

UNIT 5: ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Right from the early times, media has remained an integral part of human civilization. From the times of Vedas and Upanishads to the era of emperors and kings like Asoka, Chandragupta, further to the medieval age of Indian mass gathering to, now, the modern times of print, electronic and digital media, media has played a vital role in shaping our society. During the reign of East India Company, newspapers like Mahatma Gandhi's Young India and Tilak's Maratha acted as solid platforms of freedom struggle, helping in the expression of support to the freedom fighters, while also placing the demands of united India. Indian media, after the independence, has grown tremendously and, today, comprises thousands of newspapers, radio and satellite channels.

Without the media, people in the society would be isolated from the rest of the world. Reaching out to a large targeted group or audience is the main quintessence of media. It serves as a source of information, knowledge, entertainment, advertisement and shares the responsibility of correlating the different parts of the world. In the media industry, boundaries are infinite! Here are the few important roles media plays in the contemporary world.

- **Informative role:** The flow of information is important for the development of communities and the media facilitates this. Without extensive range of information through media, public's thoughts and opinions would be restricted and their impressions and inferences of the world around them diminutive. The media is probable to be one of the most sprawling and booming industry and is considered to be the "mirror" of the modern society. Information is need of every citizen and it is media's responsibility to feed the people with updates on politics, government, social world, economy, environment, etc. so that they could make informed and rational decisions.
- **Adversarial role:** Media today is playing an outstanding role in creating and shaping of public opinion and strengthening and shaping of our society. It is the sword arm of democracy and acts as watchdog to protect public interest against malpractice and fight against corruption, nepotism and create public awareness. For today's contemporary society, media is considered to be a sole entity that makes life easier, bridges the gap, fills all voids and makes communication at all levels extremely simple, remarkable and substantial. Media also makes sure that the government not only acts in the interest of public and free of fraud, personal benefits and illegality, but also remains transparent, responsible and accountable.

- **Educative role:** Media not just informs the citizens about the happenings in the world, but also helps them in having an in-depth understanding of the events. This is how they are able to sensibly make out the right or the wrong in any given situation. While media educates the masses about the why's and how's of the events, it is left up to the public to make an informed opinion about it.
- **Platform role:** Media provides a platform for the voices of various groups of the society, be it government, leaders, corporate or the common man. Media play a pivotal role in allowing voices from all of the society as well as the government to be heard; however, it has to make sure that it remains unbiased, objective and diversified and provides an opportunity to the public to hear all sides of a story.
- **Publicity role:** Often, media play an important role in publicizing the politicians, leaders, celebrities, intellectuals, etc. and their duties, mandates, causes or goals. Media presents a wide platform to these people to order to address the masses and attract their attention.

The influence of media on the modern-day society is undeniable as it can make or break the belief of the people, or start a movement for a right cause. However, it is also important to acknowledge the responsibility of the media in society. The mass media is a double-edged tool. On one hand, they form and, on the other, deform. It is considered that the mass media has the power to be positive as well as negative image creator, a source of information as well as a tool of propaganda, a sine qua non of modern society as well as, at times, an institution overstepping its limits and to some extent, misusing its freedom.

Historical References and Future Possibilities of Role of Media

Mass media refers to a section of media primarily designed to reach a large audience. This term was coined in 1920, when nation-wide radio networks, like TV, radio and newspaper, came into existence. Shortly after 1780, when *Bengal Gazette* was launched in India, a score of journals were sprouted, a majority of which were missionary oriented and addressed Indians. Apart from English, there were a range of journals, like *Dig Darshan* and *Samachar Darpan* among some of the noted publications released in Indian languages.

In 1818, the first newspaper, *Samachar Darpan*, was published in a vernacular language in Bengali. However, there is an agreement that Raja Ram Mohan Roy's publication marks the commencement of Indian journalism. *Oodunt Marthand*, which was the first Hindi newspaper, began in 1826. Since then, there has been a tremendous growth in the print publications in various vernacular languages, like Telugu, Malayalam, Urdu, Kannada and Hindi.

