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Cover Note

Media Transparency (And Accountability) Bill, 2024

Ever since the Press Club of India (PCI) was established in 1958, it has been at the forefront of upholding and strengthening media freedom. The record of the past decades bears witness to the fact that this institution has steadfastly resisted all attempts to curtail freedom of the press at various points in time. This was evident in the vital role it played in resisting censorship during the Emergency. It is worth remembering and noting that a free press is not just a mere component, but an essential and defining feature of Constitutional democracy.

The press draws its freedom from Article 19 (1) (a) of the Indian Constitution, subject to ‘reasonable restrictions’ defined under Article 19 (2) to 19 (6). Despite the well-settled constitutional arrangement, which has further been strengthened by a number of judicial precedents over the past decades in cases such as *Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras (1950)*, *Bennett Coleman & Co. & Ors vs Union Of India (1972)*, *State Of U.P. vs Raj Narain & Ors (1975)*, *Prabha Dutt vs Union Of India (1981)*, and *Shreya Singhal vs Union of India (2015)*, among others, the press, today, faces three crucial challenges:

1. **Lack of transparency of ownership with the emergence of media monopolies.**
2. **Financial coercion through the misuse of the power to allocate government advertisements.**
3. **Coercive actions against journalists by State and non-State actors.**

These challenges strike at the roots of press freedom.

In September 2023, after the new Executive Committee assumed office, it was resolved in the second meeting of the Managing Committee that PCI would initiate the process of developing a new policy and legislative framework for media regulation for wider consultation with various stakeholders and journalists’ bodies. A sub-committee was set up for developing a working draft of an alternative media legislation that would adequately deal with the challenges that the press is facing today.

The members of the sub-committee included:

1. Seema Chishti—Editor, The Wire
2. Hartosh Singh Bal—Executive Editor, The Caravan
3. Jatin Gandhi—PCI Managing Committee member
4. Dhirendra K Jha—Independent Journalist
5. Vivek Mukherji—Independent Journalist
6. Sarim Naved—Advocate, Supreme Court
7. Harsh Kumar—Lawyer/Researcher

This working draft of the **Media Transparency (And Accountability) Bill, 2024**, addresses the issues relating to: a) the lack of transparency of ownership with the emergence of media monopolies through cross-ownership b) freeing the press from the control of the Executive. **The other crucial issues – preventing financial coercion by misusing the power to allocate government advertisements and protection of journalists – will be dealt with subsequently in separate Bills in the future.**

About The Media Transparency (And Accountability) Bill, 2024

The working draft of this Bill comprises eight chapters. These are:

1. Preliminary Sections
2. Establishment of National Media Council
3. Registration of Media Outlets
4. Penalties
5. When A Person Is In A Position To Exercise Control
6. Complaints To The National Media Council
7. Reports And Recordkeeping
8. Finance, Accounts And Audit

Chapter I of this draft contains various ‘definitions’ under Section 2. Some of the definitions have been incorporated from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) working paper titled “Recommendations on Issues Relating to Media Ownership” that was submitted to the Government of India in August 2014. Similarly, in Chapter IV, Sections 16 and 17 define when “a person is in a position to exercise control”. Some of these definitions have been incorporated from TRAI’s recommendations of 2014.

Chapter VIII on “Finance, Accounts And Audit” briefly deals with setting up a National Media Fund for meeting the expenses of the National Media Council and **providing initial funding to media start-ups**. The Bill suggests imposing a nominal cess on the declared incomes of political parties for mobilising funds for the National Media Council. The National Media Fund needs to be distinct from the Consolidated Fund of India to avert interference or control by the Executive, which is paramount for press freedom.

Procedures for disbursement and utilisation of the National Media Fund will be defined in the Rules as and when they are notified.

Note:

*An additional method for mobilising funds was discussed but has not been incorporated in this draft. The suggestion was to impose a **cess as a percentage on the revenues** of companies that are delivering news media services— **carriers, intermediaries, and hardware manufacturers**.*

Definitions

1. **Carriers:** Companies that carry content to the end users. These are telecom companies providing data and broadband services, and Direct 2 Home service providers.

2. **Intermediaries:** Platforms that interface between the carriers and end users — Google, Facebook, Twitter, and OTT platforms delivering news content.

