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The Role of Media in Democracy

Lesson Plan

Contents

- ▶ An overview of the role media plays in a democracy
- ▶ Understanding the media, its role and functions and how it aids democracy

Objectives

- ▶ To understand the media and the role it plays in a democracy
- ▶ To learn about the different forms of media and how each operates
- ▶ To know about how different media communicate and their significance
- ▶ To appreciate the functions and impact of media on people

■ Teacher's Aids

- ▶ Globe
- ▶ Pictures, charts, atlas and newspapers/magazines, etc.
- ▶ Blackboard
- ▶ Internet

■ Tips for Teacher

- ▶ Explain what is communication, how we communicate—individually and collectively—the means of communicating widely through media.
- ▶ Different kinds of media—for personal communication and for mass communication—and how it is used in a democracy for disseminating information and building awareness, sharing ideas and opinions, etc.
- ▶ Students should be encouraged to know places, locations and their placement on the maps.

■ Background and Reading

- ▶ Read the lesson aloud and explain, sharing the aids, etc., pausing to examine and explain the data in the boxes.

- ▶ Particularly focus on the need to check whether what the media is telling us is the truth or not; also to guard against media that generates prejudice in a studied way or causes rage and hatred.

The Role of Media

- ▶ Communication fast—bringing world closer through various forms of communication—called media.
- ▶ Personal communication—letters, e-mail.
- ▶ Mass communication—to large number of people: TV, films, radio, magazines, newspapers.

Classification of Media

- ▶ Earlier road-plays and dramas used for communication—technology changed—now print and electronic media used.

Electronic Media

- ▶ A popular method of expressing public opinion—reaches public faster—even to the illiterate—media brings the truth to the public—injustice, corruption, many sensational types of information—public opinion also helps politicians change their decisions too.

Print Media

- ▶ The press is generally referred to as print media—a strong political weapon—a pillar of democracy.
- ▶ Magazines, newsletters, journals, books—effective role during our freedom struggle—some newspapers started by national leaders: Kesari [Bal Gangadhar Tilak]; Harijan [Mahatma Gandhi]; Al-Hilal [Maulana Abul Kalam Azad].
- ▶ Press expected to report events correctly without bias—sometimes press made to write things by force—[political or from the owner of press]—freedom of press should not be curbed.
- ▶ Newspaper an important medium: 'The Times of India', 'The Hindustan Times', 'The Indian Express', 'The Hindu'.
- ▶ Magazines and journals: 'Business Today', 'India Today', 'Frontline', 'Outlook'.
- ▶ Newspapers in regional languages.
- ▶ First printing press [1453] by Johannes Gutenberg; newspaper first introduced in 19th century for public—20th century: Printing, duplication of books and films; then TV and radio—for information—hence, mass media based on the communication facility and technology used.

Media and Public Opinion

- ▶ In democracy, public opinion important—people have freedom to express opinions and raise objections to policies.
- ▶ Ruling party remains in power if it retains favourable public opinion.
- ▶ Media through which strong or balanced public opinion is raised—cannot be ignored by government—take public views and modify policies or may lose power.

- ▶ All media must follow certain rules and regulations set by the government in the Broadcasting Code [1962]–to regulate functioning of media.
- ▶ Main aim of media–work in public interest–should not be controlled by a few people–partial news will be biased information–public must also be alert and careful to see that information is not manipulated or false–should not affect anyone’s thoughts or ideas adversely.
- ▶ Media also a check on elected representatives–helps proper administration–bringing corruption to light.
- ▶ Welcomes public participation in policy making.

Right to Information Act [RTI]

- ▶ October 2005–RTI Act passed–people have a right to information–could learn and know the happenings of government on demand.
- ▶ Government has to give information within 30 days or sometimes [in urgent cases] within 24 hours–Act makes departments and government more accountable to the public.
- ▶ Citizens have access to information pertaining to any period in any form; right to inspect records, public works and materials; no fees from those below poverty line; no need to give reasons for asking for information.

Need for Media

- ▶ Media should not be curbed–should be free.
- ▶ Uncensored media has a responsibility to provide unbiased information.
- ▶ In elections–media should project all candidates and parties and cover all issues.
- ▶ 1975-77: Emergency declared–all types of freedom suspended–no media person allowed to report against the government.

Assessment Corner

Oral Assignment

- A. Ask for answers at random from the students. Confirm the right answers. Let them write down the correct answers if they like in their books.

Written Assignment

- B–E. The teacher has two options–(i) Either do these exercises orally first and then ask the students to write them down. OR (ii) Ask the students to write the answers on their own. Then the teacher can announce the correct answers to the students and they can ask their partners to cross-check them.

In either case, the answers can be written as homework and the teacher can check them in the class.

Think Tank

- G. **HOTS questions:** Discuss the questions in the class and let the students write the answers to G and H as homework. Teacher should assess individual work.