On 15 April, 1823, the Press Ordinance Act was passed which made the registration of press compulsory. This act made sure that no print material would be printed or press be established without a necessary license to be obtained from the government. Until mutiny of 1857, the freedom of press was firmly established. Thereafter, the Licensing Act of 1857 was passed, which restricted printing and circulation of printed material. Shortly thereafter, Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 was passed, which is still in force, albeit with amendments made in 1893 and 1940.

In 1948, Press Trust of India took over the flow of news to and from India, in collaboration with Reuters. This agreement allowed the Indian press to gain the complete control over its internal delivery of news. PTI is a non-profit organization, which offers an open membership to all the newspapers of the country. This organization is now independent of Reuters.

Talking about electronic media, which include TV, radio, desktop computer, telephone and game console, the birth of electronic media was marked by radio. Radio began regular broadcasting in 1927, although All India Radio was setup as a public broadcasting service in 1936.

Role of Media in Democracy

Wikipedia¹ defines the term, democracy, as a system of governance where the citizens exercise their power of voting and, as a whole, form a governing body in order to vote directly on each issue. The people in democratic system have the privilege to vote and elect their representatives and, thus, it is quite obvious that democracy and freedom are closely associated. A democratic system can run to its utmost potential successfully only when there is active participation by the masses. The mass participation by the citizens is not possible without them being informed about the actions undertaken and also about various other issues.

Media has a significant role in shaping a healthy democracy. Any liberal democratic system has a need for reliable information resources and, therefore, media is an essential constituent of any democratic society. This is where media plays its role of the fourth estate of democracy. Media has evolved leaps and bounds since 1780 when

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy>; accessed on 16th March, 2019.

the first newspaper was started in India. The conventional print media, i.e., newspaper, was considered to be the leader of mass media for over a considerable period of time. However, with the advent of electronic media, television and radio took the responsibility of reshaping many of the social responses, apart from providing news and entertainment to the general public. And with the coming of internet, the reach of media has become global and, thus, has increased the responsibilities it has to shoulder in order to generate a democratic culture which supersedes the political setup and become engrained in the conscience of the masses.

Media educates people with the political information that voters base their decisions on. It identifies and highlights the various issues in the society and serve as a channel for deliberation. They also function as watchdogs which the general public relies on for uncovering errors and misconducts of people in power. Democracy is, in fact, meaningless without a free, active and neutral media. Media acts as a catalyst working for the growth of development and democracy, thereby, making public participation meaningful. If media works honestly and stays committed to its core functions, democracy is bound to work efficiently and any loopholes present in its functioning could well be plugged up to the satisfaction of the people.

Role of Media in Nation Building

In a democratic setup, media has the right to freedom of speech and expression and by exercising this right, media plays a great role in making the Indian society and culture come to the front on the global forum. Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the US, had once said, *“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter.”* Also, the first prime minister of India, Jawahar Lal Nehru, had made a powerful statement on the role of media, *“I would rather have a completely free press with all the danger involved in the wrong use of that freedom, than a suppressed or regulated press.”* Media has, indeed, the power to touch almost every aspect of public life.

Communication is the key to progress and development. As the fourth estate, media plays a vital role in nation-building and bringing forth the social and the cultural activities so as to preserve and sustain the very identity of the Indian culture.

A country's growth and development greatly depends on the power of communication. Presently, the country is riding on the wave of new media, which has opened the floodgates for new opportunities and immense potentiality and, also, bridged the gap areas left by the traditional media. The country can benefit from this revolution to achieve the thus far unreachable, the have-nots and write a success story for nation-building. Communication has brought the whole world together and with

the limitations of time and distance blurring, media has become a blessing for humanity at large to be integrated at cultural, intellectual, economic and emotional levels, by sharing and exchanging a global treasure of information resources. Let us have a deeper understanding of the role media plays in nation-building.

