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## Media and its Influence on Democracy: A Case Study of Punjab

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**Abstract** This research is a struggle to explore the influence of Media on democracy in Punjab that how media helps to promote the democratic norms in society and strengthens the democracy in context of a developing country. Using survey method, data has been collected from 500 respondents from Punjab as sample technique of available and convenient, selected 250 female respondents and 250 males from rural and urban areas. Questionnaire was based on 25 close ended questions. Current research conducted in the light of “Agenda Setting Theory” and “Framing Theory” which conclude that media has played an important role in strengthens the democracy in Punjab. Media aware public about democracy. People of urban areas especially educated people attract more to media for political awareness as compare to rural area’s people. Moreover, TV plays an important role in promotion of democracy specially the private sector media. Media plays the positive role to politically socialize the people in Punjab.

**Key Words:** Media, Democracy, Agenda Setting, Framing, Political Socialization, Political Knowledge, Public Opinion.

### Introduction

Media is the backbone of democracy. The role of media in our society is very significant. Media supply the political information to the viewers that help them to make their opinion. Media also plays the watchdog role in society to identify the problems and wrongdoing of those who have the authority. In democratic cultures media considered as a representative of society. In development of society, media plays an important role. In formation of public opinion media plays a vital role, give awareness to the community about the Government strategies and highlight the public issues. By scattering the information and new thoughts media is reshaping the societies. Media presented the new ideas to aware the people. Media facilitate the viewers to educating about the political structure of their government’ ([Christians et al., 2009](#): 158).

In short, media delivers the education and information to the people, which is the main intention of promotion of democracy. Democracy could not survive in any society without education, information and communication. If a state (society) wants the progress of governance and growth of democracy then there should be discussion, intention, argument, continual exploration and analysis. Public will be able to make their own views if they have access to information on current affairs. Media delivers effective information to voters as it is a powerful tool of communication. Media ensure the accessibility of information to the public, then people set their attitude and spread information availed to them ([Wheeler, 1997](#); [Grossman, 1996](#)).

As we know that the most influential tool of the mass media is television. Television plays a vital role to giving information and awareness to the public about the benefits of democracy, in creating public opinion and the participation of public in democratic system. Media plays an important role to achieve the goal of well-informed and educated society through informative programs, dramas,

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current affair programs, educational programs, entertainment and so on. Most of the people use television as main source of news updates and these people favor television as most responsible and reliable tool of media ([Qian, 2007](#)).

Democracy ensure a responsible government, there is a co-relation between democracy and politics. In democracy people those rule, are nominated by the public and they served for the public. But in third world countries there are many states where the political governments have failed to accomplish their promises. Democracy considered perfectly if people have the maximum chance to select their representative government but almost this idea is not practically possible ([Holden 1974](#), [Diamond, et al 1998](#), [Lively 1975](#) [Bratton and Falle 1997](#)). Participation plays basic role in democratic and political procedure. In any state it is essential that Public have decisive authority and participation of public is mandatory for finalizing the political procedure. In democracy, people have the right to take part effectively and free argument to set the opinion. Democracy supports the distribution of power and convicts the store of power by some elite class group. Democracy means that the right to rule given by the voters but answerable, if people did not participate; Democratic procedure could not be powerful and successful. Participation is the core part of the democracy ([Wikipedia](#)).

Media should free to make inquiries and get responses about elections transparency, if there is something wrong then media should tell the public about that so it can be solve. Mass Media play a dynamic part to provide the chance to political parties to dialogue openly to the huge number of public ([cook, 1999](#)). Media's role in political affairs cannot be deniable. National or international organization of democratic politics depends on media; generally, without media there is no way to address the public issues ([McQuail 2005](#)). As compared to past, now people of Pakistan are much aware and the main reason is that media plays a supportive role to spread the information to the public, before 2000 in Pakistan, there is the only government control media. In 2002, PEMRA approved licenses to private television channels, before this government controlled television all the time support the government's strategies and never criticize on the policies whether they are right or wrong, they only try to hide the wrongdoing of the government. Private media supports the development policies of the government and also criticize on the wrongdoing of the government for the people ([Yousaf, 2012](#)).

## Objective of the Study

1. To know the role of media in strengthening democracy in Pakistan.
2. To know that which tool of media is more effective to strengthens the democracy.
3. To know the significance of media in Pakistan.

