Mass Media

Mass media refers to communication devices, which can be used to communicate and interact with a large number of audiences in different languages. Be it the pictorial messages of the early ages, or the high-technology media that are available today, one thing that we all agree upon, is that mass media are an inseparable part of our lives. Entertainment and media always go hand in hand, but in addition to the entertainment, mass media are an effective medium for communication, dissemination of information, advertising, marketing, and in general, for expressing and sharing views, opinions, and ideas. Mass media is a double-edged sword – Thus, there are positive as well as negative influences of media.

Print Media

Print media encompasses mass communication through printed material. It includes newspapers, magazines, booklets and brochures, house magazines, periodicals or newsletters, direct mailers, handbills or flyers, billboards, press releases, and books.

Newspapers

Of all the print media, newspapers enjoyed the position of the most preferred medium to reach a wider audience until electronic communication emerged on the media scene. In the early days, newspapers were the only medium that masses at large depended on, for daily news. A newspaper carries all kinds of communication related to a variety of topics like politics, society, current affairs, entertainment, finance, stocks, etc. Newspapers are an important platform of mass communication, as they reach every nook and corner of the world where electronic media fails to reach. It plays a pivotal role in providing authentic firsthand information, building opinions, updating the knowledge of the reader, and serves as a good platform for advertisers to promote their products. The media analyst conclude that the difference in style between tabloids (picture based press) and the broadsheets (quality press) has now become less extreme. However, with the emergence of Internet, which updates information every second, and is just a click away, the popularity of newspapers has reduced. The digital media has expanded and is gradually overtaking newspapers. (As suggested by these facts)

- *The New York Times* witnessed a 47 per cent annual rise in its digital subscriptions
- The number of professional journalists has also decreased in many advanced countries. Citizen journalists and bloggers are increasingly replacing reporters as society chooses to produce content for itself.
- Reading consumes more time than referring in the computers
- In this fast moving world, everything has become instant; hence people have hardly any patience to spend with reading newspapers.

Electronic Media

Electronic media is the kind of media which requires the user to utilize an electric connection to access it. It is also known as 'Broadcast Media'. It includes television, radio, and new-age media, like Internet, computers, telephones, etc.

Television

Television appeals both the auditory and visual senses, and hence is an important communication device as it beholds the attention of the audience. For many people, it is impossible to imagine a life without their television sets, be it the daily news, or even the soap operas. Television has become an advertising hub where advertisers are ready to spend huge amounts for an ad of few seconds, especially for programs with high viewership.

New Age Media

With the advent of Internet, we are now enjoying the benefits of high technology mass media, which is not only faster than the old school mass media, but also has a widespread range. Mobile phones, computers, and Internet are often referred to as the new-age media. Internet has opened up several new opportunities for mass communication which include email, websites, podcasts, e-forums, e-books, blogging, Internet TV, and many others, which are booming today. Internet has also started social networking sites, which have redefined mass communication all together. Sites, like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have made communication to the masses all the more entertaining, interesting, and easier!

How media shapes attitudes and behaviour of people

Hypodermic needle theory

The magic bullet theory, sometimes called the hypodermic needle model, assumes that a media message is ''injected'' wholly into the recipient's consciousness and is accepted entirely at face value. The War of the Worlds (in 1930s) example is the most classic illustration of this media theory: radio listeners were told an alien invasion was happening and immediately panicked and sprang into action, without questioning the report or its origins.

Lasswell theorized that the magic bullet approach meant the originator of the message could directly influence, or manipulate, the intended recipients' perception. The theory relies on the idea that the public is passive and gullible, which makes it easier for the source of the message to influence its audience. Using terms like ''bullet'' and ''needle'' shows the severity of the impact on the audience and the power the originator of the message has. Though it may still be applicable today, the model grew out of the concern that the media in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s was all-powerful and could influence both its audience's beliefs and behaviors. The audience, as a result, was unable to resist the intended impact of the message. Most of the bad effects of video games are blamed on the violence they contain. That's what people say about PUBG as well. Children who play more violent video games are more likely to have increased aggressive thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, and decreased helping others.

Audience selection approach

An active audience theory is developed by Stuart Hall, and it is used to examine the relationship between a media text and it's audiences. In the past time, most theorists about the interpretation of mass media messages simply treat audiences as "passive sponges", who just absorb the content of television and other media. They believe that the viewers will accept and interpret the messages in exactly the way that the

message makers want. However, Stuart Hall goes against all of them; he said that the audience itself plays an active role in interpreting the messages by using their own social contexts, and are capable of changing the messages themselves through collective action. Stuart Hall states that texts are polysemous (having multiple meanings), they may be decoded in different ways depending on one person's identity, cultural knowledge and opinions. Theorists emphasize that audiences choose what to watch among a wide range of options, choose how much to watch, and may choose the mute remote button over the programming selected by the network or cable station. Studies of mass media done by sociologists parallel text-reading and interpretation research completed by linguists (people who study language). Both groups of researchers find that when people approach material, whether written text or media images and messages, they interpret that material based on their own knowledge and experience. Everyone brings a different angle outside context and backgrounds to interpret the mass media, so this leads to multiple interpretations of the same content.

