

The Sociology of Mass Media

Prof. Arpita Kothari

Asst. Professor

St. Rock's College of Commerce and Science, Borivali (W), Mumbai, India

Abstract: *This paper illustrates the issue with the media. The media plays a crucial role in our daily lives. Despite the fact that the media has a significant impact on our society, it also poses some severe issues. Mass communication has the incredible capacity to both strengthen people, communities, and nations, as well as the incredible power to accomplish the exact opposite in due course. By misrepresenting the facts, the media causes people to identify their errors in judgement. The most severe issue is that the media has a significant influence on our culture. As civilization has matured, mass media has evolved into one of our society's social institutions.*

Exaggerated media information has a negative impact on people, particularly teens and young adults. Some individuals tend to think that the media is always a problem. The three most prominent mass media outlets today—television, the internet, and advertising—bring with them concerns that individuals must address in modern society, such as the promotion of homophobia, violence, and other difficulties. This study paper examines the effects of mass media on several facets of human civilization.

Keywords: Mass Communication, Civilization, internet.

I. INTRODUCTION

Newspapers, periodicals, television, radio, motion pictures, and multi-media websites are examples of the institutions that disseminate such messages. The phrase is also used to refer to certain mass media organisations, including radio and television networks, film and music studios, and the Internet. The dissemination of intricate messages to vast and varied audiences while utilising cutting-edge communication technologies defines mass communication. Globally, the population of individuals with access to various forms of media is expanding at an exponential rate. With the help of smart phones and other technological devices, the majority of us are always linked and have access to media seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

There are two key sociological aspects of mass media: first, a small number of individuals may interact with a large audience; and second, the audience has no practical means of responding. By definition, mass communication is a one-way process. The essence of media organisations is corporate and bureaucratic. Everywhere in the world, the government controls the production of media, although the limitations range from very little advisory oversight to the most extensive kinds of censorship in totalitarian nations.

Numerous societal issues including crime, pornography, the development of stereotypes, etc. are brought about by the media. Large-scale, immediate, or direct impacts from the media play a role in shaping a variety of behaviours. For instance, there is a chance that a youngster who has a history of violence may be more inclined to act violently after being exposed to media with violent content.

Media outlets also have unintended consequences. It may contribute to forming the opinions or attitudes of the general population. The media may use their immense informational resources to influence audiences in a variety of indirect ways. For instance, the media may influence agenda-setting, the shaping of attitudes toward certain subjects or events, and the emergence and evolution of important public concerns.

The importance of the media for society cannot be disputed, despite the overwhelming evidence of its harmful impacts on society. One of the most vital communication channels between a nation's government and its people is the media. It communicates on behalf of its audience the issues that citizens are facing and the urge to take some corrective action to address those issues. In addition to raising awareness of social problems, media convergence also gives the impression that something is being done to address them. As a result, journalists frequently provide a lot of information on the actions made in response to "public unease".

Whether it was for defending the rights of the populace or for the battle for freedom, the mass media has historically played a vital part in a number of political movements. For instance, by mobilising public opinion against the South African government and pressuring it to provide political freedom to the great nationalist leader, Nelson Mandela, the media significantly contributed to bringing attention to racial inequality during the apartheid regime in that country. Because independence fighters like "Bal Gangadhar Tilak" formed their own newspapers, which were critical to the liberation war in India, it also played a very important role in the effort to eliminate apartheid.

Mass communication has the enormous capacity to both create people, communities, and nations, as well as the enormous power to accomplish the exact opposite in due course. Large audiences all around the world have access to a wealth of information thanks to the mainstream media. It has been accused of contributing to a number of social issues in society, including the promotion of homophobia, violence, and deceptive advertising. But it has also had a number of good effects on society.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The influence of Media Violence on Youth, 2003

In this article, Anderson, Craig, and other writers examined how the media affects young people. They came to the conclusion that media violence increases the chance of aggressive and violent conduct in both the short- and long-term. This was supported by study on violent television and cinema, video games, and music. Short-term exposure increases the chance of violent thoughts, feelings, and actions, both physically and verbally. According to the studies, there is a lot of violence in the media. Research also demonstrates that even after media violence is no longer consumed, many people continue to experience detrimental consequences from chronic early exposure.

