IMPACT OF MEDIA ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT: ANALYZING THE TRANSFORMATION IN SIROHI DISTRICT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

Media has been considered as the most powerful and effective tool of imparting knowledge and social awareness owing to the fast pace of life, where rapid changes are taking place through urbanization and industrialization. However, a lot of instances have suggested that sometimes the media can act as a biased institution where they have the authority to transmit false information and discriminatory representations of certain sections of the society, especially the rural areas. Media has been considered as a tool of the powerful and the privileged who utilize it according to their own preferences and benefits. Thus, this review paper aims at examining the role of media in the development of rural places, with special emphasis on the transformation of the Sirohi district. The paper takes into account various media strategies and the impact it has on the minds of the local residents.

Keywords: role of media, community radio, communication, rural development

1. Introduction

The media is a significant medium to propagate crucial information in the society about various news and issues that are critical for spreading awareness about different aspects of the society and the ongoing issues in the world. Media is significantly responsible for the representation of the incidents and events that are taking place across the globe as it is

considered as the only reliable source for authentic information. In today's culture, the media plays an incredibly positive role. The media plays a crucial function in raising public consciousness and in collecting thoughts, facts and reactions to a given topic. Media is the most effective medium in the developing world for contact, raising consciousness and showing the real

condition of society. The media have an incredibly great and massive role to play in this decade of education and literacy; it is present everywhere we go and anywhere we are in this world, be it while watching television, watching the news, or while reading newspapers, books and magazines, wherever we are we try to gather some facts and ideas, and some of these media have to be really accountable to our community. If there would have been no media, people in this society would not only be separated from the rest of the globe but also the trustworthy planet in its entirety.

2. Review of Literature

The spaces of media and communication are deemed as important spatial frameworks where identities are mobilized and formed to a great degree, and are resources to learn how to become good citizens as well as reminders of constraints related to citizenship and membership owing to the separations by borders (Stevenson, 2012; Couldry, 2012). It has been observed that the diasporic populations are not included in certain nations and its states even though they are a part of the land and live within its boundaries. Most often, it has been affirmed that people belonging to

diaspora maintain and support various cultural, social and political associations and relationships within both their local and national limits, as well as transnationally, however not in the slightest through the media (Morley, 2000; Cohen, 2008). Thus, it can be asserted that the role of media in representing various sections of society is significantly crucial as it spreads awareness about those particular sections of the society to the rest of the world.

According to Mudrock (1993), the media is distinguished from other sources by a set of intricate and complicated structures and establishments that operate at various distinct levels rather than working at a singular comprehensive framework or arrangement. In contrast to this statement, several other scholars such as Mattelart (2002) pointed out that new media, unlike the traditional and old forms of media, fail to challenge and question the socio-economic discriminations that one witnesses and have instead worked towards generating such inequality based circumstances in society. It has been argued that while several changes and modifications have been witnessed in media industries, it has also been seen that those specific changes have

added to the existing dominant authorities and forces in the media based market (Garnham, 2011; Fuchs, 2011).

The conversion of the entire world into a global village has made life a lot easier, however, there have been certain impacts on the society which are considered as negative. The advent of media and technologies into the world has brought greater pace to our lives owing to the recent developments in digital technologies which is intended on building a society based purely on information and technology; however, such an emergence of an information society is supposed to widen the existing gap between the richer and the less privileged sections of the society (Mathur, 2006). The media in those areas is biased towards the residents of the urban areas and thus fail to commit to the rural areas, "This bias manifests itself in one or two forms: neglect of the majority and distortion of news about the rural populace" (Ocheni, Nwankwo, 2012, p.10).

In rural development, the inclusion of technology and media has been of major significance in rural development theories. Farmers in rural areas have been proclaimed to be aware of the latest, potential technical

advancements that are increasingly apparent (Tripathi, Singh, Kumar, 2012) with the aid of technology. Thus, economic growth has also improved with productivity growth. Media also struggled to recognize and represent the nation's cultural diversity as the media became more common. Nevertheless, the media have also led to the social transformation of rural areas where a significant number of myths and superstitions have been shattered by the expansion of knowledge. Media also offered a forum for remote areas to solve their problems (Mathur, 2006). A major kind of media and primary mode of communication in rural areas or among rural communities has been the "community radio." Community radio is said to cater to the needs and requirements of the local community and its people and to maintain their interests; it also aims to promote participation among the locals inducing a sense of community and encouraging them to open up about the issues that their community is facing (Khan, 2010).

