



Mass Media and Social Awareness

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Abstract: *Media plays a vital role in society. Media Collect and communicate the news and views on various issues and topics to target audiences. Newspapers' reports, articles, editorials, features, letters to editors informs and educates to their readers on different types of issues while radio is a medium of expressing and sharing ideas, thoughts, information, feelings, views, skills, problems and prospects of weaker, disadvantaged, poor and hard to reach with the mainstream population in remote area. Television provide essential information and knowledge in order to stimulate greater agricultural production, to promote and help preserve environmental and ecological balance, to disseminate message of family planning as a measure of population control and family welfare, to promote national integration to act as a catalyst for social change.*

Key Words: *Media, Print Media, Electronic Media, Radio, Television, Films Society, Development*

Mass media are very important components of society. Their use in a developing country like India is considered most crucial in the challenge to mobilize people for awareness activities. Mass Media are the tools that facilitate dissemination of information and entertainment to a large number of people. We can say mass media are the vehicles of Mass Communication. Mass media inform, educate, entertain, and motivate a vast number of audiences aware of things. Mass Media are the tools large-scale of producers and distributors of various types of messages. According to Media prophet Marshall McLuhan, “the medium is the message”. The mass media have assumed a significant place in our society. Individually or collectively, they serve the needs of various audiences who have specific preferences. Some audiences want news, information, entertainment, films, music, dance etc., others seek guidance to solve their socio-economic problems. Each media is powerful in its own right in serving people and each has gone through several stages of development due to pressure and competition from newer communication technologies. According to Wilbur Schramm, ‘A mass medium’, ‘is essentially a working group or organized round some device for circulating the same message, at about the same time, to large numbers of people.’ Mass media have founded the idea of mass production and mass distribution. Copies of Newspapers and magazines are printed in thousands and circulated in vast area. Press, radio, television, cable television, cinema, internet are different kinds of mass media.

Print Media: Newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, leaflets, posters, banners and other printed matter have served the literate people for a long time. The growth was slow in the beginning but as demand for education and information increased, print media evolved rapidly and enormously. The twentieth century has seen the rapid growth of the newspaper industry and to withstand challenges posed by newer electronic media, newspapers have adopted the latest technology of computerization to speed up the production process and improve their quality. Traditionally, newspapers serve the interests of a specific community, with news, comments, features, photographs and advertising. At present in India, there are all kinds of newspapers like, big, medium, and small. Their nature is local but some big dailies are national, catering to the interests of readers in many parts of the nation.

Electronic media like radio, television, cable TV, Satellite television, Internet, cinema etc. is informative and entertainment channel. Electronic media different from print in different ways. Impact of electronic

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media is greater than print media. Electricity is essential for electronic media for speedy delivery of messages across distances and to the masses that are geographically, culturally, intellectually and emotionally separated from one another. Electronic media is quicker than print media, the latter takes more time for mass production and delivery to a widely dispersed population.

Radio audience has grown since its inception in the 1920s. The network of radio has expanded a great deal and it offers a daily service for many hours, transmitting news, views, discussions, talks, songs, music, comedies, thrillers, sports and specific audience programmes for children, women, youth, farmers etc. People can listen to it while working at home, in the fields, factories and in travelling. According to Mahatma Gandhi, “This (i.e. the Radio) is a miraculous power. I see, ‘Shakti’, the miraculous power of God.” At the time of independence, there were only 6 radio stations and 18 transmitters in India. The coverage was 2.5 % of area and 11% of population. Now All India Radio has become one of the largest broadcasting networks in the world. All India Radio network has 420 broadcasting stations, covering 92% of area and 99.19% of population.

Radio Programmes may be classified into spoken words programmes and music programmes. In spoken words programmes, news bulletins, talks, discussions, interviews, educational programmes for school and colleges, specific audience programmes for children, women, farmers, youth etc. Music programmes, include disc jockey programmes, musical performances of all types of variety programmes. Radio FM is becoming very popular among listeners. Radio FM also broadcasts environment related programmes and advertisement in public interests, for Clean Delhi and Clean Yamuna. FM Gold broadcasts weekly programme on environment. “All India Radio regular broadcast of programmes related to environment and forest development schemes are launched by the central/States Governments. All India Radio has adopted a multilingual approach for its broadcasts of the programmes on environment, forestry, wildlife and ecology, etc. These programmes are broadcast in major languages and local dialects, spoken by various smaller communities.”

“Television is one of the most powerful media of mass communication. In India **Television** was introduced in 1959. In the beginning, the role of television was experimental and educational. It has grown into a massive network of mass information and mass entertainment today.

According to Narayana Menon (Patel Memorial Lectures, 1975), “In the beginning was the word, but the word was spoken. Then came the invention of writing which froze the spoken word into a visual shape and changed the character and basis of language. Next came printing, which gave the written word a mass basis, creating two types of languages-the spoken and the written-and two types of human beings, the illiterate and the literate. Next, broadcasting and the electronic media, making the dissemination of information and ideas, of sound and pictures on a scale so gigantic and global that no one is immune to it. We are still in the middle of it to realize what is happening to us.”

In the attraction of visualness of the medium, the capacity to beam image of actual events, people and place, is so great that people remain glued to the TV Set for hours. Through the satellites in space that are linked via cable to the television set at home, TV now has assumed a significant role in providing the latest news and views in society. The technological advancement has made unprecedented inroads into the viewers that were earlier served in the spirit of public service broadcasting by Doordarshan in India. The objectives of television include: to provide essential information and knowledge in order to stimulate greater agricultural production, to promote and help preserve environmental and ecological balance, to



disseminate message of family planning as a measure of population control and family welfare, to promote national integration to act as a catalyst for social change.

The grip of private news, entertainment, religious and sports channels networks grip over millions in metropolitan cities and towns is getting tighter as they are transmitting different programmes simultaneously round the clock. Viewers now have multiple choices ranging from news and information to a wide variety of many other programmes.

Films are considered a major mass medium because of their mass appeal and influence on society. India is the largest producer of feature films in the world. The usual ingredients are sex, songs, dances, crime, fights, melodrama and comedy. Films are catalyst for social changes and development.

At present, new media like internet is an impressive medium of communication. Latest and updated information is available on internet. Various websites of news channels and newspapers are transmitting the messages to their receivers. Now internet is essential part of mass media. Various types of information passes through the medium of internet.

The media is giving support and commitment to creating social awareness like protection of girls, women rights, education, awareness and empowerment of women are becoming main agenda of nation building, Governmental agencies, NGO's and other Social groups, Grass roots movements are spearheading campaigns, with constructive assistance from media, to seek the boardrooms. Wilbur Schramm says that "By making one part of a country aware of other parts, their people, arts, customs, and politics; by permitting the national leaders to talk to the people, and people to the leaders and to each other; by making possible a nation-wide dialogue on national policy; by keeping the national goals and national accomplishments always before the public--thus modern communication, widely used, can help weld together isolated communities, disparate subcultures, self-centered individuals and groups, and separate developments into a truly national development."

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