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Q8(c)

Write a brief note on the Freedom of the Press.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 2 · 15 marks · Perspectives on the study of Indian society
Perspectives on the study of Indian society: Indology (G.S. Ghurye); Structural functionalism (M.N. Srinivas); Marxist sociology (A.R. Desai).

Core demand of the question

- Write a brief note on the Freedom of the Press
- Keep the note to a 15-mark length

Revision summary

Press freedom is public criticism without prior censorship.

India protects it as speech, with **reasonable restrictions**.

Emergency, ownership concentration, and attacks are the main threats.

Small and Dalit media lack the muscle of large houses.

Democracy in a disharmonic society needs this freedom in practice, not only in text.

Introduction

Freedom of the press is the right to publish without prior censorship, as a condition of public reason in a democracy. In India it is a constitutional practice under **Article 19**, always in tension with state, capital, and crowd.

Body**Meaning**

- A free press reports, criticises, and represents minorities of opinion. **Ambedkar's** democracy needs information, not only a vote.
- It is not a licence to incite. **Reasonable restrictions** exist; the sociological question is who uses them.

Indian field

- Emergency censorship is the negative lesson. After that, television and now platforms multiplied voices and concentrated owners.
- **Paid news, corporate media houses, and attacks on journalists show Beteille's disharmony:** liberty as value, intimidation as practice.
- Regional and Dalit-Bahujan small press remain weaker than English capital press.

Why it matters for Paper II

- Farmers, women, and communal riots are framed by media. An unfree press makes other freedoms poorer.

Flow diagram

19 Article 19 -> Press freedom
State emergency -> Restriction
Capital ownership -> Restriction
Press freedom -> Informed democracy

Conclusion

Press freedom in India is a democratic necessity under strain from state, market, and violence. It is a public good, not a corporate privilege.

Facts & figures

Article 19

Constitutional home of speech and expression, from which press freedom is derived.

Emergency 1975-77

The classic Indian episode of press censorship.

Paid news

Market capture of news as advertising, a freedom problem from capital.

Reasonable restrictions

Sovereign limits that can protect order or be used to chill reporting.

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