In a study conducted by Kumar, Goyal, Punjabi and Rajput (2018) on the accessibility of media and information in the Sirohi district of Rajasthan suggested that

the majority of the rural population had access to the appropriate kind of information through their reach to their local leader. A thorough examination of the sirohi district it was discovered that there is a dedicated community radio platform, named as 'Radio Madhuban', in the area whose aim is to improve and enhance the lifestyles of their local residents. The radio community promotes active participation of the local community and individuals through their regular announcements via radio channels; workshops and events are conducted to promote a healthy community lifestyle, spreading awareness and facilitating development.

3. Theoretical Framework of the Study

There are several theories that have been developed in the field of media and mass communication to understand the concept of media communication in a clearer way and its impact on society. The branch of 'media theory' refers to the study of the complex socio-political relationships that exist between the field of media and the general public. The media effects are said to put forth all the theories that depicts and describes the mechanisms of how the media and mass communication has an impact on

society and on the existing beliefs and perspectives of individuals; media effects have been considered as one of the major theories in the area of communication research (Neuman, Guggenheim, 2011). The media effects theory was earlier based on a three or four phase framework where each phase was assigned with the "significant" or "minimal" media effects that it had on the audience (see Bryant, Thompson, 2002; McQuail, 2010; Noelle-Neumann, 1973; Wartella, Middlestadt, 1991). The segregations between each phase were changeable and volatile, however, they were determined and outlined by several media technologies, cultural environments, the kinds of systems and approaches, perceptions, and the beliefs and opinions as employed by the researchers of each phase (Borah, 2016).

Another media theory is the 'uses and gratification' theory, which aims to understand the way people perceive and employ media in their lives and the reasons for their usage. This theory speaks about the impact of media in the lives of people, it seeks to understand how people utilise various media tools for their own requirements and satisfaction. In other

words, this theory seeks to assess how people use media instead of the other way round. According to this theory, the core of the examination is the audience itself who is using the media for their benefit. There are several kinds of needs due to which people use media such as cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and so on.

The ‘uses and gratification theory’ is strongly opposed by the ‘magic bullet theory’ which states that the message that is intended by the media acts like a bullet and has a deep impact on the mind of the audience. According to this particular theory, the audience is considered to be a passive element in the entire process and does not have a role or control over the situation. A similar media model to the ‘magic bullet theory’ is the ‘hypodermic needle theory’. The ‘hypodermic needle theory’ is a crucial model in the field of communication which states the message as directed by the media is completely received by the audience without any opposing force. This model was developed to understand the effects of media and communication on the general mass.

Another media theory was developed by Stuart Hall known as: reception theory”. Stuart Hall’s reception theory states that medium text is encoded and decoded. The manufacturer encrypts signals and principles to the media that the viewer then decodes. However, the information can be decoded in various forms by various attendees and is not as the creator expected initially. Hall asserts that there are three levels of reading when the interaction between the media and its audience occurs namely dominant or preferred reading, oppositional reading, and negotiated reading. These levels of readings are affected or influenced by several factors such as age, gender, beliefs, culture and experiences of the audience.

5. Materials and Methods

Research Methodology is a term used to describe the set of procedures and tools and techniques that are used for the conduction of a study. The methods used in a study encompass the identification and selection of appropriate tools and techniques relevant to the type of study that is being carried out. Research Methodology is crucial to any study as it critically assesses the relevance, accuracy and validity of the study. The following is the methodology

that is used to achieve the primary aim of the study and to obtain the results.

5.1 Research Method

The current review paper has taken into consideration a qualitative approach for conduction of the study and its analysis. The qualitative research method involves the collection of data that are non-numerical in nature and its analysis in order to evaluate and understand theories and principles that exist in previous studies, the opinions, beliefs and perspectives of individuals or communities, and their experiences through the encounter of certain situations, all within the context of the study under question.

The current review paper is based on the qualitative approach as it focuses on the perspectives of local people towards the involvement of both new and old media in their rural areas and communities. This approach is crucial as it lets us know the role of media in less developed areas and its impact on its development; the beliefs and opinions of local people are also taken into account and whether they believe that media has an actual and true role in the development of their communities. The qualitative research approach is crucial to the current paper as it makes way for a

better understanding of the beliefs of local people through their reactions and experiences with the involvement of media in the development of the rural areas. In this review paper, the major focus in this approach is the people of Sirohi District in order to understand the impact of involvement of media in the development of the area.

