

# **The distinction between government-run and privately owned news channels in the current era**

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## **Abstract**

Understanding the differences between government-run and privately owned news channels is crucial for our democracy. This research paper looks at how who owns the news affects what we see, shapes our opinions, and influences democratic values. We explore how big corporations, government bodies, and independent owners shape the variety of voices in the media. We focus on how news channels try to stay independent while dealing with commercial or political pressures, and how this affects the integrity of the news we get. We also look at the conflict between serving the public and making a profit. Government-run channels aim to serve the public, while private ones follow market demands. This difference affects what news gets covered and how it's presented. In an era of misinformation, transparency and credibility are essential for building trust. We examine how news channels ensure accountability and fact-checking. Regulatory frameworks are crucial for maintaining media diversity and high journalistic standards. We compare global approaches to see what works best. This research paper calls for preserving media diversity, maintaining editorial independence, and supporting an informed public where truth and democracy flourish.

**Key Words** — Media ownership, Editorial independence, Public opinion, Transparency, Regulatory frameworks

## **Introduction**

News channels play a crucial role in shaping public opinion by providing information, analysis, and platforms for debate. They influence how we see social, political, and economic issues, making them essential for keeping us informed and engaged. This essay looks at how these channels have evolved, from the early days of radio to the rise of television. Government-run channels like the Doordarshan started out by offering reliable news, while private channels grew by using advertising revenue to compete in the media landscape. Government-run channels, such as the Doordarshan, act as the voice of the state and aim to deliver unbiased reporting while encouraging public discussion. On the other hand, private news channels like IBC 24 depend on ads and viewer ratings. They strive to maintain editorial independence, but commercial pressures can sometimes affect their objectivity. In today's digital age, the lines between government-run and private channels are becoming increasingly blurred. Both types of channels use technology to reach more people, yet they still have different goals and ways of operating. Understanding these differences is key to recognizing how they influence public conversation and democracy. This study explores these differences and their important impact on society.

## Literature Review

- Robert W. McChesney's book, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: How Ownership Controls Our Information* (1999), argues that concentrated media ownership stifles media plurality and weakens democracy.
- E. N. Ghanem's study, *Editorial Independence and the Middle East* (2012), published in the *International Journal of Communication*, explores the challenges state-run media face in maintaining editorial independence due to government influence.
- James W. Carey, in his article *Public Service Broadcasting* (1989) from the *Journal of Communication*, discusses the difficulties public service broadcasters encounter in balancing public interest with government influence.
- Elizabeth Boyarsky's article, *Transparency in Government* (2014) from the *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*, highlights the importance of transparency in government institutions, including media entities, to foster public trust.
- Andrew Chadwick's book, *The Politics of Regulation in Information Society* (2013), published by SAGE Publications, examines the complex relationship between media regulation and freedom of expression.

- Matthew Delli Carpini and Andrew Rojecki's article, *How Media Effects Democracy* (2000) on Project MUSE, investigates the role of media in shaping public discourse and its impact on a healthy democracy.
- Ben H. Bagdikian's *The New Media Monopoly* (2004) dives into how media consolidation and corporate ownership affect journalism and democracy, shedding light on the challenges we face in today's media landscape.
- Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (2004) takes a global look at media systems in different countries, showing how they shape our understanding of politics and democracy.
- Pippa Norris's *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies* (2000) explores how media can foster civic engagement and shape democratic participation, highlighting the vital role that journalism plays in our society.
- Yariv Tsfati and Joseph N. Cappella's study, *Do People Watch What They Do Not Trust?* (2003), investigates how scepticism towards the media affects what people choose to watch, offering valuable insights into the relationship between media consumption and trust.

## Objectives of the study

In our fast-paced media world, grasping the nuances between government-run and privately owned news channels is vital. This chapter lays out what our research paper aims to achieve, using India's "Doordarshan" and "IBC 24" as focal points. We want to understand:

- How media ownership affects diversity.
- Look into editorial independence.
- Compare public service ideals with profit motives.
- Check transparency and trustworthiness.
- Examine regulations.
- Explore how these channels shape democracy.

We'll use real examples and hypothetical scenarios to illustrate editorial biases, autonomy, and the impact of censorship or propaganda within these channels.

## Hypothesis

In this chapter, we explore the differences between government-run and privately owned news channels, focusing on "Doordarshan" and "IBC 24." We believe that the way these channels are owned significantly affects the variety of content they produce, with government-run channels likely showing less diversity due to political influences. We expect privately owned channels to enjoy greater editorial independence. Government-run channels, like Doordarshan, are likely to prioritize informative and educational content, while privately owned ones, like IBC 24, might focus more on attracting viewers and increasing ad revenue. We also anticipate that government-run channels will have higher transparency and credibility because they are obligated to maintain public trust. Regulatory frameworks are likely to affect government-run channels more strictly. Finally, we think government-run channels might play a bigger role in shaping political discourse and public opinion. These ideas guide our research into how these news channels influence public conversation, democracy, and media diversity.

