

History of The Development of Mass Media in Uzbekistan and Their Current Legal Status

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Abstract

Mass media play a pivotal role in the dissemination of information and the formation of public opinion in every society. In Uzbekistan, the evolution of mass communication has reflected the broader sociopolitical transformations, from early print publications to modern digital broadcasting platforms. The development of television and radio in Uzbekistan—from early experimental transmissions in the 1920s to the establishment of major telecommunication infrastructures—illustrates both technological innovation and state policy direction. Despite the historical richness and recent liberalization in Uzbekistan's media landscape, comprehensive scholarly reviews connecting the technological evolution, legal frameworks, and current institutional reforms remain limited. This article aims to chronologically trace the development of mass media in Uzbekistan, with a focus on television, and to analyze its current legal foundations within the national and international legal contexts. The study reveals significant progress in the diversification and independence of media outlets. As of the latest assessments, over 50% of TV channels and 85% of radio stations in Uzbekistan are now non-state entities. The legal foundations, such as the laws “On Mass Media” and “On the Protection of Journalistic Activities,” demonstrate alignment with international norms like Article 19 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The article combines historical data with legal analysis, offering a unique interdisciplinary perspective on media development in Uzbekistan. The findings underscore the importance of further reinforcing journalistic freedom and continuing media liberalization while safeguarding against abuse, thereby strengthening Uzbekistan's democratic institutions and civic participation through transparent information channels.

Keywords: Mass media, television, radio, newsreels, programs, newspapers, magazines, press, law, documentary films, telecommunications

1. Introduction

As we know, mass media is a means of delivering information to the general public through newspapers, magazines, newsletters or bulletins, television, radio, video, newsreel programs, websites on public telecommunications networks, or otherwise [1].

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Article 1 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Mass Media" defines mass media as newspapers, magazines, television and radio programs, documentary films, and other periodicals of mass media [2].

Editorial boards of the press, television and radio, and other mass media are considered representatives of a particular mass media outlet. The editorial board is a legal entity operating on the basis of its own charter. The editorial board may conduct economic activities on the basis of economic independence [3].

The role of the media is extremely broad and encompasses all areas of our society [4].

Literature review. Journalism emerged in the 17th century during the period of intensified economic and political struggle. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, radio journalism, photojournalism and film journalism developed, and from the 1940s, television journalism developed [5]. The first press products in Turkestan began to be produced in the second half of the 19th century. As is known, television is the youngest of the mass media, and it appeared in our country not so long ago. Attempts to transmit an image from one location to another were made in the middle of the 19th century. The English mechanic A. Benoit invented a device for transmitting an image in a photographic film in 1843. A. Benoit drew an image on a piece of tin as thin as paper, wrote inscriptions using special ink, and installed the tin plate in the image transmitting device. The device receiving the image was installed with special paper that faded under the influence of an electric current. There is also information that another technical device project for transmitting an image over a distance using electricity was discussed in Russian official circles in 1858 [6]. In 1897, an important invention was made, when the German physicist K.F. Braun created a light-emitting electron tube for an oscillograph. Only after that did Boris Lvovich Posing, a professor at the St. Petersburg Institute of Technology, succeed in receiving a television image and transmitting it from one location to another. In 1907, B. Rosing proposed the use of a light-emitting electron tube for transmitting images over a distance [7].

On May 22, 1911, Rosing experimentally tested the reception of two parallel black lines on a light background in a light-emitting electron tube. In the house of Yusufkhan aka and Hamza opa Mirzamuhamedovs, at 74, "Bola Masjid" Street, in the Shaykhantohur district of Tashkent, in 1925-1928, a modern television based on a fully electronic system with both transmitting and receiving sides of the image was created, and a real moving television image was received for the first time in the world. The founders of this invention were Boris Grabovsky and Ivan Belyansky, who at that time lived in the same room of a house with a balcony in the old town courtyard [8].

