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# THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN SHAPING CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY DYNAMICS

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## ABSTRACT

The media, often referred to as the "fourth pillar of democracy" alongside the legislature, executive, and judiciary, plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and awareness in society. Ensuring a free and independent media is essential for upholding democracy. Although Part 3 of India's Constitution doesn't explicitly mention press freedom, the Supreme Court has interpreted the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) to include freedom of the press. Journalism's fundamental objective remains consistent: to reflect society, even when the reflection is unflattering.

With advancements in technology, widespread publication of newspapers in regional languages, and the rise of the internet and mobile applications, news and information are now accessible to all. This expanded reach enhances global awareness and keeps individuals informed about current events. However, contemporary media practices, particularly in high-profile cases, have drawn criticism for sensationalizing news and distorting facts to attract attention and compete for viewership, thereby undermining the media's role as a watchdog and its credibility.

There's a debate whether the media should refrain from reporting on cases that could interfere with court proceedings. Termed "trial by media," this phenomenon involves the public condemnation of individuals without fair representation. This study investigates the impact of such media trials, often turning into public spectacles, through the analysis of notable instances. It aims to spotlight the environment of public shaming created by the media, which contradicts the principles of freedom and fairness. Ultimately, this research seeks to explore both the positive and negative roles of the media in India's criminal justice system.

**Keywords:** Media, Criminal Justice System, Media Trial, Freedom of speech & expression

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

In the digital era, the media's influence on the public continues to expand rapidly. Through newspapers, news outlets, radio, and television, the media not only disseminates information but also shapes the narratives and discussions that capture public attention. The widespread coverage of crimes poses challenges for defense attorneys, defendants, and prosecutors alike. Judges must maintain impartiality in their decisions, regardless of any media exposure prior to trial. However, law enforcement officials involved in the case may be swayed by media reports when providing information related to the case. Media coverage of trials, especially through simulated courtroom discussions, can sway the behavior and attitudes of jurors and witnesses. Furthermore, live media coverage of court proceedings can disrupt fair trial processes and influence the administration of justice.

The concept of "trial by media," prevalent in the twenty-first century, refers to the impact of newspaper and television coverage on an individual's reputation before or after a court verdict. This has sparked intense debates between advocates of press freedom and those who prioritize individuals' rights to fair trials and privacy. In cases resembling modern-day witch hunts, the media is often criticized for fueling public hysteria.

The correlation between crime and public perception is crucial in shaping the criminal justice system. The media plays a pivotal role in framing discussions about crime, criminal behavior, and public policy. Crime stories are often sensationalized for entertainment purposes, as seen in the coverage of cases such as the Aarushi Talwar murder trial (2012). By highlighting specific issues and setting the agenda, the media influences public opinion and perception. For many Indian citizens, the media serves as their primary source of political information. In a democratic society, the media's role is to promote transparency, accountability, raise public awareness, and foster open discussions and debates.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. MEDIA & ITS RELEVANCE IN INDIAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:

Media, as a communication medium, has played a pivotal role in connecting people worldwide. The term "media" derives from the Latin word "medium," meaning "in the middle." It encompasses traditional mass communication systems, content creators, and

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<sup>1</sup> Altheide, D. L. (2009). Moral panic: From sociological concept to public discourse. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 5(1), 79–99.

various technologies facilitating mediated human interaction. Commonly, "media" and "mass media" are used interchangeably, with the former gaining prominence alongside the advent of newspapers and magazines.

Acting as a conduit for information and entertainment to a broad and diverse audience, media has undergone significant evolution, with online newspapers, journals, and periodicals gaining prominence. The rise of web-based news sources has led to their popularity matching that of their print counterparts. Mass media has not only heightened social awareness but also provided individuals with convenient ways to navigate their lives.

In recent years, investigative journalism has assumed greater significance in uncovering crimes, allegations, and misconduct within the media itself. Over time, media has influenced people's thoughts, behaviors, and decision-making processes. Media influence typically refers to the reinforcement or alteration of certain groups' beliefs through media messages. Various factors, including demographics and the psychological state of the audience, contribute to this influence.

