

# PRESS: THE FOURTH PILLAR OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

**Dr Ram Pal Saini,  
Associate Professor,  
S D (PG) College Panipat**

## **ABSTRACT**

At times Media tells half the truth and even lies. The authenticity of the news is no more guaranteed. Almost every media group has ideological or political bias and in many cases they are owned by the party heads. Media serves its prejudice and spread propaganda. They even indulge in doing media trial. In the name of moral policing every now and then opinion building is served by them. In spite of so many pitfalls, the fact remains that Media is the guardian angel of the liberties that are possessed by every citizen in India. Media has armed the common man with the weapons of knowledge and awareness and is rightly the fourth pillar in a democracy. This is the aspect that the present paper primarily discusses.

**Keywords:** Indian, Democracy, Citizen, Media, Pillar

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Laws are formulated and enforced for the safety of people and for the smooth functioning of the society. Laws also provide a fair ground within which individuals and society can choose their own values and codes, consistent with a similar liberty for others. Hence laws both protect the integrity of different sects of society and also promote their peaceful existence. When there is no law and order, the country is plunged into an unbearable abyss. But then law attains its life and delivers its intended social functions through the process of implementation and enforcements. Enforcement of law is about “law-in-reality” and not mere “law-in-theory.” The implementation of law is the most difficult aspect in any country. It is difficult make public policies and programs that are really good but it is most difficult to formulate and then to implement them on ground. More than this, it is agonizingly hard to implement them in a way that pleases anyone at all, including the supposed public for whom they are meant.

There is no doubt that the implementation of law is a complicated socio-legal process which involves many institutions and modes. Judiciary and media are the two most influential and independent institutions. Court is the first and last place where justice is sought. Media, on the other hand is an indirect agent that assists police and judiciary in serving justice to suffering people by bringing violators of law before their notice. Media is the fourth pillar of democracy and it is not an exaggeration. It is a reflection of society

and a powerful weapon in implementing laws. Although the Indian constitution does not have a clear-cut act defining the liberty of the press but it is vividly explicit in the freedom of speech and expression under the Article 19. Media reports news, provides information and is a critique of issues and problems for the public. The fundamental function of any kind of media is to make the public aware and to instill good qualities in them. Newspapers are always busy in answering the questions of events and happenings and it is for this reason that Media is easily accessible to all. It keeps people well informed on every aspect with its candid and honest reporting.

The role of Media in raising awareness on human rights, civil and political rights can never be underestimated. It helps to muster people to recognize and protect human rights and helps in bringing the violators to justice. Its reporting of cases of human rights violations and other criminal cases and punishments helps in bringing down the incidences of abuse and violation. By exposing every crime, Media has far reaching effects as it puts pressure on authorities to implement laws properly so that justice can be provided. Thus Media is an implementer of law and acts as a watchdog on anything susceptible. It creates pressure on agencies to implement laws properly. Thus Media is a diagnostic and analytical tool for discussing the different problems and their improper implementation, if any. The Governments and institutions adopt policies to raise the standard of actual implementation of policies and improve the functioning of the various law implementing agencies.

Media gives vent to the hidden struggles of people for justice and infuses a new hope in the people who have become frustrated with the system. Media also highlights the effect of delays and overdue punishments. Media has the prowess to instigate the people or when the system is hijacked by unscrupulous people. Media is an agent of change and is always fluid. It is because of media foregrounding the role of getting young adults in rape cases that the juvenile laws are reviewed and the age is now reduced to 16 from 18. The undue interference by Khap also had a scathing attack by Media. Preference of boys to girls and female foeticide were duly highlighted by the Media and we have very promising and positive results of such reporting. Media has occupied a place of immense importance in present society. Media is the source of perennial light of knowledge in the modern era and one just can't think to live without it. It is now a common fact that media is a beneficial agency in supporting or opposing any issue because it commands public opinion. As government is answerable to public, it can't ignore the irregularities brought to light by media. Hence as soon as media raises any issue, government tries to find its solution according to law. This is the power of free media in a democratic state. It brings transparency in the whole system and its organs.

Today people are more aware and reach the court on slightest infringement with their rights. Media opens the tools of discussion through opinion polls and debates to inspire the authorities for taking appropriate action. Thus Media also holds the government and officials accountable before general public. It shares the information and awakens the common masses to put a check on the violation of laws. It is more than mere reporting

rather it has a moral tint in it. It keeps a vigil on administration and checks corruption and useless administration. The fight against corruption has been largely fueled by the media. The scam cases like Coal Scam, Vyapam, all were brought to public notice by Media and it put the politicians and bureaucracy under scrutiny. It is not only that media highlights the weaknesses of improper implementation and resulting crimes but it also informs people for respecting and abiding by the laws of state. If virtues like honesty and morality still thrive, media has a role to play in it. Media is the most vigilant organ in a country that aspires to have a rule of law so that a stable and smooth society can be envisioned. It is through the operation and functioning of law in society that justice, fairness and human rights protection are achieved or abused. Laws in theory serve no purpose if their implementation is lopsided or bad. Media instills life and breath in the laws. Media is the guardian angel of the liberties that are possessed by every citizen. Media has armed the common man with the weapons of knowledge and awareness and is rightly the fourth pillar in a democracy. Till Media is there is a hope that any effort to demean and tarnish the image of democracy will get defeated.

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