



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Role of Mass Media in the Economic Development of Pakistan: An Analysis**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study analyzes the role of mass media as a catalyst for economic development and its contribution to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Human Development Index (HDI) benchmarks in Pakistan. Mass media is often regarded as the fourth pillar of the state for its role in informing the public, facilitating decision-making, and identifying policy gaps. In Pakistan, media has been pivotal in fostering awareness on various social issues, highlighting corruption, advocating for educational advancement, addressing healthcare challenges, and nurturing democratic values. Its influence in shaping public opinion on development-related matters is profound, particularly in relation to the SDGs. The study examines the impact of mass media on economic and social development through qualitative and quantitative analyses, utilizing surveys and case studies to gauge the extent of media's influence on public policy and awareness campaigns. Findings reveal that key attributes contributing to effective mass media in Pakistan include autonomy, adherence to high-quality standards, and extensive reach. These attributes enable media to effectively set the public agenda, influencing the achievement of SDG targets and improvements in HDI metrics. To enhance media's role in Pakistan's development, it is recommended that policies be formulated to further support media independence, improve journalistic standards, and expand media outreach, thereby strengthening its capacity to contribute to sustainable development.

**KEYWORDS** Civic Education, Corruption, Economic Development, Health Systems, Journalists, Mass Media, Per Capita Income, Social Media

**Introduction**

The phrase "fourth pillar of the state" emphasizes the media's enormous impact on many facets of society, including politics, economics, and human behavior. Since its inception, Pakistan has had erratic patterns of economic growth, including periods of expansion, stability, and decline. However, Hussain (2012) observed that there can be both positive and negative effects from mass media, therefore greater research is still needed to determine exactly how it influences Pakistan's economic development.

Prat and David (2013) claim that the knowledge that is readily available to the general public considerably shapes their perspectives and that the mass media is essential to increasing this accessibility. Information dissemination, which is of utmost importance in our increasingly globalized world, is primarily accomplished through mass media, which includes traditional channels like books, newspapers, and magazines, and contemporary digital ones like television, radio, and the internet.

Media plays a crucial role in any society from various sociological perspectives. The Functionalist perspective asserts that mass media functions as both an agent of socialization and a reinforcement mechanism for societal norms. It helps transmit

cultural values, norms, and behaviors to individuals within the society. The Conflict Theory approach, on the other hand, focuses on how media can reflect, portray, and occasionally worsen already-existing societal differences such as those based on race, ethnicity, gender, or social class. It introduces the idea of "gatekeeping," which refers to the method by which a small number of frequently influential corporations and people regulate the information supplied through media outlets. This idea emphasizes the several gates that information, news, and entertainment must pass through to reach the general public. Governments or powerful businesses may occasionally exert influence or control over this gatekeeping, which may affect the stories and points of view depicted in the media. In essence, these sociological viewpoints provide many lenses to comprehend the complex function of media in forming cultural norms.

Economic development has three components: social, cultural, and political. The relationship or interaction between economic development's social, political, and cultural aspects must be first understood to understand the mass media's function (Nawaz, 1983).

Media plays a crucial role in shaping culture and cultural standards in contemporary society. It is essential to any community's development and success. Media has a significant impact but can also be used to manipulate people. Media can either promote peace or incite conflict because of its deep relationship to socio-political, economic, and cultural changes. Media may actively support a country's stability and promote development (Sphere Books, 1964). Platforms like television and entertainment, which promote consensus-building and uphold societal stability, can significantly impact economic growth within the context of mass media (Paul, 2006).

Conversely, Dell'Anno et al. (2016) present the case that mass media is not necessarily associated with increased productivity. They claim that some media content might not have any economic impact and might potentially draw people's attention away from useful activities. Therefore, it is still unclear how much actual economic growth is influenced by the media without a closer look.

A nation's economy is significantly influenced by the media in several ways. It can either support or challenge those in authority, exposing both their successes and failings. Media serves as a conduit between the public and those in positions of power, frequently taking on the role of the audience's voice and transmitting crucial economic information. The existence of the media is, nevertheless, directly related to the state because governments are in charge of its regulation. Additionally, media is supported by businesses through marketing and advertising, and consumer interaction is essential to its sustainability. As a result of its interactions with individuals from many interest groups, the media is a multidimensional participant in the economy.