5.2 Research Design

This review paper is also based on the exploratory-cum-descriptive research design. The exploratory research design refers to the analysis and evaluation of an already existing issue that has not been researched upon in a thorough manner. This research design is usually employed for a better understanding of the research topic in question as it has not been clearly identified and defined in previous studies. The descriptive research design aims at understanding the research topic at hand and is used to delineate and explain the characteristics of a given population or situation that needs to be studied. This research design is crucial to the current review paper as it focuses on the analysis of

population in a given circumstance along with the assessment of the situation as well.

This research design helps in understanding the transformations that have taken place in the media over a period of time. The media approaches and strategies have been approached to provide an insight into the world of media and its mechanisms. The involvement of media in rural areas has been analyzed to know if there have been any changes or developments in the rural areas owing to the contribution of media. The analysis of sources from media houses and the existing literature on the contribution of media in the development of such areas will help in understanding the kind of transformations that have been witnessed in rural areas.

6. Results

This review paper aims at understanding the impact of media and its aspects on the development of rural areas, with special emphasis on the Sirohi district of Rajasthan. Through a thorough analysis of the existing literature related to the chosen topic of research and the available materials, it was found that there are both positive and negative impacts of media on the society and the lifestyles of people. In

many areas, especially in less developed places, the role of the media was deemed as corrupt and their work efficient. It was observed that, in such areas, the media took advantage of the situation and represented the areas according to their preferences, often concealing the actual issues and matter of the population. The media favored the urban residents to a great extent and thus produced biased reports regarding the existing circumstances of the rural communities in order to avoid the work that needed to be done.

However, in other cases, it was found that the role of the media was highly significant in a positive manner in the improvement and development of the rural areas and the conditions of its people. With the involvement of the media, people were able to access information about various issues such as the data on cattle and husbandry, the new tools and technologies being used in agriculture, the statistics regarding the economy and jobs, and so on. The media also helped in the improvement of the education system in the rural areas through the introduction of new technologies, especially digital mediums that are crucial for education in the 21st

century. Women of the rural areas slowly became more independent as they were now exposed to the outer world where they were introduced to various opportunities regarding financial literacy and different kinds of occupations.

The most effective and popular form of media in the rural areas was found to be the concept of 'community radio'. Community radios helped people in coming together which promoted a sense of community among people and thus opened the doors to mature discussions about the real issues that exist in the nation. Through a series of discussions, people became aware about the condition of the world as well as the opportunities that were available in the outside world, which were comparatively more developed than where they resided. It is seen that the concept of community radio was also introduced to educate people about the quality of living and the lifestyle that they should be following for a healthy life. In the Sirohi district, the community radio named "Radio Madhuban" aims at encouraging active participation which is important for healthy discussions in the outer world as well. It also promoted social awareness as it involved people from

various families and different backgrounds, where people discussed their life experiences in order to educate others.

7. Discussions

The role of media is it mass media, social media, or traditional forms of media, has been much debated. The role of media has been considered as a positive one when it comes to spreading awareness and regarding the development of a region, especially a rural area. A tremendous number of inequalities also hinder the possible usage of mass media of supply of rural areas reflects the disproportionate allocation of other services. Even wherever mass media is commonly accessible a severe restriction exists regarding the contribution of the content to a more egalitarian rural growth (Pisal, 2014).

A reader can now seek the intent, sense and purpose of a statement. Thus, the subject is given more constructive power to evaluate information and not to passive observers, which loses its position and singularity in the continuous influx of information (Chistyakov, 2019).

8. Limitations of the Study

The current review paper aims to analyze the effects of media in the rural

areas and the strategies that it employs to solve the existing issue in such places. The role of media in the development of less privileged areas is examined through the review of existing literature and through the application of several media theories to the studies.

9. CONCLUSION

Media is an eternal part of human life and its existence as it has so much to offer in terms of quality of lifestyle, development of rural and urban areas, the enhancement of the human mind, and so on. This review paper attempted to showcase the effects of media and its tools in the development of rural places, especially the Sirohi district of Rajasthan, through a critical assessment of the existing studies in this field of research. Through a thorough analysis of the findings of the study, which is based on the existing literature, it is concluded that media has a significant impact on the development of Sirohi district and other rural areas as well. Although there are certain negative impacts of the media on the rural communities, owing to the former's biased representation of the latter and their inclination towards the urban communities.

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