Mass Media and Social Change- Theatrical perspective

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Abstract

The term media (print, electronic or the web) the only medium, which helps in making people informed. The objective of any type of media is to present the situation objectively to the audience. Though media people disseminate the information about their want, need, and urge to know more. Public opinion matters to great extent in framing the event or issue. Media have the power to present the meanings of the feelings of general people. Media, as a powerful social system, plays an important role in creating a person's sense of reality (Gergen, 1999). It proved to be influential on the belief that in its wider cultural sense, the media largely reinforced those values and norms which had already achieved a wide consensual foundation. There is a variety of media platform that has stimulated the thoughts of the young generation and other sections of our society. The contents of Media have power to persuade individuals frequently, and have considerable influence on people (Gunther, Christen, Liebhart, & Chia 2001). The media is at the heart of cultural, social, political and economic events throughout the world. Media has a great effect on our social behaviour which is a part of our culture. Culture is learned, not inherited. The source of new cultural elements in a society may also be another society. The cultural elements of one culture borrowed and incorporated in recipient culture are called diffusion. The processes of diffusion and acculturation bring some kind of cultural changes or shift in the culture. Mass media has a political and a persuasive power over us. Radio, TV, the 'press' etc. can manipulate whole societies.

The study assessed various ways of effect of mass media on culture and society. The study aimed through theatrical perspective to elucidate the media and relationship and influence culture. Further, to understand the influences and impacts of media on society and ascertaining the levels of trust of the people in different types of media viz. print, electronic, digital etc. Finally the Suggestions for the future from the viewpoint of media policy regarding further utilization and development will be shaped through the proposed study.

Keywords: media, society, culture, social change

INTRODUCTION

Mass media ((from the press, cinema, radio and television to computer games, music CDs, and DVD, the Internet, and satellite networks), the new civilization has an important position in a technological world and it is playing a significant role in everybody's life as it has entered in every sphere of life. The media is the resource of public opinion. Media have the power to present the meanings of the feelings of general people. Media have a tendency to produce more ideological and not completely true accounts for viewing by the general public (Cotterrell 1999). The media is that authority of the society which scrutinizes all the three other powers of the state (executive, legislation & judiciary), and for that reason, it is considered the fourth power (Gormus, 2012).

The media is central mouth piece at cultural, social, political and economic events across the globe. Wright in 1975 stated the major functions of mass media as the investigation of news, finding correlations, the transmission of culture entertainment, and mobilization. The social transmission of culture implies that the media portrays our beliefs, norms and values. Media likewise entertain us in our leisure time and provides a respite from our everyday schedules. The advent of new media with practical and ideological changes of traditional media has impacted social change and subsequently transformed the world communication landscape. There is a variety of media platform that has stimulated the thoughts of the young generation and other sections of our society. Our grandparents didn't really know what 'media and communications' was, but they spoke to each other, they used the telephone, they read the newspaper, they listened to the radio and they watched the television. They were in a constant state of media and communications and didn't even know that they were doing it! For many decades, media and communication have contributed substantially to our general knowledge of international conditions and processes. Therefore, there is a perpetual need to understand social change and evaluate the socio-psychological and cultural impact of society.

Media reflect our society and it depicts what and how society works. Media makes people informed, educated, entertained and also makes people aware of the current happenings. The effectiveness of media depends on the source of the message used, type of message, language used, type of channel to transmit information and the type of audience. Now- a-days there is a variety of media platform that has stimulated the thoughts of the young generation and other sections of our society. The main function of mass media is to inform the daily life. Therefore,

Media has today become the voice of our society. All forms of media plays a very crucial role as far as social change is concerned.