On August 4, 1928, a television transmitter was installed on the street. A tram was seen passing by the image-receiving part of the television complex installed in front of the Khiva cinema [9]. This was the first time in the world that a television report was broadcast directly on the street - a great victory for Tashkent inventors.

On November 5, 1956, the construction of the first telecenter in the Central Asian region was completed in Tashkent. A television tower 180 meters high was also built and installed: a single-program ultra-short-wave frequency modulation transmitter with a power of 5 kW (video), 2.5 kW (voice) and a power of 4 kW. Its radius was 60-70 km. The construction of the Tashkent telecenter lasted two years [10].

In 1961, with the help of the ITR-center, a second television turnstile antenna was installed on the tower and a second program began to be broadcast using a 100 W TRSA 12/12 transmitter.

In 1967, the "Orbita" system was created based on the artificial Earth satellites (AES) "Molniya-1" and "Molniya-2". The "Orbita" receiving station was built in Tashkent. With their help, three programs of the Central Television began to be broadcast [11].

The Tashkent TV tower and radio and television transmitting station were commissioned in 1981. The construction of the TV tower was carried out in 1978 under the leadership of L. Semashko, N. G. Terziev-Tsarukov, and engineers E. P. Morozov, M. D. Musheev.

During the years of independence, the television and radio broadcasting network was completely modernized. All old television and radio broadcasting transmitters were replaced with modern transmitters. In 2001-2003, a complete replacement of television and radio broadcasting transmitters was carried out at the Tashkent TV Tower, and 6 television and 4 radio FM transmitters were installed [12].

Over the past decade, the number of independent print media has increased 2.5 times, and the number of independent electronic media has increased 7 times. About 53 percent of all existing television channels and 85 percent of radio channels are non-state media. This indicates that the number of independent publications that can meet the requirements of the free information market has increased and a competitive environment has been formed. Today, media in our republic are published in many areas, including political and social, legal, medical, educational, women's, socio-educational, economic and social, sports, spiritual and educational, and many others [13].

2. Research Method

The continuous integration of current technology is leading to the emergence of novel media structures, including digital, mobile, and Internet television. These instances demonstrate that the media liberalisation program in our country is being executed systematically, progressively, and with a defined objective. The ongoing reforms in numerous aspects of social life in our nation have resulted in the introduction of new media initiatives and the enhancement of the legislative framework within the sector [14].

3. Result and Discussion

It should be noted that the legislative framework created in our country and the work being done fully comply with international legal norms. In particular, an analysis of the laws on media activities shows that they are consistent with the norms of Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "everyone has the right to receive and impart information of all kinds, regardless of frontiers," and another international document, which states that "bilateral and multilateral information exchange between all states on the basis of mutual equality and respect for different cultures is important."

We know that in our country there is a solid legislative framework that regulates the activities of the media and meets international standards. We can see this in the example of the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Mass Media" and "On Protection of Journalistic Activities", adopted in 1997.

In recent years, the Uzbek media have been actively fulfilling their role in exercising public control over the activities of state authorities and administration. They are becoming a real "fourth power" in our country [15].

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, that is, the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, strictly stipulates that the media should not be subject to censorship. The new Constitution allocates 2 articles for the media. According to it, the state strengthens the freedom of the media. That is, the state guarantees the freedom of the media, the implementation of their rights to seek, receive, use and disseminate information.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The use of mass media for the following purposes is prohibited:

Calling for a forcible change in the existing constitutional order and territorial integrity of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

promoting war, violence and terrorism, as well as the ideas of religious extremism, separatism and fanaticism;

disclosing information that is a state secret or other secret protected by law;

disseminating information that incites national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred;

promoting narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, unless otherwise provided by law;

promoting pornography;

is not allowed to be used for the purpose of committing other acts that entail criminal and other liability in accordance with the law.

Censorship of the media is not permitted in the Republic of Uzbekistan. No one has the right to demand that published news and materials be agreed upon in advance, as well as to change their text or completely withdraw them from publication (not broadcast).

The media is always at the center of attention and legislation because it is an area in the world that needs to be regulated and secured.

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