

The SPL Journal of Literary Hermeneutics

A Biannual International Journal of Independent Critical Thinking
Double-blind Peer-reviewed and Open Access Journal in English



Vol. 4 Issue 2 Monsoon Edition 2024 e-ISSN 2583-1674 Page no. 122-133

www.literaryherm.org
www.cavemarkpublications.com



Unveiling Corruption in Vikas Sharma's *Media Revolution 2030*: A Critical Analysis

Riya Deshwal

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-8237-1199>

Corresponding Author: Riya Deshwal, Research Scholar, Department of English,
Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut, riyadeshwal97@gmail.com

Review Article

Keywords:

Corruption, Power dynamics, University System, Ethical dilemmas, Bureaucratic systems

Article History

Received:

July 16, 2024

Revised:

July 22, 2024

Accepted:

July 30, 2024



ISSN 2583-1674 (SPL-JLH)



Abstract

Aims: *This paper critically evaluates how corruption is represented in Vikas Sharma's Media Revolution 2030: In Modern Times, and its role within media, educational institutions, and broader political systems. The very aim of research is to reveal the complex form corruption takes as described in the novel in the mechanisms of media technology in both the perpetuation and resistance towards corruption within Indian society.*

Methodology and Approach: *Using a literary-critical approach, the paper conducts thematic analyses of Media Revolution 2030. Sharma's work focuses on character development, narrative structure, and the subtler aspects embedded in the story as it unfolds-between which historical and contextual analysis with real-world media corruption is drawn for comparison. Textual evidence from the novel serves as proof of this study.*

Outcome: *The deconstruction indicates that Sharma's corruption is deep in nature, with the media as a tool for the corrupt elite and, on the other hand, as a means of resisting it. The media penetrates all sectors of education and religious organizations.*

Conclusion: *Media Revolution 2030 presents an overwhelming criticism of how the media serves to escalate corruption within various societal segments. The dystopian view of 2030 from the novel thus presents a cautionary tale for attaining media accountability so that advancing escalations in corruption are not reached. The new study advises further research into the possible use of citizen journalism as a remedy against corruption in mainstream media.*

*Correspondence: Riya Deshwal, riyadeshwal97@gmail.com © (2024) All rights are reserved with the author (s) published by CaveMark Publications. This is an Open Access Article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any form or medium, provided that the original work is properly cited or acknowledged. This paper is available online on www.literaryherm.org and it was published by CaveMark Publications, India.

Vikas Sharma's *Media Revolution 2030* is a scathing indictment of corruption pervading Indian political and media institutions. Against this shift in the media landscape, the novel makes information that was once manipulated no longer so but weaponized for the sustenance of corrupt practices. Sharma's work is far from the traditional story-telling technique; rather, socio-political critique is woven into the fabric of his narrative. Essentially, the novel reveals a major quest in offering insights into the corrupt machinery through which the mighty hold and exercise power and media as an enabler of corrupt forces. By looking at key examples of the novel, such as how Shivakant changes from a simple farmer to an all-powerful political leader, the essay shows how Sharma uses fiction to bring light to very real issues regarding corruption involving media, the decay of the institutions of education, and personal life sacrifices for power.

Integration of the thick societal concerns into stories that feel personal but universally significant are some of the trademarks of Vikas Sharma's literary adeptness. Here, corruption isn't just a tool in the story but has an intricate tie to the very fabric of society as is seen in *Media Revolution 2030*. The role of media in propelling this corruption is portrayed in the novel by giving readers a form through which they could view the dangerous consequences of unchecked power and misinformation. This paper will explore these themes while arguing that *Media Revolution 2030* is not just a background for reflecting on life but could greatly represent a reflection of contemporary Indian society in which corruption in media and governance undermines democracy and the integrity of public institutions. Based on key characters and events of the novel, the paper will show how Sharma's fictional universe is, as a matter of fact, a reflection of our reality.

The novel starts by placing a historical context that would provide the basis for the malevolent systems that prevail throughout most of the novel. Vikas Sharma writes the socio-political history of India, from its independence in 1947 to several decades later, and traces how the beginnings of corruption were sown early in the democratic journey of the country. The tale of Shivakant, for instance, gives an account of a character hailing from humble origins but eventually being swayed by the destructive influence of power. His childhood and youth spent in

rural village Gangapur, a picture of the man living away from the political and legal intricacies of the nation:

He did not know much about the characteristics of the Indian Constitution, the Directive Principles of State Policy, the Supremacy of the Supreme Court of India. And of course, the Rule of Law and the freedom of the press. (*Media Revolution* 2030, p. 4).