Due to divergent viewpoints, many interest groups frequently experience conflicts and contradictions. The media, which is positioned among these various interest groups, is essential to effectively resolving these issues. Additionally, the media makes a conscious effort to advance the economy. The literature places a strong emphasis on a number of elements that support economic expansion.

The literature renders it evident that the media, when it acts independently, effectively delivers information services, and reaches a large audience, actively helps to economic development. Stiglitz (2002) asserts that media performs best when there is less knowledge asymmetry between those in power and the audience it serves. Media platforms that uphold these standards hold corporations and governments accountable

by enforcing strict monitoring and levying fines for breaking rules and laws. As a result, customers have more knowledge at their disposal to make wise selections (Islam, 2002).

### **Literature Review**

The world has evolved into a global village, mostly because of improved global linkages and enhanced connectivity. Nowadays, there are almost no barriers to news dissemination, and media is easily available to everyone. As a result, information or events are frequently made public before governments take any response. The world community is compelled to wait for their separate governments to take the appropriate steps as a result. People are significantly influenced by the media, which shapes their perceptions based on how it presents people, stories, or events. Not only have regular citizens' lives undergone substantial change as a result of the media's revolutionary power, but also the worlds of elites and decision-makers.

The expansion of international industrial and societal institutions has been accelerated by the growth of the media sector and the introduction of new technologies. The rapid development brought on by the expansion of media is now being used locally to strengthen communities. According to Omotoso (2010), media is used as a potent weapon to advance community economic development.

As emphasized by Robert Shiller (2002), Robin Burgess and Andrea Prat (2002), and others, the mass media not only acts as a reliable source of information but also as a powerful influencer on public opinion and the creation of narratives. The media has the power to control how quickly information is spread, as well as the audience it is intended for and the kinds of activities it inspires in a particular situation. It's crucial to keep in mind, too, that independent media may only cover some parts of a problem. There is no inherent certainty that the media will constantly promote increased openness and actions against corruption. Media could be prone to prioritizing dramatic and engaging news stories, thus deflecting attention from impartial reporting, in addition to the desire to fight corruption and promote economic progress. Unfortunately, a tendency toward sensationalism still exists in a number of media outlets, including those that have historically been regarded as reliable sources (Islam, 2002).

According to Coyne and Leeson (2004), the discussion of the variables influencing economic development has persisted for more than 200 years. In his iconic work published in 1776, Adam Smith made an attempt to shed light on the factors promoting economic growth, highlighting peace, a just legal system, and cheap taxation as important contributors. But in many instances, this ostensibly simple prescription for economic growth has not produced the desired consequences. A number of nations, including Armenia, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine, have put economic growth strategies into place, but either they were carried out ineffectively or they did not result in the intended economic prosperity. This poses a crucial question: If Smith's framework for economic development were so straightforward, why do so many nations still have economic difficulties despite following it? This complexity demonstrates that while Smith's principles offer insightful guidance, achieving sustainable economic development frequently involves complex problems that go beyond the scope of Smith's original framework. These problems include those related to governance, infrastructure, education, and global economic dynamics. The role of media in achieving the economic prosperity wasn't

discussed earlier and has only recently become part of discussion in this regard (Christopher et al. 2004).

Sen (1984; 1999) first proposed the idea of using the media as a platform to address and resolve societal problems while working to avert famines. Djankov et al. (2002) expanded this approach based on this concept to investigate the link between media ownership and poverty. Similar to this, the World Development Report (2002) added a chapter titled "Building Institutions for Markets" that emphasized the role that media play in development. The impact and contributions of the media have been analyzed from many angles. For instance, Besley and Burgees (2001) and Besley et al. (2002) evaluated the media's role in keeping the government accountable in the context of public policy and corporate governance, while Stiglitz (2002) investigated how media influences government transparency. Authors like Gross (1996), O'Neil (1997), McAnany (1980), Paletz et al. (1995), and Lent (1980) have all evaluated the current state of media in particular countries in their case studies. These case studies frequently fail to link public decisions with a thorough theoretical framework that takes into account the factors which influence how the media plays an integral part in economic development. It is challenging to fully address all of the complexities of economic development given how broad the subject is, both historically and conceptually. However, there is sufficient data to make judgments about the economic contributions of the media. The current analysis focuses on the factors affecting media's influence within these categories as well as how media adjusts to different policies. Furthermore, by using game theory, we offer empirical insights that support theoretical viewpoints and throw light on the practical facets of media's contribution to economic development.