Media as an informer and a watchdog: As discussed before, media works as a watchdog of the government and is responsible for conveying about all the aspects of governance and the actions undertaken by the administration, thereby, keeping the citizens informed. In a democratic setup, it is the media, which strengthens the democratic norms and values and, also, accelerates the pace of development. Extensive liberty and privileges are provided to the media fraternity by the Constitution of India, as an awakened and free media is invariably essential for smooth execution and functioning of the government. They are also the watchdogs that the citizens rely on for uncovering errors and wrongdoings by those who have the power. It has the responsibility to make and the ability to break by influencing the opinions of the citizens of the country. It also has the capability to swing perceptions and evoke emotions. This is the primary reason why media has gained faith of the public. Through various means like newspapers, television and digital media, it rules the hearts and minds of people.

Media as instrument of expression: Along with the political developments, economic developments and the updates in the man-society relationship, media covers various other aspects, which impact the masses. They have the responsibility to disseminate information on economical, religious and cultural aspects and provide information and entertainment to not just people from a specific region but also to people across the globe. They play a critical role in identifying the problems in the society and functioning as a medium for deliberation.

The media – print, electronic or digital – has become an integral part of the lives of the people, who are largely dependent on the media coverage for their diverse needs including information and entertainment. From the issues associated with the general public to their feelings, necessities, sensitiveness, expectations and other emotions concerning their lives are closely associated with the media. Media keeps the people informed and awakened and there is no denying to the fact that it has become one of the major instruments of social change. Media, in large interest of the masses, has the capacity to rise sometimes above or beyond the control and limitation of the government.

Media as an aid in shaping the democratic society: The media has provided assistance in shaping the democratic society by providing a space to vent out the concerns pertaining to social issues, like women care, child birth and care, domestic

violence, sexual harassment and several issues which, at one point in time, were reasoned as strictly private subjects. It makes the citizens aware of the various social, political and economic activities happening in the country as well as around the world.

Transparency and accountability are vital for the proper functioning of a democratic system. Media strives to bring to the front the nexus between corruption and democrats intertwined by political relations, which has snatched the serenity and tranquility from most of the countries. The lethal politics played by these democrats – politicians, bureaucrats, criminals – is unleashed and the bare truths and harsh realities are reflected by the truthful media.

Media as a tool to educate masses and spread awareness: The press can be the most important mass educative resource and this grants this institution a position of high influence and authority. Educating the ignorant masses on a large scale is, indeed, a tough task. Only press or mass media can do this efficiently and effectively.

Media also plays a pivotal role in spreading social awareness. Through media communications, which include news, dramas, meeting, course of study, live coverage, interactive sessions, both urban and rural, even the uneducated population can be taught about the human rights and, thus, public opinion can be built successfully. Media holds the power to communicate about the various reforms and new schemes introduced by the government and other social organizations to the masses. By using mass media, the general attitude of people towards certain social stigmas and habits can be transformed. By imparting the right knowledge and, at times, the skills, media can help bring about a change in the society.

Media and Social Responsibility

The conduct of the media should always prioritize the public interests. There are a few important points regarding public interest that the media should always focus on, like information diversity, freedom of publication, culture and sentiment, support for the democratic political system, plurality in media ownership, support for public order and security, comprehensive reach, quality as well as quantity of information disseminated to the public, regard to human rights and avoiding any harm to sentiments and feelings of the individuals and the society.

The media is required to be fair, objective, relevant and truthful. Further, along with the freedom of the press, there is a necessity for self-regulation. The media houses should adhere to the professional code of conduct and ethics as set by the governing council. Under any circumstances, media must not supersede these ethics and should always perform in the interest of the masses. It is, therefore, reasonable to consider that media should perform and abide by a certain standards with respect to these

mentioned functions, for the democratic society rests on the assumption that they do. The media has, undoubtedly, evolved and become more active over the years. Right from its inception, media been playing a very important role in shaping human minds and has grown and matured leaps and bounds. That is why people bank on the media and its activities, which are in the country's interest. Also, effective functioning of the Indian democracy cannot be thought without the intervention of media.

Media and Indian Democracy

India is considered to be the largest democratic nation in the world with its political system close in spirit to the model of liberal democracy. Along with the freedom of the press, there is also the freedom of criticism and that of assembly. Media plays a role, which deviates from merely disseminating information and entertainment, and has got the responsibility towards developmental journalism. In a country where there is large-scale poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment and illiteracy, media plays a major role in educating the masses for their empowerment. It has a role to play in formation of public opinion, which could possibly enforce the political parties to address the core issues haunting the country's progression. It can be concluded that media in India has to undertake various vital roles to strengthened democracy.

