
An Introduction to Mass Media and their Effects and Roles in Society

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Introduction

Today, we are living in an era of lightening social changes, happening without our consent or understanding. Unless we understand these changes, we are powerless to control or even influence them. Mass media such as radio, television, film, Internet, electronic newspapers and mail, newspapers and magazines have to disseminate information of the era. They are magical in their power to transform our experiences. Mass media crept into our lives and we tend to take the media for granted ignoring the industries that structure their content and control their development.

In an age of mass communication where various forms of media open the world to us in a matter of minutes and provide opportunities to experience many things never before available to us, these new experiences provide a point of departure for our attitudes, beliefs and values. Mass media play necessary roles in a modern society; without them the social, political and economic interaction that creates a society could not exist on a modern scale.

As industrialization and urbanization continues, the lifestyles of the people in modern society have undergone change. Many inventions and machines have been designed and are used for every purpose. This process of modernization is closely linked with the growth of the mass media. Modernization has led to the increased use of consumption goods and use of print, film, and broadcast media. At the same time, there is an increase in literacy, which has an influence on people's perceptions and participation in government. Modern societies have become media - dependent societies which are used to achieve goals that are dealt differently in a traditional society. The media provide information critical to economic, political, religious, and educational decisions in ways that are totally different from pre-industrial societies. As each new medium is introduced to the society, the use becomes widespread, thereby increasing the level of concern about the influence of the mass communication.

The rapid development of communication in most countries, combined with the expansion of various forms of mass communication, particularly audio visual communication has opened up new horizons. This has increased reinforced the linkage between education and communication. It has also increased the educational potential of communication; linking importance to the educational value which communication generates. While the education system loses the monopoly of education, communication becomes itself a vehicle for and a subject of education. Education is an essential tool for enabling people to communicate better, and thus a reciprocal relationship exists between communication and education.

The mass media play a large and growing role in the way we spend our

time and lead our lives. As we devote more time to interact with the mass media our environment changes. We experience things vicariously or indirectly and people around us may share those experiences and also have others of their own. We learn almost everything that we know today through some medium of mass communication. Space shuttle “Columbia” explosion on Saturday, February 1, 2003, shocked the entire world, when the media within minutes reported the disaster. In response, Japanese Premier Junichiro Koizumi was able to send a condolence message to U.S. President Bush on Sunday soon after the tragedy.

What is Communication? Its Roles and Functions

“Communication,” Professor Ronald T. Farrar defines, “is the exchange of information - getting two minds to share the same thought.”¹⁾ Communication is the means by which one person influences another, and is in turn influenced by him or her. It is the actual initiator of social process. It is a process involving components. When one refers to communication, it means interpersonal communication, which is sharing meaning between or among people.

Henry Pratt Fairchild’s *Dictionary of Sociology* includes the following definition: “The process of making common or exchanging subjective studies such as ideas, sentiment, beliefs, usually by means of language, though also visual representations, imitations, and suggestions Communication in human groups becomes the chief factor in their unity and continuity and the vehicle of culture.... Good communication is the very basis of human society.”²⁾

Mass communication helps us to correlate our response to the challenges and opportunities which appear on the horizon and to reach a consensus on social actions. An effective communication system can be used to “manipulate” people if the system is under the control of people who wish to use it that way. It should be used for a quite different purpose, for example, in the developing countries to bring people into the decisions of development and give them a basis for participating effectively, so as to speed and smooth the changes decided upon by governments.

It is generally the increasing flow of information that sows the seeds of change and the desire for change. If communication is wisely used, it could help to connect together isolated communities, disparate subcultures, self-centered individuals and groups. When information comes from the outside to an isolated community, it triggers changes, says Rao.³⁾ This information and the economic advantages accruing from it are first made use of by the wealthy and powerful. However, the changes are noticed by the masses and questions are asked.

