

Trial by Media: Role and Impact on the Administration of Justice

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ABSTRACT

Trial by media is a dynamic process in which the parties are exposed to public opinion and condemned without being heard. The media, a scapegoat under the guise of press freedom, after hindering justice, defaming one or more individuals, destroying numerous people's reputations, infringing on the right to privacy, and disrupting the fair trial process. Hence, media gains formal prerogative rights to render decisions in cases and convey them to the public as true. The media is the foundation of the news industry, thus everything the public learns about an incident is first scrutinized via its lens and then reported on by the media, which portrays its likelihood as nothing more than trials. This research seeks to explore the role of media trials in judicial proceedings and analyze how they impact in the administration of justice. This was made possible through the use of qualitative research, specifically documentary analysis using secondary data acquired from the study's literature. Findings show that media trials interfere with the judicial process and have a negative impact on the administration of justice and the rights of the accused.

Keywords: Trial by Media, Impact, Justice

INTRODUCTION

The media has enormous influence over the public and has long been regarded as society's watchdog. Newspapers, news media, social media, radio, and television not only disseminate information; they also help determine which stories and topics will be discussed by the public. Crimes are widely publicized in the media, which presents a challenge for defense attorneys, defendants, and prosecutors. The media plays an important role all over the world, and it bears a large responsibility for raising public awareness. This includes gathering public opinion about a court's handling of a case and assessing the court's efficiency in doing so. Although several empirical studies have been conducted in various parts of the world addressing the impact of trial by media in the criminal justice system, either directly or indirectly, this topic has received less attention in the Philippines. Hence, the impact of trial by media should be taken seriously as it poses enormous threats to the judicial system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Trial by media generally refers to a practice where the media starts a separate investigation and forms a public opinion against the accused before the actual trial commences. In this way, it prejudices the trial leading to infringement of the rights of the accused. Thus, the accused, who should be considered innocent

until proven guilty, is now presumed guilty, thus violating his fundamental rights (Singh, 2021). Further, according to Lim (2015), trial by media was considered a popular term in the early 21st century and late 20th century and is used to define the impact of newspaper and television coverage on the reputation of a person after or before a verdict in court. Media are frequently accused of instigating public hysteria in court cases similar to a lynch mob (Berryessa, 2014).

In addition, media trials have taken the role of the court, as well as severely challenged the authority of the courts. The media today has transformed into a public court, wherein the media pierces through the judiciary and works on the few facts it has and represents a biased opinion before the pronouncement in the people's court. Moreover, it creates a restraint on the courts to set the case aside in a similar manner as per the opinion of the masses failing which gives rise to an uproar in the public and leads to disturbance of public peace (Ramchandani, 2020).

Furthermore, media trials put the judiciary in a position of a silent spectator wherein the media informs the judiciary rather than the judiciary informing the media. The sensational media trials, the media, scapegoat under the umbrella of freedom of the press, after obstructing justice, defaming one or many individuals, hindering the reputation of several, invading the right to privacy, and causing harm to the process of a fair trial. The media investigates the criminal trial on behalf of the police forces, comes to its own conclusion, and calls it the truth before even the courts can come to a conclusion (Ramchandani, 2020).

Meanwhile, freedom of media is the freedom of people as they should be informed of public matters. It is thus needless to emphasize that a free and healthy press is indispensable to the functioning of democracy. In a democratic set up there has to be active participation of people in all affairs of their community and the state. It is their right to be kept informed about the current political social, economic and cultural life as well as the burning topics and important issues of the day in order to enable them to consider forming a broad opinion in which they are being managed, tackled and administered by the government and their functionaries (Krishnan, 2018).

In that context, the right to freedom of expression has long interacted with the right to a fair trial, particularly regarding the media, through materials such as newspaper articles and television broadcasts. Under this right the media can distribute information and opinions on any matter in a positive or negative light, including information and facts on criminal proceedings against an accused, however, there are limits to this regarding trials with a suppression order in place (Townsend, 2011). When the media report information that is the subject of criminal proceedings, it can often lead to the sensationalization of a case and is often termed trial by publicity. This can include several details regarding the defendant or trial, including the defendant's past, reputation, and criminal record (Bakhshay & Haney, 2018).