## **Methodology**

This research paper uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a well-rounded understanding of the topic. Our research methodology is crucial as it details the approach, we used to gather information, ensuring the study's credibility and coherence. We follow a positivist philosophy, focusing on obtaining factual knowledge through observation and measurement, which helps us collect data that can be analysed statistically for concrete insights. We chose a deductive approach, starting with hypotheses and testing them against real-world observations, allowing us to measure concepts quantitatively and make broader generalizations. Our research design is exploratory, aiming to deeply understand the research questions and generate insights, adapting as new information emerges despite some risk of bias.

Data was collected through an online survey distributed via WhatsApp, which is efficient and can quickly reach many people. The survey included both open and closed-ended questions to capture a wide range of responses, and it was divided into two sections: one for personal details and another for questions about the differences between government-run and privately owned news channels, totalling 22 questions. We targeted 100 people of different age groups, and 60 respondents provided their opinions, with the sample consisting of 41% women and 59% men. Convenience sampling was used to reach people active on social media who were easy to contact. Ethical considerations were central to our study; we ensured the

authenticity and proper use of the collected data and treated respondents with respect and transparency, informing them about the research's purpose and maintaining honesty throughout the process.

## Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results of a survey conducted in the Indian media market, focusing on viewers of government-run and privately owned news channels. The survey examined their preferences, views on editorial independence, media pluralism, and how these channels influence their perceptions of political and societal issues. Sixty individuals participated, representing a diverse group of regular news consumers.

- **Demographics** — Our respondents included 59% males and 41% females, with 84% living in urban areas and 9% in rural areas.
- **Ownership Structure** — Most respondents (74%) preferred private news channels for their diversity, while 26% favoured government channels.
- **Diversity of Opinions** — Nearly half (48%) felt private channels offered more diverse opinions, 32% preferred government channels, and 20% saw no significant difference.
- **Range of Viewpoints** — A majority (54%) believed private channels provided a broader range of viewpoints.
- **Political Influence** — 64% thought government channels were significantly influenced by politics.
- **Corporate Influence** — 46% saw moderate corporate influence on private channels.
- **Editorial Independence** — 69% felt private channels had greater editorial independence.
- **Political Interference** — 58% believed government channels were often politically interfered with.
- **Advertiser Influence** — 45% thought private channels were sometimes influenced by advertisers.
- **Public Service Mandate** — 64% found it moderately important when choosing a news channel.
- **Content Type** — 49% believed government channels focused on informative content, while 57% saw private channels prioritizing sensationalism.

- **Transparency and Credibility** — 47% found government channels moderately transparent, and 67% considered them more credible.
- **Regulatory Impact** — 58% felt government channels were subject to stricter regulation.
- **Influence on Discourse** — 56% believed government channels had a significant impact on political discourse, while 78% saw a moderate impact from private channels.
- **Democratic Influence** — 64% felt government channels played a more significant role in influencing democratic processes.

Let's uncover how ownership shapes diversity, editorial independence, content priorities, transparency, regulatory influence, and their impact on democracy in Indian news channels.

- **Ownership and Pluralism** — Government channels like "Doordarshan" tend to have less diversity in viewpoints due to state control, whereas private channels like "IBC 24" offer more varied perspectives.
- **Editorial Independence** — Private channels enjoy higher editorial autonomy, experiencing less political interference compared to government-run channels.
- **Content Priorities** — "Doordarshan," driven by public service mandates, prioritizes informative and educational content, whereas "IBC 24" focuses more on content that boosts viewership and revenue.
- **Transparency and Credibility** — Government channels are perceived as more transparent and credible, likely due to their public service obligations. In contrast, private channels may appear less transparent because of commercial pressures.
- **Regulatory Influence** — Government-run channels face stricter regulatory scrutiny, which significantly shapes their content, unlike privately owned channels.
- **Impact on Democracy** — Government channels have a notable impact on shaping political discourse and public opinion, often aligning with state agendas. Private channels, while influential, maintain greater editorial independence, which affects their role in democratic processes differently.

These findings illuminate the distinct roles that government-run and privately owned news channels play in shaping public discourse and democracy in India.

## Conclusion

This research paper paints a vivid picture of how news channels in India, whether government-run like "Doordarshan" or privately owned like "IBC 24," shape the stories we hear and the opinions we form. We've uncovered a complex web where government channels, while less diverse and more influenced by politics, often maintain a higher level of trust and openness, thanks to stricter rules and a focus on public service. On the other hand, private channels offer a wider range of perspectives and more freedom in reporting, but they also face pressures from advertisers and might not always be as transparent. It's clear that both play vital roles in our democracy, but striking the right balance between serving the public interest and commercial demands is crucial. As we move forward, it's essential to ensure that our media landscape remains diverse, independent, and accountable, fostering a society where everyone's voice matters and truth prevails.

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