**Role of media in crime prevention and social awareness: Keeping society together, keeping it strong**

All around the world, media has continued to play a creative role in keeping the society strong. Apart from bringing fresh news from several sources, it is also seen as a guardian of peace and order. Media’s role is not limited to just that but it is also recognised for its creative input into the making of a civil society.  Crime has tormented the civil society for centuries. Media’s arrival in this regard can be seen as a blow to criminal organisations and syndicates. Often media has been successful at reaching the corners where police and other crime control institutions have failed to. There are thousands of such cases which were discovered and solved because of media’s efforts and contribution.  Media is also credited for serving an important role in the collective war against terrorism and other evils known as the biggest plagues for the civil society.

Bringing up cases of corruption before public’s eyes and covering cases requiring public’s attention and being with the society in the times of crisis, media is known for its impartial contribution to peacekeeping and maintaining order across nations. Several times media has been able to successfully bring the deficiencies of the public agencies to light and raise the level of social awareness. Social awareness has been recognised to be the best weapon to fight against crime and this cannot be achieved alone by the government agencies. Apart from the news media, the contribution of social media must be also recognised in this area. However, while the news media has often been criticised for churning dissatisfaction against the government agencies, still its role at fighting corruption and crime has been strongly felt by the society.

In the Asian countries where media has limited freedom compared to the Western and the developed nations, despite its limitations, media has played a very strong role as a vigilante. In these nations, the level of political and bureaucratic corruption has been very high. Media has played the role of a social representative in combating this kind of corruption. In the recent years while anti corruption struggle has kept growing stronger in China, India and Hongkong and produced mixed results in these regions, the role of media in helping people fight the war was appreciable.

Even in the U.S., media has kept rising in importance not only for criticising government’s wrong economic or political moves but for helping it build a progressive and globalised society. Even the media houses are subject to several kinds of pressures. In the U.S., the government and law have subjected them to limitations which stop them from playing as openly as they can. This is done for the fear that media’s influence can torment civil unrest. If media agencies were not there, the situation of immigrants and the coloured population in the U.S. might have been worse.

Not just this, in several cases where public’s reaction has been unable to bring out quick outcomes, public’s efforts were bolstered with the help of media. Whether it is the murder of a citizen of colour or cases of domestic violence, media has always brought the most pressing issues to everyone’s notice. In this regard, it has also helped citizens by spreading awareness so people can remain ready for changes in the political and economic environment of their nations. Especially in the times of crisis, media’s role grows more highlighted. Whether it is during a war or in times of economic or biological crisis, media has helped people by making them aware of sources from which they can find help and support.

In such times, you often see media working in tandem with government agencies to help people and create solutions that will empower the entire society. In several corners of the world where criminals and terrorist organisations or dictators rule, there is no other hope for people than media and other sources of information like news blogs. Media does not just inspire hope in these regions, but also helps build consensus over political and economic issues. In the backward nations however, media can play an even stronger role in helping the citizenry bring their nation and society out of the dark. In the backward nations, the government and civil machinery can be very weak. People are easily exploited and fall prey to evils like drug and crime syndicates and trafficking gangs. Innocent people often find it difficult to get help from the government agencies and media’s role has mostly been instrumental at creating pressure on government agencies for swift action. Whether it is genocide, war, terrorism or other types of crisis and even exploitation of the immigrants, media has been able to fill the gaps through its efforts and create harmony through social awareness.

Thinking specifically in terms of crime and its perils for the society, media is not just a whistle-blower or a watchdog agency. It has remained an active participant in crime control globally and in many nations where the freedom of the press is higher, its role is that of a social institution that aims to promote ethical behaviour. It is also among institutions with the highest influence on the society and people because of its knowledge of crime and deviance. Most of people’s knowledge of crime and crime patterns is derived from the media. While sometimes, it can give rise to unnecessary fears, it has also been able to warn the society and help people take preventive actions that could create a secure environment.  Not just this, media has also played a role in highlighting people’s contribution to the preservation of law and order. The overall picture of crime and justice that the common citizen has in mind is mostly influenced by media.  From sexual assault to murder, burglary and even domestic violence, a common citizen often tries to see a solution in media. In the developed nations, the relationship between police and media has been seen as symbiotic where they together defend social order and peace. Media consumption has often been related with increased fear of crime but on the other hand media has also been able to bring focus on crime and its havens using its investigative techniques and strategy. If we check the overall image of media in this regard then it is seen world over as a vigilante that through various ways helps the society defend itself against crime and several other social ills.

In the recent times, media’s image has weakened in several regions where it has been found less than effective and it is true mostly about the Asia and Middle East or the smaller underdeveloped nations. Its credit goes to several factors like the rising competition in the media sphere, rise of the social media and its misuse, political support for select media agencies and more factors. This has also led to a decline in media’s credibility and popularity as people have started turning towards better sources for credible information. Despite this fact, media remains a source of credible information for people around the world on many issues including crime, politics and economy. Media is still seen as more responsible than several other social institutions. As more options for information dissemination have emerged, people are now also relying on other sources to understand political, economic and social dynamics and how their society is evolving. Media’s role may have become limited compared to a decade ago but its participation in crime control and social awareness continues.