On The use of the Mass Media for Important Things, 1979

1. The writers of this essay, Elihukatz, Hadassah, and Michael Gurevitch, examined the requirements for mass media, the connections between those requirements, as well as the many roles of mass media. The authors discovered that the more "distance" a person experiences from a referent—social, physical, or psychological—the more significant their position in the media becomes. They discovered that television is beneficial for passing the time but not as a means of escape. It is also the least specialised kind of media, and people who claim it is useful for one set of requirements frequently claim that it is useful for another. In this sense, the cinema and newspapers are the most specialised; one is for self-gratification.

Mass Media Influence on Sexuality, 2002

Jane D. Brown, the author, claims that individuals may learn about and view sexual activity in the media more easily than ever before. For young individuals, who are still forming their own sexual views and behavioural patterns, the media may be particularly crucial. Brown discovered that exposure to, opinions about, and potential actual sexual activity may all be influenced by the media. More study is required to determine more exactly whose audiences, what conditions, and which content impacts exist.

Social networking among adolescent, 2011

Jayne, Waddington came to the conclusion that teen social networking is ingrained in their society and not just a passing trend. Teenagers are exposed to the same risks in real life as well as through social networking. Given that computers, technology, the internet, and social networking are used in many facets of contemporary life, including the job, a parent or teacher cannot expect an adolescent to give up the internet and be able to succeed in modern society. This is why social networking should be used to teach students the skills necessary for safe and beneficial use of social media, in addition to being incorporated as a useful tool to enhance the classroom.

The Mass Media as a Force for peace and Development, 1979

The author of this article, Roperos, Godogredo M., has examined the functions and outcomes of the media. In this essay, the author has made the case that modern society is profoundly dependent on the media and that it controls all facets of daily life. It is a well-known truth that the media has a significant influence on how people perceive reality. The author also argued that the media may play a significant role in fostering peace and the development of attitudes toward sustainable development, both of which are widespread needs.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Individual Differences Theory:

This hypothesis asserts a recent development in the way that learning shapes a person's character. The experience of learning has a significant impact on thinking and motivation. Individual and environmental variables lead to differing perspectives on the world. Environment will have an impact on how their personalities wish to react to new knowledge in terms of attitudes, values, and beliefs. Thus, the impact of media on different people would be different.

The class dominant theory:

It contends that the minority elite, who controls the media, uses it to reflect and express its viewpoint. These elite are the folks who own and run the media production companies. This point of view's proponents are especially concerned with the widespread corporate mergers of media companies, which reduce competition and place big business in control of the media, especially news media. They worry that when ownership is constrained, a small number of individuals will be able to control what others may see or hear. Owners, for instance, may simply dodge or suppress news that reveal unethical business behaviour or demand accountability from firms.

Theory of Social Relations:

This hypothesis holds that rather than accepting directly from the media, the majority of people who get messages from the media do so through connections or interactions with others. In this instance, interpersonal connections have a significant impact on how the media disseminate information.

Theory of Media and Modern society:

This hypothesis is put out by John B. Thompson to explain how the media affects contemporary society and the intricate relationships between individuals within it. His primary concern is the critique of the phrase "mass communication," where he raises concerns about its application to contemporary media. He contends that the media of today are generated for markets rather than the general public in his critical study of the word. It is especially deceptive to use the word "mass." It conveys the idea of a sizable crowd made up of several people. He also objects to the term "mass" since it divides viewers into homogeneous groups. The topic of one-way mass communication is then covered by Thompson. He draws a comparison between this and face-to-face conversation, which involves a two-way exchange of information. According to Thompson, there are other phrases that may be employed in the era of digital technology, such as "mediated communication" or simply "the media," which are less deceptive.

Thompson provides five fundamental features to define the phrase in The Media and Modernity. public relations. The first attribute listed by Thompson is the institutional and technical means of production and dissemination, which indicates that "the growth of the media industries is inseparable from the growth of mass communication." Thompson also emphasises what he terms the comodification of symbolic forms. He distinguishes between two types of information: that which has symbolic significance and that which has economic worth. According to Thompson, mass communication establishes a controlled separation between the creation of symbolic forms and their reception, which means that the material is not created at the same location and time as when the audience would be exposed to it. Thompson goes on to say that because of this planned pause, media producers are deprived of input from viewers, which has an impact on their work. The fourth trait emphasised by Thompson is the expansion of the availability of symbolic forms in space and time due to mass communication. This looks at the various settings in which the message is sent and received. Public involvement is Thompson's sixth attribute of mass communication.

