

Question: "Investigative Journalism is not yet developed in Pakistan as in the west". Do you agree? Give arguments in the favor or against the statement.

**Solution:**

A free and independent media is fundamental to democracy, and to ensuring public access to information. Journalists help to protect against the abuse of entrusted power for private gain and inform the public about corrupt activity. Their reports are the window through which citizens can view and understand the activities of public officials and corporate executives, and call them to account. Investigative reporting is essential to good governance. Investigative journalists expose corruption, often at great personal risk.

The fourth estate model "dictates the press to make the government accountable by publishing information about matters of public interest even if such information reveals abuses or crimes perpetrated by those in authority". From this perspective, investigative reporting is one of the most important contributions that the press makes to democracy and, resultantly, to the citizens. When we take into consideration the fact that most people do not exercise their right to the freedom of information in a direct and personal way, the significance of investigative reporting becomes all the more important. People are dependant on mass media: newspapers, radio, television and, increasingly, the internet, in order to have access to information. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the journalists to empower the citizens by exercising the right to information on their behalf, in matters pertaining to public interest, through investigative reporting. That is why journalists are not only supposed to use their access to information laws to inform themselves but also to better inform the public.

The media has a very substantial role in exposing corruption. The guilty do not like public attention and while investigative journalism is not that developed in Pakistan as in the western world, it certainly has great potential. The problem is that investigative journalism is anathema to both the public sector as well as the media's commercial transactions. Both the government (in third world countries like Pakistan) and free enterprise control advertisements that fuel the cash flow of the media balance sheet. Controlling the purse-strings gives them virtual VETO powers over investigative journalism. Whereas in developed countries such journalists are considered top of the line for any media corporate entity, in Pakistan the media bosses barely tolerate their presence. While curbing the powers of bureaucracy may not be an attainable goal in the present circumstances.

Investigative journalism has never been very prevalent in Pakistan because of the media control mechanisms. Here is a dark picture regarding the future of

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investigative journalism because it is in the interest of the government to keep media away from the facts so that they can ensure ignorant citizenry. Government creates hindrances in the way of investigative journalism on purpose.

In our country the situation become more alarming and painful in the past few years with the growth of violence against the press by militant parties and groups. Logically the authorities should have taken strong and effective measures against this trend in the paramount interest of the preservation of democratic norms. Instead strong arm methods against the investigation journalism many times seen to be emanating from official quarters.

So far, journalists in Pakistan have not started using their right to information instruments to unearth corruption cases and thereby holding public officials accountable. Elsewhere, journalists are digging deep and coming up with potentially embarrassing stories for the ruling elite. Such is the power of the right to information tools which is begging to be used by journalists in Pakistan. All that is going on in Pakistan there is hardly anything which could be called investigative journalism in the Pakistani press as in it has developed in the west. .