The information coming from the media is all firstly about the news, reports, and largely forms the public's perceptions of reality. Thus, the incidences, thoughts, and the concepts by which the individuals organize their own views of the social reality mainly come from media (Lazar, 2001). The audience receives various messages, each of which has a various attitude, from the environment, confirms some, and rejects some other. The part absorbed affects the audience attitude and makes the behavior stable (Mokhtari, 2009). The media try to affect the audience by agenda setting and then representation. (Rabiee and Ahmadzadeh Namvar, 2008). In mass theory, the media is defined as a guide by meeting the psychological needs of the individuals. The media are referred to as powerful guides in this theory (Mehrdad, 2001). In this process, the media indirectly and directly affect people's thoughts and beliefs that finally lead to the social change. There are many fundamental theories in this regard.

In change theory, the role of the media is the transfer of individual values and innovations, social provocative, psychological and mental stimulation, and the strengthening of conscience (Mostafavi Kohangi, 2015). In Cultivation Theory, it is believed that the media make people resemble. According to the theorists of this theory, the media make all people show similar reactions to national and international events. Indeed, this theory believes that the role of media is to create common ways of using the product (Ghasemi, 2006). Charles Lindblom believes that at the start of the twenty-first century, the use of force and explicit deterministic methods gradually waned. However, the spread of a variety of mass media and their presence in different aspects of life constitutes the best and most effective tool for the proper solution of the relations between the rulers and people, and the various people (Ahrari, 2004). In fact, media today have become an important means of influencing sociocultural spheres to bring about calm and low cost changes (Mokhtari, 2007). Many studies have shown that the media directly and indirectly affect social changes. McGuire (1984) examined the effect of

media on advertising and consumption and purchasing, effect on political gatherings and participation in polls, the effect of announcments and public service calls, the effect of political propaganda on ideology, and the effect of the media on social control (Percy, 2001). In his study of the effect of the media on social changes in India, Awatadi (2016) concluded

that television programs directly or indirectly affect the social minds that could be recognized as social and cultural attributes and lead to the social change among the individuals. In examining the role of the media in social change, Hupper and Philo (2013) concluded that the media play a major role in informing what is happening in the world. According to them, mass media focus on general interest by setting different programs. This is while they present some media programs, such as political ones by limited media.

RELEVENCE OF THE STUDY

Media is visible in almost every aspect of life and work. Media in our day-to-day life helps us to be a more informed citizen, a savvy-consumer, and a more successful worker. Mass media has a persuasive power over us. Radio, TV, the 'press' etc. can influence whole societies. Media has a great effect on our social behaviour which is a part of our culture. Nowadays, visual, audio and written media are considered as the main sources of creation and dynamism of culture. The present study assesses various ways of effect of mass media on society and culture. The study aims to elucidate the importance of media, society and culture, their relationship and influence over each other.

Theoretical Analysis

I)   Media and Society- Influence and Relationship

Mass media is a term used for dissemination of information, ideas and entertainment by uses of technological media such as radio and television, cinema, press and advertising. They continue to coexist with important traditional media such as folk song and dance, drama, puppetry, etc. McLuhan (1964) argued that different types of media have different effects on society. His famous dictum is "the medium is the message". A society is influenced much more by type of media than by content or messages which are conveyed by it. Mass media being an agent of social change disseminates information, ideas and entertainment by uses of technological media such as radio and television, cinema, press and advertising. They continue to coexist with important traditional media such as folk song and dance, drama, puppetry, etc. Louis Writh and Talcott Parsons have "emphasized the importance of mass media as instruments of social control." Afsaneh (2012) concludes that TV channels seek for a change in lifestyle among

Iranian women, as she finds a significant relationship between lifestyle portrayed by TV channels and lifestyle of women in Tehran.

