

## DIGITAL TIMES: AN ANALOGY ON MEDIA AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

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### Abstract

*This paper is an attempt to understand how modern media technology influences people's thinking, sense of experience and perceptions of reality and is paramount to ushering in good governance in any democratic society. The study is expected to provide clarity on helping media to articulate on values of an independent media so as to help our citizens create a demand for such media connected to the principles that spawned the free press in the first place. Within this framework, the paper also seeks to study the concept with an open-ended conclusion for further research. Ensuring good governance is not possible if the state, market, and society do not work collaboratively. Which work free and open press can perform specifically in good governance and elevate democratic culture.*

**Keywords:** Governance, media, values, behavior, democracy, informed citizens.

### Introduction

In today's digital age, media enables us to be exposed to a lot of information and it has established an irreplaceable role in shaping, reflecting and influencing people's attitudes, beliefs and world views. Without a doubt, the media's influence on governance has a significant impact on building governance by affecting the reputation of civic engagement in the online space as well as in societal changes that democracies are going through. The manifold advantages of print, broadcast and internet media today are a great use for the people and the country and so they should be encouraged in every possible way to disseminate information to the public in an unbiased way. The stronger and more accountable the media is, the more prosperous the democracy will be. The role of media in ensuring good governance and

the urgent need in building media value has been highlighted in this paper.

### Media's Influence on Governance

In contemporary society, media technology serves as a powerful agent to reach more people. It makes us aware of various social, political, and economical activities happening around the world. It is like a mirror, which shows us or strives to show us the bare truth and harsh realities of life. Undoubtedly media plays a very important role in shaping human minds and in shaping a healthy democracy. Media can be a way to transmit information and can also serve as a check on the abuse of socio cultural, political and economic power.

“Humans have exchanged a similar mix of news...throughout the history and across

cultures”, historian Mitchell Stephens has written (Kovach 2003, 9). The historians and sociologists have concluded that 'news satisfies a basic human impulse. Being aware of events we cannot see for ourselves engenders a sense of security, control and confidence'. One writer even has called it as the hunger for human awareness.

“Print and electronic media is a communication channel, it includes the entire organizational structure that makes up the media including all media personnel”. It must serve as an independent monitor of power. This principle is often misunderstood, even by journalists, to mean “afflict the comfortable”. Moreover, the watchdog principle is being threatened in contemporary journalism by overuse, and faux watch-dogs are aimed more at pandering to an audience than public service. Perhaps even more serious, the watchdog role is threatened by a new kind of corporate conglomeration, which effectively may destroy the independence required of the press to perform their monitoring role. (Bill Kovach 2003, 112)

When print periodicals first emerged from the coffeehouses in England in the seventeenth century, they saw their role as investigatory. The *Parliament Scout*, that began publication in 1643, suggested something new in journalism—the necessity of making an effort to search out and discover the news. These early efforts at investigative work became part of the reason the press was granted its constitutional freedom (ibid). “The press was protected so that it could bare the secrets of government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government”. Today journalist continues to see the watchdog role as central to their work.

'When the flow of news is obstructed “a darkness falls” and anxiety grows'. The world, in effect, becomes too quiet and isolated. The technological means of today create better opportunities for monitoring that never existed before. They also create possibilities for a free flow of information from individuals to enormous amounts of people in little to no time. The complex dynamic of all kinds of sub-groups in society, like audiences, interest groups, competitors, investors, partner organizations and many more all these different factions mostly have informal means of influencing media behavior. Furthermore, there is an increasing pattern of societal expectations and demands. We can easily imagine that the introduction of new technologies throughout the ages, like the printing press, radio, television, and computers has created a stress on the governance system of that time. Each new technology required the three spheres: media, government, and society to change and find a new balance, reinventing norms and setting up new guidelines and new rules of conduct. The forces that govern our media landscape differ from time to time and place to place but if we look at it from a great distance we could say that there are at least the three spheres which usually influence media behavior.

Media behavior primarily is to regulate, facilitate, monitor and influence. Media plays an important role in ensuring good governance. Participation of civil society in the decision-making process, in taking anti-corruption steps, and ensuring transparency and accountability of the government- all can be achieved if the media remains ever vigilant. It not only disseminates information but it also acts as the bridge between the common man and the government to ensure

that there is good governance in a democracy. The media on behalf of the citizens can take certain measures, can ask for certain accountability. With changing times there is more emphasis on a societal lens, and a societal approach to media to ensure good governance. Supporters of societal lens believe that societies and countries have transformed or have undergone change not because media followed an institutional path but because they dared to break institutionalism.

The urge to call for a societal lens, societies can access information not only from within their society or within their country but also from outside, which gives them the perspective, that ensures them a comparative parameter which they can draw between two nations, countries, between two societies to see how their government is faring. Subsequently, through different forms of media platforms, they can strive to achieve accountability, this good governance that they seek in their own country.