The impact of media on public opinion can extend to the judiciary, with media narratives potentially shaping court decisions. It is plausible to suggest that public opinion influences judicial outcomes due to the intrinsic link between human psychology and perspectives. The degree of influence varies among individuals, with minimal impact generally yielding more favorable judicial outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the absence of explicit provisions for media freedom in the Indian Constitution, Article 19(1)(a) guarantees freedom of expression, indirectly permitting media organizations to report on societal discussions. With their extensive reach, news outlets often provide firsthand accounts of crimes. In some instances, cases go unreported due to societal fear or lack of awareness among marginalized communities. Media coverage can shed light on such issues, prompting societal attention and potential resolutions.

Historic cases, such as the Jessica Lal murder case, the Arushi-Hemraj murder case, and the death of Sushant Singh Rajput, have gained significant visibility due to the advent of social media platforms. Media plays a crucial role in shaping policy and its effective enforcement,

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<sup>2</sup> Bortner, M. A. (1984). Media images and public attitudes toward crime and justice. In R. Surette (Ed.), *Justice and the media: Issues and research* (pp. 15–30). Charles C. Thomas.

evolving into a valuable tool for data collection and dissemination. Investigative journalism has become increasingly vital, uncovering criminal claims, corruption, and their consequences, thereby safeguarding society against misconduct and facilitating informed decision-making.

Through comprehensive reporting, individuals are empowered to form their own opinions on various issues. However, media coverage can also lead to contentious debates, potentially influencing public opinion beyond the bounds of due process of law.

### **3. ROLE OF MEDIA IN DELIVERING JUSTICE :**

Previously, the media has played a crucial role in raising awareness and ensuring justice in cases such as the Jessica Lal murder case and the Priyadarshini Mattoo case. These instances highlighted instances where justice was delayed or denied. For instance, in Jessica Lal's case, where it took seven years for the court to determine that the evidence against Manu Sharma, a politician's son, was inconclusive, the media took proactive steps to seek justice. They resumed investigation efforts where the police had left off and amplified public demands for justice. This public outcry applied pressure on law enforcement, administration, and government entities, ultimately leading to Manu Sharma's conviction and life imprisonment.

Similarly, in the Priyadarshini Mattoo case, where a 23-year-old law student was raped and brutally murdered by her senior, Santosh Singh, the son of a senior IPS officer, the media played a significant role. Despite Santosh Singh's acquittal after three years of court proceedings, the media engaged in widespread investigative journalism to uncover flaws in the police investigation. Their efforts prompted the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to intervene, resulting in the arrest of the culprits. These cases demonstrate how responsible media can positively impact society and contribute to the pursuit of justice.<sup>3</sup>

### **3. SOCIAL-MEDIA AND ITS ROLE IN SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION**

The emergence and rapid expansion of social media platforms have fundamentally transformed the process of shaping public opinion. With the advent of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other platforms, information - alongside opinions and persuasive messages - can now reach a wider audience at a faster pace than ever before. Social media sites have

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mahindrauniversity.edu.in/blog/role-of-media-in-the-process-of-justice-in-india/>

evolved into crucial arenas for political discussions, policy debates, and social activism, fundamentally changing the dynamics of citizen engagement with politics and societal matters (Conover et al., 2011). These platforms empower users to generate and distribute content, fostering a more participatory culture in public discourse (Jenkins et al., 2016). The emergence of social media platforms has revolutionized the dissemination of information, fostering a rapid and dynamic news cycle that enables real-time sharing of news and events. This characteristic has greatly accelerated public response and interaction with ongoing developments, facilitating a more immediate engagement with societal issues. However, alongside these benefits, the instantaneous nature of social media also poses challenges, particularly in the realm of misinformation.<sup>45</sup>

Social media's capacity for swift information dissemination has the potential to amplify the spread of misinformation, complicating the formation of informed public opinions (Vosoughi et al., 2018). The rapid dissemination of unverified or false information can lead to the proliferation of inaccuracies and misconceptions, undermining the public's ability to discern fact from fiction. This phenomenon highlights the importance of critical media literacy skills in navigating the complexities of social media platforms. Furthermore, the personalized nature of social media algorithms can contribute to the formation of 'echo chambers' or 'filter bubbles', wherein users are predominantly exposed to content that aligns with their existing beliefs and preferences (Pariser, 2011). This selective exposure to information can reinforce preconceived notions and biases, potentially limiting the diversity of perspectives to which users are exposed. As a result, individuals may become insulated within ideological bubbles, impeding the exchange of diverse viewpoints and hindering constructive dialogue.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, social media platforms have emerged as influential tools for shaping public opinion, particularly during election periods. Political parties and candidates leverage these platforms for campaigning, voter engagement, and framing political narratives (Bond et al., 2012). The pervasive reach of social media enables political messages to be disseminated widely, potentially influencing voter behavior and shaping public discourse. However, the use

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<sup>4</sup> Conover, M. D., Ratkiewicz, J., Francisco, M. R., Gonçalves, B., Menczer, F., & Flammini, A. (2011). Political polarization on Twitter. *ICWSM*, 133(26), 89-96.

