Media as an Agent of Change with reference to Women Rights

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Abstract:

Media of Communication makes the diffusion of knowledge vital in the modern world and have over lasting influencing an political and economic patterns. Mass media represent an important variable in various processes of social change, because socialization is the process which brings about changes through socio-cultural influences around us.

Electronic media telecast news and opinions through news reports, interviews and panel discussions. Media are the source of political education and "market place" (1) of political thought and "without an extensive and swift system of mass communication, the economic life of a major industrial country cannot function properly" (2) Media fully saturate the lives of general masses in social setup. Women is an important and sensitive segment of society where they have been considered less capable and portrayed as an interior sex object on the media and victim of violence which take place in houses workplaces or elsewhere and may lead to psychological problems carrying them to the dark shadows of the world.

Importance of Media in shaping images

Mass Media are the means of in the development of social and economic fabric, recording and influencing social behavior of groups along with the mixing of various cultures. Therefore, they are considered to be essential parts of contemporary societies. Mass media "return to the ideal democratic state would be possible because a free flow of ideas would facilitate the participation of all in political decision making" (3) I thiel de Sola pool is also optimistic in the increasing density of television, stressed the possibility that in case of need, all essential questions will be death with as in a town assembly, with the whole country joining in "Saoh expectations of mass media are just as naïve as the model of all powerful media for media goes too for in the other direction. The optimistic anticipation overlook possibility of media managed manipulation or alienation" (4) The effect of media cannot be regarded in isolation from social context within which they are integrated. Mass media represents important variable in processes of social change.

Mass media helps people to know their status and shape their identities. Media also promotes traditional cultural values and serve to maintain the status Quo, we must understand the influence of mass media on socialization process. Socialization is a process of learning the expectations associate with various roles allocated to individuals, which help to bring social control among people. Social control is the process by which a social system is kept to deviate within acceptable limits and beyond their occurrence which might endanger the existing social structure. Social system very in the tolerance limits of deviation. Socialization is a process by which man makes social change through socio-cultural influences around him. It is

transmitting culture of an individual and the individual is fitted into an organized way of group life.

Culture is a "Social heritage" (5). It is "totality of way of life of people" (6) It is part of total environment and is learned behavior of members of a given social group. Communication is basic tool to form a culture. Carey says "Communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed" (7) Communication is a process where through which people are informed and it lays the foundation of culture. Culture is "the medium involved by humans to survive. Nothing is free from cultural influences. It is the key stone in civilizations and is the medium which all of life's events must flow. We are culture" (8) The classical definition of culture was described by Taylor in 1889 in these words, "Culture or civilization taken in its wide ethnographic sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society." (9)

Mass media are interpreters and transmitters of culture. Media are candered to be the most powerful agent of socialization, which helps to shape identities of different groups. Social learning theory explains that human behavior is formulated through modeling others. This is now attitudes are developed. The term attitude explains different regularities of an individual's thoughts and feelings to act towards some aspect of environment. Attitudes are believed to be the effective behavioral component. Helping to concentrate on certain directions for a social change. The process of social change is universal and the people have different roles in bringing change in a society. Change in one social institution brings changes in other social

institutions positively and negatively. It will naturally bring change in the existing social structure and social change takes place in the existing cultural patterns to lead to an additional cultural base.

The mass media are the tools of communication that reach a large people without any personal contact between senders and receivers at the messages. The space organized, time organized and space time organized media are agent of socialization, introduce, the individual to extraordinarily diverse <u>array</u> at people who are "known" only indirectly; Reporters, politicians, authors, columnists, sports, figures, historic personages, announcers, talk show host, newscasters, musicians and even ordinary people interviewed in eyewitness news items. Mass media provide instant coverage of social events and social changes, ranging from news and opinion to entertainment. They after viewpoints, role models and features of lifestyles that people might otherwise never have access to. Through the media, masses learn about their roles in the society and changing social norms and values are reflected and may be readily adopted by people who might not otherwise be exposed to them. The rapid spread of new trends in culture, depends heavily on media. Mass media are the agent of socialization.