Mass media has bring a process of digital revolution, in which a society prior to its traditional form of communication mode, changes rapidly in various forms and modes like socio-cultural, psychological, economic, political, etc. The use of mass media was quite helpful in the positive social change which resulted into the enhancement of socio-economic development of the country. Lerner's The Passing of Traditional Society (1958) and Schramm's Mass Media and National Development (1964) were founding texts of development communication, and they have had a defining influence on the paradigm since their publication. Their basic principle was that desirable social change could be produced by scientifically designed and executed communication campaigns. Herbert Marcuse believes that the media has the provoking role of the real needs in social changes (Nouri et al., 2007)

We have been witnessing a process of convergence in production, distribution, consumption, etc. of information. Newspapers can be read online, mobile phones use is exploding, and digital television with satellite broadcasting services allow an unprecedented diversity of choice for viewing audiences. With expansion of technologies such as voice recognition, broadband transmission, web casting and cable links, the internet threatens to erase distinction with traditional media and to become primary conduct for delivery of information, entertainment, advertising and commerce to media audiences. Rogers (1978) wrote that the dominant paradigm wrongly relied on the introduction of technology to solve the social problems of the developing world. In addition, the gradual realization by development researchers and practitioners that the role of the mass media was indirect and more limited than it was previously assumed. Advocating a shift in the general orientation of development communication, Rogers (1978, p. 68) gave a new definition of development that he called "a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement ... for the majority of the people."

Robert Hornik (1980) published an article in the Journal of Communication in which he reviewed and summarized evaluations [*part of a review of Agency for International Development communication policy*] of a cluster of development projects spanning several continents. Hornik articulated his article around three central questions. The first question was concerned with the role that communication plays in processes of development. The second question focused on the

conditions that make a particular development communication project a success or a failure. Hornik's third question concerned knowledge about specific applications in development communication. Hornik conclusions were a) he found communication to be a useful complement to development because communication functioned as a catalyst, organizer, maintainer, equalizer, and legitimate motivator for social change. b): that development communication is effective only as a complementary strategy to changes in resources and environments. c):, Hornik states that the relationship between communication and development was more complex than previous research tended to assume. Thus, Hornik's wide-ranging review indicated that communication is necessary, but not sufficient, for meaningful development to take place.

Social psychologist Albert Bandura emphasizes the importance of observing, modelling, and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Albert Bandura (1977) agrees with the behaviorist learning theories of classical conditioning and operant conditioning. He has argued for an indirect and complex understanding of how people model their behavior on images that they obtain from society. Bandura's social learning theory maintains that humans acquire symbolic images of actions and behaviors, which they adapt and then use to inspire their own behavior. According to Bandura, social learning from the media is achieved in one or a combination of observational learning, inhibitory effects, and dis-inhibitory effects. Observational learning is the most direct way in which social learning operates. It is based on the fact that by observing a behavior; people can learn how to perform it themselves. In society, children are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents within the family, characters on children's TV, friends within their peer group and teachers at school. These models provide examples of behavior to observe and imitate, e.g., masculine and feminine, pro and anti-social, etc.

Jurgen Habermas in his sociological theory explains that the mass media are controlled by political and economic forces to manipulate the information consumer. He states that this compromises the rightfulness of the communication power exercised by the mass media. However, the German political scientist Peter Klier does not agree with Jurgen's theory. Klier argues that, there is a large amount of information freely available in addition to the mass media, and that people can choose among them. Another researcher, Doyle explains how mass media uses the cultural selection theory to bring about social change. Cross-cultural comparisons indicate that the structure of the mass media may have a strong effect on political developments,

and the mass media are influenced by many dynamics such as the overall editorial policy of a medium, and economic and cultural factors. New innovations in technology are further influencing the effect of media. However, media critics argue that mass media are not able to fulfill their role due to many inherent barriers that are prevailing in any society.

According to the Classical Marxist approach, mass media are assumed to follow the ideological interests of the dominant class in society. The Marxist media theory perceives the media as a fusion of the existing economic and political elites and, therefore, reflects their interests. On the other hand, the liberal approach sees the media as facilitating social agreement through the dissemination of information and conflicting opinion.

Media and Cultural Shift

The term culture and cultural phenomenon, its characteristics and what it does or how it should be studied is still highly debatable among social scientist. The definitions of culture include components like ideas, concepts, values, ideologies, attitudes, goals, norms, learned behaviours, symbols, rites, rituals, customs, myths, habits and/or artifacts. Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Taylor, 1958). Thus, the cultural and social realms appear integrated into a harmonic socio-cultural system where culture is manifested in the observable human practices and their products. Culture is learned, not inherited. The cultural elements of one culture borrowed and incorporated in recipient culture are called diffusion. The processes of diffusion and acculturation bring some kind of cultural changes or shift in the culture. Clifford (1975) defined culture as a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes towards life.