<sup>5</sup> Jenkins, H., Shresthova, S., Gamber-Thompson, L., Kligler-Vilenchik, N., & Zimmerman, A. M. (2016). *By any media necessary: The new youth activism*. NYU Press.

<sup>6</sup> Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). *The spread of true and false news online*. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146-1151.

of social media for political purposes also raises concerns about the manipulation of public opinion through targeted messaging and the spread of disinformation.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these challenges, social media plays a multifaceted role in shaping public opinion, offering both opportunities and obstacles to informed discourse. On one hand, it enhances democratic engagement by facilitating information sharing and fostering public participation in political and social issues. Social media platforms provide a platform for marginalized voices to be heard, amplifying grassroots movements and promoting civic engagement. On the other hand, the unchecked dissemination of misinformation and the formation of echo chambers pose significant challenges to the integrity of public discourse. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to promote media literacy, encourage critical thinking skills, and foster a culture of responsible online engagement. By empowering users to navigate social media platforms discerningly and critically evaluate the information they encounter, we can mitigate the negative impacts of misinformation and echo chambers while harnessing the potential of social media to enrich democratic dialogue and informed public opinion formation.

## **5. MEDIA TRIAL CASES ANALYSIS :**

### **• JESSICA LAL MURDER CASE (1999)**

In 1999, Jessica Lal, a former model working as a barmaid, was fatally shot by Manu Sharma, also known as Siddharth Vashisth, the son of Vinod Sharma, a former Union Minister of the Congress party. The incident occurred at a restaurant owned by socialite Bina Ramani in Mehrauli, South Delhi, after Jessica refused to serve liquor to Sharma and his friends. Initially acquitted by the trial court, the case garnered significant media attention and public outcry.

Following public pressure and media scrutiny, Manu Sharma's acquittal was reconsidered. Despite the Delhi police's failure to sustain their case initially, the Delhi High Court later sentenced him to life imprisonment in 2006. The High Court reevaluated witness testimony, giving weight to statements from individuals like Malini Ramani, who witnessed Sharma's presence and misconduct at the restaurant, even though she wasn't an eyewitness to the murder.

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<sup>7</sup> Bond, R. M., Fariss, C. J., Jones, J. J., Kramer, A. D., Marlow, C., Settle, J. E., & Fowler, J. H. (2012). *A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization*. *Nature*, 489(7415), 295-298.

The testimony of Beena Ramani was particularly crucial in the High Court's decision, leading to Sharma's conviction.

Throughout the trial and judgment, media coverage extensively labeled Manu Sharma as a suspect in the Jessica Lal murder case, circulating his photograph widely. This media portrayal influenced public perception and presented practical challenges during Sharma's identification parade.<sup>8</sup>

#### • SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT CASE (2020)

Sushant Singh Rajput, a prominent Bollywood actor, was found dead in his Mumbai apartment on June 14, 2020. Initially deemed a suicide by the Mumbai police, the case swiftly became mired in controversy, with various claims and conspiracy theories emerging. Rajput's family alleged foul play and called for a more thorough investigation, prompting the transfer of the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in August 2020. Additionally, other agencies such as the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) became involved, probing into drug-related offenses and financial irregularities.

The arrest of Rajput's girlfriend, Rhea Chakraborty, on drug-related charges by the NCB further fueled speculation, although she was later released on bail. The case has sparked a wider debate surrounding nepotism in Bollywood and the challenges faced by outsiders in the industry. Despite the CBI's inquiry yielding inconclusive results, with no evidence of foul play discovered, the agency did not rule out the possibility of homicide and recommended further investigation.

The case remains contentious, touching upon issues of mental health awareness, transparency in investigations, and the role of law enforcement agencies.