In addition, the media is responsible to give information and keep a check on the organs of the government and act as a supplier of information to the masses and not perform the functions of the organs by itself. The media has been given too much power, due to a lack of regulations to keep check on media. Thus, the media has been called the handmaiden of justice, the watchdog of society; the judiciary, the dispenser of

justice, and the catalyst for social reforms wherein both are essential for the progress of civil society (Krishnan, 2018).

Moreover, newspapers, radio, and television convey information and shape the subjects that people engage one another about (Ray & Dutta, 2015). Certain crimes attract substantial coverage by the media, presenting a challenge to the parties related to the judicial proceedings. Every jury should be impartial when processing the case before it, regardless of the prior coverage of the case by the media. The parties may find themselves entangled with journalists and the media in general when providing information on specific cases. There is a widespread view that the way the media covers certain trials in courtrooms affects how jurors and witnesses behave.

However, juries and judges are required to be impartial when making decisions regarding a case, regardless of the media news coverage, they might have encountered prior to the trial (Moran, 2014). Though, police officers handling criminal cases might be influenced by the media in the process of giving case-related information. There is also some evidence that the media relies very heavily on law enforcement and prosecution sources as the basis for their reporting. For example, one study of newspaper coverage of capital cases found that law enforcement and prosecution sources were frequently cited (Haney & Greene, 2004).

Consequently, the source of information can influence both its interpretation and the weight it is given (Studebaker, Robbenolt, Pathak-Sharma, & Penrod, 2000), such coverage not only presents just one side of the story but also lends greater legitimacy to the side that law enforcement officials and prosecutors, who are viewed as especially credible sources of information, convey. In combination, these factors can result in an unbalanced and biased media representation of crime, which may threaten a criminal defendant's right to a fair trial.

Moreover, trial media coverage, particularly the coverage of proceedings through moot court media room discussion, can influence the jurors' and witnesses' behaviors. Live media coverage of the court proceedings can interfere with the process of a free trial and can influence justice, especially for the oppressed in society based on a particular case and factors that influence the case (Ranjan & Kashyap, 2014).

The effects of a media trial are adverse and the consequences of which are to be dealt with by the accused and victim, they are in the eyes of the public constantly and are being watched. Their every move is scrutinized by the media and the media through constant sensational news forms a foundation in the minds of the public about the guilt or innocence of the accused (Ramchandani, 2020).

Across the world, there have been efforts to regulate what the media conveys to the public, especially by criminal justice systems. In many nation-states, the freedom that the media enjoys when reporting on criminal matters is considered conditional. Many court systems provide that every party's right to expression does not extend to committing contempt of the system. There is a need to determine whether the motivation of the court systems in limiting media freedom is related to how they perceive the media

to be impacting criminal justice systems. Particularly, there is a need to establish how the media impacts the systems (Greer & McLaughlin, 2011).

Likewise, in the study of Ranjan and Kashyap (2014), they argued that trials by media are not regulated and put tremendous pressure on formal judicial processes. Atrocious crimes ought to be condemned, with the media pushing that causes justifiably. Ranjan and Kashyap conceded that the media should neither usurp the functions of the judiciary nor engage in subjective, biased reporting of formal criminal justice proceedings. At times, the media distorts information relating to the proceedings.

In the Philippine context, trial by publicity is basically what Tulfo's program is all about, where ordinary people come on the show to talk about a legal problem, they have in hopes of getting it sorted out faster than if they were to file paperwork at their town hall. Being called out on a national program like Tulfo's deprives a person's constitutional right and subjects him or her to the pressure of agreeing to conditions on the spot. Thus, without due process, the public witnessing the issue as it unfolds is likely to adopt the mob mentality, which typically leaves people with heightened negative emotions about what they just witnessed. This, in turn, subjects the accused to the collective disapproval of the public (Project Jurisprudence, 2021).

