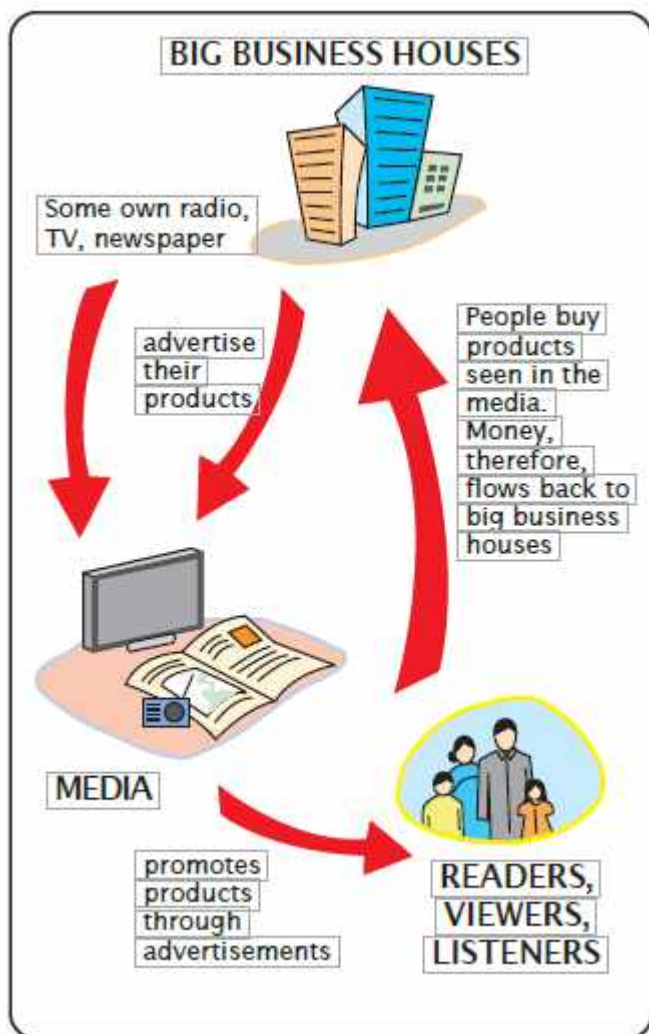


1. In what way does the media play an important role in a democracy?

Solution: Media plays an important role in democracy, as it provides news and discusses events taking place around the country and all over the world. It also acts as a watchdog to the conduct of the government by:

- Criticising the unpopular policies and programs that the government undertakes
- Highlighting, and even to a certain extent, influencing public opinion
- Acknowledging several current issues
- Spreading awareness among the general masses

2. Can you give this diagram a title? What do you understand about the link between media and big business from this diagram?

Solution: The title can be given as – “Influence of Big Business Houses on Media”. Big businesses and corporations approach the media to advertise their products through them. This is the most effective and cheapest way to reach the masses and ultimately influence their decisions regarding the purchase of these products.

3. You read about the ways in which the media ‘sets the agenda’. What kind of effect does this have in a democracy? Provide two examples to support your point of view.

Solution: Media creates and influences public opinion in a democracy. It can influence public opinion for or against any issue. However, the scenario seems to have changed, as it forms public opinion in favour of the highest bidder or those in power. The neutrality it is supposed to showcase has completely disappeared in its quest to bring in more viewers and profits.

The adverse affect this can have on a democracy is that it may influence the populace to not question the government on the basis of its action. It can be basically give a government a free hand especially to those actions that can be detrimental to society

One example of this is that an economic crisis is downplayed by the media so as to prevent any questioning the government on its functions. Thus, it highlights the selective attitude of the media.

A positive aspect of this can be the recent example of the media finding out about alarming levels of pesticides present in soft drinks. They published reports that indicated a high level of pesticides and made the public aware of the importance of monitoring the quality of these soft drinks in accordance with international quality and safety standards. This was done despite the government unabashedly declaring soft drinks safe to drink. Public outcry over this made the government retract its statement and order an inquiry into the quality standards of the drink.

4. As a class project, decide to focus on a particular news topic and cut out stories from different newspapers on this. Also, watch the coverage of this topic on TV news, compare two newspapers and write down the similarity – and differences in their reports. It might help to ask the following questions:

- (a) What information is this article providing?
- (b) What information is it leaving out?
- (c) From whose point of view is the article being written?
- (d) Whose point of view is being left out and why?

Answer: Students are advised to do this project by themselves.