

Success Laventille Secondary School

Social-Studies

Form 5

Section C: OPTIONS

C1: Communication

The Regulatory Functions of Government and Media Associations in Relation to the Media

Although there is a principle of freedom of press, there are also laws and regulations that govern the press and other media broadcasters. These regulations are generally in place to:

- protect persons, mainly children, from material that is deemed to be harmful in some way
- promote and protect cultural traditions and social practices
- ensure there is sufficient public service broadcasting (including public information broadcast)
- protect the privacy and reputation of individuals and organizations
- maintain state security
- prevent sedition
- promote more standards.

Government can regulate the media in a number of ways:

Censorship Boards

Censorship can be defined as a form of regulation of the press that involves examining material, with the aim of removing anything that is considered morally harmful, offensive or politically dangerous.

Legislation

Broadcasting legislation prohibits the transmission of any material that is profane, indecent or incites violence against any person or group. Defamation laws cover such things as libel and slander.

Licensing

In most cases an individual or company needs a license to transmit material via mass media.

Such licenses can be refused to individuals or companies that are perceived to be critical of the government. A license can also be withdrawn or revoked if any relevant legislation is violated.

Media regulations by professional associations

There are accepted codes of conduct for those working in the media to deal with issues such as fairness in reporting, privacy and public morals.

The association of Caribbean Media Workers was established in 2001. One of its aims is to collaborate with national media associations and related organizations in promoting professional and ethical standards.

Mediating in disputes

Organizations that are licensed to broadcast should have a simple and responsive complaints system. Where a complaint is not dealt with to the satisfaction of a complainant, then a regulatory body might become involved. A broadcaster can be required to air an apology, it might face having its license revoked and it could even face prosecution.