3. **Hardware:** Companies that manufacture hardware through which content is consumed by the end user — TV sets (on one-time sale), mobile phone (on one-time sale), tablets (on one-time sale) and laptops/desktops (on one-time sale).

We are releasing the draft of the **Media Transparency (And Accountability) Bill, 2024**, for wider public discussion and to invite suggestions from various press bodies, civil society organisations, individuals, and organisations working in the field of protecting digital rights, before it is submitted to the government and other political parties for the purpose of enacting new regulations that will not only strengthen press freedom, but also drastically reduce Executive overreach.

You are requested to submit your suggestions via email to: pressclub.legal@gmail.com.

Last date for submission of suggestions: June 30, 2024.

Sd/-

Guatam Lahiri

President, Press Club of India.

(On behalf of Managing Committee)

MEDIA TRANSPARENCY (AND ACCOUNTABILITY) BILL, 2024

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

CHAPTER I PRELIMINARY SECTIONS

1. Short title, extent and commencement
2. Definitions

CHAPTER II ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL MEDIA COUNCIL

3. Establishment of the National Media Council
4. Role of the National Media Council
5. Powers of the National Media Council
6. Permission of the National Media Council
7. Term of Office Bearers
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CHAPTER III REGISTRATION OF MEDIA OUTLETS

9. Registration
10. Registration — where to be done
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12. Special provision regarding registration of media outlets in cross-ownership
13. Production of relevant documents at the time of such registration

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14. Contravention of orders of the National Media Council
15. Penalty for non-furnishing information of integration
16. Penalty for making false statement or omitting to furnish material information

CHAPTER V WHEN A PERSON IS IN A POSITION TO EXERCISE CONTROL

17. When a person is in a position to exercise control
18. When a person is in control of a newspaper, magazine or journal

CHAPTER VI COMPLAINTS TO THE NATIONAL MEDIA COUNCIL

19. Complaints relating to offences or breach of licence conditions

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20. Register of media outlets

CHAPTER VIII FINANCE, ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

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22. Constitution of funds
23. Accounts and audit
24. Utilisation of media funds

MEDIA TRANSPARENCY (AND ACCOUNTABILITY) BILL, 2024

An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to the media.

STATEMENT OF OBJECT AND REASONS

1. To ensure independence of the media, which performs the role of a public service, it should be free from Executive control. Today, most news media platforms in India across genres — print, television and radio — are dependent on government advertising for revenue due to the collapse of the traditional model of advertising subsidising news, which, however imperfect it might have been, offered a ‘reasonable’ degree of freedom to newsrooms in deciding their respective editorial positions.

2. A natural consequence of the government’s ability to exercise unbridled power and control through an Executive-dominated regulatory structure combined with financial leverage has severely eroded the ability of the media to push back against the default impulse of the Executive to stem freedom of the press.

3. The paradigm shifts in the marketplace in which the media operates, characterised by the fragmentation of the revenue model, necessitate the need to have a more equitable regulatory structure representative of the multi-party democratic structure of India.

It is, therefore, important to shift the power of the Executive to regulate the media through its multiple arms such as the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (licences), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (intermediaries), and Ministry of Home Affairs (security clearances) to a new regulatory body called the National Media Council, which will comprise members of national political parties and major state political parties. A wider and a more representative body will be much better placed to regulate the media sector, where plurality of news content is of utmost importance in fulfilling its primary role of performing a public service.

CHAPTER I PRELIMINARY

1. Short title, extent and commencement:

(i) This Act may be called the Media Transparency (and Accountability) Act, 2024.

(ii) It extends to the whole of India.

(iii) It shall come into force on such date as the central government may appoint, by notification in the Official Gazette; and different dates may be appointed for different states and any reference in this Act to the commencement of this Act shall, in relation to a state, be construed as a reference to the coming into force of this Act in that state.

2. Definitions: In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

(1) “Media outlet” shall include any person engaged in the generation, production and distribution of news and opinion in text, audio, or audio-visual format via newspaper, magazine, internet, terrestrial and satellite broadcast, radio or through any electronic mode, or any other electronic mode, or any other electronic form as defined in clause (r) of sub-section (1) of Section 2 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 or any other mode of mass communication.