The media in its role of a watchdog has unearthed various shortcomings of the democratic system. Investigation and reporting in print and television media has helped in exposing large scale corruptions, which have continued to rob the nation. However, at times, media could also conceal facts and project doctored reports to influence the electorate and public opinion. Media houses, in an attempt to exercise their vested interests to serve their own goals, completely forego their values like objectivity and truthfulness in the presentation of news.

The media organizations, be it print, audio-visual, radio or web, have to be accountable to the general public. The media should, thus, be monitored in a way that the professional integrity and ethical standards are not sacrificed for sensational practices. The freedom of press is a blessing for the people of a country; however, this blessing can go terribly wrong when manipulations are set in. The regulatory mechanism across media organizations must be strong enough to stop anomalies whenever they occur and must be vigilant to stem out the rot. The social and the economic conditions of the nation play a role in setting up the responsibilities, which are deeply associated with them.

ISSUES AND DEBATES WITH MEDIA IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

One of the basic tasks of the media is to provide honest, authentic, verified and objective facts to the individuals, so that they could form rational opinions. This is

essential, crucial, and indispensable for a democratic nation. Here are a few issues or debates with respect to the media.

Media is plagued by sensationalism:

Sensationalism, typically seen as the editorial bias in mass media, is generally the events or the topics in news stories deliberately over-hyped to increase viewership, readership or the TRP figures. It involves reporting or scripting about insignificant or trivial matters and events, which do not have any constructive influence over the public and prejudiced, and glamorous presentations of not so newsworthy topics in a sensationalist, trivial or tabloid manner.

This characterization of sensationalism can be extended to include reporting serious, grave issues and events in a startling manner in order to fascinate more audiences. Media is frequently held responsible for crafting news out of thin air. Celebrity gossips, breakups and scandals are the best examples of sensationalism. Instead of publishing real issues, which the public should be informed about, media creates hype around the trivial issues in order to create a stir and attract more attention.

Tweaking of facts:

One of the flaws in the working style of the media today is that it often twists facts to make the report look more controversial and interesting. The media holds a great responsibility to ensure that the news they present is accurate and serve the interests of the people. However, unfortunately, more attention is given to the presentation of the news, packaging it in an interesting and jazzy manner.

If ever media conveys false or twisted news, it may harm the reputation of a person or a section of society. It may also do great damage to the mental health of a person, since reputation is a valuable asset for everybody. Irresponsible news reporting results in aggravating the grief of the already anguished. By twisting facts and publishing wrong news, media clearly breaches the right to privacy of those who are being wrongly portrayed. The journalists should be mindful of their content and have an obligation to continue to be ethical. The media must not cross its boundaries to the extent of victimizing and being judgmental. Twisting information is, in a way, breaching the trust the masses lay in media.

Paid News:

Paid news or paid contents are those articles or reports published by the media in favour of various organizations or institutions in exchange of some payment. This is more like an advertisement but without a clear ad tag. Such kind of news is considered to be serious malpractice as it deceives the citizen, not letting them know

that the news is in fact a method of paid marketing. Paid news is usually considered to have been funded by politicians, businessmen, celebrities, eminent personalities or such social figures in order to accomplish ulterior political goals or to improve their image in public.

Non-issues as real issues:

Media, these days, frequently presents not-so important issues as genuine, while sidelining the genuine ones. These factual and grave issues in India might relate to various social or economic conditions, in which a majority of people are living, like poverty, unemployment, lack of housing or medical care, and so on. Instead of addressing or publishing stories about these real issues, the media often tries to divert the attention of public to not-so important issues by giving more prominence to these.

A few of such instances include news pieces like *the wife of a film actor becoming pregnant, whether she will deliver single baby or twins, the controversies during Lakme India Fashion Week* etc. This is not a responsible way of functioning for the national media. They must not turn a Nelson's eye to the harsh economic realities prevalent in the country, while giving attention to glamour and show biz.