The Sushant Singh Rajput case stands out as the most extensive media trial in the history of Indian broadcast media. The case garnered international attention and was continuously covered for several days across various media platforms. It sparked a flurry of curious, eccentric, and often absurd conspiracy theories, which were extensively broadcasted on Indian news networks, social media platforms, newspapers, and even in global politics.

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<sup>8</sup> Siddharth Vashish @ Manu Sharma v. State NCT of Delhi (2010)6SCC1; (2010)2SCC (Cri)1385

Following the tragedy, news stations embarked on continuous 'Live Streaming' coverage, providing updates hour by hour, day by day, and week by week without pausing to address other pressing issues. This relentless focus on the SSR story highlighted several shortcomings and blunders in Indian journalism. The extensive coverage of the actor's case led to the proliferation of sensationalized and fake journalism, undermining the integrity of news reporting.

The media's fixation on Rhea Chakraborty, the prime suspect in the case, further exacerbated the situation. She was portrayed as a villain with numerous allegations hurled against her. News channels relentlessly aired provocative headlines, such as "Sushant par Rhea ka kaala jaadu" (Rhea's black magic on Sushant).

Overall, the media's handling of the matter was reckless, thoughtless, and devoid of ethical considerations. There was a clear failure to differentiate between responsible reporting and sensationalism.

Furthermore, the media's coverage infringed upon Rajput's privacy and dignity. Inappropriate and intrusive reports, including images of his dead body, caused immense distress to his family and friends. This disregard for sensitivity and decency further underscored the unethical conduct of certain media outlets.

#### • **ARUSHI TALWAR'S MURDER CASE (2008)**

The Arushi Talwar murder case, also known as the Noida double murder case, garnered significant attention in 2008. The tragic incident unfolded when 14-year-old Arushi Talwar was found dead in her bedroom at her parents' residence in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The following day, the family's domestic worker, Hemraj Banjade, was discovered deceased on the terrace of the flat. Initial investigations by local authorities proved flawed, leading to the case being handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The case was marked by numerous disputes and twists, with allegations ranging from honor killing to sexual misconduct and police corruption. Arushi's parents, Rajesh and Nupur Talwar, were initially accused of the murders but were later acquitted by the Allahabad High Court in 2017. However, the CBI inquiry was marred by inconsistencies and gaps, hindering efforts to establish a clear motive or identify the perpetrator. The Arushi Talwar case



underscored various concerns about India's criminal justice system, highlighting the need for greater transparency, accountability, and sensitivity in investigations. Additionally, it shed light on the significant role played by the media in shaping public opinion and influencing the course of the inquiry. Despite ongoing controversy and unresolved aspects of the case, it continues to captivate public interest and fuel debates.

From the outset, the media sensationalized the Arushi Talwar case, offering speculative and irresponsible coverage that fueled suspicion around the victim's parents, Dr. Rajesh and Nupur Talwar. This led to public condemnation of the Talwars, with the media spreading assumptions and creating an atmosphere of doubt. Their relentless coverage contaminated the crime scene and destroyed evidence, further complicating the investigation.

The media's interference eventually impacted the case's outcome, as the public opinion influenced by sensationalized reporting played a significant role. The Talwars endured constant scrutiny and suffered damage to their mental health due to the media's portrayal. Their reputation was tarnished, leading to a prolonged battle to clear their names.

In summary, the media's handling of the Arushi Talwar case was highly detrimental, resulting in a miscarriage of justice and severe harm to the Talwar family's reputation. It underscores the need for responsible journalism, urging the media to refrain from sensationalizing cases to the extent that it influences investigations and trials.<sup>9</sup>

## 6. CONFIRMATION BIAS

Confirmation bias in media pertains to individuals' inclination to seek out and interpret information in a manner that reinforces their preexisting beliefs or biases. In the context of crime reporting, confirmation bias can significantly influence public perception in the following manners:

- **Selective exposure:** Individuals tend to consume media content that validates their existing beliefs and attitudes about crime. For instance, someone inclined to believe that specific demographic groups are more prone to criminal behavior may actively seek news stories that corroborate this viewpoint while disregarding contradictory information.