Mass communication helps us to transmit the culture of our society to new members. We have always had teaching at the mother’s knee and imitation of the father - and we still have. For thousands of years we have had schools of some kind. But mass communication has entered into this function by supplying textbooks, teaching films and programs, and a constant picturing of the roles. When a large group of immigrants were once asked, “How did you get your first English lessons?” They answered, “From your movies,”⁴⁾ according to William Rivers and Wilbur Schramm.

Lerner⁵⁾ sees communication as the great multiplier of ideas and information for national development, while Rao⁶⁾ observes it as the great smoother of transition. When enough information is available, it is possible for new industrial roles to be created with no scriptural or traditional norms as the media fill the gap with new norms and new media. Gradually, the flow of information leads to the broadening of horizons. Through communication, man avoids the frustrating loneliness of isolation and finds a way of satisfying his needs and wants. Mass media, particularly in education, help to relate group behavior to the environment.

“Communication” is used by Warren Weaver⁷⁾ to include “all of the procedures by which one mind can affect another.” Still another author calls all meaningful social interactions are “communication.” Noel Gist⁸⁾ writes, “When social interaction involves the transmission of meanings through the use of symbols, it is known as communication.” He further defines “social interaction” as “the reciprocal influences that human beings exert on each other through inter stimulation and response.”

Intonations, facial expressions, and bodily gesture are also excellent communication media. Their use, moreover, together with words, is often necessary to convey precisely the intended meaning of written material. Psychologists have found people who use gestures while talking are better understood. A Manchester University study has found that those who use their hands to explain themselves are far more likely to be remembered than those who do not. In politics, Adolph Hitler was a flamboyant gesticulator, while the former U.S. President Bill Clinton was noted for using his hands while talking.

People have thought about the effects of communication on attitudes and behavior from the time of Aristotle. Mass communication has the special power to change the way people think, feel, and behave. In ancient times, the human race has used primitive, simple forms of communication. Today, these have been enhanced, extended, refined, and used in all societies despite the continuous invention of new technologies and the complexity of interaction between people. Individuals first used their bodies to communicate. 'Body language' and other non verbal languages still exist.

The basic tool of communication which relates the individual to the social environment is language, "the accumulation of symbolized human experience." Group communication develops out of individual communication.

Images often have preceded words. But language marked an immense step forward in human communication, especially in the ability to memorize knowledge and in the expression of relatively complex conceptions. Language has three functions and is used by speakers and writers for these purposes. The first function is informative, which means to communicate facts. Expressive is the second function used to express one's feelings or affect the feelings and attitudes of the person we are talking to. The third function is directive is to cause people to act. The number of languages used in verbal communication is high, with some 6000 identified throughout the world.⁹⁾ The number of written languages is much lower, with one estimate indicating not more than 500.¹⁰⁾

Since the invention of the printing press and in more recent times of a

multitude of communication forms including telegraph, television, telex, camera and film, radio and television, Internet and with the most recent invention of cellular phones with different functions, the world has undergone a complete change. Messages of all kinds are continually transmitted to a vast number of recipients. The expansion of communication in recent decades has been steady and uninterrupted, in keeping demographic educational, social and political trends in the media have been a major feature of the contemporary world.

Mass Communication in the satellite era offers all people the possibility of simultaneously witnessing the same events, exchanging full information, understanding one another better, notwithstanding their specific features, and valuing each other while acknowledging their differences. In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the world news media particularly the televised images instantly transmitted live around the world. They were showing still-stunning images we watched just like out of an action movie, where two hijacked passenger jetliners slammed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York. The television images of the towers bursting into flame shocked many Japanese and others worldwide. Another noteworthy incident is the worst power black-out in North America on Thursday, August 14, 2003 at the time of writing this paper. This largest black-out in cities across the North Eastern United States and Southern Canada drove millions of people outdoors into dark rush hour streets and paralysed much of the Northeast and parts of the midwest was watched by millions of people around the world.

If communication is considered in a broad 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. One of its main functions is to transmit knowledge so as to foster intellectual development, the formation of character and the acquisition of skills and capacities at all stages of life.