Media has frequently been used as a propaganda tool throughout history, with instances ranging from the deceptive political-military linkages of the 1980s and 1990s to stories about the "evil empire," Saddam Hussein's storyline, and the weapons of mass destruction. The power of the media goes beyond mere propagandism; it increasingly impacts how decisions are made, allowing people to independently express their thoughts and support particular agendas or policies. According to Swedish academic Kent Asp (1986), who coined the term "mediatization," this increased function highlights the media's expanding influence on many societal and political spheres.

According to Nawaz (1983), the development of any contemporary society stems from the interrelated progress in numerous domains and disciplines. According to Rosero-Bixby (1990), improvements in sociology, economics, and governance are crucial for a country's development and the residents' security in the future. Economic development and these elements are clearly intertwined when analyzing societal growth, and mainstream media, as stated by Schramm (1964), plays a crucial part in this interaction. Therefore, as suggested by Nawaz (1983), we may conclude that the development of mainstream media is intimately related to the efficiency of the government and the health of the economy.

### **Hypotheses**

- H<sub>01</sub>: In Pakistan, the role of mass media has been unsatisfactory in contributing to economic development.
- H<sub>02</sub>: In Pakistan, if the media ethics are not practised properly, it cannot ascertain the advancement in economy like a developed democracy.

H<sub>03</sub>: Independent Mass media by creating not awareness among public about economic inequalities cannot strengthen democracy and cannot ultimately leads to economic development.

#### Alternate Hypotheses

H<sub>1</sub>: In Pakistan the role of mass media has been satisfactory in achieving economic development

H<sub>2</sub>: In Pakistan, if the media ethics are practised properly, it can ascertain the advancement in economy like a developed democracy.

H<sub>3</sub>: Independence of Mass media by creating awareness strengthens democracy that leads to economic development.

#### **Material and Methods**

In this paper, the impact of the media on Pakistan's economic growth is examined using a quantitative methodology. Deductive and explanatory in character, imperial analysis is the methodology, and positivism informs the study's ideology. By gathering information from a specific target demographic, this study is able to generalize the contribution of the media to economic development. For the quantitative approach, a questionnaire based on a Likert scale was created and distributed via emails and Google Forms to gather information on the general perception of media experts, those involved in the economy, researchers, academicians, and members of the general public regarding how media is influencing Pakistan's economic development.

#### **Target Population**

All four of Pakistan's provinces – Punjab, KPK, Baluchistan, and Sindh – as well as Azad Jammu Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and the Islamabad Capital Territory were included in this research's concentration on data collection from the Pakistani populace. The goal was to generalize the influence of mass media on democracy, media ethics, and the Human Development Index. The main goal was to determine how the public felt generally about the contribution of the media to Pakistan's economic growth.

The study specifically addressed important stakeholders, such as journalists, economists, businesspeople, researchers, and academicians, in order to do this. In addition to the presence of democratic institutions and adherence to media ethics, their perspectives on the role of mass media in promoting economic development in Pakistan were sought after.

#### **Sample Size**

Sampling is a technique for choosing a particular subset from a broader population, enabling researchers to extrapolate generalizations about the entire population from the details of the group they have selected. In this study, a non-probability sampling method was used to determine the population's characteristics, which were in line with the goals and inquiries of the study. This strategy was chosen for its affordability.

There are multiple ways for selecting the right sample size for a study. According to Potter (2005), a sample size of more than 300 is typically regarded as

adequate. Additionally, a sample size of between 80 and 300 is frequently seen to be appropriate for social science research (Rashidian et al., 2006). A sample size of 330 was chosen after carefully weighing the various sample size concepts, and 315 respondents provided responses.

### **Data Collection Tool**

The survey method is widely regarded the best way to collect data in the social sciences. This approach enables researchers to methodically gather primary information in a way that fully answers concerns about diverse variables. Additionally, the survey approach entails gathering information from a representative sample of the entire population. This enables results to be extrapolated in order to learn more about the general perceptions and attitudes of the entire population about a given issue or topic.

