



drishti

Mains Practice Questions

 drishtias.com/mains-practice-question/question-320/pnt



Q. Examine the following quote:

“ I'd rather have a free press without a government than a government without a free press.” (250 words)

12 Sep, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Introduce your answer by providing links between government and free press.
- Give your arguments using examples.
- Conclude your answer by giving future implication of free media on India

Introduction

Government acts as an important vehicle of delivering basic services and protector of basic human rights of the masses but what would happen if the government became all oppressive. **Free Press** acts as a means for keeping the elected officials **accountable** to the people, as an important **watchdog** on the activities of the government and the as disseminator of truth to the public.

Body

- The above quote has been extracted from the **Thomas Jefferson's** letter to his friend on the occasion of the **First Amendment to American Constitution** highlighting the importance of **free press**. **A free and independent media** that can keep the population informed and hold leaders to account, **is as crucial for a strong and sustainable democracy as free and fair elections**.
- **Fundamental Rights** under **article 19 (1) (a)** of the **Constitution** which guarantee **freedom of speech and expression**, also include **freedom of press**. The government on many occasions has been violative of this rights.
For Eg: During Emergency, media was completely controlled by the government and the voice of people was suppressed badly. Also, many were put behind the bars just for using their constitutional liberty.

Importance of Free Press

- Free Press can give voice to the peoples' opinion and shape their choices. **For Eg: India Against Corruption**, the peoples' movement received wide support and participation across the country only due to media hype, which forced the government to pass anti-corruption **Lokpal Bill**.
- Globally, we have seen a lot of examples of government without free press, the most notable among them was of **Saddam Hussain regime in Iraq**. The Government was powerful and peoples' were denied even the basic human rights.
- Without free and independent media, **citizens cannot make informed decisions** about how they are ruled, and **abuse of power**, which is inevitable in any society, **cannot be exposed and corrected**.

Conclusion

- In developing countries like India, the media have a great responsibility to fight ideas such as **casteism** and **communalism**, and help the people in their **struggle against poverty and other social evils**.
- A free, responsible and ethical press can keep the freedom of a nation intact.