Communication has always been vital for collective entities and communities. Industrial societies today cannot survive if they are not properly informed about political affairs, international and local events or even weather conditions. In summer 2003, the intense heat wave that has baked much of Europe for weeks, fueling deadly forest fires, causing drought and damaging crops, has convinced many people through the media that global warming is a reality.¹¹⁾

Mass communication makes available messages that can be used to stimulate and develop human capacities for feeling, imagination and conceptualization. Through the development of these capacities, we upgrade ourselves as reasoning beings capable of planning our lives in meaningful ways and develop futures that benefit ourselves and those around us.

What is Mass Media? Forms of Media

The term 'mass', as in mass media, means extremely large number of people, the millions who are reached by the various media, either one at a time or by two or more simultaneously.

People live today surrounded by a vast array of communication media.

The major media can be divided into two kinds, print and electronic. The print media - newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, catalogs, circulars, brochures, anything we read. The electronic media - radio, television, films of all kinds, records, tapes, Internet anything that is transmitted by the use of electricity are much less than a hundred years old. Besides the older media of newspapers, magazines, radio, television and billboards, a host of new media have come on to the scene over the past few years. Computers, video cassettes, satellites, and cable television are well known, but other media have already appeared. Because of cable television, Internet and the cellular phone with different functions, the number of information sources available to the public has exploded.

With such a wide variety of communication media, one almost wonders if there was life before the media. Back before television, mass newspapers, and the printing press, people had no means of quickly spreading "the word." But as far back as the cave people there were reporters, or at least recorders, who drew the events of their day on the walls of caves. Pictures of animals, battles, and even political events found their way to the walls of caves and eventually to buildings. With the invention of printing machines, a large number of cheap books opened the way for the creation of a new printing industry. Books are the oldest print medium and were first produced by a press with movable type in 1456. For centuries they remained a medium for the elite. As education became more common, the use of books increased and then became a mass medium. Today, they remain one of the most respected medium in terms of their use as college textbooks, works of literary merit. The book as a medium of communication has been the subject of fewer critical analyses than the newspaper or television.

The 19th century was a period of important growth for newspapers. The mass newspaper got its start in 1834 in New York. In the initial stages, newspapers were for the educated minority, but the new daily paper was aimed at those for whom literacy was a relatively new experience. As literacy was increasing rapidly, people were moving from the farms to the cities to take new jobs created by industrialization. By the time the first newspaper appeared, urbanization was well underway. Immigrants, who flocked to the United States wanted news from their homes because they were now cut off from their families and friends. Soon there was a mass newspaper in every major city of America and Europe, and the age of mass communication had begun.

The world had changed and more people were educated and interested in reading. Today, newspapers remain a major mass medium with millions of daily readers in most parts of the world. In the U.S., probably a couple of million people a day read the nation's best known daily - *The New York Times*. They think they are an influential, important group and they believe they have all the facts about everything that's going on in the world

Magazines have a shorter history than either books or newspapers. At the end of the last century, printing techniques and postal services had developed to such an extent where mass circulation of magazines were possible. Modernization had raised the literacy level, and the magazine provided a supplement to the briefer accounts of the newspaper. During the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th, most magazines were aimed at a large and general readership. With circulations in the millions, they were a significant mass medium.

A magazine as defined by Webster's Dictionary as a publication that appears at regular intervals and contains stories, articles and usually advertisements. A newspaper is more current; a book is less so; and a pamphlet has a more specific content area. The most important effects of magazines were probably imperceptible and cumulative. Reading a magazine does not change a reader, but exposure to magazines throughout a lifetime may have profound effects.¹²⁾

Print as a medium of communication had been around for centuries, but it was the mass newspaper that brought printed information to the ordinary citizen of the industrialized society. Magazines, film, and broadcast media followed later as social changes as well as scientific and technological advances made them possible.

