

Role of Media in Socio- Economic Transformation of India

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Abstract

Media is assumed to be one of the important four pillars of democracy. It largely affects the society. If media is used properly it can accelerate growth rate at one hand and also awaken people for sustainable development on the other. Hence, understanding different facets of media and transformation is a most challenging phenomenon for the country. In this paper an attempt has been made to understand media's role in contemporary society, while changing the perspective of people. Drawing on findings from a range of empirical studies, we look at the impact of media coverage in areas such as attitudinal change, socio-economic change. Findings across these areas show the way in which the media shape public debate in terms of setting agendas and focusing public interest on particular subjects. Post liberalization, transnational media organizations have spread their wings in the Indian market with their own global interests.

Keywords

Indian media, socio-economic change, growth rate, transformation, global interest, sustainable development.

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Introduction

Media empowerment is a sign of true democracy, a medium to communicate with the youth and the entire world. Media definitely has a responsibility on its shoulders, which is to guide the people towards India's transformation. Media has a significant and indispensable place in our lives.

The mass media is an important social institution which caters social and economic needs of wider social groups and it has been playing vital role in developing countries like India. Especially in the post globalization era, media has to educate people for changing their traditional attitude to suite the modern progressive needs. Gandhiji was foremost in his thinking in this regard. Nehru completed this process by evolving a model for Indian path to social transformation. It recognized that revolutionary changes in institutions, social structures and values of Indian society where essentials if social change was to be brought about through democratic participation. The process of social transformation in India has been conceived through transition of various aspects of society – structure, culture, institution, ideology etc. The objectives of social transformation in India as envisaged ideologically could be characterized as 'revolutionary' in content and 'evolutionary' in strategy.

Media is a means of social change and transformation. A.A. Berger has opined that Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com SRJIS/BIMONTHLY/ MR. MILIND AWATADE (2085-2089) MAY-JUNE 2016, VOL-3/24 www.srjis.com Page 2086 "What is important about informal socialization is that people generally do not recognize that they are being taught what roles to play and how to play them, what values to espouse, what attitudes to have, what goals to strive for, and so on." The specific role that media can play in country like India can be very well examined here. Commentary Global Media Journal – Indian Edition/ Summer Issue / June 2011 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF MEDIA AND INDIAN DEMOCRACY SoumyaDutta UGC Junior Research Fellow Department of Mass Communication University of Burdwan, West Bengal, India Website: <http://www.buruniv.ac.in>. Sahoo has further observed that "Higher rate of growth and inclusive or widespread growth are not antithetical to each other. In vast country benefitting larger number of people belonging to all sections of society, SRJIS/ BIMONTHLY/ MR. MILIND AWATADE (2085-2089) MAY-JUNE 2016, VOL-3/24 www.srjis.com Page 2087 revealed that people require conscious and careful planning and sympathetic governance.

Media and Democratic System

The role of media in a democratic system has been widely debated. India has the largest democracy in the world and media has a powerful presence in the

country. In recent times Indian media has been subject to a lot of criticism for the manner in which they have disregarded their obligation to social responsibility. Dangerous business practices in the field of media have affected the fabric of Indian democracy. Big industrial conglomerates in the business of media have threatened the existence of pluralistic viewpoints. Post liberalization, transnational media organizations have spread their wings in the Indian market with their own global interests. This has happened at the cost of an Indian media which was initially thought to be an agent of transformation through developmental programs directed at the non privileged and marginalized sections of the society. Though media has at times successfully played the role of a watchdog of the government functionaries and has also aided in participatory communication, a lot still needs to be done.

In the post globalization era, value erosion is a serious problem. Media can sustain to resist collapse of values in the materialist world. It has been observed that “Media critics must be aware of the values demonstrated by the characters portrayed in mass mediated production and should examine what these values suggest about society. Media can strengthen moral and spiritual values in the cross cultural and multi dimensional society.

A quality and independent media has a positive impact on society and should be viewed as a critical development outcome in itself. The review is divided into three sections addressing three areas where media can have a positive effect on societies:

Governance Impact: Corruption has a negative impact on society, particularly in furthering poverty and income inequality. Numerous studies show a robust link between a free, strong, and independent press and reduced corruption. A free press exposes private and public sector corruption. It monitors government officials and increases voters’ knowledge, allowing voters to hold corrupt politicians accountable during elections, causing politicians to reduce corruption.