The media pushes people to prejudge the verdicts of criminal proceedings. Some people use the media to influence court case outcomes. In media trials, the media serves as a conveyor of popular sentiment. The media are also used to practice parallel elements of justice outside the confines of the courtroom (Newburn & Peay, 2012). In a study conducted by Greer & McLaughlin (2011), that trial by media is a dynamic process through which people are exposed to public opinion where they are condemned without being heard.

Notably, several studies determined that biased media reports could lead to wrong views about given justice systems (Berryessa, 2014); Kwong, et al., 2015); and Vining, Wilhelm & Collens, 2014). These three studies established that even judges may develop biased perceptions regarding how given justice systems function. Further, other research has also shown that biased news coverage of crime can affect public opinion and may influence the outcome of criminal cases. In specific cases, exposure to media coverage has been shown to have a prejudicial impact on potential jurors' attitudes toward criminal defendants (Daftary-Kapur et al., 2014). In some studies, exposure to pretrial publicity has resulted in more guilty verdicts and harsher sentences (Ruva & Guenther, 2015).

In this regard, the literature on the subject indicates that trial by media is a dynamic process through which the parties are exposed to public opinion where they are condemned without being heard. This paper attempts to investigate the role of media trials in judicial proceedings and analyze the impact of such trials by the media which is often reduced to a public spectacle. It also seeks to shed light on the environment of accused shaming created by the media that ridicules the tenets of the freedom afforded to them as an institution.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

People's conversations are influenced by the media at any given time and place. The media shapes the public's perception of societal issues. The media reflects people's various perceptions of conflicting situations. The media presents stories in a way that draws the public's attention to the situations. The media has recently become involved in criminal justice trials, particularly high-profile cases. This has been said to impede the criminal justice process, including witness testimony and evidence gathered in a specific case. As a result of the widespread concern that criminal justice processes should be handled carefully by the media, such reasons motivated the researcher to conduct the study. The present study will raise awareness and inform the public about how the media influences judicial proceedings, as well as its impact on the administration of justice.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research endeavor aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the roles of media trials in judicial proceedings?
2. What are the impacts of media trials on the administration of justice?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study will use a qualitative approach specifically the documentary analysis of various secondary sources such as books, journals, newspaper articles, online sources, research articles, etc., which are available relating to the concerned topic. It employs a systematic approach to analyzing documentary evidence and answering specific research questions. Similar to other methods of analysis in qualitative research, document analysis is an efficient and effective way of gathering data because documents are manageable and practical resources. Documents are commonplace and come in a variety of forms, making documents a very accessible and reliable source of data (Bowen, 2009). Also, documents are stable, “non-reactive” data sources, meaning that they can be read and reviewed multiple times and remain unchanged by the researcher’s influence or research process (Bowen, 2009, p. 31).

TREATMENT OF THE DATA

Thematic analysis will be used to present, interpret, and analyze the collected data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves searching across a data set to identify, analyze, and report on repeated patterns (Braun and Clarke 2006). Data can take any form, including transcriptions of interviews, field notes, political documents, photographs, and videos. Thematic analysis is very beneficial when looking for personal information like a participant's experiences, ideas, and opinions. It is typically performed on data generated from surveys, social media postings, interviews, and discussions. Thematic analysis is relatively easy to learn and apply when compared to many other qualitative methods. Concurrently, it is a powerful data analysis method that enables researchers to summarize, highlight key features of, and interpret a wide range of data sets (Nowell et al. 2017).

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study will center on determining the role and impact of trial by media on the administration of justice. Since documentary analysis will be used, the data will be limited to the existing literature, studies, and articles related to the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Media Trials in Judicial Proceedings

This section provides an overview of the numerous roles of media trials in judicial proceedings. In this study, the identified roles of the media trial include disseminating information to the general public, prejudging the verdicts of court proceedings, undue interference in the judicial process, and case sensationalism.

Information Dissemination

In the study, one of the primary roles of the media trial in the judicial proceedings is to disseminate information to the general public. According to Ramchandani (2020), the media must inform the public, keep the government's organs under control, and serve as a source of information for the general public. Thus, the role of the media is to inform the public since most people follow particular occurrences at particular times via media news reports. The media helps the general public stay informed about the events by disseminating as much information as they can.