As radio came in the early 20th century, modes of travel were speeding up, business was diversified and international commerce was beginning to be a reality. The radio served a need for speedy communication. Like radio, TV was made possible by electronic discoveries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. All sorts of technological innovations have contributed to the explosion of mass media, which opened the doors to a larger audience. As time has passed, definitions have also changed, especially by becoming more complex and acquiring more options. Each medium is variant in its forms and functions. According to Raymond Williams¹³⁾ "Unlike all previous communications technologies, radio and television were systems primarily designed for transmission and reception as abstract processes, with little or no definition of preceding content."

Mass Media's Effects and Functions in Society

Forty years ago, a Canadian scholar trained in engineering and English literature named Marshall McLuhan advanced the revolutionary thesis that “the medium is the message.” He meant that each medium of communication produces social and psychological effects on its audience. Two closely related media now of great and growing importance are video games and other uses of computer technology which did not exist as mass media at the time McLuhan wrote.

Each medium has a contribution to make towards human development. One medium’s strength is another’s weakness; thus the media are complementary, not in opposition. As we live in an environment of media that continuously expands, a balanced development composing of various media is required.

Mass communication is based on the premise that media has many effects. For example, we dress for the weather under the influence of a weather forecast, buy something because of an advertisement, go to a film mentioned in a newspaper, react in countless ways to television, radio or music. Text books often define the role of mass media as informing, persuading, and entertaining. People buy newspapers and magazines, listen to the radio and television, or go to the movies because they want to be informed, persuaded and entertained. The public wants to be informed about what is happening in its immediate vicinity and distant areas. Asked why they want to know, most people will answer that they want to make informed decisions about their lives.¹⁴⁾ The desire for information is universal.

The amount of information available and the extent to which it has been distributed or spread is a key factor for speedy and smooth preparation for the worst and to act quickly to prevent pestilence and infectious diseases. We need a free press to get accurate and quick information. Soon after SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) epidemic burst out in November 2002 in Southern Guangdong province, Beijing's response was to give little news and Chinese journalists were told not to write about SARS. So the Chinese media helped hide SARS. In early February 2003, media in Hongkong warned against the outbreak of SARS epidemic. The Wall Street Journal in a subsequent editorial titled "Quarantine China," sharply criticized Chinese authorities for covering up this deadly infectious virus from the beginning, and misleading the international community by letting SARS spread to the whole world, and costing businesses billions of dollars. The 13 week outbreak has killed more than 800 people and infected more than 8500 people worldwide as of August 15, 2003. In Chinese mainland alone, there were 334 deaths and 5328 sickened. In order to combat this deadly disease, the governments must keep the public informed and react quickly. As a measure, Asia Pacific Health Ministers agreed on June 28, 2003 to share and increase information flows about SARS and other diseases across the grouping. When the epidemic first struck, and if all the pertinent information was readily available the gravity of SARS would have been much less.

Among theories of long term media effect, Gerbner¹⁵⁾ points out that television, amongst modern media, has acquired such a central place in daily life that it dominates our symbolic environment, substituting its message about reality for personal experience and other means of knowing about the

world. The message of television in their view is distinctive and deviant from reality on several key points.

Wright and Huston¹⁶⁾ have evaluated the attention - getting (perceptually salient) properties of television and measured their impact on different aged children. Some of these are animation, rapid movement of characters, fast scene changes, rapid cuts as opposed to slower zooms, loud music, laugh tracks, special effects, and peculiar sounding voices.

Communication maintains and animates life. It is also the motor and expression of social activity and civilization. It leads people and people's from instinct to inspiration, through processes and systems of enquiry, command and control. In addition, creates a common pool of ideas, strengthens the feelings of togetherness through exchange of messages and translates thought into action, reflecting every emotion needed for human survival to supreme manifestations of creativity or destruction. Communication integrates knowledge, organization and power and runs as a thread linking the earliest memory of man to his noblest aspirations through constant striving for a better life. As the world has advanced, the task of communication has become ever more complex and subtle.

Communication could focus attention, point out opportunities, attack indifferences or obstruction, and influence the climate of opinion. Communication thus plays a supporting and participatory role in development, but its contribution can be significant.