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<sup>9</sup> Sara Sun Beale, The news media influence on criminal justice policy, Volume 48, Issue 2, November 2006 <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu> as visited on 26/02/2024

- Interpretation of information: Despite being presented with the same factual information, individuals may interpret crime-related news in a manner that aligns with their biases. For example, two people reading an article about a crime might interpret the perpetrator's race, socioeconomic status, or motives differently based on their preconceived notions.<sup>10</sup>
- Polarization of public opinion: Confirmation bias can contribute to the polarization of public opinion on crime-related issues. As individuals become more entrenched in their own beliefs, they may be less receptive to alternative viewpoints, hindering constructive dialogue and compromise on matters concerning crime prevention, criminal justice reform, and community safety.
- Resistance to contradictory information: Individuals affected by confirmation bias may resist information that contradicts their existing beliefs about crime, even when presented with compelling evidence. This resistance can perpetuate misinformation and misconceptions, further shaping public perception in a manner that diverges from reality.

## **7. DIFFERENT MEDIA OUTLETS ESSENTIAL FOR SPREADING INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC**

- PRESS COUNCIL OF INDIA:
- FIRST PRESS COMMISSION (1952-1954)
- SECOND PRESS COMMISSION (1970-1982)
- TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA (TRAI)
- BROADCASTING REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA (BRAI)
- INDIAN BROADCASTING FOUNDATION (IBF)
- INDIAN NEWSPAPER SOCIETY (INS)
- INDIAN FEDERATION OF WORKING JOURNALISTS (IFJW)

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<sup>10</sup> J Glascock, Relationship of media usage to attitudes towards police, Volume 71, Issue 5, published on July 2023 <https://www.tandfonline.com> as visited on 26/02/2024

- INDIAN JOURNALISTS UNION (IJU)
- THE NEWS BROADCASTERS ASSOCIATION (NBA)
- ADVERTISING AGENCIES ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (AAAI)
- INDIAN WOMEN'S PRESS CORPS
- PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
- CHILDREN FILM SOCIETY OF INDIA
- NATIONAL FILM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.<sup>11</sup>

## 8. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There remains a vast field for prospective research, as numerous cases persist where the media's influence shapes public perception of crime, often leading individuals to forfeit their ability to critically analyze and reflect upon information. The proliferation of platforms such as WhatsApp University and other social media channels has exacerbated this issue, creating a barrier in the minds of people that renders them susceptible to being swayed by the content disseminated therein. Consequently, there is an urgent imperative to educate the populace, fostering an understanding of discerning between authentic news and misinformation, and emphasizing the importance of allowing the judiciary to carry out its duties without undue interference.<sup>1213</sup>

In recent years, the advent of digital media platforms has revolutionized the dissemination of information, granting individuals unprecedented access to news and opinions from diverse sources. While this technological advancement has democratized access to information, it has also ushered in an era of information overload and susceptibility to misinformation. Social media platforms, in particular, have emerged as potent vehicles for the rapid spread of news, with users often sharing content without verifying its accuracy or authenticity. This phenomenon has given rise to the concept of "WhatsApp University," where misinformation

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<sup>11</sup> Aditi Anand, Ms. Mohini Taneja- The Influence of Media on Public Perception of Crime

<sup>12</sup> Hermida, A. (2012). Social journalism: Exploring how social media is shaping journalism. In E. Siapera & A. Veglis (Eds.), *The handbook of global online journalism* (pp. 309-328). Wiley-Blackwell.

<sup>13</sup> Pariser, E. (2011). *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You*. Penguin Press.

proliferates unchecked, leading to the formation of echo chambers and the reinforcement of existing biases. Users are frequently inundated with sensationalized headlines and misleading narratives, leading to an erosion of critical thinking skills and a susceptibility to manipulation by nefarious actors.<sup>14</sup>

In this context, the role of education becomes paramount. There is a pressing need to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complex media landscape effectively. Media literacy programs can play a pivotal role in achieving this objective, empowering individuals to critically evaluate information, discern reliable sources from unreliable ones, and identify instances of misinformation and propaganda.

Moreover, efforts to promote media literacy must extend beyond the classroom and into the broader public sphere. Public awareness campaigns, workshops, and seminars can serve as valuable tools in raising awareness about the dangers of misinformation and the importance of responsible media consumption. By fostering a culture of critical thinking and skepticism, we can inoculate individuals against the pernicious effects of misinformation and empower them to make informed decisions.