## Rationale of the Study

Basic purpose of this research is to find that media has a great role in strengthening democracy or not and which tool of media has more influence. In Pakistan, most of the television channels are news channels and broadcasting political talk shows, political news and current affair programs mostly. So the question raises in the mind, did media have any role in formation of public opinion and inspire people to take part in political system. In this field, this research serves as a basic platform for future.

## Literature Review

[Norris \(2006\)](#) conducted a research on "The role of the free press in promoting democratization, good governance and human development" describes that what is the concern of media in social

development, democracy and government performance. 1st Part of the research is analysis and about summary of previous studies on this area. 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this research is about research plan, this study explores about the good control and effects of liberate press on several indicators of democracy. 3<sup>rd</sup> part defines the local actions and division of free media. 4<sup>th</sup> part estimates the outcome of these models and the conclusion of the research is that liberty of press is very essential for development of democracy and press freedom enhances the chance of good governance for the people.

[Held \(2006\)](#) explain in his book “Models of democracy” chapter “deliberative democracy” that why people partaking is required for the democracy. Held raise a question that media performs for government or the civil society? He assesses the ways of democracy in the world and also criticizes the several theories of democracy. He explains the nature of connection among media, government and civil society.

[Porto \(2012\)](#) conducted a research on “Media power and democratization in Brazil: TV globo and the dilemmas of political accountability”. This research investigates the role of TV globo (Largest TV Network) in fall of 1985 authoritarian government. Improved skill and critical reporting of TV globo forced the chief executive to take their communication approaches with the complex responsibility for the excellence of communal accountability. He believed that modifications at TV globo help to improve the system of answerability and performance of election in Brazil. Liberated idea of journalism at TV globo improved accountability system that plays important role to bounds the presidential supremacy in Brazil.

[Kaul \(2012\)](#) wrote an article “Are new media democratic?” In this article he says that new technological variations in field of media have powerfully effect on democratization and globalization. Through their policies, media have the power to weak or strong the democratic process. In some ways through media technologies it is possible that globalization sidesteps democracy for particular benefits. Through valuable, effective and responsive programs, media can change the democratic and political position of government. Market services use media only for the advertisements not for the development of democracy. If real progress is required, then political progress is necessary than technological. If people want the democracy, then they will start with politics not with technologies.

According to [Loveless \(2009\)](#) Democracy circulate through media comprises on idea that cultural appearance must be put in the transmission data. Now in this technique of broadcasting, communal values and normative political affairs are communicated from one nation to the targeted nation thus using this technique the targeted nation people powerfully attach to these values. [Katrin et al., \(2009\)](#) tells about the relation of democracy and media. In democratic progression, media is known as the dominant and potential factor. Such as the recent worldwide trend of democracy take place in this facilitated atmosphere. In modern democracy, media plays a central role for accountability and promotes complete politics. Now Media is much close to the political influential authorities so media can criticize on the political structure without any problem. Media can also play an overseer role in democratic process and through political reportage it is essential that media should play a balanced overseer role. Market pressure on news reporting bear out the expenditure and boost the sustain attention on multiple matters, strategy plan and international matters. International media can contribute in democratic process by pointing troubles in a specific country to viewers and foreign political power holders.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Media want to get business and income through advertisements from those who have authority. Media Channels voluntarily make different attractive slogans and make special TV programs to tell

the people about their power of democracy. Most suitable theories for this research are agenda setting theory and framing theory, that how media sets the agenda for the people and framing the data that which should be more important and frame that for public. Media depend on data providing by business, experts funded and government which are called agents of authority. Thus both essentials power and wealth are used in elections. After filtration, media broadcasted impartial news stories.

## Hypotheses

**H1:** It is more likely that media influence on people knowledge about democracy.

**H2:** It is more likely that TV is more effective than any other medium to strengthening the democracy.

## Research Methodology

As the research was survey-based so to collect the data the quantitative research design was used. All participants from Bahawalpur were choose as the population, whereas 500 (250 females and 250 males, 250 from rural and 250 from urban) are selected as the sample of the study through a multi-stage random sampling technique. A self-made questionnaire by researcher consist of different factors was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was consisting of 25 statements with the categorization of different variables. Respondents were asked to choose the priority of their area on a different point scale ranging from least to highest priority and collected data was analyzed through SPSS.

