

Is Electronic Media losing its shine?

It is unfortunate that the excitement, thrill and promise which was getting generated by popular English news channels, every weekday evening is getting slowly and sadly eroded by ennui and disillusionment. The TRP is bound to fall. Already, I think many serious and self-respecting personalities are avoiding such boisterous electronic confrontations. The most watched national channels between 8 and 10 pm offer the same juicy menu with opposing teams, hanging on to their mikes and the anchors playing the spoilsport. It is not the fun of breaking stories anymore, but the anchor management with their cryptic remarks, which is making it distasteful. At times, it is downright rude and is devoid of even ordinary conversational pleasantries.

Once again, people are turning to print media to get a balanced view of the topic which gets hotly discussed and disputed by the nocturnal vociferous players of the media. Take for instance, the issue of Italian Marines or Stalin's car. Was it worth the time spent? We knew that Marines would eventually return, but patience is not the virtue of our current electronic media. It is still showing signs of journalistic immaturity and a belief that millions are watching, makes it heady. The overall role of electronic news media is becoming increasingly negative. I had thought that because of the electronic media's tantalizing revelations with all their hotly pursued so called evidences, the print media would become superfluous, but time has proved it wrong. Viewers are once again turning to either foreign channels to get the right perspective of any breaking story or wait for the newspapers the next day. People would like to read the columns of eminent journalists for their analysis. When these veteran journalists are invited to share

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their views, in any of the media panels, they have to keep raising their fingers to get a word in edgeways. The caustic remarks of the anchors and their personal frequent and boring interruptions deprive the viewers with the benefit of getting the right perception of any burning issue. In the heat of the discussions, mostly generated by the anchors themselves, they at times utter unwise remarks like once an anchor said the stupid Fatwas, which fortunately went unnoticed. On every issue, when political parties spokespersons are invited to comment, it becomes a slanging match between them and most of the time is wasted on their defenses and offences. Their contribution to any topic is only a political propaganda and the arguments are the same repeat of old litany. Let us take the issue of Sanjay Dutt's Supreme Court's judgment. Where was the need to spend hours of prime time on all channels on an issue which has less of news value and more of emotional churning up. Some people will have a sympathetic view and others will take a more realistic approach, but the anchors enjoy stoking the intentionally generated fire. Heavens will not come down one way or another.

The sting of the sting operations on three banks was quietly diffused two days later by a press release by the Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India. So much money and time gets wasted on these useless pursuits, in the false belief that it is newsworthy. Electronic media has been indulging in this kind of unproductive work since long time and has not learnt any lessons. How the media was taking vicarious pleasure in the revelations of Narco-analysis of accused in many sensational cases with every bit of unbelievable evidence, which finally proved to be of no significance. If their purpose is to enjoy the benefits of creating sensations against the background of their melodramatic

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anchor interpretations, then perhaps it has served its purpose, but not anymore and viewers are becoming wiser.

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