Furthermore, it is imperative to underscore the importance of respecting the independence and integrity of the judiciary. While the media serves a vital role in holding power to account and fostering transparency, it must also recognize the importance of allowing the judiciary to function free from undue influence or interference. Sensationalized reporting and premature judgments can undermine the credibility of the judicial process and compromise the pursuit of justice.

In conclusion, the proliferation of digital media platforms has ushered in a new era of information dissemination, presenting both opportunities and challenges. While social media has democratized access to information, it has also facilitated the spread of misinformation and the erosion of critical thinking skills. Efforts to promote media literacy and foster a culture of responsible media consumption are essential in safeguarding the integrity of public discourse and upholding the principles of democracy. Additionally, it is crucial to respect the independence of the judiciary and refrain from prejudicing legal proceedings through sensationalized reporting. By working together to educate and empower individuals, we can

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<sup>14</sup> Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). *Social media and fake news in the 2016 election*. Journal of Economic Perspectives, 31(2), 211-36.

build a more resilient society that is capable of navigating the complexities of the digital age with confidence and discernment.<sup>15</sup>

## 9. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Enhanced punishments and legislative amendments are deemed the most effective means to regulate and control media behavior, ensuring it doesn't impede the judicial process. Upholding the autonomy of courts in civil and criminal matters is paramount, and media outlets mustn't operate with unchecked freedom. Enforcing stringent laws and holding the media accountable are imperative. The media must grasp the concept that with great power comes great responsibility, adhering to ethical standards of journalism.

Moreover, it's crucial to recognize that while freedom of speech and expression is fundamental, it shouldn't supersede the right to a fair trial. Fair trial rights, rooted in natural justice principles, are essential human rights. In my view, an accused's right to a fair trial outweighs freedom of speech because it directly impacts an individual's life and liberty. Media outlets prioritizing viewership over a fair trial should face consequences to deter similar actions by others.<sup>16</sup>

The 200th Law Commission Report titled "Trial by Media: Balancing Free Speech and Fair Trial in Criminal Proceedings (Proposed Amendments to the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971)" proposes legislation to prohibit the media from disseminating prejudicial information regarding the rights of the accused in criminal cases, starting from the moment of arrest through investigation and trial. The report highlights the detrimental impact of pre-trial publications on the justice system and the integrity of the judiciary.

To uphold a healthy democracy, it is imperative to wield the power of contempt against the media, demonstrating that unrestricted freedom of the press cannot override the principles of fairness. Similarly, the press must exercise greater responsibility in disseminating information to ensure the integrity of both institutions is preserved. Failure to do so risks eroding public trust in the media, akin to the loss of faith witnessed in other institutions like the Church.

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<sup>15</sup> Erin M Kearns, if torture is wrong, what about 24? November 2017, [https:// digitalcommons.unomaha.edu](https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu) as visited on 26/02/2024

<sup>16</sup> Viven Carli, The media , crime Prevention and Urban safety: a brief discussion on media influence and areas for further exploration, December 2008, <https://cipc-icpc.org> as visited on 26/02/2024

Although the media plays a vital role in fostering democracy, citizens also bear the responsibility of consuming news with discernment. Media literacy initiatives can empower individuals to grasp the inner workings of media, differentiate between trustworthy and untrustworthy sources, and participate in informed public discussions.

Furthermore, aside from mainstream media conglomerates, it's crucial to bolster and advocate for independent journalism in India. This entails allocating resources for investigative journalism, backing community-driven media initiatives, and safeguarding freelance journalists who frequently encounter heightened risks compared to their staff counterparts.<sup>17</sup>

Media ethics can be fostered by educating journalists and reporters on the ethical principles of reporting. This can be done through workshops, training programs, and seminars.

The government can implement penalties for media houses that engage in false reporting. This can include fines or the suspension of media licenses.

In conclusion, controlling the media's negative role in the Indian criminal justice system requires a multi-faceted approach that involves the government, media and the public. By fostering responsible journalism, promoting transparency, and encouraging fact-checking, we can ensure that the media reports on criminal cases accurately and unbiasedly. Ultimately, this would help foster trust between the public and criminal justice system and ensure that the justice is served.

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<sup>17</sup> IV.V.L.N. Sastry: Walden University- Influence of Trial by Media on the Criminal Justice System in India

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