Handy (1991) [27] was of the opinion "change is not what it used to be". Before change was continuous and comfortable, when the past acted as a guide for the future, but now we have moved into a period where circumstances tend to combine to the distress of the advocates of the status quo. Indeed, the changes we are experiencing are no longer foreseeable or comfortably cast into predictable patterns but rather discontinuous, uncomfortable and tensional. Undoubtedly, the changeover from a preceding social order based on custom and

tradition to one originated from rational calculation and control, seemed secured by the growth of bureaucratic organizations (Handy 1991) .

However, the current set of interrelated economic, technological, social and cultural changes is reflected, and reflects in turn, an underlying fragmenting dynamic in our organizations that has transformed the hierarchical structures and disciplinary practices of the traditional rational bureaucracies into more self-regulating, decentralized, diffuse and flexible arrangements (Reed, 1983) .

Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation. Media has a great impact on our social behaviour which is a part of our culture. The era in which we live culture seems to offer the possibility of a more changes   Work motivation have widened the scope of changes in culture and these changes have inspired the development of new and softer `means of controlling people' (Rose, 1989), and Mass media refers to those means of diffusion that are designed to get in touch with a wider audience. It has been reflected by Smith (2011), "Media is not only confined to the four walls of news but, it also entertains, educates, informs and facilitates cultural transformation between generations". The media is that authority of the society which scrutinizes all the three other powers of the state (executive, legislation & judiciary), and for that reason, it is considered the fourth power (Gormus, 2012). Media gives knowledge and news related to basic events. Media have a tendency to produce more ideological and not completely true accounts for viewing by the general public (Cotterrell 1999). With the media discourse, there are some groups, potentially magnificently influential on public opinions, ideologies and models (Altheide 1985; Altschull 1984; Paletz & Entman 1981; Lichter, Rothman & Lichter 1990).   The mass media are less effective in this process if they use a hostile perception and more powerful when "persuasive press inferences" (Gunther & Christen 2002). The persuasive press inference depicts that individuals frequently presume public opinion from perceptions of the content of media coverage, and assumptions regarding the content that have considerable influence on people (Gunther, Christen, Liebhart, & Chia 2001) .

 Numerous theories have also attempted to understand the effect of the media on social change from a variety of perspectives and for different objectives. These include theories of media and democratization, theories of development communication and social learning, and theories in health communication, social marketing, and participatory communication. Also, a variety of areas of inquiry in mass communication dealt with social change.

Social learning theory has had a lasting effect on efforts to induce social change using the mass media because it recognized that social learning is not a rote process of direct imitation, but one in which several forces affect both observation and behavior. For example; in vocational training, apprenticeship developed as a more or less lengthy process of initiation primarily based on learning by observation. By observing the master at work, the apprentice was to learn the trade. Inhibitory effects operate on the assumption that if someone observes a person being sanctioned for behaving in a certain way, then the observer will learn not to behave in that way. Copycat crime is one of the worrisome examples of imitation. Most people, however, will imitate images and behaviors they see on television screens in discriminate, selective, and, often, indirect ways