'Journalism provides something unique to a culture-independent, reliable, accurate, and comprehensive information that citizens require to be free'. In the global information era, the profound quest for free independent and professional journalism- both online and offline- serves an essential role in democracies. It can bridge divides through accurate reporting, break down stereotypes, cover human stories and present solutions, requiring politicians and bureaucrats to respond to the public and to focus on subjects of real public interest.

### **Good Governance in Digital Age**

Good governance is such a system which is practiced in economics, politics, and through the use of social resources. And it is a such work

process in state management that civic society can express the opinion regarding the issues concerning interest, legal rights, and differences of opinion and can participate in every issue of state (Arvind 2010, 245). Subsequently, good governance depends strongly on the existence of an informed society and participatory public. In a good governance system, there exist manifold opportunities and mechanisms for the participation of people. It is epitomized by predictable open and enlightened policy-making, a bureaucracy, an executive arm of government, and a strong civil society-all under rule of law.

Good governance can be combined into three stages in general. They are:

A) Good Political Governance: In good political governance there exists, decentralization of power and administrative authority and transparency; people's participation and accountability exist in every stage of governance. Besides, the establishment of justice and creating speedy trials exist within the boundary of good political governance.

B) Good Social Governance: In good social governance there exists building strong civil society, establishing human rights, equality of both men and female exchanging information, specially to ensure that in Urban and Rural areas and to make it easier, to encourage the businessman to spend a little portion of their income in social welfare.

C) Good Economic Governance: In good economic governance, there exist some points such as enhancing the amount of budget necessarily regarding social development; reforming tax management, making information available regarding credit and government

services and ensuring the access of poor communities in these kinds of services; to take appropriate action by reviewing the impacts of trade policy of multinational companies and world trade upon the poor community people. (Arvind 2010, 112)

Good governance may be impeded by the blight of corruption, economic disparity, imbalances in modern social infrastructure and consequently the problems arising out of it, public service ineffectiveness or abuses, political unrest, poor health services, age-old oppression, violation of human rights etc.

'Many thoughtful persons are deeply troubled by the extent and depth to which our mindsets are being controlled by the media' (Jitendra 2002, 1). This is why we care about the news and journalism we get: they influence the quality of our lives, our thought, and our culture. Extensive empirical research has demonstrated the connection between a free press and good governance- a passive and weak media leaves a critical void in our democratic structure and weakens its credibility. The interface of media and governance can be captured by some variables: participation and involvement in public policy, level of freedom and expression, freedom from discrimination, freedom from want and fear, restraint in its coverage and responsible in its treatment of news.

### **Principles of Free and Open Media**

The first among them is that the purpose of journalism is to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing (Bill & Tom 2001, 12). To fulfill this task the first obligation is to the truth and loyalty to citizens. The media can help citizens by raising their voices and encouraging their will

and demands. As an independent monitor of power, they call for transparency and accountability in the quest for development and help in empowering people through awareness of the rights of citizens and styles of governance. It has an important role in creating civic education regarding human rights and voter's education; developing new forms of knowledge, and satisfactorily resolving a collective action situation, overcoming the paralyzing contradiction and generating ways and means to the people, the common man, gets access to information and communication apparatus. In the age, we get news has gone through a momentous transition. Needless to say, the monitoring strategy that media can put speaks of success in implementing the multi-actors of governance and in conducting public affairs. One of the profound questions for a democratic society is whether an independent press survives. The answer will depend on whether media channels/journalists have the clarity and conviction to articulate what an independent press means, and whether, as citizens, the rest of us care.

### **Need to Build Media Sector in Ensuring Good Governance**

Certainly, the media today has the potential to reach millions of people and has an increasingly important impact on ensuring good governance. Subsequently, in recent years, we have seen a remarkable change in the use and consumption of media. Online media access has made it infinitely easier to get information about the political processes and thus, it is of both legal and moral obligations for the media to provide impartial news to their readers and listeners.

This article concludes by bringing out reasons

and concurrently some ways forward to build the media sector on value and effectiveness in ensuring good governance-

Firstly it is a prerequisite for the functioning of any democratic society and for attaining human rights objectives.

Secondly free and independent media is needed for ensuring accountability objectives and improving state-citizen, society-people relations.

Thirdly, it has an important role to improve dialogues and debates centered on human interests.

Fourthly, impartial media establishes communication for development in all aspects of political life by shaping governance outcomes at the societal level and making us aware of various, social, political, and economic activities happening around the world.

Fifthly, free and open media helps to garner a plurality of opinions. It is a powerful and flexible

tool which acts as a voice for the voiceless and a great force in bringing superior governance.

### **Conclusion**

Media generations and societies as a whole consequently develop different standards and methods for evaluating knowledge, experience, and reality (Steve and David 2012, 217). If one is born into the internet generation, one thinks differently and perceive the world differently than someone born before the introduction of the internet, and vice versa. The influence of free and independent media technology results in the increased readership and has an important role in empowering people through awareness. The result is that today we witness a high increase in the media-governance interface. Media no doubt serves a connective tissue between the government and its people. Within this framework, the need to build media value is promising to usher in achieving good governance.

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