According to this idea, the public may take a message or piece of information in a variety of ways depending on their cultural background. This suggests that media has an impact on people's opinions. The mass media can affect cultural norms in a variety of ways. First, the information spread serves to reinforce the dominant cultural patterns and persuade individuals that culture is still relevant and should be followed. Second, the mass media should work to develop a fresh, non-contradictory culture that can enhance or complement the current one. Third, the media has the power to alter both societal views that are evolving and long-standing cultural norms that already exist.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To investigate the effects that various types of media have on various societal segments.
2. To research how mass media may be used to improve contemporary society.
3. Understanding how mass media might affect societal transformation and change.

Internet and Its Impacts:

The internet is one of the most popular media platforms nowadays. Nearly ten years ago, just a small portion of the world's population utilised it; today, thousands of new users have access to it and use it for a variety of things, including student research, social networking, news, gaming, and other things. But what impact does the internet have on society—positive or negative? Many individuals believe that the rise of online pornography, fraud, and other bad components has a detrimental impact on society. Others contend that the internet fuels crime because it is improperly governed. Nevertheless, despite these drawbacks, the internet has improved people's lives by opening up a wealth of new avenues for opportunity.

The internet stands out among previous forms of media because it has made it simple for individuals to get together (at a distance) and speak with many others simultaneously in places like chat rooms or online discussion forums. The way individuals connect with one another has been significantly altered by the internet. The usage of social networking sites and chat rooms like Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ enables one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many communication via the internet effortlessly and affordably. Users may communicate with a wide range of people all around the world. Internet has helped society transition from a group-based to a network-based structure.

The internet has a lot of bad effects as well. Cybercrimes like online fraud, hacking, and piracy are on the rise, and there aren't enough resources to protect consumers from them. Although it does not actively promote crime, the internet is a major factor in its growth. Recent research indicates that because of the growing popularity of porn on the internet, this sector is growing quickly.

Mass Media, Violence and Youth:

Violence is a common source of entertainment. Several spectators love watching a street brawl. Boxing and wrestling are both popular spectator sports. Violent crimes are often covered on local news stations as well. The availability of violent entertainment has significantly risen because to technological advancements, whether it be in video games, news, or movies. Children are also affected, in addition to teenagers. Young people are now more likely to interact aggressively and be victimised in new settings thanks to the rise in their use of mobile phones, text messaging, e-mail, and chat rooms. These new settings breach the old boundaries of family, neighbourhood, and community, which may have provided some measure of protection in the past. Our children have not truly faced any new psychological dangers as a result of these electronic communications, but they have been exposed to many more dangers and made it much more difficult to shield them from them.

In general, studies have shown that watching violent behaviour on television or in movies makes people more likely to act violently right away. This is especially true for children and young adults. According to the standard paradigm, participants are chosen at random, given a brief film, TV show, or video game that is either violent or not, and then watched while they have the chance to act aggressively. For kids, this typically involves playing with other kids in settings that might lead to confrontation; for adults, it typically involves engaging in competitive activities where winning seems to include hurting someone else.

The imitation of social behaviour is one of the most widespread consequences. People frequently replicate what they observe, whether it is movements or language from a movie. Growing research suggests that young humans and primates have an inbuilt propensity to imitate those they see. Children are more likely to act exactly how they observe other people doing in certain social situations. Children are particularly prone to copy aggressive behaviour when they witness it.

The study on how children respond to exposure to a violent film was done for the paper "The Influence of Media on Youth". Josephson carried out the experiment in 1985. In that study, he assigned seven to nine-year-old boys at random to see either a violent movie or a nonviolent one before playing a game of floor hockey in the classroom. The number of times each boy physically attacked another kid throughout the game was counted by observers who had no idea what movie any of the boys had seen. Physical assault was defined as any action that would be considered an assault in hockey, such as striking, elbowing, or forcing another player to the ground. It also included tripping, kneeling, pulling hair, and other similar actions. The fact that the referees occasionally carried a particular cue from the violent movie (a walkie-talkie) brought an extra dimension to this investigation. The boys' memories of the movie they had earlier viewed are probably triggered by this specific cue. Josephson discovered that seeing a violent film and seeing the

corresponding cue dramatically increased the likelihood of aggressive behaviour in boys who were already considered to be aggressive (those who scored above average on a measure of aggression).

Television News Violence:

Nowadays, it's practically difficult to turn on the TV, open a laptop, or visit Facebook or Twitter without being bombarded with notifications of a recent calamity. Some psychologists claim that being exposed to violent and unpleasant media can have substantial and long-lasting psychological repercussions. "Extensive research suggests that media violence can lead to aggressive behaviour, desensitisation to violence, nightmares, and fear of being injured," the American Academy of Pediatrics stated in a policy statement on media violence from 2009. One instance of recent violence is the recruitment of people, primarily young people, by the terrorist organisation ISIS.

