

THEORY OF MASS COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC OPINION

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ABSTRACT:

The mass media are pervasive part of our life. In present time mass communication and public opinion have great relevance. The scenario of whole world has been changed into global village because of the channel of mass communication. In old time print media was the main medium for the flow and feed back of information, which was very slow. In the present time the new channels, mainly electronic media made it rapid and 'right to know' supported it strongly. Media has brought the revolutionary change in human life and have become very important in decision making in our daily life. Through this, people come nearer and distances becomes lesser. Communication is providing a readymade macro analysis and micro analysis of every incidence and information. In this way communication is shaping the public opinion, which plays key role in democracy. The social effect of mass media. These mediating factors operate a person's behaviour attitude and values. In this was the process of socialization has become wider and rapid. The channels of mass communication are the chief makers and movers of the information revolution. They have moulded the patterns of traditional society towards the pattern of modern industrial society.

KEY WORDS : mass communication, public opinion

INTRODUCTION:

Aha ! There is an entry in the world of mass communication, channels of mass media, a world of glory and fascination, a devil which can not leave either aspect to touch, an enlighter which expresses the World, a companion which compel us to think, and when it touches life, it enlightes life, it makes us thoughtful as a result, it directly strikes to the opinion and its availability and reachability does not respond to one opinion. It responds to opinions. We are living in modern times where the standard of life has changed considerably literacy, industrialization, science and technology, urbanization, all the modern standards have made the information much important. So we may presume that every pillar of life stands on the basis of information because more and more areas of life are getting open to the opinion. This is why, in modern life, importance of public opinion and communication has increased. When we say democratic government, what we actually mean to say that all the calculations are made according to the public opinions which has increase the responsibility of communication. The introduction of printing press and television have stimulated the research in this field. The society has changed and transformed from traditional patterns to modern patterns where greaf emphasis on formal and higher education and layers (starta) is bit of analysis- either socio-economic, or political anthropolopological. So all the issues and all the problems are taken (dealt) with specialization and seen in the light of dynamics of public opinion and mass communication. So every aspect is shaped by public opinion when we talk about international system, we see the basic changes during the depression of first world war, and cold war. The international security raised questions about public opinion and mass communication process and there started a trend of imperative studies in this reference. There are two types of effects which are studied, direct and indirect. Scientific study indicates that mass media has the ability to influence directly public behavior and attitude because of its availability, reachability to larger

audience. Empirical study points out mediators and mediating effects are quite important in the process of communication. It also points out that mass character plays an important role in this reference.

MASS COMMUNICATION:

Communication is the basic necessity of a society. The process of communication among the people is essential in a democratic system. Public opinion is important for the political authority, because it is believed that in democracies there must be greater interaction between the ruler and the ruled, and for this purpose, there is a great need of a large scale media exposure.

The origin of communication might be traced in the probable interaction of early human beings and this interaction has now become an essential behavioural pattern of the human life. Communication is the basic means for the maintenance of the social systems and the process of socialization. Now, media are in a very much flourished form as far as technologies are concerned. The process of communication started with gestures and after that it turned into a complex systems of symbols. This confined to face to face conversation. The main problem in this oral period was that the transmission was totally dependent on the memory of the individual. As the society progressed, the communication system also became more complex. Now human being is searching to make the things better for easier life and several inventions are being made by the man. Invention of writing was the first application of technology to the process of communication. Inscriptions, the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Puranas are the gifts of writing. These have become the proof of social and political picture of those times. In eleventh century a revolutionary event happened when papyrus was replaced by paper. Present form of book came into existence in fifteenth century. The earlier book printing was done through wood-cut. Technological inventions made the rapid printing possible in the third decade of nineteenth century. Actual idea of mass communication came into existence with the idea of newspaper, and thus press has since been most important channel of mass communication. After that invention of radio, television, computer, internet, mobile gave pace to the mass communication.

MODELS OF COMMUNICATION:

The process of communication has largely been described through some models by different social scientists. We try to present some of the significant models for general understanding of the phenomenon.