The targeted group was surveyed in order to collect first-hand information. Three independent and one dependent variables are used in the study. Survey questions were taken from several studies and then modified to fit the study questions. In this study, the dependent variable is economic development, and the independent variables are mass media, democracy, and media ethics. These four variables were covered by a total of 27 survey questions that were carefully crafted to capture the target population's real opinions. Preliminary questions in the survey also asked about the respondents' demographics (name, age, gender, education level, employment status, and profession), as well as their opinions on how the media affects economic development and the nation's economy as a whole.

### **Data Collection Sources**

Both primary and secondary data collection techniques were used in this investigation. Secondary data was acquired from a variety of sources, including published books, articles, newspapers, official government reports, international and national journals, and the World Bank report "Right to Tell: Role of Mass Media in Economic Development." To gain insight into the crucial role of mass media, democracy, and media ethics in economic development as well as to study pertinent theories, this secondary data was carefully analyzed.

In addition to gathering secondary data, a survey questionnaire was used to gather primary data from the target demographic. This main data collection aims to record respondents' opinions on the function of the media and examine the study's stated research problem. To obtain the intended research results, primary and secondary data were combined.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

The multiple regression technique was used in the research for analyzing the data that was gathered from primary sources. Since it works well for analyzing the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, this approach was adopted. The study closely examined the views and opinions of the target population on the function of mass media in economic development using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Regression model of the study

The linear regression model of the study is;

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3$$

### Where

Y= Economic Development (Dependent Variable)

$\alpha$ = Intercept

$X_1$ = Mass Media

$X_2$ = Democracy

$X_3$ = Media Ethics

### Reliability

The Cronbach Alpha method was used in the study to evaluate the validity of the scale that was used to gather the data. The scale employed in the study was regarded to be reliable for data collection when the Cronbach Alpha score was 0.7 or above. Additionally, inter-item correlations between 0.2 and 0.4 are frequently preferred. The scale utilized for data collection in this study was determined to have a Cronbach Alpha score of .88, indicating high reliability. The occurrence of inter-item correlations between the variables that fall within the range of 0.2 to 0.4 further attests to the dependability of the results.

### Pilot Testing

A sample of 65 respondents took part in the pilot study to ensure that the survey questions were clear, relevant, and aligned with the study's objectives. The results indicated that the questionnaire did not require any changes, allowing the main study to proceed.

### Ethical Consideration

The study was performed following strict ethical standards throughout the data collection and analysis process. Quantitative data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires through email, social media, and hard copies, with careful attention to maintaining respondent confidentiality. SPSS data entry was performed in accordance with ethical guidelines, ensuring the integrity and respectful handling of respondents' information.

**Table 1**  
**Reliability Statistics (Variable wise)**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Mass Media	.888	7
Democracy	.830	6
Media Ethics	.545	5
Economic Development	.863	9

The values of Cronbach Alpha in Table 1 above indicate that the mass media, democracy, media ethics, and economic development are all reliable, with respective values of 0.888, 0.830, 0.445, and 0.863. The values demonstrate the dependability and repeatability of the materials employed for data collection against each variable. Despite having a somewhat low Cronbach Alpha score, Media Ethics is nonetheless regarded as reliable because, by the established criteria, reliability cannot be less than 0.5.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 2**  
**Descriptive Statistics (Variable wise)**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mass Media	315	1.00	4.00	2.2599	.87138
Democracy	315	1.00	4.00	2.3370	.84435
Economic Development	315	1.00	4.00	2.5453	.75646
Media Ethics	315	1.00	4.20	2.8622	.60418
Valid N (listwise)	315				

Table 2 above displays the study's descriptive statistics. All of the variables utilized in this study's descriptive statistics include their maximum, minimum, standard deviation, and mean values. Media ethics, democracy, economic progress, and mass media each had mean values of 2.2599, 2.3370, 2.5453, and 2.8622, respectively. The average values demonstrate that no values exist at either extreme. It shows that, at 2.2599, mass media has the lowest mean value, and media ethics has the greatest mean value.