This quote captures a wider social issue the denial of access to information critical to living leaves rural populations open to being manipulated by those in power. It also makes an indirect criticism of the media for failing in its task of enlightening the masses. Shivakant's ignorance of what governs his very life is a presage of how later, media would be manipulated to steer the perception of reality. The reader is challenged to realize how information (or its lack of presence) can be seen as a tool of control. And making this theme occur so early in the novel, Sharma prepares one for a critique on how, historically, media failed to empower the people but instead to fulfil the will of those in power.

He bases his analysis on concrete developments in India's early years- for instance, the introduction of democratic socialism and the institution of public industries indicate the widening gap between ideas and facts. The novel assumes that just as India was modernized, its media failed to march forward for the betterment of society. Instead, it became a tool of power, representing the agendas and interests of those who already held it. That is a subtle yet serious commentary on the state of the media in India today. Institutionally, media were once an important bulwark of democracy but have now become yet another Trojan horse captured by political elites to advance their agenda and protect their interests. This historical perspective is very important in understanding the levels of media corruption in the novel and how it hooks characters like Shivakant into its corrupt nexus of power and media.

This role of media in perpetuating political corruption in the novel also comes out more clearly in its progressive exploration as *Media Revolution 2030* progresses. One of the very apparent examples is Gram Pradhan Ravidutt, who uses the post to accumulate personal gains at the cost of public service. This can

be demonstrated when he, for instance, negotiates with the Tehsildar to donate land for a school and says that it was a selfless move, but, in reality, that proved to be a strategic move for power consolidation. The media is doing an important job in this manipulation by coloring Ravidutt's act in a luring hue, and through this, he positions himself politically. The deal is condensed in the novel as follows, "The UP government will construct the school building and send five teachers there. Find out the donor and leave other government responsibilities to me" (*Media Revolution 2030*, p. 9).

This scene is important because it shows the transactional politics of power in the novel. Ravidutt has donated not out of benevolence but to leverage himself into a higher rung in the community's ladder. Tehsildar's taking this as an excuse to gain politically also indicates how rot has nested on every level of administration. And this is aggravated by media that only manipulates the lie that Ravidutt was indeed magnanimous. One of the most critical handling of the public perception theme in the novel lies in how the media perpetrates corruption for having chosen what to report and the manner of storytelling. Lacking an account of politicians, media institutions of *Media Revolution 2030* become complicit in nurturing such corrupt power structures.

Sharma has bitterly criticized the symbiotic relationship between media and politics—a state where both institutions feed off each other to maintain control over the public. Ravidutt's rise, catapulted by media endorsements, reflects in this light the dangers of media getting too closely allied with political interests. In doing so, the novel raises important questions regarding the role of the press in a democracy. Is it still the tool for truth and accountability or has become a pawn in the hands of the powerful? Questions thus posed by the story of Ravidutt and how the media cooperated with him come up to nudge the reader into introspection about the relationship between media and politics in their society.

Once the story advances, the focus of the attention of the reader shifts from Shivakant's educational ambitions to the darker realities of the exploitation of media. At the outset, Shivakant's desire to open an Intermediate College is based on a need in his community: better education needed by the public. But as

the story evolves, it appears that the venture has greater personal ambitions than educational ones. Thus, this role the media played in amplifying Shivakant's achievements without probing into the motive of the man establishes that it is how the institutions of power take hold of the media for their agenda. The words in the policy are:

No problem. Plan it and spend thirty gold coins, buy two bighas of land, and get an Intermediate College built in your name. That way your children will be able to study here and this step will help other village boys and girls as well (*Media Revolution 2030*, p. 10).

It has been framed as a public service where it serves private gain. The media propagates the other narrative of self-interest by harping on individual achievement rather than the common good. How malicious the corruption within the educational system is compounded by the lack of media acumen to investigate and question what's going on behind all this. In the process, Sharma condemns the media's tendency to promote characters more bent on personal advantage than on true public service.

Media Revolution 2030 reflects a common theme of moral decadence as it portrays the instance wherein media evolves from an instrument of enlightenment into a tool of exploitation. In earlier days, institutions like schools and colleges were intent on uplifting society but were presently directed to serve personal ambition and political agenda. Instead of blowing the whistle on such malpractices, the media becomes an accessory to the crimes by upholding the facade of progress. Referring with great boldness to the role that media plays in controlling public opinion, Sharma brings into focus a few of the dangers posed by uncontrolled media influence. When the narratives that media perpetuates are no longer controlled, it becomes a powerful agent of corruption.

Such institutions are, by nature, touted as the nurseries of intellectual rigor, personal development, and apt social conduct. But as the *Media Revolution 2030* dawns, universities, and schools become locations of widespread corruption—a situation that waters down the quality of education provided and makes normal the perversion of values among students and teachers themselves. Sharma points

out that corruption in the education sector betrays the meritocratic basis of society, alienates youth, undermines institutional integrity, and has far-reaching implications for society.