 "Social Marketing Theory" *[1971, (Reprinted in 1997) in the specialized journal Social Marketing Quarterly] an article by* Kotler and Zaltman advocated the application of consumer marketing techniques to social problems, and they laid the conceptual foundations for their approach. Social marketing is based on one basic premise. Since marketing has been largely successful in making people chose to buy some products as opposed to competing products, then the same techniques should be effective in encouraging people to adopt certain behaviors that would lead to better physical and mental health, and eventually to wide-scale social change. As a hybrid theory that proposed to induce positive social change, social marketing borrowed concepts from psychology, sociology, communication, and preventive medicine. Similar to communication theory and research, social marketing theory is an interdisciplinary venture that requires collaborative research between scholars in several traditional disciplines. Social marketing campaigns are simultaneously directed at two audiences. First, because social problems have behavioral causes, social marketing campaigns target the individuals and groups who would benefit from a behavior change. Second, since social problems have socioeconomic causes as well, social marketing campaigns are aimed at policymakers who have the power to make policy changes that would enhance the chances of success of social marketing campaigns. Social marketing campaigns are organized around three principles. First, in order to be successful, a campaign has to have a consumer orientation. This means that the target group is treated as an active audience whose members participate in the process of social change. Second, the campaign should be premised on a social exchange of values and ideas between campaign organizers and the target group. This exchange is based on the important idea in social marketing that behavior is voluntary and not coerced. Third, campaigns should have a long-term plan that

goes beyond immediate or short-term measures of success. This should include mechanisms of monitoring, feedback, and evaluation. Social marketing has been criticized for fostering a consumer approach to social change, with its underlying capitalist premise. Still, social marketing has become a preferred approach to creating and sustaining positive social change.

Both development communication and social marketing theory do have elements that are grounded in assumptions about the relationship of consumption to social change. Development communication, starting from Schramm's early work, has tended to focus more on economic issues than on social and cultural issues. Social marketing theory after all, is derived from concepts developed in marketing and advertising, two areas that focus on making individuals good consumers. As a result, social marketing theory runs the risk of regarding individuals as consumers to be persuaded to buy a commodity, rather than citizens to be informed about issues. The line between regarding individuals as either consumers or citizens in campaigns focusing on promoting positive social change is understandably difficult to draw. Theories of media and social change have tremendous potential, but they also have serious limitations. Research has attempted to move beyond previous models of social change and has advocated more interactivity, transparency, and sensitivity to context in using media for social change. Even if the influence of the mass media is indirect and difficult to monitor, measure, and understand, the media are an important instrument to be used in continuous efforts to improve people's quality of life.

Development communication and social marketing theory share assumptions like social change can be achieved by using carefully conceptualized and operationalized persuasion campaigns which includes: radio, television, popular music, and the Internet, these mass media are highly significant and hold considerable potential for positive social change.

Until the late 1970s, development communication theory, research, and practice was grounded in what Everett Rogers (1978) termed a "dominant paradigm." This dominant paradigm, according to Rogers, was a consequence of a specifically Western legacy. That legacy includes the Industrial Revolution in North America and Western Europe, colonialism in the developing world from Latin America to the Middle East, and from Africa to East Asia the quantitative tradition of American social science, and capitalism. These historical, geopolitical, economic,

epistemological, and ideological factors molded the dominant paradigm on the role of the mass media in development and social change.

CONCLUSION

Media is basically a powerful presence in people's lives. It is found that there is potential for understanding the perception of media effects and impact. Addressing the disparity in how media psychology is perceived by making more people aware of the current, potential, and positive uses in the field through increased research, publishing and applications. Media has given new meaning to cultural sharing and communication. Media plays a cardinal role in disseminating our daily life cultural practices. It is said to reflect our culture norms and values and it has widened our choices and increased cultural expression with flow of information at planetary level. Cultural values also shape mass media messages when producers of media content have vested interests in particular social goals. People can produce and symbolise cultural identities through the media. It can be asserted that there is a close relationship between mass media and culture of people. Different mass media channels are interlinked with the culture of the place. On the basis of the literature, it could be further asserted, as (Dakroury, 2014) states that "media narratives and discourses are created within different forms of texts and images that are complexly related to the cultural perceptions and practices of both those who produce and consume them.

Theories of media and social change have tremendous potential, but they also have serious limitations. Researchers are moving beyond previous models of social change and advocating more interactivity, transparency, and sensitivity. Even the influence of the mass media is indirect and difficult to monitor, measure, and understand, the media are an important instrument to be used in continuous efforts to improve people's quality of life. Thus, media have a central role in mediating information and forming public opinion,

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