### Correlation Analysis

Correlation Analysis involves the use of the Pearson coefficient of correlation, a statistical measure used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between variables. Values for the correlation coefficient fall between -1 and +1. A strong positive correlation is indicated by a number around +1, and a strong negative correlation by a value near -1. The values' signs indicate whether there is an inverse (negative) or direct (positive) relationship between the variables. Typically, a correlation value of 0.5 or higher in either direction is thought to be optimal. In this study, the strength and direction of the association between the dependent and independent variables were determined using a Pearson correlation analysis using SPSS.

**Table 3**  
**Correlations Matrix**

	Mass Media	Democracy	Economic Development	Media Ethics	
Mass Media	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	315			
Democracy	Pearson Correlation	.690**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	315	315		
Economic Development	Pearson Correlation	.710**	.681**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	315	315	315	
Media Ethics	Pearson Correlation	.454**	.440**	.601**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	315	315	315	315

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Results and Discussion

The independent and dependent variables under inquiry in this study have a clear and positive correlation, as seen in the table above. These variables have high correlation coefficients that are all greater than 0.5, demonstrating a strong association between them. The correlation between mass media and economic development is specifically .710\*\*, which is remarkable and implies a significant and strong positive



correlation. Furthermore, the correlation between media ethics and economic development is .601\*\*, while the correlation between democracy and economic development is .681\*\*, both of which demonstrate strong and positive associations between these variables.

### Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical technique that evaluates the impact of one or more independent variables on a single dependent variable as well as the strength of the relationship between numerous independent variables. It also determines how effectively a theoretical or conceptual framework that was developed to look into and test hypotheses in a study fits the facts that was gathered. This analytical strategy is essential for figuring out the relationships between independent and dependent variables. The results of a linear regression analysis performed on the relevant dataset are shown below.

**Table 4**  
**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.644 <sup>a</sup>	.414	.409	.750

a. Predictors: (Constant), Media Ethics, Democracy, Mass Media

**Table 5**  
**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1						
	Regression	115.819	3	38.606	188.001	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	63.864	311	.205		
	Total	179.683	314			

a. Dependent Variable: Economic Development

b. Predictors: (Constant), Media Ethics, Democracy, Mass Media

**Table 6**  
**Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1						
	(Constant)	.117	.125	.930	.353	
	Mass Media	.321	.042	.370	7.709	.000
	Democracy	.262	.043	.292	6.134	.000
	Media Ethics	.381	.048	.305	7.870	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Economic Development

The coefficient of determination, also known as R-squared (R<sup>2</sup>), is a measurement of how well independent variables in a regression model explain changes in the dependent variable. R<sup>2</sup> is a measure of a model's goodness of fit and ranges from 0 to 1 (or 0% to 100%). For instance, an R<sup>2</sup> of 0.6 means that the variables that are independent account for 60% of the variance in the dependent variable. With an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 40.9% and a F value of 188.001, the model summary shows that mass media, democracy, and media ethics explain 41.4% of the variation in economic development. This indicates that these variables are important, with additional independent variables accounting for the remaining 58.6% of variation.

### SEM (Structural Equation Modelling)

#### Factor Loading Amos

As all of the construct loadings in this study are above the benchmark level of 0.71, indicating good factor loadings, they exhibit extraordinary quality. Additionally, when factor analysis is taken into account, all 27 of the study's questions surpass the predetermined standards. Each question's t-values and alpha coefficients are shown in Table 7, and both metrics are higher than expected values, demonstrating the validity and dependability of every question in the study.

**Table 7**  
**Factor Loading Amos**

Variables	Measure	t-value	P
	Massmed01		
	Massmed02	15.920	***
<b>Mass Media</b>	Masmed03	14.341	***
	Massmed04	15.724	***
	Massmed05	12.888	***
	Massmed06	10.369	***
	Massmed07	13.010	***
	Demo01		
	Demo02	9.522	***
<b>Democracy</b>	Demo03	9.661	***
	Demo04	9.564	***
	Demo05	8.439	***
	Demo06	9.658	***
	Ethics01		
<b>Media Ethics</b>	Ethics02	-2.308	.021
	Ethics03	7.761	***
	Ethics04	4.422	***
	Ethics05	-.255	.799
	HDI01		
	HDI02	10.989	***
<b>Economic Development</b>	HDI03	12.282	***
	HDI04	9.786	***
	HDI05	10.043	***
	HDI06	11.543	***
	HDI07	8.820	***
	HDI08	11.599	***
	HDI09	11.340	***

### Factor Loading

In this study, all t values are more than 2 or exceed the benchmark. While the p value's significant values are all less than 0.05. The investigation comes to the conclusion that there is a substantial relationship between all the factors and items.