Although media addresses genuinely important issues, like farmers' committing suicides, rise in the prices of essential commodities, etc., but such coverage constitutes only 5 to 10 per cent of the total coverage. The bulk of the coverage goes to portraying subjects like lives of the film stars, pop music, fashion parades, cricket, astrology, advertisements and several others which are non-trivial.

Tendency to brand:

A media issue or debate is always concerned with some social, political, technological or economic issues. However, even before the factual conclusions about the issues are identified, the media has the tendency to brand, relate or speculate the same. Within a few minutes of a bomb blast or murder of a high-profile person, various TV news channels start showing news stories around it and speculate the acts to be connected to terrorism or blame certain groups like naxalites, communists, anti-social elements for the same. Thus, media is responsible for branding certain groups of society as bad, wittingly or unwittingly, and, hence, become responsible for communalism within the country.

Journalistic Blackmail or Blatant Journalism:

Blackmail by journalists (Blatant Journalism) is something which has been prevalent in journalism industry since long time and is practiced by errant journalists who

indulge in such activities. Errant journalists or freelance journalists try and capture stories, clips or pictures of eminent personalities, executives etc. by either breaching the conduct of privacy or by trespassing. The journalists thereafter threaten/blackmail to release the evidences to the media. Risking the possibility of negative or damaging stories appearing in media, eminent personalities usually yield to blackmail threats. These captured evidences are, then, used by the journalists to extort huge amount of money.

Media Bias:

Media bias is the prejudiced or perceived bias of the news producers or the journalists in the selection of events and stories in the way they are reported or covered. The term "media bias" refers to an enveloping or widespread bias contravening the standards of journalism. Ethnic or racial bias includes racism or nationalism. Corporate bias includes reporting of issues in favour of the interests of the owners of the news media and the corporate. Class bias includes favouring one social class and ignoring the other. Political bias includes bias in favour of or against a particular political party, candidate, or policy. Religious bias includes bias in which one religious or non-religious viewpoint is given preference over others. Ideological bias includes bias based on personal philosophy which may include liberalism, conservatism, progressivism and communism.

Social Media negative impacts:

Social media is integral part of everyone's lives. Not always fun and useful, it can get harmful in ways nobody would anticipate. Social media allows spreading of misinformation which may be perceived as facts even with nimble or no evidence. It creates a notion in which a single mistake, such as a lewd image or poorly thought-out remarks, result in irretrievable harm to a person's reputation. It also provides information that increases the risk of identity theft and creates a platform for cyber bullying.

To conclude, in developing countries like India, the media has a great responsibility to fight the orthodox ideas, such as casteism and communalism, and to help the people in their struggles against poverty and other social evils. The media is termed as the "fourth pillar" of Indian democracy. If it has been given such a status, it must also abide by the responsibilities that come with it. Media should have social responsibilities and not involve itself in tweaking news and creating controversies. Instead, it should work to help the large section of the people who are backward and ignorant, and necessarily strive to educate them and imbibe modern ideas in them. This would possibly result in them shedding off their backwardness and become a part of the enlightened India. The media needs to serve and show greater

responsibility in doing empowering work towards making the citizens and the nation progressive.

JOURNALISM ETHICS AND ISSUES

Journalism is considered to be the watchdog or a pillar of democracy and, thus, the press is undoubtedly an essential element of the public sphere. Ethics in journalism are built on professional conduct, morality and truth. Not adhering to these ethics and principles might lead to the public being misrepresented or misled and betraying media ethics could jeopardize the career of the journalist. There are a certain elements of journalism ethics, which vary among media sources and professional societies or organizations. However, there are a few basic professional standards which are universal across the boards. Let us have a deeper understanding of these.