Economic Impact: Economic actors need accurate and timely information to allocate resources efficiently. Investors and other groups increasing value and demand a governance-monitoring role from the media. A free and 3 independent press can provide information and monitoring to the economic policy development process leading to more effective economic policies. It can also reduce political risk and increase good governance—conditions that are important for robust economic development.

Social Impact: In order for development to be just and sustainable, citizens must productively participate in the decisions that shape their lives. Participation requires an informed citizenry. A free and independent media supply timely and relevant information to citizens allowing them to change their own behavior and to

demand higher social standards for society.

Media and Sustainable Development

It is observed by many researchers that interest in sustainable development and reduction of poverty has grown along with the spread of globalization. In agro based society in India media can educate people for bringing awareness regarding sustainable development. However, the role of media can be effective and supporting when good governance is attained. In India socio economic development programs are more in number but their faster implementation alone can bring change. Inclusive growth for sustainable development is the motto of 12th Five Year Plan in India. India is trying to maintain and improve high growth rate. But it should reflect changing profile of society. Mass media in India have to bridge urban rural gaps, because the fruits of development are not equally shared by people in villages. In India it has been observed that life of the people in ancient period was peaceful and fruitful as there were limited desires of the people. In order to fulfill rising hopes and aspirations of millions of people in India, media has to reflect their hopes and aspirations. Good governance can help to attain greatest happiness in greatest number. In the British period very limited transfer of power was made. Now in Gram Swaraj in India local self governments are focusing on reflecting hopes of villagers through Gram Sabhas. Media can be vehicle of social and cultural change. Nair and White have observed that socio cultural change is the goal of development communication. Mass media in the process of social change should provide new opportunities in changing world. The term mass communication must imply at least five things:

- (a) Relatively large audiences
- (b) Fairly undifferentiated audiences composition
- (c) Some form of message reproduction
- (d) Rapid distribution and delivery and
- (e) Low unit cost of the consumer

In this context mass media in India is only urban phenomenon. It can be truly mass based if media is available at cheaper rate to the poor people. There is a need of modification of media processes to improve stimulus responses. Media has to change accordingly to meet future challenges. The role of media in India, the largest democracy of the world is different from merely disseminating information and entertainment. Educating the masses for their social upliftment needs to be in its ambit as well. In a country where there is large scale poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment media has a responsibility towards developmental journalism. It has a role to play behind formation of public opinion which can force the political parties to address the core issues haunting the country's progress. However, public

opinion can be manipulated by vested interests to serve their own goals (Corneo, 2005). Media can conceal facts and project doctored ideas to influence the electorate and thereby the voting outcome. Values like objectivity and truthfulness in presentation of news and ideas can be totally done away with. In India public service broadcasting was given much importance after independence. It was used as a weapon of social change. AIR (All India Radio) and Doordarshan, the public service broadcasters in the country had the responsibility of providing educational programs apart from information and entertainment. However, it needs to be taken note of that the public service broadcasting system in the country was closely identified with the state.

There are communication gaps between media and society. What is more important is bringing awareness at different level. India requires communication on more coequal basis is ethically correct and practically more relevant and useful. Thus there are many challenges for bringing transformation in India. At present mass media is not properly useful for promoting sustainable rural development. Hence the future perspectives can be more progressive if media's power is properly harnessed. It has been rightly observed that the social capital be built by forming self groups for collective action under the guidance of NGOs and that the presence of social capital is crucial for the successful functioning of participatory programs. Thus all these aspects are significant wherein mass media can promote more participatory development on different levels. Media can involve large number of people in social change. It can persuade progressive values and finally it can transform Indian society from tradition to modern by developing it as information community which means rich in information and advanced in technology. Information automation and use of mass media only can be way for future change.

Conclusion

In Indian democracy media has a responsibility which is deeply associated with the socio economic conditions. The present scenario is encouraging but certain areas also need to be addressed. The power of the internet can be easily judged from the recent steps of demonetization etc.in the country. Social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter were used to garner support against black money. Advertisements in newspapers, television, radio and at times the internet have become a part of the present election campaigns. Media organizations, whether in print, audio visual, radio or web have to be more accountable to the general public. It should be monitored that professional integrity and ethical standards are not sacrificed for sensational practices.

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