The media plays an increasingly important role in today's globalized and technologically advanced world, given the rise of numerous media such as radio, television, social media, and so on, which have led to the general population becoming more informed and aware of their surroundings. It is essential for raising people's consciousness and has the power to alter societal perceptions. By reporting on events in a way that influences, informs, or supports public concerns and opinions, the media offers a diversity of viewpoints on the happenings. Access to information on public issues is therefore required to ensure democracy and free and independent media (Singh, 2021).

Trial by media was a new approach to disseminating information regarding legislation reforms, how the executive carried them out, and how the judiciary upheld them. The media today pierces the judiciary and not only forms an opinion, but continually feeds that opinion to the public, so that the people blindly follow the media (Ramchandani, 2020). Likewise, the role of media trials was to enlighten the public and raise awareness of the adverse aspects of modern society. Due to the significant changes in the global legal environment, media trials are now a common occurrence.

Prejudge the Verdicts of Judicial Proceedings

According to our criminal law, a defendant has the right to a fair trial and is presumed innocent until proven guilty by a court of law. No one may prejudice or bias their case prior to the conclusion of the trial. Due to excessive coverage, the media publishes and covers interviews with witnesses or relatives of victims while the case is still being adjudicated in a court of law and prejudices the question of the accused's conviction. Singh (2021) contends that the media has repeatedly been accused of prosecuting the defendant and delivering the judgment ahead of the court's decision.

In this regard, the media plays a variety of roles in society. The media is incredibly influential in shaping societal perceptions and has the power to alter the entire lens through which individuals view different events (Sastry, 2019). Recently, in an article by Bakhshay (2018), it revealed that the media, not only dared to go outside of its purview but also advanced to the point where they are now able to make decisions about cases as if they were judges.

People who are put on trial by the media are exposed to public opinion, where they are condemned without being heard (Greer & McLaughlin, 2011). The media influences how people feel about court rulings, even those involving criminal cases. Some people use the media to try to sway the outcomes of court trials. During media trials, the media conveys the public's opinion. Additionally, the media is used outside of courtrooms to exercise-related concepts of justice (Newburn & Peay, 2012).

Undue Interference with the Judicial Process

The present study confirmed that media trials are unquestionably an excessive interference with the administration of justice. The media has suddenly transformed into a public court and has started interfering with the judicial process. It completely overlooks the vital gaps between an accused and a convict keeping at stake the golden principles of "presumption of innocence until proven guilty" and "guilt beyond reasonable doubt" (Krishnan, 2018).

Undue interference with the administration of justice occurs when a suspect or accused is subjected to extensive media publicity prior to trial that predicts the outcome of a fair trial or portrays him as having committed the crime. In particular, for people who are marginalized in society and who are the subject of that case, live media coverage of court proceedings can hinder the process of a fair trial and have an impact on justice (Ranjan & Kashyap, 2014).

Nashter (2018) asserts that "information and opinions" disseminated by the media negatively impacted "the interests of the parties involved in litigation currently proceeding before the courts." As a result, the media trial is an unwarranted interference with the legal process. The media shouldn't interfere with the judiciary's authority or report on official criminal justice proceedings in a subjective or prejudiced way, according to Ranjan and Kashyap (2014). With this, there is a widespread notion that media involvement interferes with court processes and undermines the impartiality and integrity of witness testimony and the types of evidence presented.

Case Sensationalism

In the study, the sensationalism of the case, comes out as one of the roles of media trials in judicial proceedings. When the media publishes information that is the subject of legal action, cases are frequently sensationalized as a result. According to Bakhshay & Haney (2018), information about the defendant or the case, such as the defendant's background, reputation, and criminal history, may be discussed during media trials.

Likewise, Vining, Wilhelm, and Collens (2014) presented empirical evidence demonstrating how sensationalism, novelty, and drama influence how capital offense cases are reported in the media. The media should strive to create and share content that is both newsworthy and engaging for the broader audience. Media coverage of minor or serious situations does not especially ignite public interest. The likelihood that the media will cover court hearings that result in sensational or severe verdicts is therefore higher than it is for regular court proceedings (Platania & Crawford, 2012).