This is particularly so for the university system, which the book projects as one of the most important power centres that are infested with corruption. Here, at several turns in the book, we witness how nepotism, bribery, and exploitation disfigure a staple institution of the modern world: hiring professors, grading students, and administering administrative tasks. "The Adversary's Education" is one of the more poignant reflections on corruption in education, when Shivakant says, "The university was supposed to be a place of learning, but what I saw was a marketplace where knowledge was bought and sold, and the currency wasn't intellectual effort, but connections and bribes" (Sharma, p. 54). This quote sums up what the overall message is, that is, how education, which is meant for betterment, turns out to be another tool for corruption.

Media Revolution 2030 is quite autobiographical and develops from Vikas Sharma's distinguished career and personal experiences, especially in academics and literary critique. Sharma, the accomplished scholar and writer, derives his deep insight into societal issues, educational institutions, and the political landscape into his narrative. This goes in tandem with the book that has explored corruption in educational institutions, a reflection of his administrative insight drawn from his later years as Professor and Head of the English Department of Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut. Conversely, his academic background with the best of literary excellence could be equaled with characters like Shivakant and Kantlyogi exposing the intricacies of personal ambition as well as societal roles. Media corruption being dissected in the novel has hints resonating with Sharma's overall scholarly pursuits, as his academic journey endows a fictional world of power, manipulation, and integrity. The novelist has managed to bring real observations from his personal and professional life into one's purview, giving shape to a broader critique of Indian society through *Media Revolution 2030*.

The family background that Vikas Sharma hailed from was deeply rooted in academic and literary excellence, which dictated his career and writing. His father, Chandra Pal Sharma was a lecturer at R.S.S. Degree College at Pilkhuwa which established a strong foundation of intellectual pursuit within the family. There is also Kumar Vishwas, a much younger brother of Sharma. He is one of the most respected literary personages in India. Not only has he significantly contributed to poetry, but he is also a great presence within the political realm. His sister, Prof. Vandana Sharma, is another accomplished Hindi poetess and adds to the longevity of heritage that streams out from this family in terms of the literary and academic world. This intellectual rigor and creativity within a family background laid a very healthy basis for Vikas Sharma's success as a scholar, author, and critic. Against this backdrop, societal issues in his novels could be explained with depth and understanding of the complexities involved.

It also delves into the mode by which such corruption in the media and politics, at their respective level, trickles down into personal relationships within the family unit. The character of Shivakant and his family sub-concept within the entire idea of *Media Revolution 2030* portrays how ambition and power struggles tainted even the most intimate areas of life for the sake of personal ambition and public perception. Shivakant's initial aim of opening a college for his children soon became enmeshed in a web of personal ambition and public perception. His children, who would be proud to have such an erudite institution under his patronage, shun to disassociate with the father's institute and go to supposed premier institutions, "There is a major difference between our college education and that of Navodaya School. Let them live in the boarding house and lead life independently." (*Media Revolution 2030*, p. 13).

This quote gives fore of the angst that erupts when the reputation becomes overmuch rather than knowledge. It is almost as if the media is daydreaming over certain schools and continues the elitism upon which this disenchantment emerges. Now, the sons of Shivakant, under those paragraphs of the media, therefore, think their father's college is inferior because of its purpose, i.e., the upliftment of the community. The same pattern presents the larger motif where in

corruption seeks entry into personal aspirations and family bonds. As media remains instrumental in the entrenchment of prestige and power-dominated notions of success, people are forced to sacrifice their ethos in the pursuit of such socially constructed objectives.

The family angle in Sharma's handprints out how corruption is not just an exception to political or educational spheres but rather occurs in every walk of life. The Tension between Shivakant-Ravi-Vinay brings out how perceptions of success led by media could result in fragmentation within families. In such a society, which touts' power and prestige as its most valuable commodity, personal relationships are lost to the altar of status. The family drama in this novel, on a micro level, reflects the much larger issues and problems of the time: to wit, corruption does not just infiltrate the public sphere but also the private.

The forceful critique of the novel is exercised through its handling of how media hew public figures for public opinion manipulation. In a representation that runs throughout *Media Revolution 2030*, Sharma provides instance after instance of how media has been used for building reputations of seemingly incorruptible people when the opposite end of the situation prevails. Ravidutt's public figurehead as a benevolent man finds most of his construction via the media, who put forth the occasions with much fanfare and gloss over the malicious underplots of corruption. The public opinion is manipulated in the novel, it is revealed that mass media can play with the stories which are affirmative for the opinion-bearers, "The Tehsildar got Ravidutt's picture printed in The Hindustan the next day, and Ravidutt felt delighted to see this' " (*Media Revolution 2030*, p. 10).