Music Videos and Music Lyrics:

The fact that music videos are frequently filled with violence and that teenagers frequently view them raises further concerns. J.D. Johnson, Jackson, and Ghatto (1995) discovered in similar research with young African American men that exposure to violent rap music videos boosted endorsement of violent behaviour in response to a fictitious conflict situation. According to Peterson and Pfof (1989), watching non-erotic violent music videos made men much more likely to have antagonistic sexual ideas. Studies examining song lyrics without accompanying videos tend to be less consistent, possibly as a result of the methodological issues described previously. However, more rigorous studies have found that songs that are easy to grasp might promote aggressive thought and emotion.

Video Game:

As a source of worry for parents, violent video games have lately eclipsed violent music videos and even violent television. There are various causes for this. The first is that kids are playing video games for longer and longer periods of time. Second, many of these games have violent content. Third, since the kids participating in these activities are doing so actively rather than just watching, they could be more likely to develop aggressive tendencies. Children that play violent video games like "WWE Smack," "Mortal Kombat," "Call of Duty," etc. imitate moves, which is a result of the games. Sometimes, kids get so enamoured with these activities that they begin copying the motions with their friends or siblings.

Advertisements and its Influence on Society:

One of the current techniques used by numerous firms to promote their products is an advertising. The goal of mass marketing is to draw attention to the product, creating a lasting link with consumers, or to ensure that customers remember their product. Nowadays, the majority of advertising feature "celebrity endorsements," which serve as a reliable justification for spending money. Their social position can be the cause of this. People want to use the "correct" scents, buy the "right" durables, and wear the "perfect" clothing. According to research on consumer attitudes, if a consumer sees advertisements for two different products from the same company, one of which has a better advertisement than the other, they are more likely to believe that the product with the better advertisement will have more features and therefore be more valuable.

Numerous people have also accused advertising of having a detrimental societal influence on people's lives. Even if advertising has a lot of positive effects on society, it also has negative ones. Advertising strives to show a product in the best possible light, but when dramatisation goes too far and misrepresents a product, there is a problem. Even movies are infiltrated by advertising through product placement. When a movie hero holds up a can of Coke rather than Pepsi, it's not by coincidence. Advertising has a detrimental impact on how individuals feel about themselves. Women frequently believe they should be skinny and attractive, hold down full-time careers, and be full-time parents based on the images they see in advertising. Advertising portrays males as always being attractive, tall, athletic, loving spouses, kind dads, and virile. These pictures are frequently idealistic and unreachable.

Advertisement and Children:

The media, particularly television, fascinates kids. Children have this innate love of television all over the world? It not only amuses them but also serves as their greatest instructor. Children may be drawn to advertising because they tell a story in a brief amount of time and/or because of catchy taglines. If you ask a youngster the name of a certain thing, there's a good possibility they'll get the name right due to the influence of an advertising. When a youngster visits McDonald's, for instance, he always orders the "Happy Meal" and nothing else since he knows from the marketing that he will receive a toy in it. Children are readily affected and want to try new things, therefore advertising to them is a

delicate and emotionally charged topic. This is true regardless of the product being sold or the manner in which it is being advertised.

Children are greatly influenced by advertisements, whether they are choosing toys, clothing, or mimicking their favourite figures. Boys in the South of India mimicked the famed South Indian actor Rajnikant, who had a distinctive way of bringing a cigarette to his lips. They unintentionally began attempting to flip the cigarette in the same way, and many started smoking as a result of this humorous imitation.

Some goods are so expensive that buying one as a middle-class guy becomes nearly impossible. The significant sum of money the corporation spent on advertising may be the primary cause of its high cost. This demonstrates how much of an impact advertising has on society. Some automobile and mobile brand names, like Ford, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, BMW, etc., as well as Apple, Samsung, etc., have evolved into status symbols as a result of advertising. One of the clearest illustrations of this thesis is the fact that people now request Pepsi or Coca-Cola instead of asking for a cold drink, demonstrating the extent to which advertisements have affected society and how people now judge a product by its brand instead of its actual worth.

Mass media and Social Change:

Any social movement develops from a perception of widespread unfairness and, as a result, advocates for a revision of norms to get rid of the sources and the conditions perceived as unfair. The rise of mass media may have helped social movements expand in a number of ways. One of the elements in the development and desensitisation of people to unrecognised societal concerns has been the mainstream media. The fact that mass media participates in human affairs is one of its most significant traits. It benefits all spiritual movements as well as the political parties now in power. There is a strong possibility that the French or American Revolutions would not have occurred without the media or press. As news sheets were distributed by freedom fighters to inform the populace of what the East India Company had been up to, the printed media has always played a significant part in India's struggle for independence.