(2) “Person” shall have the meaning as defined in sub-section (42) of Section 3 of the General Clauses Act, 1897.

(3) “Market share” means concentration of markets and entities in a relevant geographic market.

(i) “Market share for television segment” means, in the relevant market for the television segment, that the gross rating point of a channel should be compared with the sum of the gross rating points of all the channels in the relevant market.

(ii) “Market share of an entity in television” means the sum of the market shares of all the channels controlled by it.

(iii) “Market share for the print segment” means the circulation of that newspaper compared with the combined circulation of all newspapers in the relevant market.

(iv) “Market share of a print entity” means the sum of the circulation of all the newspapers controlled by it.

(4) “Relevant geographic market” means a market comprising the area in which the conditions of competition for supply of goods and services and demand for goods or services are distinct and homogeneous and can be distinguished from conditions prevailing in neighbouring areas. It is to be defined in terms of the language and the state(s) in which that language is spoken in majority.

Relevant geographic markets would be as follows—

(i) Assamese and Assam (meaning Assamese newspapers read and Assamese television channels watched in Assam); and similarly

(ii) Bengali and West Bengal

(iii) English pan-India

(iv) Gujarati and Gujarat

(v) Hindi and Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh (these ten states together should be considered a single market);

(vi) Kannada and Karnataka

(vii) Malayalam and Kerala

(viii) Marathi and Maharashtra

(ix) Odia and Odisha

(x) Punjabi and Punjab

(xi) Tamil and Tamil Nadu

(xii) Telugu and Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

(5) “Concentration” means market concentration of any person in any form of media in a relevant geographic market.

(6) “Threshold” means the minimum value for dilution of market concentration of any television or print segment in a relevant geographic market.

(7) “Transparency disclosures” means all documents as listed in Section 13 of this Act.

(8) “Register” means the register established and maintained by the Council under Section 20 of this Act.

(9) “Integration” means, directly or indirectly, acquiring or agreeing to acquire –

(i) Shares, voting rights or assets of any enterprise; or

(ii) Control over management or control of any enterprise.

(10) “Public good” means matters concerning the welfare of the people of India.

(11) “Political party” means –

(i) An entity or body of individual citizens of India –

(a) To be registered with the Election Commission of India as a political party under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951; or

(b) Which has put up candidates for election to any legislature, but is not registered or deemed to be registered under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968;

(ii) A political party mentioned in the columns of Table 1 and Table 2 of the notification of the Election Commission of India No. 56/J&K/02, dated 8 August 2002, as in force for the time being.

(12) “Holding company” shall bear the meaning of company as defined under Section 2(20) of the Companies Act, 2013.

(13) “DIGIPUB” shall include the founding members, members, office-bearers and board members of the DIGIPUB News Media Foundation.

(14) “Editors Guild of India” shall have the same meaning as Section 1 of the Constitution of the Editors Guild of India.