Socialization is the process of social interaction through which people acquire personality and learn the may of life of their society. It provides link between the individual and society. "Socialization enables the individual to learn the norms, values, languages, skills, beliefs, and other patterns of thought and action that are essential for social living" (10) It also enables the society to reproduce itself socially as well as biologically, thus ensuring its continuity from generation to generation. One of the

most important outcomes of socialization is the development of individual personality, the fairly stable patterns of thought, feeling and action that are typical of an individual" (11) Social interaction takes place according to the norms and values of the culture. The content of socialization and the personality that are most admired, therefore, vary from one society to another. As a result, there are characteristic personality traits in every society that result from a common experience of socialization in a unique culture. Within every society, however, each person is different and these differences are also largely the product of socialization. Thus, socialization is the lifelong process of social interaction and essential for the survival of both the individual and society.

Socialization takes place through learning roles. There is a common core of norms and values shared by most of a society's members, social behavior, both deviant and conforming is controlled mainly be internalized norms and values. Deviation is attributed to some disruption of the process of internalizing and expressing those values in one's behavior. People usually internalize the values of those with whom they associate comfortably. Social order prevails when the ordinary activities of people go or predictably and comfortably. In simple societies, socialization maintains social order by preparing to want to act as they are expected to act and social pressure towards people with acceptance and approval when they act as expected. In many situations, mass media messages maintain order in societies and control the needs and pressures of the situation. Deviation is any violation of the rules of behavior. An act is not deviant until denied as deviant. While there are both approved and disapproved forms of deviation for each society. It is the disapproved deviation that draws the interest of journalists. Mass media of a society act as an

institution of socialization. An institution is not a building, it is not a group of people, it is not an organization "An institution is a system of norms to achieve some goal or activity that people feel is important, or, more formally an organized cluster of folkways and mores centered around a major human activity. (12) Institutions are structured processes through which people carry on their activities. They are organization of norms for doing something people feel is important.

Media institutions are used as primary agents in the development of attitudes. Since media held monopolistic position in that society and have a central role. They are able to change behavior, actions and opinions rapidly. As people believe news media to be authentic and credible, they rely and trust the media, to accept everything they are told and are influenced by it. Everything said, shown or written by the media have an impact (negative or positive) on the minds of audience, viewer, or readers. The most significant function which mass media perform is creating "awareness", and " only through awareness, whether positively or negatively, can bring about changes in the society". (13) The masses can only change themselves, whether positively or negatively when they are "ware" and "informed". (14) When the society is informed of something good or bad, it is influenced by the media , and in a position to judge, opt, accept and transform. Usually media presentations are strong, powerful and persuasive and have an immediate impact on the society which is apt to accept.

An eminent researcher, writer also conclude that: "Mass media help socialize by teaching either deliberately or inadvertently, social norms and expectation" (15) Another view on the social change by means of media is given by Wein Berg: "The

media corrupt society by valuing and teaching materialism, brutality, insensitivity, and other anti-social behavior". (15) Social behavior is the outcome of interaction between biological potentials and cultural learning changing social norms and values are quickly reflected in the media, and may be readily adopted by people who might not otherwise be exposed to them. The rapid spread of new trends in youth culture, for example, depends heavily on such media as popular records, television, FM radio, youth oriented magazines and movies.

By analyzing the role played by media in social change, the media are the most powerful agent in affecting the thoughts, opinions and attitudes for the members of public, the cause of social change must be noted. In fact social change depends upon the techniques and its progress in society. In primitive communities with a relatively small accumulation of material culture, every significant inventions are seen whereas the rate of social change was also slow, while in advanced communities with a larger accumulation of material culture, basic inventions are frequent and social changes are rapid. (16) The industrialized societies need social change by any mean. A sociologist predicted that:

"It we declare a ban on technical inventions; the inventions that have already been made, would continue to bring about social change for hundreds years to come"(17)

"The effects of communication are many and diverse. They may be short range or long range. They may be manifest or latent. They may be strong or weak. They may derive from any number of aspects of the communication content. They may consider

as psychological or political or economic or sociological. They may operate upon opinions, values, information, levels, skills, taste, or overt behavior" (18)

Mass media are the tools of interaction, which people acquire personality and learn the way of life of their society. The process is essential for the survival of both individual and society. Media have become major institution in modern times. Scientific and technological advances carry latent consequences which sometime are difficult, if not impossible to control. Mass media are the agencies of socialization. These agencies are structured groups or contacts within which significant processes of socialization occur (when communicate). In all cultures, the family is the principal socializing agency of the child during infancy. Other factors include peer groups, educational institutions and the mass media. The development of mass communications has enlarged the range of socializing agencies. Simon Biggs says:

"Socialization is the process whereby the knowledgeable person, skills in the ways of culture into which he or she was born. Socialization among the young allows for the more general phenomenon of social reproduction. The process whereby societies have structural continuity over time" (19)

Socialization creates a culture and culture is the learned behavior of people of a social group. A socialist said in 1976 that "Culture is the medium involved by humans to survive. Nothing is free from cultural influences. It is the keystone in civilization's arch and is the medium through which all of life's events must flow. We are culture"(20)

Creation and maintenance of a common culture occurs through mass media. Culture serves a purpose. A culture's learned traditions and values can be seen as

patterned, repetitive ways of thinking, feeling, and acting: culture limits our options and provides useful guidelines for behavior, obviously through communication. Culture can limit and divide us. James Carey wrote:

"Because we have looked at each new advance in communication technology as opportunities for politics and economics, we have devoted them, almost exclusively, to government and trade. We have rarely seen them as opportunities to expand (our) power to learn and exchange ideas and experience".

Mass media involve people to contribute to the creation and maintenance of culture. Mass media are the primary forum for the debate about culture. The forum is only as good, fair and honest as those who participate in it.

Media literacy increases the impact of media on individual and society and provides insight into contemporary culture, understanding of and respect for power of media massages. The role of media in creating 'public sphere' a sphere of public opinion and public debate. Baudrillar (theorist) argued that "the new media particularly television, actually change 'the reality' we experience. Mass media have created a new form of social interaction. Media theorist James W Carrey recognized this and offered a cultural definition of communication that has had a profound impact on the may communication scientists and other have viewed the relationship between communication and culture. Carey wrote "Communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed" (21) It is needed that medias literacy be increased in women section of the society.

Comstock proposes that the main input which may effect behavior is the "television". This is portray of a specific action. The following list of elements from Comstock model is taken from McQuail and Windahl: (22)

-TV act is any form of human behavior shown on television.

-TV arousal is the extent to which person is motivated to perform an act as a result of the TV act.

-TV perceived consequences are described as the sum of all positive (minus all negative) values which are learned from television and which go with a given act.

- TV a perceived reality is the degree which a person perceives the TV act to be true to life.

-TV alternatives are other social behaviors shown on television.

-TV act is the probability of carry out the TV act.

-Opportunity is the real life chance of putting the TV act into practice.

-Performance of social behavior shown on television.

Television brought information from distant areas that were not necessarily contiguous or in any way connected by social or cultural ties, economic pacts or any other considerations. This added a new dimension to communication between peoples. Thus, the act or behavior " Seen or television will have impact on the individual viewer, depending on the degree of positive value attached to the act and on the degree to which it is shown to be close to real life" (23)

Mass Media could have a direct and quite spectacular impact on the masses who received mass communication messages. For example, in the reportage of news and views through electronic media, apart from the brevity required in expression, the basic characteristic of the system was the instant projection of events and then the projection of equally instant reactions to those events. This led to speed up of the tempo of activity in the domestic affairs of societies and nations. It also led to the establishment of a new tempo, increasing tension and urgency in conduct of social behavior. At the initial stage, instant projection and reaction was not, however, produced without a certain occasional reduction in judgment and accuracy. On the other hand, the instantaneous sharing of events become a somewhat baffling, but extremely strong, integrating force on a global scale, transcending national frontiers. This consequence of this crossing of national boundaries, through shared information of human interest, and the perceptions of nationalism and morality that developed because of it, have not been fully understood or fully examined to date.

Communication media serve the cultural purpose of lessening tension, and enhancing harmony. Media importance as a social institute is now widely accepted and media shapes our beliefs, opinions and attitudes. Media have proved as an important unit of socialization and its domination on other socialization is visible. Mass media are tools of interaction between people and different cultures. Media are seen as a mode of social interaction of various sorts amongst individuals, between individuals and institutional order of society among institutions, themselves. All this is done by the transfer of meaning of full attitudes, values and beliefs, and above all a culture. Thus, culture is socially constructed and maintained through mass media. Media as well as liberate masses; they differentiae as well as well as unite them.

