

## EXISTING CONTEXT OF MEDIA TRIAL IN INDIA

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper to study the present day scenario of media courts in India by assessing the correlation between the media, judiciary and society. A media trial can be said to happen when different media or even one particular media tries to cover the matter of the case and discuss it even when the court is adjudicating over that particular case. This problem is especially relevant for the developing country like India, where many of the popular cases are in the spotlight of the media. The paper attempts to examine and systematically review the impact that media trials have in particular on the presumption of innocence of the defendants and the fairness of the trial. It examines historical dynamics and establishes the most important legal norms that govern today's relations, such as significant cases and transforming media. The paper focuses on the influence of the media on the establishment of the story of the legal case and how this affects the person being tried and the court as a system. Following the tactics of the media tend to advocate for media trial, slanting of targeted media coverage and balancing of the media coverage among others. Moreover, the paper examines the existing responses and laws that have been established to tackle these problems, including new changes and the impact they have had on the identified problems.

**Keywords:** Media Trials, Judicial Impartiality, Context of Media Trial, Public Perception, Fair Trial, Sensationalism, Indian Constitution.

### Introduction

Media trials are the situations whereby the media give extensive coverage of legal matters even before the court decides on the matter at hand. Media trials are those whereby the media overrides the judicial process and carries out a trial based on public discussion on a legal issue. This is particularly true of India where the scope of this kind of media coverage has increased dramatically and raised questions on the implications of such coverage on the judicial process and people's conduct in court. This article will analyze the reasons of increase of media trials in India, the consequences of this phenomenon and the aspects of conflict of interests that are associated with them. And it's also finally understanding where it

stands vis-a-vis the legal system in explaining the effects of media trials on justice, particularly the impact of public perception, possible biases and constraints of ease into the legal system.

### **Overview of media trial**

In most cases, media trials do start with the detonation of the calamity through the hype of crime reporting. The press disseminates data that influences people's attitudes way before a decision is made. Such reporting would involve describing the features of the crime in detail, talking to any relevant witnesses, and discussing with legal practitioners, etc. The media helps educate people on various issues, but the stress it places on the administration of justice is unhealthy.

### **Impact on the Indian Judicial System**

#### **➤ Presumption of Innocence**

Imprisonment without trial is one of the notable aspects of justice; One is to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, this is a legal rule that operates throughout the world. Such principles can be subverted in the context of "media trials." If the people in general have read reports of some manner or other regarding the head of a public institution or agency where he or she is being charged with committing wrong, then it is unlikely that the jurors will be completely neutral regarding that spokesperson.

#### **➤ Influence on Public Opinion**

Media trials often end up creating an altered public opinion about a case. The manner in which the news media reports incidents can also impact the way people perceive the accused and in turn, affect their life, reputation and mental being. People start forming opinions even before the entire information is made available to them and this may lead to a lot of other serious problems later on too.

### **Current Scenario of Media Trials**

Over the recent past, the outlines of media trials in India have surfaced with some high profile cases. Crime reporting, particularly one centered around a 'star factor' or sensationalism, has raised issues regarding media ethics, fairness to the accused as well as fairness of justice.

High-Profile Cases: Nirbhaya crying in her friend's lap died after it was pushed inside the president's mansion and Sushant Singh Rajput in scene are cases which have attracted a firestorm of attention from the media. It is largely during these times that the media, in terms of the stories becoming the Laura in the trial of law, escalates the atmosphere as if the suspects had already supremed sack in dismissal.

Public Influence: Images of these court cases suggest that a person's case may suffer from 'trial by public' or 'trial by media impression' where there are negative portrayals of a party expected to be legal representatives long before any litigation has commenced. Conclusively this in their way deep underscores the right that the Indian Constitution guarantees, "the right to a fair trial," in other words, undermines the public respect for justice.

Their actions restrained them to only arms monitoring and to some extent monitoring the activities of the foreign state authorities.

### **Ethical Consequences**

#### ➤ Sensationalism (Sensation seeking journalism)

So, when inflamed with passion, it often works to the hindrance of true work, that is, original research, which is actually value-centric in nature rather than driven by client's wishes. To wit, certain media outlets couldn't find the circumstances of the trials to adorn facts provided to them.

#### ➤ Accountability in Reporting

Journalists are also obliged to serve ethical concerns by reporting in a proper way. One important prong of this definition is that journalists do not get involved in non-crucial controversies among the various parties. The scope of investigations and coverage is acceptable, given that ratings and engagement factors are paramount.

### **Consequences of Media Trials**

The evolution of the digital age has only made the situation worse. Information is disseminated instantly, and opinions are quickly formed, meaning that some facts may be missed out on. And this can bring about:

- **The Spread of Misinformation:** Because of the 24/7 media, false reports about ongoing cases has become common as the attention is not on the correct facts but on drama.
- **Social Media's Role:** Twitter and Facebook are tools for propagating distortions of the truth creating situations where the 'angry mob' takes matters into their hands.