CHAPTER II
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL MEDIA COUNCIL

3. Establishment of the National Media Council:

- (1) With effect from such date as the central government may, by notification, appoint, there shall be established, for the purpose of this Act, a body which shall be named the National Media Council.
- (2) The head office of the National Media Council shall be in New Delhi.
- (3) The National Media Council shall consist of a chairperson and members not exceeding 16 (sixteen) as specified in Schedule I.
- (i) 1 (one) retired Justice of the Supreme Court of India or retired Chief Justice of any High Court, who has served a minimum cooling off period of 3 (three) years, recommended by the collegium of the Supreme Court of India.
- (ii) 1 (one) Member of Parliament from each National Party recognised in the latest notification of the Election Commission of India.
- (iii) 1 (one) Member of Parliament from each of the top 5 (five) state parties as recognised in the latest notification of the Election Commission of India.
- (iv) The status of the top 5 (five) State Parties will be determined according to their respective strengths in Parliament.
- (v) 1 (one) senior journalist with a minimum of 25 years of experience nominated by a collective of press bodies, which shall include the Editors Guild of India and DIGIPUB.
- (vi) 1 (one) senior journalist with a minimum of 25 years of experience nominated by a collective of the Press Club of India (Delhi), Press Club of Mumbai (Mumbai), Press Club of Chandigarh (Chandigarh), Press Club of Kolkata (Kolkata), Press Club of Bangalore (Bengaluru).
- (vii) 1 (one) senior journalist with a minimum of 25 years of experience nominated by the News Broadcasters & Digital Association.
- (viii) 1 (one) senior journalist with a minimum of 25 years of experience nominated by the Indian Newspaper Society.
- (4) A retired Justice of the Supreme Court of India will be the chairperson of the National Media Council.
- (5) 2 (two) members, representing the national parties and the state parties, respectively, will be elected to the 2 (two) posts of vice-chairperson.
- (6) The electoral college will consist of 15 (fifteen) nominated members comprising 6 (six) members from National Parties, 5 (five) from State Parties, 1 (one) representing the Editors Guild of India and DIGIPUB, 1 (one) from the press bodies, 1 (one) from the News Broadcasters & Digital Association, 1 (one) from the Indian Newspaper Society. Provided that no more than 2 (two) members of the National Media Council will be individuals who can in any way be considered to be owners, majority shareholders or be acting in a non-journalistic role in a media outlet.
- (7) The chairperson shall have no voting rights except having the casting vote in case of a tie in the election for vice-chairperson.
- (8) The chairperson and every other member shall be a person of ability, integrity and standing and have special knowledge of and such professional experience in the field of media and press, which in the opinion of the central government, in consultation with the representative body of the journalist bodies as specified in Schedule I, may be useful to the Council.
- (9) The chairperson and other members shall be full-time members.
- (10) The chairperson and every other member shall hold office as such for a term of 3 (three) years from the date on which he enters the office and shall not be eligible for re-appointment for more than one term.
- (11) A vacancy, caused by the resignation or removal of the chairperson or any other member or upon death or otherwise shall be filled by fresh appointment in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(12) When the chairperson is unable to discharge his functions owing to absence, illness or any other cause, the senior-most member shall discharge functions of the chairperson until the date on which the chairperson resumes charge of his functions.

4. Role of the National Media Council: The National Media Council shall ensure the following –

- (i) Ensure that the media ecosystem in India remains stable and predictable and
- (ii) Deal effectively with breaches of the rules established by this Act.

Provided that all such functions will be carried out in a manner consistent with freedom of the press and the public good.

5. Powers of the National Media Council: The National Media Council shall enjoy the following powers –

- (i) The National Media Council shall have all such powers as are necessary or expedient for the performance of its functions and shall ensure that its functions are performed effectively and efficiently.
- (ii) The National Media Council shall have the power to direct the government to allocate or deallocate every existing allocation regarding advertising to ensure that no unfair advantage is gained by any political party, body or person due to the quantum of advertising expenditure made by the government.
- (iii) In performing its functions, the National Media Council shall endeavour to ensure –
 - (a) That the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution of India, especially those relating to freedom of speech and expression, are upheld,
 - (b) That the interests of the public, including the interests of children, are protected, with particular commitment to the safety of children.

6. Permission of the National Media Council:

- (1) Before institution of any criminal proceedings against any media outlet or any of its employees regarding any journalistic story or activity, the permission of the National Media Council must be taken.
- (2) The National Media Council shall accord or deny permission on the following grounds:
 - (i) That the complaint is factually correct.
 - (ii) That the relevant provision of law has been violated.
 - (iii) Initiation of prosecution will be in the public good.

7. **Term:** The term of the National Media Council shall be for a period of (3) three years.

8. **Salary and Remuneration:** For the purpose of this Act, members of the National Media Council shall be entitled to salary or remuneration as follows –

- (1) Chairperson will draw a salary of rank equivalent to the rank of a cabinet minister.
- (2) Vice-chairpersons shall be entitled to the salary of a regular Member of Parliament and no additional remuneration shall be paid to them.
- (3) Other members of the National Media Council shall draw salaries as per Parliamentary norms.
- (4) Members from journalists' bodies shall draw salaries equivalent to an ordinary Member of Parliament.

CHAPTER III REGISTRATION OF MEDIA OUTLETS

9. **Registration:** All media outlets shall in a period of one year of the enactment of this law, register themselves with the National Media Council to qualify for any of the benefits provided under this Act or any funding from the state or the central government, whether directly or indirectly.

