

## Role of media in Anna Hazare's Movement and its Impact on society

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### Abstract

In today's world media occupies an important place in the society. People get to know what is happening around the world and accordingly they formulate their opinion. One can say that media is the voice of people. There are many functions of media like persuasion, it provides information, it entertains and it keeps an eye on the government work. Man is surrounded by its presence whether in the form of print, electronic or internet. Therefore, it also has impact on its user according to their usage. Many studies have come up with the view that media has lot of negative impact on the society. They have been criticizing media for many years for their negative role in the life of the people. This paper talks about that though media has negative impact on its viewer yet it is playing important role in the life of people. It is one of the vital tools in the hand of common man. We cannot ignore the positive aspects of media presence.

### Introduction

Media is a forth pillar of the democracy and it is perceived as watchdog of the society. India which is a nation of diverse ethnicity, religion, caste, creed etc. role of media becomes more significant and analytical. We cannot forget the contribution of newspapers in freedom struggle. Media role in democratic society is very important. It is through the presence of media institutions that the citizens of that country came to know what is happening in and around the world. Media can be divided into following categories:

- a. Print Media
- b. Electronic Media
- c. New Media.

Indian population is highly diversified in nature. According to census of India 2011 literacy rate of India is now 74.04%. This indicates that more than 25% of our population is still illiterate. But still they are well aware with what is happening around the nation and world. Though their access to print media is restricted yet they have other mediums like television and radio to access for the information. Therefore, in media itself one has lots of option for getting information according to their accessibility, capability and understanding. This shows that there is no way to escape from the media and its exposure.

Today there are many options available for the people to get information. Therefore, media is also affecting our lives, behavior and thinking. Many scholars have conducted research on the impact of media on the society. However most of the studies have concluded that media impact is bad and critical on every section of the society. For instant a study conducted by Susan Villani began in 1996 on the 'Impact of Media on Children and Adolescents.' In this study she found that constant exposure of media content containing violence and explicit scenes can affect the children's mind and behavior, she further in her study state that there is violent behavior of the children who see lots of violent content.

In 1992 Shanahan and Morgan conducted a comparative analysis and case studies on the adolescents and how the use of television is influencing their interaction with their family. The study was conducted in five countries – USA, Canada, Taiwan, Argentina and Korea. The focus of the study was on the exposure of television, family conflict due to television and the relationship of television viewing and family communication.

### There are many other researches which often concluded on the negative impact on society like –

In 2004 a major new study by RAND Corporation published in the September issue of Pediatrics the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, concluded that teens who watch television shows with heavy sexual content are twice more likely to engage in sexual intercourse what those who watched tamer TV.

In India Feminist scholars are particularly concerned the way female portray in men's abuse of women is often glorified within Indian Cinema. And many feel that rising cases of eve-teasing and attempt to rape is due to the unfavourable exposure of media content.

However there are still many researches which have viewed that media also have some positive effect on our society. For example Candle March at India Gate for Jaissica Lal Case by the public was inspired from the film Rang De Basanti directed by Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra. In a same way Lage Raho Munna Bhai film

directed by Rajkumar Hirani also inspired public to take the path of Non-violence to fight against the system. Such incidents show that media do have positive impact on the actions and thoughts of the people.

When India was a colony of British Government the first newspaper of India was published in 1780 called Bengal Gazette by James Augustus Hicky. This led to the growth of Newspaper in India later many other newspapers like Madras Courier (1785) & Bombay Herald (1789) were published under the control of British Government. Mostly these papers were by the Britishers and for the Britishers, however proceedings of the British Parliament were not allowed to publish in these newspapers. James Silk Buckingham, the editor of Calcutta Chronicle (1818) was the first to raise the issue of 'freedom of press.' His newspaper gave the voice to the Indian population. The newspaper used to cover local news and views, criticizing the policies of the British Government and as well as social evil practices of India like 'Sati' and 'Child Marriages'. Gradually this medium of mass communication became one of the tools to fight for the freedom. Many freedom fighters like Bal Gangadhar Tilak owned Kesari newspaper published in Marathi language. In a same way Dadabhai Naoroji established his own monthly journal called Voice of India (1882). Many prominent leaders of the freedom struggle like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojani Naidu etc. were inspiring the whole India to join fight against British rule with their writings. This shows that media had been playing an important role during that period. However, society has been criticizing media for deviating from their objectives and becoming commercialized. But once again media has proved its importance and its positive role during the Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement. The positive coverage and objective views of media have inspired the whole India to participate in this movement and making it a public movement. This paper will study the role of media in Anna Hazare's Movement and its impact on society, so that we can prove that media do have positive impact on the masses and it still carries the social responsibility of democratic society like India.