While mass media keep us alert to an impending snowstorm, and

through communications media we learn what others are saying, wearing and doing. The media educate us, to a great degree and help us to function in the social structure. The media of mass communications, do more than merely report the news or provide entertainment. To a great degree, they illuminate our society and help us shape our individual and national priorities, while developing economy and preserving our culture and liberty.

The media create celebrities and confer status. They also make enemies. For instance, Journalist Takeshi Tachibana's investigation led to the downfall of Kakuei Tanaka, one of Japan's most powerful post-war Prime Ministers in 1974. In August of the same year, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's work and *The Washington Post* led to the resignation of U.S. President Richard Nixon. Again, it happened in the spring of 1987, when a prominent U.S. political figure, former Senator Gary Hart of Colorado, blamed the press directly for his spectacular downfall.

Two years later, on August 10, 1989, in Japan, the late Prime Minister Sosuke Uno was forced to step down only 69 days after he assumed office due to intense pressure from domestic and international media focusing on an alleged sexual relationship with a geisha. The sex scandal of former U.S. President Bill Clinton and the subsequent inquiry by Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr and rightly faced impeachment order in 1998 was hot news before the end of his term. More than 100 of the daily newspapers across the United States had published editorials calling for Clinton to resign. Among the nation's largest newspapers, *U.S.A. Today* has called for the President's resignation. Kenneth Starr's report to the House of Representatives was made accessible to millions via the Internet, the latest

electronic media. The Canadian Prime Minister's top aide Francoise Ducros who called U.S. President George W. Bush a "moron" was under intense pressure from opposition politicians and the media forced her to quit on November 26, 2002. These were some of the roles of an adversarial media played during relevant times to claim that they are powerful.

Hearst,¹⁷⁾ on the other hand was just getting up to speed. Exhilarated by his success in New York, he commenced to extend his empire from city to city. At one time he owned twenty-six daily newspapers, thirteen magazines, eight radio stations, a Sunday supplement, a wire service, two motion picture studios, several estates, New York hotels, a world class art collection, a private rail road line and a zoo. In all, he had been in journalism for nearly seven decades when he died in 1951.

It is claimed that the figure of the pen as mightier than the sword has been modernized by social observers who have claimed that the mass media are more powerful than the atom bombs.¹⁸⁾ "Newspapers are the schoolmasters of the common people, a greater treasure to them than uncounted millions of gold,"¹⁹⁾ was proclaimed by the great 19th century clergyman Henry Ward Beecher.

Media have direct and powerful effects that influence the lives of everyone. Mass media produce effects by their immense power to attract and hold the attention of millions of people. When Osama bin Laden chose to call the faithful to *jihad* (holy war), Al-Jazeera was the medium he used. He understood as Western governments and broadcasters quickly came to realise, that it was the quickest way to reach the largest number of Arabic

speakers in the world.²⁰⁾ People see the mass media as mystical, virtually omnipotent sources of compelling messages. In the letters to the editor column of *The Daily Yomiuri*, Mr. Daniel Axiak admits as follows : “On my humble salary, I cannot afford to travel the world watching events unfold before my eyes, nor do I have the political pull to secure a personal interview with the likes of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. So, I too rely on the mass media as my primary source of information.”²¹⁾

Harold Laswell²²⁾ summarizes the basic communication functions as follows: (1) surveillance of the environment; (2) correlation of the parts of society in responding to its environment and (3) the transmission of the cultural heritage. Wright²³⁾ developed this basic scheme to describe many of the effects of the media and added ‘entertainment’ as a fourth key media functions.

“Whoever says the first word to the world is always right,” said Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels,²⁴⁾ a mass communication practitioner of odious capability. He appeared to have expressed at that time, his faith in two different concepts: (1) that mass communication is highly effective in creating attitudes on newly arisen or newly evoked issues, and (2) that the point of view first expressed will prevail over later persuasive communications to the contrary.