Media defines their realities and thereby shape the way they think, feel and act. Everybody in the society involved in creating and maintaining culture that define us. Masses involved in mass media industries and the media men who compose their audience. Together people allow mass communication not only to occur but also to contribute to the creation and maintenance of culture. Culture lends significance to human experience by selecting from and organizing it. The creation and maintenance of a more or less common culture occur through communication, the tools of communication, the mass media, and the social agent of change.

Women and Media

Women have been a topic of discussion since long although they play a tremendous role in the house and outside but they are considered less capable and not task oriented as men. Most often women have been the victim of exploitation and discrimination and is being treated as an interior gender. In television (women advertisements have been featured as most solicited consumers and instruments of persuasion. In a study" women and communication after natives: Hope for the Next', Kamla Bhasin Concluded "we are not just concerned with how women are portrayed in the media or how many women work in the media. We are also concerned about what kind of lives they lead, what status they have and what kind of society we have ? The answers of these questions will determine our future strategies for communication and networks". (24).

Images of women are used in conflicting ways, as symbols of progress on one hand and as a symbol of continuity without that in the reaction to representation of women imposed from outside society by the western media, major ideological

changes obviously affect the use of female imagery to promote national goal. L.J. Busby identified a comprehensive content analysis that focus on the portrayal of women on television, it concluded:

"Females are more often stereotypical job, nurse and secretary. Males are more often in the high status jobs. Females are more often identified by their material status. Females are usually young. Married females who work are more likely to be unhappy. Males are more violent. Females are more often victims. Females display more emotion. Males are more often natural stable and powerful". (26) The stereotypes have been identified as "women's place at home. The most important and valuable asset of women is physical beauty. Women energies and intellect must be directed to guide and control men. Women and dependent coy, submissive and good women are the traditional housewife" (27) The stereotype images of women are never challenged so there is an increase in violence against women. Women are depicted as wagging housewives, helpless in their relationship with males.

The media has tended to deal with women issues within a stereotypical framework, undermining their struggle for an improved status. During the women movements in the U.S, the American media showed the some tendency, through the movement broke new ground in the struggle for women emancipation. Ruth Rosen wrote that it took a women's movement to address the many ways women felt exploited and reinterpret customs and practices that had long been accepted, but for which there was no language. (28).

The movements were wages by women to secure their rights and to have an improved place in society. The media in the US, however, was conspicuous by its lack

of support to the women movements. The movements were going to have an impact on the issues of women emancipation but it did not have support from the mainstream of media. (29)

Not only were women painted with the brush of stereotypical images but most readers were also shown a negative or simplified representation of the movement. (30)

Reporting was found wanting in fulfilling the objective of a responsible journalism, and "must reporting trivialized the issues and mu-ked the movement's leaders" (31). As the movement progressed it effects on the society and the media covered the issues of gender equality. Society began to address gender inequalities and the media caught on. The general attitude of the media did not undergo any significant change. Media play a basic role in shopping the opinion of the general public because its strong influence.

Conclusion

Media are the collective communication outlets that are used to store and deliver information's. Ethics is the branch of knowledge that tests with moral principles. Ethics is a system of which describe what is good for individuals and society and is also described as formal philosophy. Media ethics are a complex topic because they deal with an institution that must do things that generally people in ordinary circumstances would not do, those communication ethics focuses an moral characters, social values related to women protection the significant segment of the society. Women play an important role in reforming the society. The media have a critical role to play in shaping people's opinion and perception through the ways they

report the news of women issues. The media is an agent of change and there are some important considerations which the media should tube into account before reporting on women's problems. The media also need to focus on different aspects of society at a large to gradually bring an awareness regarding the status of women and change or the dux mindset which are based against women. Rational debates must reviewed by the media emphasis on women rights, which is not only a western idea but also an Islamic ideal. In fact Islam improved it. Act of burring girls alive were banned. Racial bias was discouraged. Slavery was curbed. Islam improved human rights. Emphasis on education should be given. Islam supports democracy, education and rights of women. Extremism is a bigger problem of our society. The powerful character of media in depth, on the social, moral, political, economical, and religious and other factors will contribute to the benefit of masses in making the awareness of human rights, duties, privileges and above all, women affection and religious proximity in our society.

Media functions as supportive and reinforcement tool in transmitting positive attitudes and influencing a behavioral change to maximum level, the mode of persuasion for educating people. Media not only inform but also serve the cultural propose of minimizing the tensions among nations and simultaneously lead to enhance peace and harmony. The positive cultural values can easily be made clear through media.

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