ARISTOTLE'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION:

It is the earliest model presented by Aristotle in his book Rhetoric about 2300 years ago. There are five essential elements in this model:

1. The speaker
2. The speech
3. The audience
4. The occasion
5. The effects

This model is applicable for public speaking.

LASSWALL MODEL OF COMMUNICATION:

This model is like Aristotlian model. This model explains the message flow in a pluralistic society. The key factors of this model are:

WHO - SAYS WHAT - IN WHAT CHANNEL - TO WHOM - WITH WHAT EFFECT

SHANNON AND WEAVER MODEL OF COMMUNICATION:

Shannon and Weaver proposed their model in 1949 (figure 1). Its processing is from left to right. In this mathematical model, speaker sends a message through the communication channel and it is changed into signals. These signals are received by the receiver and also some information (which we call voice) is added

to the signal.

WENDELL JOHNSON'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION:

It is a model which explains the complex process of communication presented by Wendell Johnson's in 1951. The surrounding rectangle shows that communication taking place in a context which is external to sender and receiver and curved loop indicated that various stages of communication are interrelated and interdependent.

Berlo says that the message may be sent or received through any or all of the five senses in his model Here Berlo stated the importance of the 'effect' component.

Source <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Message <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Channel <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Receiver <input type="checkbox"/> Effects			
Communication Skills	Elements	Seeing	Communication Skills
Attitudes	Structure	Hearing	Attitudes
Knowledge	Content	Touching	Knowledge
Social System	Treatment	Smelling	Social System
Culture	Code	Testing	Culture

SOCIAL THEORY:

Innis stated that media affects the forms of social organization and this is because of biases, either a time bias or a space bias or a space bias. "Time bias leads to an emphasis on the past, the way things were while as space bias looks to the future". In this reference Innis emphasizes upon two specific communication channel, either oral or written, produces a unique type of culture. An oral culture is ruled by traditional elites and elders of that tribe. It is preserved by narratives, folk tales and myths. "Modes of communication and the channels associated with them are instruments of social control creating various publics (depending upon oral or written communication, time or space bias) and fashioning governing regions to regulate between them"

A PERPETUAL THEORY:

This theory believes that each communication medium possesses a grammar and the variables of that grammar are our senses. So each medium is biased in form of a particular sense. This is why they are associated with that medium. Machlluhan also tells that medium is either 'hot' or 'cold'. A hot medium extends a single sense and cool medium is an active constituent of more than one sense.

FUNCTIONAL THEORY:

It focuses on the kinds of functions the media do for the audience.

DIFFUSION/PERSUASION AND INFORMATION THEORY:

The theory defines information in terms of its ability to reduce uncertainty on disorganization of a situation at the receiving end. So in this reference, mass media diffuse information and reduce uncertainty.

PLAY THEORY:

It is proposed by William Stephenson. He derives that people have nothing to do with anything. They

simply want the pleasure and that is 'communication pleasure'.

PARASOCIAL THEORY:

This theory argues that as Man is a social animal and it functions to satisfy human needs for social interaction', so it supports the socialization process.

USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY:

This theory supports that the mass media gratify various needs. It means that audience is active and gratify according to their need from all the communication process. Even Joseph Klapper describes "dozens of other researches findings show that people expose themselves to mass communication selectively. They select material which is in accord with their existing views and interests and they largely avoid material which is not in accordance with those views and interests."

WHAT IS MASS COMMUNICATION?

According to Joseph Dominick "mass communication refers to the process by which a complex organization with the aid of one or more machine produces and transmits public messages that are direct at large, heterogeneous and scattered audience". He describes it as "the source in mass communication is a group of Individuals..... mass communication is the end product of more than one person". Explaining the process of communication he concludes the Process of Mass Communication is formalized, institutionalized and impersonal. It consists of messages sent through some form of technology to large groups of people of mass audience. "Technology is always involved in mass communication; there is no face to face sharing of information. Messages are communicated to mass audience via a variety of forms- The printed page, radio and television, music screens, huge bill board and even mass produced T-shirts". John Vivian says, "The process of using a mass media to send messages to large audience from the purpose of informing, entertaining, persuading. Wright describes, "mass communication is a special kind of communication involving distinctive operating conditions, primarily among which are the nature of the audience of the communication experience and of the communicator". Charles concludes, "Form of wide span of methods by which meaning are transmitted in human societies ranging from the most primitive gestures to the most sophisticated electronic technologies, a small but important segment has been selected that of segment of symbolic transmission commonly identified as mass communication. Uma Narula says, "communication through mass media caters to the needs of the mass audience, for whom the messages are produced in mass and distributed in mass and are also consumed in mass". Charles Wright describes mass communication as an organized communication. According to Maan, "in mass communication messages are produced in considerably large number and distributed to masses through the media which is capable to send the message to that large audience.