During the twenty one day war in Iraq in 2003, Iraqi information minister Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahhaf until he disappeared on April 8, 2003 called his daily news conferences “the Al-Sahhaf show.” At these news conferences he maintained with a straight face that Iraqi troops were

routing the Americans even as U.S. tanks busted through Baghdad. He became a media star during the war, winning his stripes as a hero to many in the Arab world, while Western audiences gasped and then chuckled at his bravado. These boasting news conferences earned him unflattering nickname 'Comical Ali.' This prompted Conn Nugent and his friends in the U.S. to create a Sahhaf website to poke fun which later became a global hit.

The broadcasting media, i.e. radio and television, and particularly television, are able to provide their audiences with a sense of participation, personal access, and reality. In addition, the two media reach virtually the entire population, including certain groups such as the very old, the very young, and the less educated, who are not so easily accessible to the other media. Radio was found to produce greater retention of simple material than print does, especially among the less educated and less intelligent. It is believed by some writers to allow greater "structuring" or creative participation than the concrete imagery of TV. It is perhaps the most easily used of all the media.

In the recent war on Iraq, the Pentagon had agreed to embed 662 journalist including reporters from NHK and other T.V. stations from Japan. While the British, the U.S. ally took in another 95 journalists including those from U.S. organizations such as CNN and FOX News Channel in addition to the Fleet Street crowd. The Washington Post has ten embedded slots with the U.S. military in addition to its correspondence in Baghdad, Kuwait and elsewhere to cover the conflict independently. Stories from embedded reports were often the centerpiece of television coverage, bringing the sights and sounds of war home with immediacy.

For the media, the endeavor offers the possibility of up-close coverage. Technology has advanced so dramatically in the dozen years since the Persian Gulf War that Americans may be able to watch combat live from the front lines and check in on the latest skirmishes in real time on the Internet.²⁵⁾

The visual media, i.e., television and film, are widely believed to be uniquely effective simply because they are visual. Both media have been observed to command more complete attention from their audiences than other media.

New means of communication and improvements to the existing ones have made possible vast audiences for the media. High speed presses and mechanical typesetting allowed newspapers and magazines to seek large circulations, and the electronic media have put a speaker into instantaneous touch with millions of people. For instance in 1919, when President Woodrow Wilson wanted to sell the Treaty of Versailles to the nation, he spent twenty seven days travelling more than 8,000 miles in 17 states to deliver forty formal speeches and many more informal talks, only one of them with the use of the public address system. In December, 1962, when three TV networks carried "Conversation with the President," John F. Kennedy was in instantaneous touch with an estimated 21,960,000 American homes, according to A.C. Nielsen figures.²⁶⁾

Furthermore, this year, on January 28, 2003 U.S. President George W. Bush's State of the Union address was a part of his effort to convince Congress and the U.S. people to support his war against Iraq. They were

told of Iraq's connection with terrorism and Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction program were a threat to U.S. security and that invading Iraq and ousting Saddam would greatly reduce the risk of terrorism. Many of the U.S. people who are not very aware about what is happening beyond their borders watched this address and justified and supported the war on Iraq. "Millions of Americans accept what they are told and think they understand what they see. And what they are told and what they see is most often news as a manipulated commodity.²⁷⁾ Bush convinced the majority of Americans and this was confirmed by the ABC News/Washington Post poll of 855 adults, conducted in the days after Bush's state of the Union address, reported a rise in US approval - two-third of Americans supported the war on Iraq.

While the flow of information is of the greatest importance in regulating the level of social tension. Communication is a kind of temperature - controlling agent. It can raise as well as reduce the social temperature, by raising aspirations and providing explanation.

People who live in societies where the mass media are common sometimes forget how much they learn from the media. For nearly three hundred years the printed book has been the strong right arm of public education. Wherever newspapers have been available, they report on the environment. Everyone who has experienced motion pictures and printed fiction has not noticed the extra ordinarily long lasting memory traces of those media. Scenes, characters, phrases still remain vivid, sharp, and clear, a part of one's usable resources, many years after their first read or seen. We can see children learn "singing commercials," slogans, vocabulary,

and customs from television, without trying to realize they are learning. In other words, all our experience with the mass media illustrates how easy it is, voluntarily or involuntarily, to learn from them.²⁸⁾

As media have this ability to report and inform so effectively, we can say with great confidence that they can perform certain essential services for a developing country. Mass media also expand our life space. In primitive societies most people are born, grow up, and die within a narrowly circumscribed area both in a psychological and a physical sense. Mass media expand people's horizons, permitting them to experience this vicariously that it would be impossible for them to envision in a face to face society. This represents another dimension of public education.