In several ways, the mass media have facilitated the emergence of movements. It has not only aided in the emergence of a new awareness and in the formulation of both dissatisfaction and change, but it has also helped movements spread quickly and so served as a contagion tool.

The media's capacity to positively or negatively affect the growth of a movement may be attributed to two factors: (1) the movement's leaders' skill in labelling; and (2) its ability to use the media to make the desired impression on the target audience. Simply put, the capacity of media to quickly and directly transmit information on such a large scale gives it a particular edge when it comes to labelling (Das, Mitra, 1981, pp. 127–143). Because it is a platform that reaches a broad audience quickly, the media today plays the most significant role in social movements. The media is crucial to the introduction or revision of law. One of the instances is the American Guy Rights Push, which garnered popularity and support from all around the world as a result of the Nirbhaya Rape case or a movement to introduce new laws for the safety of women in India.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

From 2012 to 2014, several websites were accessed in the UK by mobile phone, as seen in the bar diagram above. The graph above may be used to infer that most individuals prefer utilising their mobile phones for social networking sites. Comparing Facebook's usage to other websites, it grows yearly.

The graph up above displays internet consumption across several devices, including laptops, smartphones, and other devices. The graph above shows a year-over-year growth in internet usage (measured in hours). The graph above may be used to infer that there are more people using the internet and that it is becoming more important to our society on an annual basis.

The bar-diagram up top demonstrates how popular Android-powered smartphones are among users. The image made it evident that contemporary guys are often found using their smartphones.

In contrast to other digital media platforms, the above Bar-diagram demonstrates that the majority of users spend the bulk of their time on Facebook and playing video games on their smartphones.

The graph above clearly shows that from 2010 to 2016, mobile advice exceeded desktop ads.

Due to the advancement of technology and technological knowledge, even international commercials have surpassed TV advertisements in popularity.

More people use mobile ad-blocking browsers than desktop ad-blocking browsers. The table above demonstrates that more mobile ad blocking browser users are found in emerging nations like China, India, and Indonesia than in any other developed nation.

VI. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The author of this study discovered that the media has an impact on society in both positive and negative ways. The findings are summarised by the researcher below.

- The usage of social networking sites is growing along with the use of the internet, which is expanding day by day. Youth are significantly impacted by media violence. Children frequently imitate speech and violent movie sequences, which negatively affects their behaviour.
- Because they are so accessible to kids, violent video games and music videos have a negative impact on them.
- Advertising has such a profound impact on society that consumers no longer associate items with their intrinsic worth but rather with their brand value.

Today, the success of every revolution depends on the use of mass media. Companies spend a lot of money on advertising in order to influence customer demand. It has an impact on both society and the government.

VII. CONCLUSION

Both adults and children are more dependent on media in their daily lives. The many media outlets provide us with a wealth of knowledge. It includes a wide range of information that is available anywhere in the world. Thus, the issue of mass media and its impact cannot be ignored in the modern world. We must utilise the media carefully because, depending on how they are employed, they may be instruments for not just individual enrichment but also for the growth and unification of nations at both the national and international levels. Through the media, people should endeavour to receive accurate information. They must thus develop critical thinking skills in order to filter accurate information.

The ability to accept which knowledge is necessary to us may be aided through critical thinking. "Mental processes of distinguishing, analysing, and evaluating." A kind of judgement, especially an insightful and thoughtful judgement, is critical thinking. One addresses the dilemma of deciding what to believe or do by applying critical thinking, but one must do it in a thoughtful manner (critical thinking, 2008). People have the right to condemn and penalise media that subverts our morals and emotions. People must increase their capacity for judgement. In this information-driven culture, those with the power to manipulate information may be given preference over those without.

REFERENCES

- [1]. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20111128201009669>
- [2]. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/mass-media-sociology>
- [3]. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/cambridge-handbook-of-sociology/sociology-of-mass-media/D9036F0B360674371DCEA072E8A8CA27>
- [4]. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2083287>
- [5]. <https://homework.study.com/explanation/what-is-the-sociology-of-mass-communication.html>
- [6]. <https://dde.pondiuni.edu.in/files/StudyMaterials/PG/MASociology/2year/MASY2001SociologyofMassCommunication.pdf>