## Data Analysis

Following findings were drawn on the basis of data analysis:

**Table 1.** Distribution of sample according to demographic variables of respondents

Gender		Urban Residence		Rural Residence	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	250	50.0	500	50.0
	Female	250	50.0	500	50.0

The above table showing the distribution of overall sample from rural and urban localities separately according to their gender (male or female).

**H1:** It is more likely that media influence on people knowledge about democracy.

**Table 2.** Cross tabulation and chi-square testing for H1.

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Strongly Agree	43	34	31	33	42	183
Agree	9	21	21	18	8	77
Neutral	12	25	27	23	7	94
Disagree	16	36	17	28	18	115
Strongly Disagree	14	5	4	6	2	31
Total	94	121	100	108	77	500

For the value of Chi-Square

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \left( \frac{(O_i - e_i)^2}{e_i} \right) \text{ and under Ho } \chi^2 \sim \chi^2_{\alpha, (c-1)(r-1)}$$

Chi-Square = 49.45

P-value = 0.000

The above cross tabulation shows association among the attributes of hypothesis (H4) mentioned above for the target population. The value of Chi-Square is 49.45 and the P-value for the test is 0.000 shows there is significant association among the attributes at 5% level of significance and our hypothesis is accepted.

**H2:** It is more likely that TV is more effective than any other medium to strengthening the democracy.

**Table 3.** Cross tabulation and chi-square testing for H2.

Options	T.V	Radio	Newspaper	Family	Peer Group	T.V and Newspaper
Very Much	174	4	43	4	21	45
Much	59	0	20	5	8	7
Sometimes	25	2	22	1	11	4
Rarely	8	1	9	5	3	2
Not at All	5	1	4	1	6	0
Total	271	8	98	16	49	58

For the value of Chi-Square

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \left( \frac{(O_i - e_i)^2}{e_i} \right) \text{ and under Ho } \chi^2 \sim \chi^2_{\alpha, (c-1)(r-1)}$$

Chi-Square = 78.66

P-value = 0.000

The above cross tabulation shows association among the attributes of hypothesis (H2) mentioned above for the target population. The value of Chi-Square is 78.66 and the P-value for the test is 0.000 shows there is significant association among the attributes at 5% level of significance and our hypothesis is accepted.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Research was lead to be familiar with the opinions of people of Punjab about role of media in election turn-out. On the basis of available and convenience method, sample size of 500 respondents was chosen. 250 respondents from urban and 250 respondents from rural areas of Punjab. Outcomes show that most of the respondents were educated. Questionnaire comprise on 25 close ended questions. Respondent answer attentively to all the questions that proved very helpful. Basic purpose of this study was to see the involvement of people in political socialization process and views of people about role of media in strengthening democracy. Media is backbone of democracy now a day. In last era, Pakistani media has quickly promoted and all the credit goes to General Parvaiz Musharaf. Now a day media is definitely easily reached in all areas of Pakistan. Television is a major source for people to know about any latest political or social news and updates. Due to liberty of media, it is concluded that Pakistani media is a pro-democratic media as it high spot any issue in well

way that update political parties and also the public as well. Mostly respondents believed that democratic system is not complete without media. Free media is a symbol of good democracy.

### **Hypothesis No 01:**

It is more likely that media influence on people knowledge about democracy.

Pakistan is a democratic state however the democracy has not been so powerful. First time in history of Pakistan a political party PPP finished its tenure of 5 years and gave the power to another political party in 2013. It is a good symbol for betterment of democracy in Pakistan and media also plays an important role to achieve this goal. Researcher asked most suitable question to examine this hypothesis "Do you think that media educate the public about the importance of their vote" result shows that 36.6% respondents are strongly agree and 15.4% people are agree that media educate the public about the importance of their vote, 18.8% are neutral, 23% are disagree and the other 6.2% are strongly disagree with the statement. Another related question is that "Media show the portrayal of previous government work that awakes your mind to vote for the country" result shows that 27.8% respondents are strongly agree and 23.4% people are agree that Media show the portrayal of previous government work that awakes your mind to vote for the country, 19.2% respondents are neutral, 13.6% people are disagree and the other 16% people are strongly disagree with the statement. Another related question is that "What do you think that democracy is not complete without media" result shows that 18% people are strongly agree and 29.6% people are agree that democracy is not complete without media, 15% people are neutral, 15.2% people are disagree, and remaining 22.2% people are strongly disagree with the statement. Another related question to examine hypothesis is that "Do you think that media highlighting the advantages of democracy" result shows that 18.8% people are strongly agree and 24.2% people are agree that media highlights the advantages of democracy, 20% people are uncertain, 21.6% people are disagree, and remaining 15.4% people are strongly disagree with the statement. Mostly respondents answered positively to all these questions that media have influence on voter's knowledge about democracy, media can educate people about the power of their vote and tell them the positive effects of the strong democracy. The value of Chi-Square is 49.45 and the P-value for the test is 0.000 shows there is significant association among the attributes at 5% level of significance and hypothesis is accepted. Above discussion on this hypothesis is true.

