

Mass Media and Rural Development

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Mass media, the fourth pillar of democracy plays a pivotal role in upkeeping the socio-political system of a country sound and healthy. Due to the advancement of information and communication technology (ICT), the role of mass media has been multiplied to a higher order. Man has conquered time and space due to this modern technology. The print and electronic media remain at the helm of affairs in every nook and corner of the world. Media touches the remotest village and unfolds the irony behind the scene. Mass media really connects the whole universe with a noble mission to share the sorrows and sufferings, pains and strains, success stories of the society. It always, if properly managed, takes a vital part in political affairs. As we know the development of a country depends upon the political will power, it fires not only the spirit of legislature but also the other two pillars of democracy. Analysis of the affairs of a country is highly essential for smooth progress. Mass media perform the role of a dynamic watchdog and erects its fingers towards any backlog in a system. It diagnoses the system and opens the pitfalls and tries to rectify it.

As we know, our country believes in a democratic way of living and India has completed sixty five years of its independence. It is still in its youth stage. Our country has been successfully surviving as the largest democracy of the world.

The political thinkers of our country have provided a new way of functioning for the rural India as seventy percent of the total population reside here. A sizeable number of population consist of tribes who have their own compartment of culture. It is rightly said 'the soul of India remains in villages.' In last two decades it is observed that liberalism has its impact on various dimensions of the human civilization. Establishment of market economy creates challenge to traditional cultures and values. The rich cultural heritage of our country faces a setback due to cultural homogenization. It affects the urban population most and gradually creeps into rural circle. Neoliberal consensus makes culture simple but it loses its identity. But despite of serious blow to the rural India it inherits the cultural heritage. As the modern society is the consumer of mass culture produced by the developed countries like USA, the country like ours now faces challenge in the conservation of our culture. But the rural India is still shining with a rich cultural outcome. Cultural plurality is found in its soul though it has some modern touch.

Mass media is a powerful influencer in the present go of life. Starting from book to internet it has catalytic action to the wide population. It acts as a mass mobilizer irrespective of literacy. It distributes message abruptly. Where administration can't reach, mass media touches

the heart of the darkest spot of the globe. There was a time where the rural India had no chance to think over a daily newspaper, whereupon there was a wide gap between rural and urban segment. But now rural culture with urban taste prevails in rural India. Still we have to go a long way to generate awareness among rural people. It does not imply that urban people with all modern amenities have nothing to change for enriching our culture.

Several national programmes have been launched for poverty alleviation, employment generation, food security, abolition of child labour, safeguard of human rights, empowerment of women, ensuring education for all, right to information, rural electrification, safe drinking water, road connectivity, access to mass media, etc. Prominent among them are Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), National Land Records Modernisation Programme (NLRMP), Integrated watershed Management Programme (IWMP), Right To Information (RTI), Right To Education (RTE), Rashtriya Madhyamik Sikshya Abhiyan (RMSA), formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs).

All these programmes need special care by the media personnel for smooth arrival of these programmes to the needy people of the country. Television broadcast programme and community radio service are very helpful in this regard. Newspapers and journals have no less importance in propagating the mission of the government.

Our State Government has initiated several commendable steps for all sections of our society. It has launched Biju KBK Yojana, Janani

Suraksha Yojana, Supply of rice at the rate of rupees two to BPL families. Mo Pokhari Yojana, Mo Kudia Yojana, Biju Rural Electrification Plan, Madhubabu Pension Plan, Bi-cycle Scheme for students of tenth standard, bore well to farmers, compensation to the farmers for drought and untimely rain, several welfare programmes for SC/ST & rural road connecting programme, internet connectivity, incentives to SHGs etc. For the successful implementation of these programmes media has a responsible role to play. In order to generate awareness there is no other weapon than mass media. The Rural Development Department of Odisha since its inception and Panchayati Raj Department is thriving ahead for implementing rural welfare plans. Rural works, rural water supply and sanitation are major thrust areas of rural programmes. But as we know due to ignorance of the people the welfare programmes donot yield desirable results. Hence media especially electronic media has to play a vital role in generating awareness among rural people. Every Panchayat is connected with website and Gram Rozgar Sebaks are ready to provide up-to-date knowledge to rural people. 'Knowledge is the best vaccine for all maladies'. Mass media can provide knowledge to each section of people.

Some say mass media is opiate of masses and others say it is a vital aspect of human society. As we know we are living in a globalised knowledge world we have to change ourselves to cope up with this changing world. Sometimes mass media is criticized on ethical ground. Sometimes media publishes distorted news which creates imbalance in the society. It is the responsibility of the media persons to go deep into the matter before publication. They should publish real, judicious, true facts rather than polarized stories. It should be free from any bias. It should try to develop four types of citizenship political, economic, social and cultural citizenship.

Especially the cultural citizenship involves new democratic structures of dissemination and control of information and culture (Mass media and art etc) which allow every member of the community to take part in the process and at the same time develop his/her intellectual and cultural potential. The elite which control them filter out the views of reality which they see to be fit to be made public. The press people most of the times feel hard pressed to express freely the real views. Individuals use the press for their benefit and for

favour of their groups and it sometimes mobilizes the people in a wrong way. Freedom of press is highly essential for its better performance. Commercialization, politicisation, individualization of press leads to yellow journalism. Hence press should be a regulator and reflector of public opinion in an unprejudiced and honest manner.

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Ethics and Media

Anwasha Mohanty

Media is undoubtedly very fast, vast and powerful mode of communication. Nor does it only appeal a vast audience it has got a tremendous impact on the political run of a country and culture of a society. Films, TV shows, Journalism (newspapers and news channels) all come under short yet large "Media". By "Ethics and Media" we generally discuss the ethics in journalism which influences the mindset of people and moulds the society. Starting from weather forecast to "what will be your future ?" It tells you anything and everything. With such an impact any misconduct or irresponsible act can not only affect but shake the very base on which we have laid our so much comfortable lives. Sadly this is what happening. So much power has come into their hands that they have started taking advantage of the faith and liability of people. It has given away its base to the cheap "money making" business. False stories are made huge sensation, money stops the news of many to create high class business people

and politicians indulged in illegal practices. Cheap news are made highlight. Flooding of Amitabh Bachchan's house is a news but so many villages smashed by the flood is not covered as news. SRK's protein diet to get 6 packs is a news but the plight of millions in starvation is not a news. They clearly show what will make people stick to their channels or get a copy of their newspaper everyday. Ethics in media is lacking so much so that people have now started to question its credibility. Without claiming of being original, said "with great power comes great responsibility." With more than 7000 newspapers and 80 news channels running in the country can't a common man turn to any one of 7080 to get original 'un-made' news, to know exactly how is his life going to be altered the next day ?

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