In addition, the existing study showed that the media may, in fact, sensationalize the criminal behavior of those regarded to be unusual in nature, including those with mental health issues, resulting in unfavorable,

vague public perceptions of those who are on trial (Gunasekaran and Chaplin, 2012). The conclusion that media coverage of court cases that result in sensational or punitive decisions is more likely than that of ordinary court cases can therefore be inferred. Sensationalizing some claims or facts relating to given cases to ensure justice is served or to tamper with the course of justice.

When the media sensationalizes a case, millions of individuals who read newspapers or watch news channels start to build their own opinions on the case based on the facts presented by the media. The accused, victim, witness, and all parties involved in the case can therefore be said to be infringed by the practice of media trial.

The Impact of Media Trials in the Administration of Justice

This section examined and explained the various impacts of trial by media vis-à-vis the rights of the accused to a fair trial and privacy. Further, it also identified the impact of media trials to the freedom of speech and expression, its potential impact on the judge's behavior, thoughts, and attitudes, and lastly how it shapes or influences public opinion.

The Impact on the Rights of the Accused to a Fair Trial

Article III, Section 14 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that: "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall be presumed innocent until the contrary is proved, and shall enjoy the right to be heard by himself and counsel, to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation against him, to have a speedy, impartial, and public trial." In this regard, the right of the accused to a fair trial is considered as an essential right guaranteed by the Constitution. The constitutional law of the Philippines is based on a system where an accused has the right to a fair trial and is presumed to be "innocent unless proven guilty." However, when put in opposition to one another, these fundamental protections create one of the most important disputes in the administration of the criminal justice system. The issue arises when the media oversteps the limitations imposed on it while acting in an active capacity.

In a research article published by Sastry (2019), the media trial has the problem of failing to strike a balance between "free speech of the press" and "the right of the accused to a fair trial." The media's justification for free speech is that it stems from the public's right to know about and participate in the discussion that concerns them. The accused's rights must be respected as well, and this freedom must not be exploited to subvert the justice delivery system by sensationalizing and distorting the truth.

With this, the judicial system is under great threat from media trials because they may result in obvious bias against the rule of law and possibly deprive the accused of a fair trial (Kushwaha, 2021; Priyanshu, 2015; Singh 2020). Thus, if there is any possibility of bias or unfairness in a criminal trial, the criminal justice system will be jeopardized, and public trust in the system would be weakened. The assurance of a fair trial is critical for carrying out justice. If there was even the least amount of bias or unfairness in a criminal trial, the criminal justice system would be undermined, and public trust in the system would be eroded.

The Impact on the Rights of the Accused to Privacy

The accused's right to privacy is also compromised by the media trial. The idea of privacy is enshrined in the Philippine Constitution and is recognized as the right to be free from undue exploitation of one's person or from intrusion into one's private activities in such a way as to degrade a person's ordinary sensibilities (IADC, n.d.).

Furthermore, the right to privacy is recognized in Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). It defines privacy as follows: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks." These existing laws on privacy recognize a person's right to privacy and a personal space that is encroached upon. Society today has emphasized the importance of privacy and the recognition of that right. It is the result of a culture that is becoming more individualistic and values the individual over society. When assessing the conflicts between the freedom of the media to disseminate information and the right to privacy, there has always been a discussion about the relative importance of private versus public interest.

In this regard, the right to privacy and the right to freedom of speech and expression are interdependent rights. The right to privacy may be violated by someone else's desire to know and be informed. According to Priyanshu (2015) & Singh (2020), the media's rapid expansion, electronic media in particular has highlighted privacy issues in recent years. A person's private life can now be made public and widely attributed to the media, putting him at risk of having his privacy and personal space violated.

Media trials in some cases have unfairly and unjustifiably focused on certain accused individuals' personal life, particularly by publishing private information about them that has little to do with the allegations they are facing. Furthermore, Ramchandani (2020) stated that not only the accused and the victim are in the public eye, but so are the witnesses and everyone else involved in the case; their privacy is compromised to the extent that they cannot leave their houses without security.