Cultural approach/ theory

The culture theory, developed in the 1980s and 1990s, combines the other two theories and claims that people interact with media to create their own meanings out of the images and messages they receive. This theory sees audiences as playing an active rather than passive role in relation to mass media. One strand of research focuses on the audiences and how they interact with media; the other strand of research focuses on those who produce the media, particularly the news. where media reflects and creates the culture. Communities and individuals are bombarded constantly with messages from a multitude of sources including TV, billboards, and magazines, to name a few. These messages promote not only products, but moods, attitudes, and a sense of what is and is not important. Mass media makes possible the concept of celebrity: without the ability of movies, magazines, and news media to reach across thousands of miles, people could not become famous. In fact, only political and business leaders, as well as the few notorious outlaws, were famous in the past. Only in recent times have actors, singers, and other social elites become celebrities or "stars."

Ownership and control of the mass media

Control of the newspaper

Ownership of the media rests in the hands of a few companies. Within the restraints of keeping up with the standards and the need to be commercially successful, a newspaper owner has a tremendous amount of power to shape its political direction. The day to day decisions are left to an editor who also holds substantial power in terms of publishing the material.

Control on broadcasting

Control of radio and television is different from that of newspaper and the recording industry. There are some radio and tv stations owned and run with state sub-cities. Commercial radio and television although private owned, are under the authority of certain other groups like the independent broadcasting authority (U.K), which has considerable controlling powers. However, it means that control still remains in the hands of very few people, who are usually chosen for their pro-establishment views. Rupert

Murdoch, who controls the Sun, The Times and News of the World, is renowned for editorial interference and using his newspapers his own political purposes.

Patterns of media use by social class, age and gender

Depiction of social class

The media, especially the electronic media has a strong role in creating images of different social classes. It is found particularly in the soap operas that certain characters represent the real life people, belonging to different social statuses. The soaps make comparisons between people by showing workers as physical rather than intellectual, simple than sophisticated and local rather than national figures. Similarly the people belonging to middle class are also presented in somewhat exaggerated manner i.e The life style of a middle class person sometimes, is as lavish as any upper class person.

The media and gender

Feminists criticize the media for the way that they reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. Women are portrayed mainly in terms of their physical attractiveness or their performance of domestic roles. When they are shown in occupational sales, the occupations are extensions of the domestic roles. This reinforcement of stereotypes has been particularly evident in advertising. The appearance of men and women in advertisements generally conforms with the classic images of masculinity and femininity. The image of 'dependency' of women is further reinforced by the fact that they are frequently shown with male partners .Women appearing on their own in an advertisement is the rare exception.

Age stereotyping in the media

Depiction of age through mass media is another important subject. Basically those under 16 and those over 60 tend to be socially differentiated in the sense that they are perceived as unequal compared to other age groups (the working population). The media however the social 7 group identified as adolescents is partly attributed to the influence of media is usually used to refer somewhat inferior culture, this is not the case while referring to the popular culture. While some do see popular culture as shallow or even harmful, others argue that it is just as valid and just as worthwhile as high culture.

Effects of media on people

People can be addicted to video gaming. The WHO in 2018 declared gaming addiction as a mental health disorder. Addiction to video games increases their depression and anxiety levels.

Addicted people also exhibit social phobias. Too much video game playing makes a person keep busy with the game only. People may become socially isolated, they may have less sleep. Also, they may spend less time on other activities such as doing reading, sports, interacting with the family and friends and also sometimes not concentrating on career as well.

Information or Misinformation?

Propaganda is a mode of communication used to manipulate or influence the opinion of groups to support a particular cause or belief. Over the centuries, propaganda has taken the form of artwork, films, speeches, and music, though it's not limited to these forms of communication.

Though its use is not exclusively negative, propaganda very often involves a heavy emphasis on the benefits and virtues of one idea or group, while simultaneously distorting the truth or suppressing the counter-argument. For example, the Nazi party rose to power by promoting the idea that it would lead Germany out of economic depression, which it claimed was, among other things, the result of Jewish people stealing jobs from hard-working Germans.

Agenda setting

Two basis assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: (1) the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. Although different people may feel differently about the issue at hand, most people feel the same issues are important. According to Chaffee & Berger's 1997 criteria for scientific theories, Agenda-Setting is a good theory as it has explanatory power, it has predictive power, it is easy to understand, it can be proven false, it is a springboard for further research, and it has organizing power. One of the most critical aspects in the concept of an agenda-setting role of mass communication is the time frame for this phenomenon. The amount of time spent on an issue and the information relayed in a new story, along with the story's position, determines how much a reader learns and the amount of importance placed on the issue.

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