10. **Registration – where to be done:** Media outlets shall be registered with the National Media Council formed under Section 3 of this Act.

11. **Registration – how to be done:** Media outlets desirous of registration under Section 9 shall be registered with the National Media Council in the form and manner prescribed under Schedule II of this Act.

12. Special provision regarding registration of media outlets in cross-ownership: Integration of media outlets shall be permissible subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The different media outlets concentrated in a relevant geographic market are not contributing more than the threshold of market share prescribed by the National Media Council under this Act.
- (2) If the market share of the different media outlets is more than the prescribed threshold then it will have to dilute its control in one of the two segments.
- (3) The integration of the media outlets will be permitted only to the extent the abovementioned in sub-clauses (1) and (2) is not breached.
- (4) The existing media outlets which are in breach of the rules mentioned above should be given a maximum period of one year to comply with the rules.

13. Production of relevant documents at the time of such registration: The National Media Council shall, before proceeding to register a media outlet, require the person applying for such registration to produce –

- (1) Transparency disclosures (to be placed in the public domain) as –
 - (i) Shareholding in the media outlet
 - (ii) Foreign direct investment pattern of the media outlet
 - (iii) Revenue statement of different media outlets half-yearly
 - (iv) Interests, direct and indirect, of the media outlet in other entities engaged in media and non-media sectors
 - (v) Interests of media outlets, direct and indirect, having shareholding beyond 5% in the media entity under consideration, in other media outlets
 - (vi) Shareholder agreements, loan agreements and any other contract/agreement pertaining to the media outlet
 - (vii) Any other contract/agreement that has a bearing on the editorial policy of the media outlet
 - (viii) Details of loans made by and to the media outlet.
- Provided that change in any of the parameters (i) to (viii) listed above must be reported to the National Media Council within (30) thirty days of implementation of the change.

(2) Reports to be submitted to the National Media Council pertaining to:

- (i) Subscription and advertisement revenue of the media outlet
- (ii) Advertising rates of the media outlet
- (iii) Top ten advertisers for each media outlet of the entity.

CHAPTER IV PENALTIES

14. Contravention of orders of the National Media Council:

- (1) The National Media Council after due inquiry can punish a media outlet if there is non-compliance with any order.
- (2) If any media outlet, without reasonable cause, fails to comply with the orders or directions of the Council issued under this Act, it shall be punishable with fine prescribed by the Council which shall be a percentage of the market share of the media outlet.

15. Penalty for non-furnishing information of integration: If any media outlet fails to give notice to the National Media Council under the provisions of Sections 12 and 13 of this Act, the Council shall impose on such media outlet a penalty which shall not exceed the total turnover or the assets, whichever is higher, of such integration.

16. Penalty for making false statement or omitting to furnish material information: If any media outlet, being party to an integration –

- (1) makes a statement which is false for any material particular, or knowing it to be false, or
 - (2) omits to state any material particular as per Section 13, knowing it to be material information,
 - (3) makes any statement or furnishes any document which it knows or has reason to believe to be false in any material particular, or
 - (4) wilfully alters, suppresses or destroys any document which is required to be furnished as aforesaid,
- such media outlet will be liable to incur penalty as prescribed by the National Media Council which shall be a percentage of the market share of the media outlet. The word integration shall have the meaning as per section 2(9) of this act.

CHAPTER V
WHEN A PERSON IS IN A POSITION TO EXERCISE CONTROL

17. When a person is in a position to exercise control: (1) A person is said to be in a position to exercise control of a licence or a company if –

- (i) The person, either alone or together with an associate of the person, is in a position to exercise control of the licence or the media outlet; or
- (ii) In the case of a licence –
 - (a) The person is the licensee; or
 - (b) The person, either alone or together with an associate of the person, is in a position to exercise (whether directly or indirectly) control of the selection or provision of a significant proportion of the programmes broadcast by the licensee; or
 - (c) The person, either alone or together with an associate of the person, is in a position to exercise (whether directly or indirectly) control of a significant proportion of the operations of the licensee in providing broadcasting services under the licence; or
- (iii) In the case of a non-licensee, the person, either alone or together with an associate of the person, is in a position to exercise (whether directly or indirectly) control of a significant proportion of the operations of the company; or
- (iv) The person, either alone or together with an associate of the person, is in a position to
 - (a) Veto any action taken by the board of directors or editors of the licensee or the media outlet; or
 - (b) Appoint or secure the appointment of, or veto the appointment of, at least half of the board of directors or editors of the licensee or the media outlet; or
 - (c) Exercise, in any other manner, whether directly or indirectly, direction or restraint over any substantial issue affecting the management or affairs of the licensee or the media outlet.