MASS COMMUNICATION- PRIMITIVE SOCIETY AND TRADITIONAL SOCIETY:

James D. Harless writes in this reference " by definition primitive have no written language and therefore, little need for printing. They lack electricity to power presses, transmitters or projectors. They spend much of their time hunting and forging for food and have little time for media consumption. They do not understand money advertising or trade but depend on barter. Primitive societies do not have proper time, " mind set" or economy to support mass communication". Joseph Dominick presents a very live picture of primitive society in reference of mass communication and on how it works in primitive society. "Primitive tribes had sentinels that scanned the environment and reported dangers councils of elders interpreted facts and made decisions. Tribal meetings were used to transmit these decisions to the rest of the group other members of the tribe may have been story tellers and gestures who functioned to entertain the group. As society became larger and more complex, these jobs grew too big to be handled by single individual with the advent of a technology that allowed the development of mass communication. These jobs were taken over by the mass media. This

change was an important one, and throughout the following discussion we will examine the consequences of performing these communication functions by means of mass communication as opposed to interpersonal communication.”

As pattern of society has been changed according to time and primitive society has become traditional having some fixed characteristics. David Riesman has described traditional society as a stable society of family and kinship ties that finds meaning of life in its age old patterns and traditions, and in following the traditional religion and wisdom of its forefathers. In the traditional societies (advance from the primitive societies), there were little resource for mass communication because the utilization was limited, power supply was for a little time period in a day, illiteracy prevailed and written language was in few schools. Mass communication can be scanned as one of the several society-wide communication processes, at the apex of a pyramidal distribution of other communication processes according to this criterion

IMPORTANCE OF MASS MEDIA:

As human life has been very-very hectic and mass media are pervasive in the modern life style man can stop but the information flow of the channels is going on and on, so it has been very important. If communication is concerned in its broadest sense, not only as the exchange of news and messages but as an individual and collective activity embracing all transmission and sharing of ideas, facts and data, then it acquires an area of functioning in any social systems. This intern enhances its capacity as well as the role it has to play. In these terms mass media have become pervasive in today’s society. It is due to mass media that the world today’s has turned into a global village. In today’s life-style communication touches many aspects of human life, be it intellectual, political, economic or social. Intellectually mass media have contracted the world into a global village. It has made the world beyond our intimate environment known to us. If it is covering the mass space project at one place then the seen of tower attack in America at the other. Nothing can escape the mass media today whether its America’s war or the peace negotiations with terrorists or entertaining engagements around the World. So media are having a close vigil at every corner of human life. Not only the happening and the hussel-bussel of the life itself but it also takes care of the intellectual need of man as media is the projection of ideas. People need the mass media to express their ideas widely. It acts as a medium for wide spread of individual ideas on one hand and inducing new ideas on the other. And there is an another advantage that the media have, is the power to influence others. That why powerful sources use the mass media to influence people with their ideologies and commercial purpose. The mass media are the main tools of propagandist advertisers and other persuaders.

CONCLUSION:

As whole world has been contracted through the channels of communication and now it has become global village, channels of communication have become the source of understanding each other and reduce the distance. But transmission of information is not just one more thing. It has more functions to perform. It entertains, it enhances knowledge, and it constructs a specific approach about socioeconomic-political pattern of a specific place. It crosses all boundaries i.e. language and culture etc. and reaches to very body simultaneously as the rays of sun so this is very important that such a weapon should be used for the welfare of every body having a target of ‘Vasudhev Kutumbham’.

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