The Impact on Freedom of Speech and Expression

Article 3, Section 4 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that no law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press. The freedom to express one's opinions and thoughts is the core of democracy, and measures to restrict such liberty constitute a substantial threat to society.

An essential requirement of a democratic system is media freedom, which is inextricably linked to freedom of expression. Media freedom is the right of the public to have access to information on public issues. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that a free and healthy press is essential to the operation of democracy. However, freedoms and privileges clash when information about the judicial process is released publicly.

The Supreme Court reiterated in *Raffy Tulfo vs. People of the Philippines* (GR. No. 187113, January 11, 2021) that there is a need to protect freedom of speech and of the press. These rights and freedoms are the most pervasive and powerful means of informing the government of the public's opinions, needs, and grievances. The people are kept informed of government activities through these guarantees. There would

be no vigilant press without these rights. Thus, without vigilant press, the government's mistakes would go unnoticed, its abuses would go overlooked, and its wrongdoings would go uncorrected.

The press has long been regarded as the fourth chamber of democracy in most democratic countries like the Philippines. However, in civil society, no right to freedom, no matter how valuable it is, can be considered absolute, unlimited, or unqualified in all circumstances. This supports Aqib and Dwivedi's (2019) assertion that media freedom, like any other recognized constitutional right, must be used within reasonable bounds. Excessive media coverage obstructs courtroom justice and affects not only the accused but also victims and witnesses by infringing on their fundamental rights and liberties.

The Potential Impact on Judge's Behavior, Thoughts, and Attitudes

The right to a fair trial is one of the most crucial duties of an independent court. In Article 6 of the 1985 UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Court, the judiciary is given the right and duty to "ensure that judicial processes are handled fairly and that the rights of the parties are respected." In addition, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) also outlines the same principles as this article, which states that "everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal in the determination of any criminal charge or in a suit at law".

The proliferation of media trials, however, raises a significant problem because media frequently breaches the thick walls of the courts, potentially having a negative effect on judges' behavior, thoughts, and attitudes. Thus, according to research, it has been demonstrated that exposure to media coverage might negatively affect potential jurors' perceptions of criminal defendants in certain circumstances. Trial by media has been linked in several studies to more guilty verdicts and harsher penalties. The consequences of media trials are more biased the more publicity there has been before the trial (Daftary-Kapur et al., 2014). Sastry's (2019) research study also proved that human behaviors, thoughts, and attitudes of judicial officers can be influenced by the media, as rulings made by judges are frequently formed by sentiments expressed by and in the media. That is because judges are human beings and undue influence of irresponsible expression may taint the rational process of adjudication (Nidhi, 2016).

This also supports Lim's (2015) findings that the media influences civil adjudication by changing the public's preferences for specific civil justice infrastructures or systems. Judges and jurors are prone to making decisions that will benefit them and acquire media favor. The media's political and moral opinions may have an impact on court rulings. Furthermore, Berryessa (2014), Kwong et al. (2015), and Vining, Wilhelm, and Collens (2014) discovered that biased media reporting can influence how people perceive certain justice systems.

Moreover, judges' decisions are impacted by the misconception's media stories have given rise to (Matter and Stutzer, 2013; Mulder, 2009; and Wentland, 2012). A substantial persuasive effect from biased media portrayal is possible. The degree of the effect depends on how closely the attorneys' opinions align with those that are supported or promoted by the media. This supports the findings of Chakraborty (2015) and Nidhi (2016) that judges are subconsciously influenced by several forces such as media coverage and that the rulings made by judges are shaped by the sentiments often expressed by and in the media.

The media has a negative impact on the courts when it publishes "information and opinions that are clearly prejudicial to the interests of the parties involved in litigation pending before the courts" (Nashter, 2018). Media trials have an impact on judges' ability to adhere to the "golden standards of 'innocence until proven guilty' and 'guilt beyond reasonable doubt'" (Singh & Associates, 2012).