**Table 8**  
**Regression (Coefficient)**

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Massmed01	2.098	.064	32.917	***
Massmed02	2.241	.063	35.526	***
Masmed03	2.076	.063	32.889	***
Massmed04	2.117	.064	33.105	***
Massmed05	2.267	.064	35.396	***

Massmed06	2.610	.065	40.385	***
Massmed07	2.410	.062	39.176	***
Demo01	2.025	.062	32.515	***
Demo02	2.368	.064	37.089	***
Demo03	2.219	.064	34.471	***
Demo04	2.470	.065	37.881	***
Demo05	2.476	.068	36.446	***
Demo06	2.463	.065	38.155	***
HDI01	2.422	.062	38.832	***
HDI02	2.717	.055	49.687	***
HDI03	2.473	.064	38.766	***
HDI04	2.952	.060	49.470	***
HDI05	2.835	.057	49.424	***
HDI06	2.444	.064	38.070	***
HDI07	2.305	.065	35.678	***
HDI08	2.498	.063	39.548	***
HDI09	2.260	.065	34.994	***
Ethics01	3.597	.062	58.353	***
Ethics02	2.327	.063	36.808	***
Ethics03	3.403	.061	55.507	***
Ethics04	2.775	.056	49.323	***
Ethics05	2.210	.063	35.180	***

### Criteria to Accept and Reject Hypothesis:

The value of Alpha determines which hypotheses are accepted and which are rejected. We can decide and accept that the hypothesis under consideration is accepted if the outcome of alpha is below the pre-determined value, i.e. ( $P < 0.05$ ), and on the other hand, if the value of alpha is above ( $P > 0.05$ ), then the hypothesis is set to be rejected.

### Conclusion

Following are the conclusions drawn from this study after looking at the data analysis results;

Through regression analysis, **Hypothesis 1**, which asserted that "In Pakistan, the role of mass media has been satisfactory and has led to achieving economic development," has been validated and supported. A significant positive association between mass media and economic development was found through correlation analysis. The T-value surpasses 2, and the p-value is less than 0.05 in the regression analysis, demonstrating that mass media is statistically significant and does in fact have a considerable impact on economic development.

Through regression analysis, **Hypothesis 2**, which asserted that "In Pakistan, if media ethics are properly practiced, they can contribute to economic advancement akin to a developed democracy," has been supported and confirmed. The results of the correlation research revealed a strong association between media ethics and economic growth. It's interesting to notice that in the regression analysis, the T-value is greater than 2, and the p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that media ethics is statistically significant and has a real impact on economic growth when properly upheld in mass media practices.

The regression model has confirmed **Hypothesis 3**, which postulated that "Independent mass media, by raising public awareness about economic inequalities, strengthens democracy and ultimately contributes to economic development." The correlation study revealed a strong association between democratic government and economic growth. When mass media have the freedom to operate freely, democracy is statistically significant and does in fact have a major impact on economic development, as shown in the regression analysis, where the T-value exceeds 2 and the p-value is less than 0.05.

Any democracy depends on the mass media because it provides a fundamental conduit between the public and the government. Issues of public concern are brought to the fore, forcing decision-makers to develop strategies that can help the entire population. Independent media acts as a watchful watchdog, highlighting both the positive parts of a nation's image and, when necessary, closely examining the government's activities. In a democracy, the main goals of mass media are to promote diversity and inclusion, increase global consciousness, promote tourism, and sell the goods and services of a nation, which ultimately boosts the economy.

By exposing instances of corruption involving politicians and government officials, Pakistani mass media has played a significant role in addressing governance challenges ever since it was founded. The independence, scope, and caliber of Pakistani media are indicative of its viability. According to a study, Pakistan's media has significantly strengthened democratic values and promoted beneficial economic development. This suggests that the nation has a reasonably independent media environment with acceptable scope and quality.