"Media can hand someone a leadership role by letting the public view only his good deeds," according to the above citation. Portraying Ravidutt as a generous land donor changes the public perception and enables him to sustain political power without facing a proper inquiry over his dealings. The support will selectively focus on charitable intent with which deals are done rather than ill ones, thus enabling him to sustain a false, beneficial narrative. This manipulation of public personas is an essential part of the corruption that runs through the novel

because it allows manipulative people like Ravidutt to maintain their power while cloaking their real motives.

The novel's criticism of the role that media plays in creating public personas goes beyond the censure of individual characters toward a broader social context. Media institutions are the gatekeepers of information as to what needs to be known and what would be better left to obscurity. Information flows because of this control by the media institutions, which enabled corrupt people to survive when nothing could challenge their presence constructed by the media. Sharma's investigation into this theme is a cautionary note regarding the possible dangers of consolidating media and the kind of power such control will bring into the hands of those who construct the narrative. When media is not answerable to truth, it becomes a powerful vehicle for the perpetuation of corrupt systems of power.

Corruption in Sharma's account extends to the religious and moral domains as well where figures such as Pandit Dixit exerting moral authority have a chance to fix the game so that they can come out winners for realizing their self-interest. Here, Pandit Dixit is a religious figure in a novel who is more involved in corrupt practices than the politicians and educators. His involvement in arranging Shivakant's marriage to Madhavi was not about spirituality but only securing favors and influence, "Pandit ji had seen Madhavi several times in this temple and he told her details to Shivakant the next morning – 'She is nice, humble, obedient and above all beautiful with good fate lines'" (*Media Revolution* 2030, p. 7).

This quote depicts how even religious characters in the novel are accomplices in the malpractices prevalent in society. An analysis of Madhavi's "fate lines" by Pandit Dixit means less a way to spiritual illumination and more of a support for the old power play in his interest. The pandit blackmails Shivakant into acceding to this marriage, and his hold on the community is thereby safely established. Again, the media, along with all these shady characters, misses this manipulation and lets religious figures maintain their moral high ground even as they act in pure self-interest.

Shamya Sharma's criticism regarding religious corruption is particularly strong as it critiques an assumption of religious morality and figures. In *Media*

Revolution 2030, religious institutions stand shoulder to shoulder with all others in corruption tendencies and are further enhanced by media complicity in manipulating public perception. Sharma gives thrust to these essential dangers or dangers that lie in unlimited power domains, religious and secular alike.

As the novel draws closer to the titular year, 2030, Sharma paints a dystopian vision of how things are to turn with the help of media corruption that, in this imagined world, has reached its zenith. In the place of a tool for information and education, this anticipated future foresees media emerging as an arm of a state apparatus striving to preserve 'the order of things'. The "revolution" referred to in the title is more of a media owning the truth and public perception rather than one of change and progress. Media has now become indistinguishable from corrupt systems it presented itself as a tool to unveil earlier, "Shivakant's dream of honest society was broken, since he failed to realize that media had become the very motor of corruption, propelling the society further into the depths of deception and manipulation" (*Media Revolution 2030*, p. 44).

This summary on its own speaks volumes about the rather dimming end of the novel: the conclusion that media is not the force of virtue but one that has been the cause of corruption. Media in this near-dystopian future is no longer complicit in maintaining rotten power structures; instead, it forms the basis upon which these power structures are built. In their former glory when hopes were still high to make things better, the characters find themselves powerless against the overwhelming control that the media exercises over them. Sharma's vision for 2030 becomes a stark warning about the peril that uncontrolled media power builds toward society's destruction of integrity.

Media Revolution 2030 is a novel that engages in a serious critical analysis of the role of media in reinforcing and aggravating corruption at almost all levels of societal life, from politics to education, from religion to personal lives. Through characters like Shivakant and Ravidutt, the novel charts how one can utilize media to build fake narratives and run rotten systems of power. As the narration draws closer to a dystopian vision of 2030, Sharma warns about a society in which media becomes less responsive to truth but rather an instrument

for people in control. *Media Revolution 2030* is in the end just a cautionary tale of how media corruption leads to quite undesirable consequences, hence leaving us an appeal to thoughtfully reflect on the role of media in our very own lives and thus concerning society.



Work Cited and Consulted

Sharma, Vikas. *Media Revolution 2030*. Diamond Pocket Books. 2024. Print.

Riya Deshwal

Presently, Research Scholar in the Department of English, Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. With a notable rank in the university merit list during her Master's at CCS University, Meerut, she has been recognized for academic excellence. She cleared her UGC NET JRF in 2022. Graduating from Delhi University, she has further enriched her academic journey by contributing significantly to her field with the publication of multiple research papers and active participation in numerous national conferences. Displaying leadership skills, she recently served as the Co-convener of the 66th All India English Teachers' Conference, organized by AESI and Department of English, Chaudhary Charan Singh University.