The emergence of the internet and social media has increased the sophistication of media trials (Townsend, 2011). Because of the rapid spread of information via electronic communication, public opinion, thoughts, and ideas can be expressed, shared, and viewed around the world in a matter of minutes. Prosecutors, defendants, and defense lawyers all have difficulties as a result of widespread media coverage of crimes. However, regardless of whatever media coverage they may have seen before the trial, juries and judges are supposed to remain impartial when rendering judgments in a case (Moran, 2014).

The Impact on Public Opinion

Media has a tremendous amount of ability to shape or influence public opinion, and as technology has advanced, it is now even capable of dividing people's opinions. By cultivating people's ideas and opinions, media also impacts the general population. According to Krishnan (2018), individuals who engage in media trials frequently have their critical reasoning skills targeted since they make assumptions and inferences based on media information. As a result, people tend to lose confidence in the judicial system.

With this, the media's ability to affect people is one of its most valuable tools. The editor's and publisher's ideologies are what connect with the general public. This ideology may act as a catalyst for and a manipulator of the receivers. It is also quite simple to fund and form any kind of thinking. Since media may quickly reach the masses biased news reporting also has an impact on how the population as a whole perceives things (Bakhshay & Haney, 2018). In the last few decades, it has become increasingly common for the media to sensationalize news by covering examples of corruption, rape, murder, and terrorist activity.

Trial by media may potentially polarize public opinion by portraying the legal system as faulty or biased in favor of the accused. This demonstrates how trials covered by the media can significantly alter public opinion. How people respond to and react to the news can also be used to understand the power of the press. In some instances, the media has been highly effective in shaping public opinion. In the study by Ray and Dutta (2015), they recognized that media as a key factor in the development and alteration of public opinions as well as the instigation of investigations into issues of concern to those involved in the criminal justice system.

The public's perception of social issues is influenced by the media. The media portrays the various ways that people view disparate circumstances. Media tells tales in a way that will draw the public's attention to the circumstances. Platania and Crawford (2012), reiterated that the agendas that the media sets affect their audiences, particularly through the shaping of their realities. Interconnectedness afforded by the internet means news can quickly be distributed far and wide. Therefore, media trials have played a significant role in shaping public opinion and has done so quite successfully.

CONCLUSION

Media trials interfere with the judicial process and have a negative impact on the administration of justice and the rights of the accused. Furthermore, it is obvious that the trial by media played a substantial role in influencing public opinion and had a detrimental rather than beneficial impact on judicial proceedings. Unfortunately, this situation has become today's harsh reality as a result of the media taking on the function of the courts of law, which frequently results in distorting reality and giving its decision even before the Court.

Furthermore, the media trial has now progressed to a media judgment and media punishment, which is an unlawful use of freedom and a violation of the reasonable delineation of legal boundaries. Thus, there is a thin line between press freedom of expression and the rights of the accused, which results in overstepping the boundaries of justice. The impact of media trials, as well as the risk they posed to the public sphere, must be seriously considered. As the number of media trials grows and evolves, it is likely that the court system will continue to encounter substantial challenges in securing an unbiased verdict and the right to a fair trial.

RECOMMENDATION

In this regard, the media must be appropriately regulated, may not be given a free hand in judicial processes, and must be held accountable for abuses if its legitimate jurisdiction and powers are exceeded. Despite the importance that has been put on them, there must still be some form of regulation on the part of the media. They cannot carry out a trial that receives more publicity while uncontrolled. Media practitioners must always adhere to the ethics of responsible journalism, and their actions must be held increasingly accountable. The media's role in revealing societal injustices is not the main issue however when they overstep boundaries and are outside the limit of the rights allowed to them that is where the problem arises.

Initiatives to prevent the spread of false information and sensationalism in the judicial process by fostering digital literacy and responsible media practices are another significant thing to take into consideration. As a result, it's possible that the judiciary and the media would rather work together while still upholding each other's independence and domain. Future studies may also examine the functions and effects of media trials on the administration of justice in the Philippine context and add to the scant body of knowledge in the field by gathering robust results using a variety of approaches. With this, such actions that undermine the judicial authority and cause the public to lose faith in the justice system may be avoided.

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