According to the study, Article 19a of the Pakistani Constitution guarantees everyone the freedom of speech and expression, subject to some restrictions linked to national security, Pakistan's defense, and the primacy of Islam. According to Nazir's findings, Pakistan's legal system clearly recognizes the need of media independence. The full exercise of these rights by Pakistanis may be constrained in some ways, but the media is nevertheless allowed to criticize the government and point out problems with governance with a fair amount of freedom.

There have been numerous frauds in the nation that the media has drawn attention to, assisting the government in defining its agenda appropriately (Agenda defining Theory), ultimately enhancing governance and preventing further economic

Democracy is largely regarded as the most successful form of government for promoting social justice and equality. A free and independent media is a pillar of democratic society, holding governments accountable and bringing concerns to the public's attention. Investigative reporting by journalists provides the people with the knowledge they need to participate in political debate and hold their government accountable. This media scrutiny improves the effectiveness and transparency of public officials, strengthening and advancing democratic values across the nation.

In contrast, democracy provides citizens equal opportunity to examine its governing framework, with the media acting as the crucial link. The media became crucial during Pakistan's third consecutive democratic administration. Independent media and democracy are closely related and mutually supportive of one another. The emergence of private media in Pakistan coincided with the strengthening of democracy, and media procedures have improved along with significant investments in creating journalistic capacity, frequently made possible by international funding

through NGOs, which have been further strengthened by the rapid expansion of social media (Muzaffar, et. al., 2019; Muzaffar, et. al., 2020).

Economic progress cannot be achieved just by having an independent media; it also requires consideration of media ethics. Media professionals may practice sensationalism and indulge in "yellow journalism," which can harm a nation's reputation. This study emphasizes the beneficial contribution of mass media to economic growth when professionals uphold ethical norms. It highlights how the media may considerably support economic growth and encourage constructive society improvements when it adheres to media ethics. Since breaking media norms and guidelines may jeopardize a nation's reputation, ethical journalism is essential to maximizing the influence of the media. In the case of Pakistan, there have been times where media ethics were not upheld, undermining the economy and the country's reputation. Bomb explosions and suicide assaults were sensationalized by Pakistani media during the country's protracted war against terrorism, which ultimately hurt its reputation abroad.

This study underscores how important media ethics are in determining how mass media affects economic growth. It demonstrates how upholding media ethics may really boost the economy and spark constructive social change. The positive impact of media is amplified by ethical journalism, but a country's good reputation can be damaged by a media outlet's contempt for rules and guidelines. Unfortunately, Pakistani media has occasionally acted unethically, harming the economy and the reputation of the country. Bomb explosions and suicide assaults were sensationalized by the media throughout Pakistan's protracted war against terrorism, which hurt the country's reputation abroad.

In this study, three indicators—education, health, and per capita income—are used to gauge economic development. These elements, along with a few others, together make up the Human Development Index (HDI). By promoting investment opportunities and encouraging the government to generate employment chances, the media has a significant impact on increasing the quality of education and health systems as well as per capital income.

In Pakistan, the media has significantly impacted many facets of life. By bringing to light problems like ghost schools and flaws in the examination system, it has considerably raised the literacy rate and educational standards in the nation. Additionally, the issue of teacher absenteeism has received significant attention in the media, particularly in rural areas where it has been a major barrier to the advancement of literacy. Additionally, during the global COVID-19 pandemic, the media was crucial in spreading information about the virus's transmission, case counts, and the need for taking precautions, assisting government reaction and raising public awareness (Yaseen, et. al., 2020) Beyond education and health, mass media also serves as a vital platform for highlighting issues such as malnutrition, emphasizing their direct impact on Pakistan's economy. Overall, mass media has played a multifaceted role in Pakistan, contributing to education, public health, and socio-economic awareness. Mass media is being viewed as a crucial decision-making pillar since it informs the people about investment opportunities, raising their per capita income. Additionally, the media plays a role in luring foreign investors to Pakistan by televising promising regions, which promotes economic growth.

Based on its inferences, this study offers a convincing example of how democracy, observance of media ethics, and mass media use jointly affect economic

development. It emphasizes how mass media, democracy, and media ethics may work in concert to considerably improve and foster Pakistan's economy. Any evaluation or future planning pertaining to the nation's economic development must consider these aspects. To improve Pakistan's economic prospects, it is essential to recognize and utilize the mass media's potential within the confines of democracy and morality.

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