### Objectives of the Research Paper

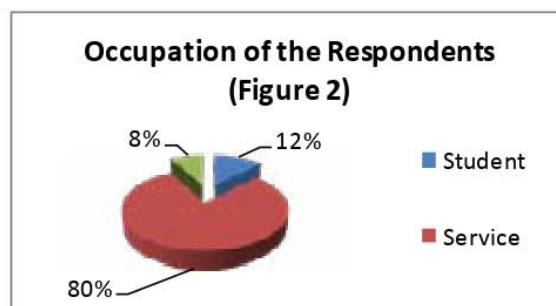
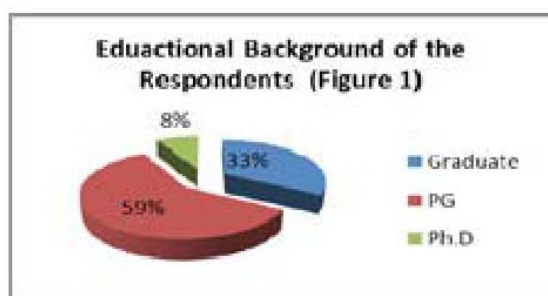
1. To study that media do have positive impact on the audiences.
2. To study how media had inspired the people living in India and abroad to participate and to support the movement and presented its positive quality.

### Methodology & Area of Research

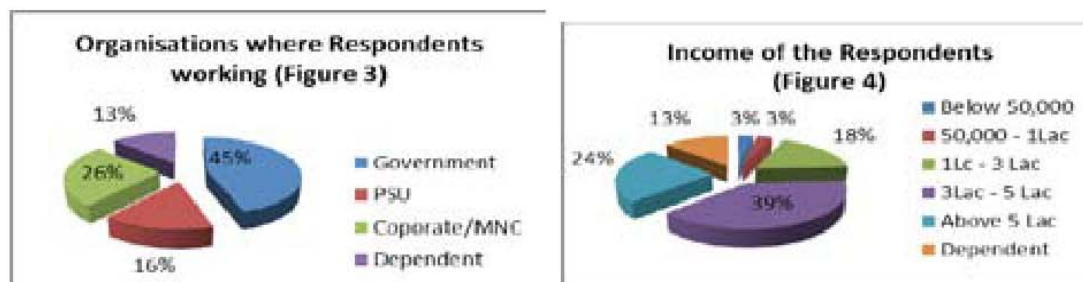
The study is based on the data collected through questionnaire from the respondents of different age group and gender. The sample size for data collection is 100 samples out of which 49 are females and 51 are males. 20 years to 60 years of age has been considered of the respondents. The research has been conducted in Delhi. Delhi is a prominent place for this movement as it has witnessed the two consecutive movements against the corruption. First by Baba Ram Dev which unfortunately was suppressed by the government and second by Anna Hazare, the anti-corruption activist who finally made government to bow. The whole episode happened at the Ram Lila Maidan where lakhs of people gathered from all over India to participate in the movement for cause.

### The socio-economic conditions of the respondents:

While selecting the sample, their socio-economic conditions were kept in mind. This has been done so that we can study how the media coverage had affected their thinking and action to participate or not to participate in the movement. It is important to take into consideration their educational and professional backgrounds.

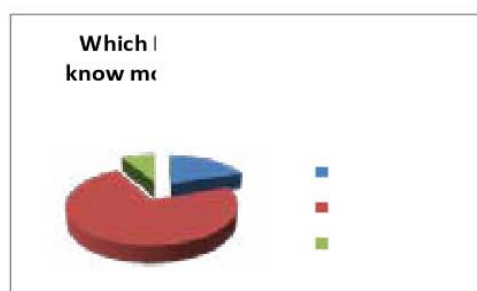






### Coverage of the movement through different media:

It is not wrong to say that through media the movement got international recognition. It has been long time to see such a mass movement in India in which not only people from different state participated but Indians living in other countries also participated. It was possible only through media participation that so many people around the world turned a simple movement into the mass movement. If we look at the coverage pattern especially between the newspaper and television news channel, then television exclusively cover the event. The medium as we know has an advantage over the newspaper in the sense that it is more immediate. Therefore, news channels were covering it live throughout the day from the Ramlila Maidan, New Delhi. The big challenge for the print media was then how to cover or present the whole event where people already following the television news channels. If look at the data then 74% of the people were following television channels whereas 20% were reading newspaper for the event and only 8% were following internet (figure 5).



