turned out to be the game changer and it also made sure that social media will continue to play a vital role in the coming years of Indian politics. And in recent times Social media has been integral part of politics and its growth seems to be continuous.
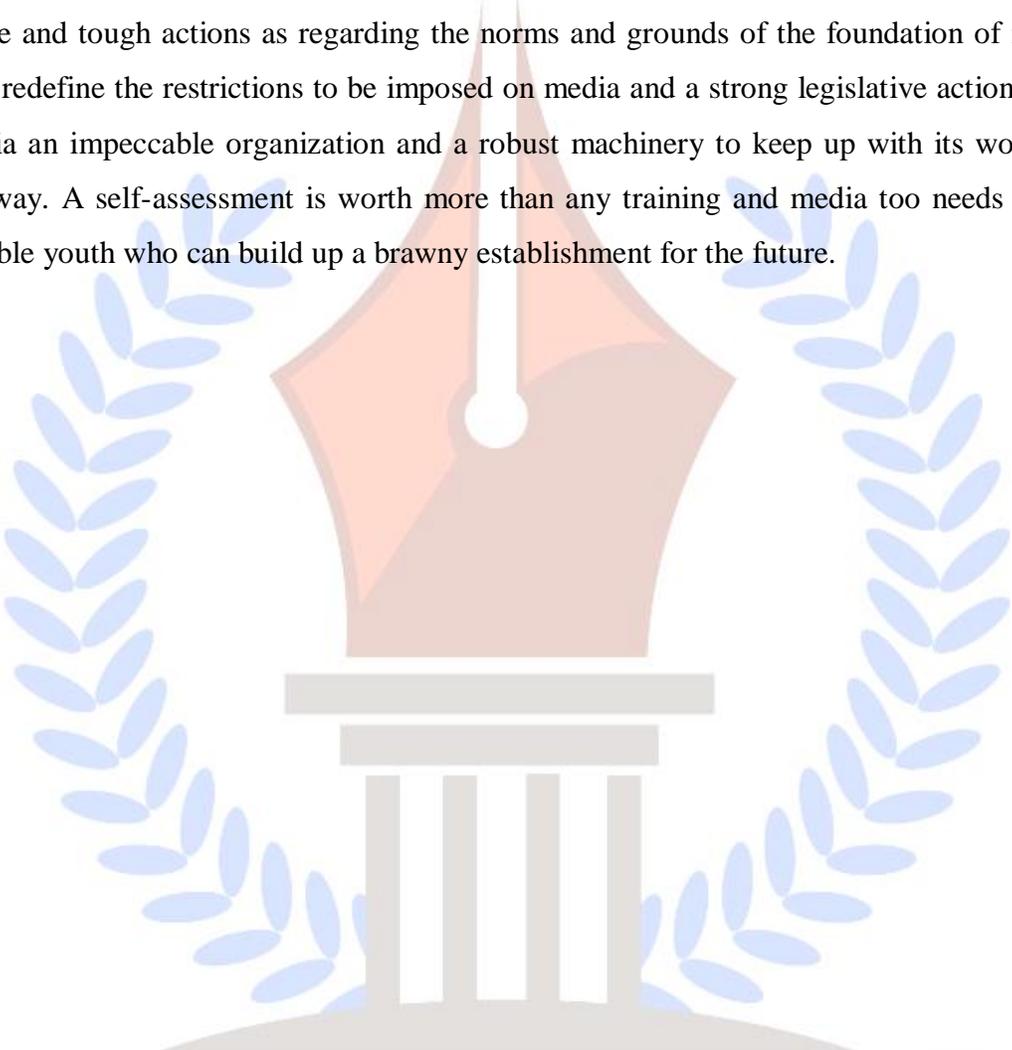
As it is a known and the accepted fact that Indian political scene is very volatile and a powerful entity like media can very easily shake up the entire scenario of political system. And in both directions whether positively or negatively media is being and becoming most powerful entity on earth. They possess a powerful wield force to make the guilty innocent, they have of control over the minds of the masses. Today, even if we don't have newspaper we have this guarantee that we can be up to date with the happenings from around the globe. Political parties and their party members are thriving on digital marketing for reaching out to the majority and for spreading their word.

According to a report by Business standard 2012, more than a third of news channels in India are owned by politicians or political affiliates who use such channels as 'political vehicle's' to influence the course of local elections. In fact the common man participation in politics has increased through this modernized technology so we can pinpoint it out as long the politicians are very were awarded about the fact that social media is not about the exploitation of the technology but service to the community till then our country is safe, otherwise drastic shifts and changes could take place rather than development but here we could see the positive phase too of social media as India being a country of diversity and youth makes up a huge 34% of the total population of our country. And social media is the best way to reach such a massive community.

CONCLUSION

It is now clear from the above statements and detailed studies that media highly influences and controls the taste and preferences of the general public. It also depicts how media moulds the perspective of public towards a particular situation or a person or community. It shapes as to how an act or activity is to be make an appearance to the public. Also, the polarization and privatization of media has led to more and more exploitation of its power. Media, instead of providing the actual situation makes a polarized and manipulated news to gain more popularity and public attention. Also, being critique to a trending issue also adds up their increasing TRP. Many a times, media spreads communal news, through its various forms such as,audio- visual media, print media, social networking websites, Facebook and Twitter accounts, to light the fire of communal violence. Also, it broadcasts certain news in such a hype that it may cause law and order situation in the entire country, disrupting the way of smooth governance. Media acts a fourth pillar of a successful democracy but it also, for its own benefit, stimulates the activities of

terrorist groups by not preventing them from reaching out and distracting innocent youth by taking them into its own ambit. There is a need or urge to revise and regulate the norms governing the media in the country, because as per the given situation, we need a strong body to govern and prevent the corruption that is enhancing its roots in the sector making an impediment for them to make justice to their own existence. The Legislative Assembly needs to take deliberate and tough actions as regarding the norms and grounds of the foundation of media. It needs to redefine the restrictions to be imposed on media and a strong legislative action to make our media an impeccable organization and a robust machinery to keep up with its work in the noblest way. A self-assessment is worth more than any training and media too needs potential and eligible youth who can build up a brawny establishment for the future.