

B.A. Hons. Political Science
Code: 12323903
Legislative Practices and Procedures
Semester IV

Unit 5: Support in media monitoring and communication.

The final unit of the syllabus deals with the legislative role of media. Media is popularly dubbed as fourth pillar of democracy after – executive, legislature and judiciary. The intersection of media and politics plays very important role in legislative process. Politicians willing to receive next mandate, finds it difficult to ignore the public opinion, and as you know very well, it is the media that shapes those opinions. Thus, a nexus exists between media and politics. In general, media plays critical role in various ways such as –

1. Media reports about incidents of crimes and problems. These reports are useful for academicians and parliamentarians to identify the patterns of the problem. For civil society and NGOs, these reports are helpful to mobilise grass root movements to pressurise the elected representatives for appropriate legislation. You may have witnessed the important role of media in generating mass movement during Anna Hazare's movement against Corruption.
2. During debates on parliamentary bills, media highlights about the shortcoming of bills through several written columns and debates.
3. After the legislation, media reviews the success rate of legislation in mitigating the problems. These reviews are helpful to give additional legislative interventions in areas of special concerns.

Types of Media

- Print
- Radio
- Television
- Social Media

Role of Media

According to Lee Thayer, there are four crucial functions of mass media which can be represented by Four I's:

- Informative
- Influencive
- Instructive
- Integrative

The intersection or interaction of media, government and citizens generates issues for debate and discussions in a healthy democracy. These issues then take shape of activism, research and political movement. Movements need constant feedback of information that is supplied by media. Movement and flow of information has potential to transform people's thinking in a particular direction. In otherwise, these thinking may convert into votes. Since votes are oxygen for politicians, they are susceptible to media pressures.

Thus, fear of adverse voting make politicians respond to the people's concerns on issues through executive orders, legislation and reforms. Thus, media play important pressure point for legislation on various issues. It educates people and imposes political cost on politicians during

elections for their wrong decisions. Thus, media is vital for upholding election accountability of politicians. While media operates freely within the open democratic country; journalists inside some authoritarian country face massive restrictions.

The role of Media in mobilizing social reforms

(1) Highlighting wrong social practices such as instant triple talaq; ban on entry of women inside the Sabarimala.

(2) Educating people about social issues through its various programs; it's also educates people through its various reports; rates of crime against women, dalits, minorities; Child labour, environment issues etc.

(3) Providing neutral forum where public can ask their politicians about actions they have taken or about to take after election;

(4) Acting as pressure group: media acts as pressure groups by consistently focusing on certain issues.

(5) Even when laws are being made, media provides additional platform of debates on issues and bills. It helps the policy makers to close the gaps. When laws are made media reports about its effectiveness and its reports help government to make necessary changes. For example, after 2012 Delhi gang rape case, the media debates focused on women crimes, it brought large scale protest in Delhi and other parts of the Country, the pressure forced government to bring criminal law act 2013. This act made many changes to address women related crimes and punishments.

Online Material

Cook, Fay Lomex et al., (1983), Media and Agenda Setting: Effects on the Public, Interest Group Leaders, Policy Makers, and Policy. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 47(1), 16-35.
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.840.7379&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