The reason why television is chosen by the most of the respondent could be that it is easy to follow, immediate and regular updating is fast. Whereas newspaper needs more concentration for analyzing the news, still many prefer newspaper because of wide range of news content and it is at your ease. The draw back with the news channels was that they only concentrated on one news because of its news value and ignore most of the news and event which is taking simultaneously. This is the result of high competition prevailing among the news channels for the advertisements.

Therefore, they were ignoring other valuable news which could be beneficial to the viewers. Television news channels to break the monotony of just covering the happening of Ramlila Maidan, they were simultaneously showing extensive discussions between political party's members, NGO's members and general public. They were also using different programmes formats like interviews, talks etc. to cover up their air time. The presentation of the event covered by news channels was very melodramatic.

### That's why it had attracted the viewer's attention.

Table 1: Percent distribution of the respondent on using the media for the follow up of the movement according to their occupation.

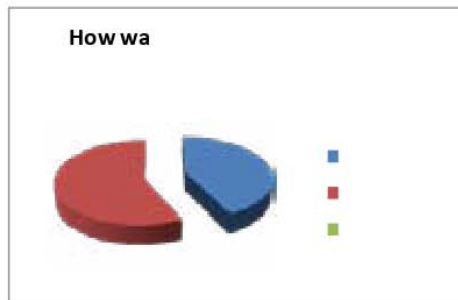
Media	Students	Service	Part-Time Service	Total
Newspapers	4%	12%	4%	20%
News Channels	6%	62%	4%	72%
Internet	2%	4%	8%	8%
Total	12%	80%	8%	100%

If we analyze the data of table 1, we can conclude that whether it is student or service man they both have chosen news channel as their medium to follow the movement whereas people doing part-time service have chosen internet over the other two media.

However, newspapers had very balanced coverage over the whole episode and they maintained their various columns so that no valuable news was left out. Though their first main page was covered with the Anna's figure yet they were also providing the government viewpoints on the issue which has been ignored by the news channels. It is interesting to know that during this movement Rajiv Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated by



the Congress. However no news channels were carrying that news, whereas government used newspapers to advertise about the Rajiv Gandhi's Jayanti. In Times of India every second page of it was carrying the advertisement of Rajiv Gandhi B'day Celebration. This effort by the government was done to dilute the damages done by this movement to the government's image.



According to the figure 6 around 57% of the respondents think that the coverage by the media where it is newspaper or television or internet is very informative. Whereas 43% of the respondents think that it is highly inspirational. This could be the reason why so many people gather at Ramlila Maidan, India Gate and other parts of the country to support the cause. This shows that if media had not given such coverage to the movement, it would not have had such an impact on the audience. Somewhere media played the role of linkage between the Anna's team and the common man.

During that period whatever was the government reply to the team Anna, it went against them. They were looking more in the villainous image whereas Anna was becoming the hero in the public view. This hype was the result of media coverage to the movement.

### Conclusion

The modern era is a media age. Print, audio, film, video and internet are more pervasive than ever before. The world is circled by communication satellites, and rich and poor, although not equally, are linked to a single emerging media world. The last few years have seen growth of interest in how the media work, how they affect our daily lives and how the public might ensure the fulfillment of the media's staggering potential. This is the one case where media has shown its positive attributes of its impact on the society. In democracy like India media has greater role to play as it is the watchdog of the largest democracy of the world. Therefore we cannot ignore media and its importance in today's society. People for the news, events and information are totally relying on media. The media helps in formulating the public opinion whether it's a Jaissica Lal's murder case or Anna's movement. Therefore one cannot criticize media all the time for the negative impact.

Media played major role in making people aware about the event. If we study the collected data then 98% of the respondent has said that yes media played important role in making people of the event (figure 7). This shows that people from different states, creed, caste and religion united against the corruption and participated in this movement. Media had provided common man with a platform where they voiced their opinion. Around 87% of the respondent believed that people and media has come together to support the movement. Therefore we can say that media had played positive role in bringing the people together.

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