- **Accuracy and truth:** Journalism works on facts-based information and accuracy is one of the critical aspects. Journalists must always strive for accuracy. There should be no deceptive handling of facts and all the relevant facts must be ensured that they have been verified, corroborated and truthful and without any distortion, exaggeration or sensationalism.
- **Independence:** Journalists must bear independent and unbiased voices and must not act, formally or informally, keeping in view any special interests, be it political, corporate or cultural. Journalism must exhibit transparency, independence and no political affiliations, financial arrangements or other personal information which might constitute a conflict of interest.
- **Fairness and impartiality:** News stories and facts are largely multi-faceted. Journalists tend to present all sides of a story; however, it should be balanced and should have comprehensiveness to the context. Objectivity and impartial reporting builds trust and confidence with the viewers. There should be a clear distinction between opinions and facts. When an opinion is presented as a fact, it misguides the readers and whenever the partiality would become apparent, the professional credibility of the journalist would be undermined.
- **Humanity – avoiding obscenity and vulgarity:** Journalists must be aware of the consequences and the impact of the words and the images used. They should do no undue harm and should not indulge in hate speeches, publishing obscene images or the ones spreading violence. Publishing or broadcasting such content might be hurtful to the public and, thus, journalists should be conscious of the impact of such content on the lives of others.

- **Avoid defamatory writing:** Although media has the right to comment and criticize, it must refrain from defamatory writing against any individual or organization. It should not distort or misrepresent a fact. In fact, the published elements must be an honest expression of opinion. No dishonest means should be used to obtain information.
- **Avoid plagiarism:** Using or passing of the works or ideas of others as one's own, without crediting the source, is a wrongdoing and against the ethics of journalism. This practice of plagiarism of lifting news from other sources and subsequently publishing as one's own is in contradiction to the high standards of journalism.
- **Avoid intrusion into the privacy of an individual:** Journalism shall not encroach or invade the privacy of an individual. The things concerning a person's home, family, religion, health, sexuality, personal life or private affairs should be protected by the concept of privacy, except the matters where any of these impinges upon the public or public interests.
- **Accountability:** When any factual error or mistake is detected or confirmed in the published news, they should promptly publish the correction with due prominence and with apology or expression of regrets in the cases of serious lapse. When errors are committed, they must be corrected with respect and the expressions of regret must be sincere not cynical. A journalist is held accountable for all types of credits for his works, be it bad or good.

ETHICAL ISSUES THAT PLAGUE JOURNALISM

Majority of professionals in journalism uphold the core values and the cardinal principles of journalism; however, there are exceptions to tarnish the popular perception and to undermine public trust.

- **Paid news:** Paid news or paid content are those articles or reports intended to be published in some channel of the media in exchange of some payment and generally in favour of some organisation or institution. This kind of news is a serious malpractice as it deceives the citizen by not letting them know the fact. Paid news is normally considered to have been funded by politicians, businessmen, celebrities, eminent personalities and such social figures to accomplish certain political goals or improve their image in public.
- **Opaque private treaties:** Media groups and organisations enter into agreements called as private treaties with organisations for a stake in the company and in return providing media coverage through biased and imbalanced reporting.

This may lead to inaccurate perceptions which are the beneficiaries of such private treaties.

- **Blatant blackmail:** Errant journalist try and capture stories or clips or pictures of eminent personalities, executives etc. by either breaching the conduct of privacy or by trespassing. The journalists threaten or blackmail to release the evidences to the media. Risking the possibility of negative or damaging stories appearing in media, usually eminent personalities yield to blackmail threats. These captured evidences are then used by the journalists to extort huge amount of money.
- **Flawed measurements of audience reach and readership:** Audience measurement is used to gauge the readership or viewership on how many people are in the audience. These ratings sometimes fail to tell the real picture of as they are paid off to tamper with the system and they do so in ingenious ways. This gives a flawed measurement and public is misled.

EMERGING ISSUES WITH NEW MEDIA IN 21ST CENTURY

Digital media have brought up unbelievable potential capabilities to deliver information in new and innovative ways. Arrival of internet communication and penetration of mobile devices has led to a consequent shift towards a new media, where social networks, blogs, forums, digital marketing etc. are influencing consumers' media usage behaviour. One of the biggest additions in media platforms is through the advent of social media, as it has the power to generate insights, build awareness to stimulate demand and more importantly deliver offerings tailored to a group or even to a specific person.