### **Applications and Use Cases**

Nothing said in the previous section is limited to the courtroom. It affects:

- **Public Trust in Justice:** Negative media influence only on the few which are very few cases may encourage public scepticism regarding the judicial system.
- **Legal Reforms:** Ever since the public demand for fair trials in the courts has increased, media houses have been asked to self-regulate and reforms have been proposed to ensure that the accused gets his or her rights respected.

The relevance of media trials can be seen in different aspects. Cases against high social status individuals catch mass public attention. This highlights the need of regularization. Also, these can be used as an application in legal education to make law students understand the impact of media on: justice.

**Applications and Use Cases** An understanding of the impact of media trials can have multiple applications. For legal practitioners, it underscores the need for ensuring fair media representation and educating people about legal proceedings. Policymakers may have to consider legislation to regulate media reportage of cases under trial. Media organizations could adopt self-imposed guidelines to minimize sensationalism and concentrate on sober reportage.

Campaigns geared at raising the awareness of the public could be of help in informing the citizen of how the judicial process works thereby preventing the spreading of misinformation and promoting a more informed view of high profile cases. Apart from creating awareness, there campaigns could also push for the protection of individuals' right against the media.

### **Comparison with Other Countries**

As practiced in the United States and in the United Kingdom, as well, in some cases such media trials also take place. Their legal frameworks are, nevertheless, stricter. For instance, the UK's 'sub judice' rule helps to safeguard the interests of the parties to the case by restricting any reporting on the matters currently before the court. Such Measures may be implemented in India in order to reduce the effects of media trials on the public.

### **Challenges and Limitations**

News today moves at breakneck speed, which means that stories have to be reported fast. In that haste, mistakes can happen and often the coverage is not complete. This can end up doing a disservice to the people who are on trial or considering legal action. Additionally, there are no real regulations or directives about how ongoing trials should be covered by the media and therefore they can be exploited for entertainment value.

Media trials bring a number of challenges. Firstly, there is the risk of misinformation and emotional prejudice. It can be very difficult for defendants to receive a fair trial in the face of overwhelming adverse media coverage as it becomes almost impossible for judges and lawyers to shield jurors from media-generated public perceptions. Social media only amplifies this danger with its capacity to spread misleading information quickly.

Secondly, there is a heightened risk that certain individuals will be disproportionately targeted by the media due to their race, class or gender. This can compound societal divisions and skew public perceptions still further.

### **A review of current media experiments in India**

With increased access to news channels and social media Media monitoring is therefore important in the Indian scenario. This phenomenon includes intense coverage of court cases. legal arguments and details of the investigation This is often a public judgment before an official judgment is made. High-profile cases such as the Nirbhaya gang rape case, the Sheena Bora murder case and the recent Sushant Singh Rajput case show how media stories can shape public perception and influence legal outcomes.

When the media presents information, it can create an environment that influences public opinion and puts pressure on the judicial system. Broad dissemination of opinion and analysis often oversimplifies complex legal issues. and may lead to bias. Journalists and various channels Always analyze evidence Express your opinion about guilt or innocence. Analysis of personal life Raise ethical concerns about fairness and justice.

Many argue that media scrutiny undermines the basic legal principles of "Innocent until proven guilty" The media's emotional narrative can distort facts and create a narrative that is inaccurate. This process harms the reputation of the accused and the possibility of a fair trial.

### **Challenges and Biases**

So the media trial has a set of its own challenges. First, journalist bias can play in what stories get covered and how they're reported on. Second, media companies face very little accountability meaning they can push narratives with no real consequences only serving to cement pre-existing biases/stigma against groups of people which affects justice overall all the more.

### Final Thoughts and Recommendations

The current scenario of media trials in India raises serious questions for justice as well as public opinion. With the ever-changing media, a balance needs to be struck between reporting and responsible journalism. It would be interesting for future researchers to develop ethical norms related to media functioning while reporting in judicial matters, and the impact of this kind of portrayal on Justice outcomes. It is necessary that public is made aware about their part during judicial matters to ensure fairness and justice prevails for all.

### Conclusion

The media trials in India are increasing at an alarming rate, creating hardships for fair administration of justice and the principle of ‘innocent until proven guilty’. In order to overcome this situation, it becomes important to support responsible journalism and contemplate some regulatory effects in order to ensure procedural fairness in the context of judicial dealings. Further, it calls for undertaking research study directed towards exploring the workability of media regulations that have been adopted by other countries and their suitability in Indian perspective. Hence, developing a symbiotic association between media trial and legal system becomes necessary as public confidence on one hand is dependent upon fairness while on other is also based on perceptions.

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