### **Hypothesis No 02:**

It is more likely that TV is more effective than any other medium to strengthening the democracy.

There are many mediums of media like Television, Newspaper, Radio, Magazines, social media etc. On different places different mediums are used for political awareness and political information. Researcher asked most suitable question to examine the hypothesis "What did you think that which is most famous and effective medium to giving political awareness" result shows that mostly respondents said that TV is the most powerful and effective medium for the political awareness. In this question researcher ask that which medium is how much effective to giving political awareness in form of very much, much, sometimes, rarely and not at all. When researcher asked that TV is how much powerful medium and then answer is that 58.2% respondents said very much, 19.8% said much, 13% said sometimes, 5.6% said rarely and 3.4% said not at all. When researcher asked that Newspaper is how much powerful medium and then answer is that 33% respondents said very much, 35.2% said much, 17% said sometimes, 10.4% said rarely and 4.4% said not at all. When researcher asked that Radio is how much powerful medium and then answer is that 33.2% respondents said very much, 12.8% said much, 20.4% said sometimes, 29.8% said rarely and 3.8% said not at all. When

researcher asked that Magazine is how much powerful medium and then answer is that 23.2% respondents said very much, 25% said much, 27.2% said sometimes, 14.6% said rarely and 10% said not at all. When researcher asked that Social Media is how much powerful medium and then answer is that 51% respondents said very much, 7.8% said much, 12% said sometimes, 22.8% said rarely and 6.4% said not at all. So final result shows that mostly people select Television as most effective and famous medium as mostly people selects very much, much and sometimes to Television and then any other medium. Another related question to this research question is asked to respondent is that "Do you watch Television" result shows that 26% people are strongly agree and 24.2% people are agree that they watch television, 24.6% people are neutral, 15% people are disagree, and other 10.2% people are strongly disagree with the statement. Another related question to this research question is that "How much time do you spend in watching Television" results shows that 5.8% people said they don't watch T.V. 52.2% people said that they spend 2 hours in watching T.V. 26.2% people spend 2-4 hours in watching T.V. 10.6% people spend 4-6 hours on T.V. 3% people spend 6-8 hours on T.V and the remaining 2.2% people spend more than 8 hours in watching T.V. another related question is that "Does political campaign on television convince you to cast your vote" result shows that 20.6% respondents are strongly agree and 28.6% people are agree that political campaign on Television convince them to cast vote. 16.6% people are neutral, 16.8% respondents disagree and the other 17.4% people strongly disagree with the statement. Another related question is that "What is your source of political information" and result shows that 54.2% said that T.V is the source of political information, 1.6% said that radio is source of information, 19.6% people said that newspaper is most powerful source of political information, 3.2% people said that family is source of political information, 9.8% people said Peer group is source of political information and the other 11.6% people said that T.V and newspaper both are the source of political information. Mostly respondents answered positively to all these questions that TV is more effective than any other medium in influencing the voting decision. The value of Chi-Square is 78.66 and the P-value for the test is 0.000 shows there is significant association among the attributes at 5% level of significance and hypothesis is accepted. Above discussion on this hypothesis is true.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Media have to play careful role so that in case of biased journalism it can be bad for the image of Pakistan. Media and political parties make friendly atmosphere so both can help each other and together works for the development of democracy and country. Media have not support any specific political party or person for personal interest. Professional training should be necessary for all journalists and media organizations. Yellow journalism method should not be used.

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