Proliferation of Digital media and Citizen Journalism: Though the biggest benefit is that new media removes boundaries, eliminates silos, and can associate interactions from any part of this world, it has also brought hitherto unheard of moral issues and variety of challenges. With the way that the web has progressed toward becoming an information haven for individuals to distribute whatever they consider fit for public utilization. Thus, it is becoming harder to stay on with the journalistic practices to put up with the ethical commitment to the general public. Perhaps the thorniest issue is anyone with a tad of computer knowledge can be a content creator, where one can disseminate the information from his or her own personal perspective with the world and may end up selling it better. Though citizen journalism and social media haven't replaced professional journalism, but it has put up a lot of pressure traditional media houses.

Sensationalism over factual content, less emphasis to real issues: In 21st century the media houses are under continuous pressure to play up and dwell on stories that are sensational. There is a major shift in the type of content that gets reported like reporters often over-dramatize a certain event and even deviate from actual source and even end up making factual errors. This way the genuine issues that distress our lives might be deprived of the actual attention. Though there are several reasons for emergence of such practices, one of the primary reason is to sustain and stay relevant, the media houses are expected to bring out the information faster, make them exciting and to make exclusive coverage on a certain type of stories, even though they are less important. The news coming out of social media are directly consumed and even read out in the television to carry further discussions on them.

Overuse, misuse of Slacktivism: Another potential issue in the new media is that it is slowly killing real activism and replacing it with slacktivism or hashtag activism. In the process of chasing social rewards and political gains, hashtag activism campaigns gets plotted and circulated. The real danger of hashtag activism is that users misinterpret and then misrepresent the activities and associated events and this tendency is often exploited for political and radical gains. While this can happen with any development, it's particularly normal with developments that distort their issues to a hashtag. In the name of social change, it can be used as a tool for social gain. In the similar lines, malicious campaigns and oversharing of the content can have severe negative impact on a product or a brand. Even though, the new media helps customers to share their experiences of the overall customer service, misrepresentations, it can also be used by the competitors and extortionists to amplify harmful underpinnings of a certain product and raise awareness of convenient untruths.

Spreading fake news and mongering: Though the new media in 21st century can be better utilized to build awareness and improve the situation especially if there is a disease outbreak or a political situation, it's often seen that the fear mongering and hate mongering that overstates the level of danger or a ground reality. Thus, the public confidence in the emerging media has been going low and it's slipping further due to the level of inaccuracies and the content sharing that goes around in the social media. The vast amount conflicting evidence and opinions makes it difficult for the modern media consumer to discern what is truly accurate. Sharing information within online social circles can also create a vicious cycle of self-reinforcement. Social scientists have observed that more rumours someone encounters, the more likely he or she is to share them with others; and thus more opportunities that others have to encounter the rumours.

Addiction and other psychological issues: The emerging media has also changed the trend of addictions in twenty to thirty year olds. Online networking surely looks as though it has supplanted liquor as a preferred method for social cooperation with others. Spending time online is coming out as more appropriate option than spending time in person with friends. Cyber Bullying, sexting, selfies and self-obsession, challenges, social networking sites and many more has become a habit that is impacting mental health of the age band. It is found that emerging media is giving raise to higher narcissism among current generations especially in students compared with previous generations. Instead of seeking help with a teacher or mentor, students feel it's more desirable to check them online. Giving no preference to direct face-to-face interaction is perhaps the less perceived danger, can be linked to depression and loneliness. In spite of the fact that we are beginning to wind up mindful of the issue, there is no characterization of online life dependence as a psychological issue.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. How does media influence the general public to be for or against something? Explain using a recent example which has been in trend.
2. List down the differences between older media and new media with respects to the journalism ethics.
3. How does mass media affect our perception of reality?
4. Discuss in detail how mass media serves as an enforcer of social norms.
5. Elaborate the various roles played by media in shaping a country's democracy.
6. How do media and marketers manipulate the public? Do you think this is ethically right?
7. Do you agree that 'sting operation' aptly follows the approved notions of journalistic ethics? Discuss critically. Also, explain the code of ethics of journalism.
8. What are the various codes of ethics in journalism? Do you agree that yellow journalism supersedes all such ethics? Explain using examples.
9. What are the various issues which plague journalism today?
10. What do you think are the three most important issues with media in the 21st century?

FURTHER READING

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