(2) The following are examples of situations that, depending on the circumstances, may be relevant in determining whether a person is in a position to exercise control of two or more licences –

- (i) The licensees share any or all of the following –
 - (a) Equipment
 - (b) Studios
 - (c) Other production facilities
 - (d) Transmission facilities
 - (e) Human resources
 - (f) Other resources
- (ii) The licensees have a financial relationship with each other;
- (iii) The person is in a position to exercise control of one or more of the licences;
- (iv) The person has a financial relationship with another person who is in a position to exercise control of the other licence or one or more of the other licences.

18. When a person is in a position of control of a newspaper, magazine or journal: A person is in a position of control in a newspaper if:

- (1) The person is the publisher of the newspaper; or
- (2) The person is in a position, either alone or together with an associate of the person, and whether directly or indirectly –
 - (i) To exercise control of a significant proportion of the operations of the publisher in publishing the newspaper; or
 - (ii) To exercise control of the selection or provision of a significant proportion of the material to be published in the newspaper;
- (3) If the newspaper is published by a company:
 - (i) the person is in a position, either alone or together with an associate of the person, to exercise control of the company; or
 - (ii) the person, either alone or together with an associate of the person, is in a position to veto any action taken by the board of directors of the company; or
 - (iii) the person, either alone or together with an associate of the person, is in a position to appoint or secure the appointment of, or veto the appointment of, at least half of the board of directors/editors of the company; or
 - (iv) the person, either alone or together with an associate of the person, is in a position to exercise, in any other manner, whether directly or indirectly, direction or restraint over any substantial issue affecting the management or affairs of the company; or
 - (v) the company or more than 50% of its directors.

CHAPTER VI
COMPLAINTS TO THE NATIONAL MEDIA COUNCIL

19. Complaints relating to offences or breach of licence conditions:

- (1) A person may complain against a media outlet if it has—
 - (i) Committed an offence against this Act or the regulations; or
 - (ii) Breached a condition of its licence.
- (2) The National Media Council shall, after following due process of law, give its decision within three months from the date of receipt of the complaint.

CHAPTER VII
REPORTS AND RECORDKEEPING

20. Register of media outlets:

- (1) The National Media Council shall establish and maintain a register of media outlets, subject to registration.
- (2) The register shall include the name of the media outlet, and the criteria according to which the media outlet comes under the jurisdiction of the National Media Council.
- (3) The register shall be in such form as the National Media Council considers appropriate.
- (4) The National Media Council shall provide a copy of the register to the government annually.

CHAPTER VIII
FINANCE, ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

21. Grants by Central Government:

- (1) The central government may, after due appropriation by Parliament by law in this behalf, make to the National Media Council allotment of such sums of money as the government may deem fit for being utilised for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) Notwithstanding any amount granted under sub-clause (1), the central government will allot 2% of money from income of political parties to the National Media Council to be utilised for the purposes of this Act.

22. Constitution of Fund: There shall be constituted a fund, to be called the National Media Fund, and there shall be credited thereto –

- (1) All government grants received by the National Media Council
- (2) A sum of 2% of income of political parties received under this Act
- (3) The interest that shall accrue on account of Clauses 1 and 2
- (4) Any amount contributed by any person to the fund.

23. Accounts and Audit:

- (1) The National Media Council shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts in such form as may be prescribed by the central government in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
- (2) The accounts of the National Media Council shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India at such intervals as may be specified by him and any expenditure incurred in connection with such audit shall be payable by the Council to the Comptroller and Auditor General.

24. Utilisation of Media Funds: The National Media Fund constituted under Section 22 shall be utilised to support the media and journalism in a manner – (1) To meet the expenses of the National Media Council

- (2) To support the expansion of independent media
- (3) As may be prescribed by the rules made for this purpose by the National Media Council.