

MEDIA FOR A VALUE-BASED SOCIETY

Present Scenario

Mass media, comprising of newspapers, magazines, radio, television, films, etc. is a potent means of not only monitoring, mirroring and following social changes but also of working as moulder, motivator, promoter and catalyst of socio-economic, political, cultural, intellectual, moral and spiritual transformation.

While the country's pre-independent media, mainly in the form of the press, was more patriotic and nationalistic in character, content and commitment; the post-independent media has witnessed increasing incidence of vested interests, commercialism, consumerism, sensationalism, sensualism, yellow journalism, undue political patronage and bureaucratic interference in the affairs of mass media.

The current media policies and practices are not enthusiastic about creating positive social changes or in addressing the needs of the disadvantaged. The publicly owned media as well as the private media seems to be caught up in serving consumers rather than citizens. Both are under pressure to maximize revenue through advertisements rather than creating a wholesome impact through better quality content.

Need For Self-regulation And Value-orientation

With the advancement of technology, the control over media has become increasingly difficult. At this point, some degree of self-regulation on the part of media industry is highly desirable. Presently, it is upon the owners, controllers, managers and gatekeepers of mass media to assess the character and content of the message being communicated to the public. Yet, is the message in consonance with the culture, heritage, values and ethos of Indian society, or not? Are the information, news, views and programmes positive and conducive to promote holistic health, harmony, happiness and sustainable development of people and society or are they detrimental, denuding, and debilitating for them? Appropriate answers to such questions should determine the quality and character of life and the society we want to create for ourselves and for posterity.

For this matter, media persons are to take up their profession as a challenge or holistic mission. Thus, the sterling qualities required in these individuals are a high degree of honesty, integrity, fearlessness, fair play, humanism, uprightness, whole-hearted devotion and dedication to the cause of moral and material upliftment of the suffering multitude and all round growth of the nation. The media professionals need to reorient their attitude and rearrange their priorities as per ground realities of socio-economic, political, moral, spiritual, scientific and technological changes and imperatives, for the achievement of an egalitarian and equitable society.

Exposure to Spiritual Wisdom

A little exposure to India's ancient spiritual wisdom, living values and Raja Yoga Meditation as being taught and practised in the Brahma Kumaris Institution, will not only help to clean the consciousness of media persons for developing the powers of positive thinking, discrimination, determination, detachment and judgment; but also will provide them sufficient self-empowerment to remain free from tension and tussles and to rise above the pulls and pressures of narrow mindedness, self-centredness, negative attitude and wrong value-orientation in personal, professional and public life.

Services of Brahma Kumaris

Prajapita Brahma Kumaris is an international, non-governmental, socio-spiritual educational institution rendering full time philanthropic public services for the promotion of

human, moral, ethical, cultural, social and spiritual values in personal, professional and civic life all over the world. Through over 6,500 study centers in India and in about 87 other countries, the institution is imparting teachings and training in the areas of value education, character-building, self-managing leadership, stress-free living, positive thinking, personality development, women empowerment, holistic health, global peace & cooperation, environmental de-pollution, de-addiction from drugs, alcohol and smoking etc., on the basis of its spiritual wisdom and easy Raja Yoga Meditation.

For such selfless community services, the institution has earned many national and international awards, accolades and recognitions including the International Peace Messenger Awards and Peace Medals from the United Nations to which the institution is officially affiliated as an NGO member having Consultative Status with the UN's Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) and UNICEF.

Role of the Media Wing in R.E.R.F.

The Media Wing, like other Wings of Raja Yoga Education & Research Foundation (R.E.R.F.) is comprised of many Brahma Kumars and Kumaris. It engages directly in mass media services as it keeps keen interest in media-related activities. It also carries out the planning and implementation of print and electronic media network for highlighting, publishing, broadcasting and telecasting the institution's value-based news, views, programmes and projects from time to time on regular basis in India and abroad.

In addition, the Media Wing is actively engaged in the dissemination and promotion of teachings, training and services on India's rich spiritual wisdom, culture, values, lifestyles and Raja Yoga meditation. The Wing has also prepared an interactive professional course on *value-based journalism*, which is offered to its inmates as well as to people from outside media organisations.

Main Objectives of the Media Wing

- *To inspire media personnel to take up the challenges of promoting positive values in their enterprises and of ending negativity in media coverage.*
- *To encourage media responsibility in promoting religious harmony, national character, unity and integration, and in protecting the interests of the weak, victimised and voiceless millions.*
- *To discourage media malpractices triggered by misinformation, biased news casting, invasion of privacy, indulgence in sensationalism and yellow journalism, and giving undue coverage to violence, obscenity and vulgarity.*

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