Mass media also help create wealth by helping to create a demand for things and facilitate to raise the standard of living. They describe how others live, create an expectation, and inspire human ingenuity to make it possible for people to share in the better life. They are a liberating force because they can break the bonds of distance and isolation and transport people from a traditional society to a modern society, where all eyes are on the future and the faraway as Pool puts it, "where every business firm must anticipate the wants of unknown clients, every politician those of unknown voters' where planning takes place for a vastly changed future; where the actions of people in quite different cultures may affect one daily."²⁹⁾ As societies march from primitive to transitional and finally to modern status, they make use of mass media, which in turn help them to achieve modernization.

Daniel Lerner³⁰⁾ considers empathy as a fundamental quality which the

people of developing nations must have. This, he says, is because it “enables newly mobile persons to *operate efficiently* in a changing world. Empathy, to simplify the matter, is the capacity to see oneself in the other fellow’s situation. This is an indispensable skill for people moving out of traditional settings. Ability to empathize may make all the difference, for example, when the newly mobile persons are villagers who grew up knowing all the extent individuals, roles, and relationships in their environment, outside his village or tribe, each must meet new individuals, recognize new roles, and learn new relationships involving himself.” In a traditional society people’s horizons are limited.

Therefore, media, bring what is distant near and make what is strange understandable, can help to bridge the transition between traditional and modern society. Both McClelland and Lerner are of the opinion that the media can raise the aspirations of developing people.³¹

Mass media contribute to the amount and kind of information available to people. By showing modern equipment and life in economically well developed societies, by disseminating news of development from distance places, by carrying political, economic, social and cultural reports from other parts of the country and the world, the media can create an intellectual climate which makes people to take another look at their own current practices and future perspectives.³² Yukichi Fukuzawa, father of modern Japan (1835-1901), first used the English word ‘information’ to advocate its role in modernizing Japan. So he emphatically said “Expand your horizons. Seek wisdom. Information is the key to the new age.” Now more than ever, information is power and the key to success in any business.

Different people tend to use the media differently, it is difficult to come up with theories in these limited areas. Professor Raymond Bauer³³⁾ of the Harvard Business School, a public opinion research specialist, has said that given a reasonably large audience, communication varies in its impact. It affect some one way, some in the opposite way, and some not at all. Professor Bernard Berelson,³⁴⁾ a communication research pioneer, years ago stated the same proposition - that some kinds of communications on some kinds of issues, brought to the attention of some kinds of people, under some kinds of conditions, have some kinds of effects.

Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach³⁵⁾ suggests that there are really three levels of communication effects. The first level is what they call cognitive effects, or how mass media can affect the thinking process. The second level of media effects is an impact upon people's feelings and emotions. Mass media can make people cry or laugh. They can frustrate, alienate or reassure and give them confidence.

The impact of the mass media is very strong. It changes our language, stimulate our emotions, informs our intellect, influences our ideas, values, and attitudes. Thus mass media have far reaching effects on society and these effects are too broad to be measured by social scientists. Some of these effects are the nature of the media themselves, irrespective of its content.

Conclusion

The age of mass communication has made it possible for us to gain

access to more information than any society has ever had. Information is indispensable to a complex and advanced civilization, and the need is ever increasing to maintain and increase our standard of living. The first noteworthy characteristic of communication is that it is a process - on going and dynamic. It also means there are components that interact with one another, and the interaction produces specific consequences.

The educational value of information and communication and their impact on intellectual development are considered to be of primary importance to many thinkers, researchers and government authorities. Communication in modern society is a sign of the emergence of a new framework for the personality with a strong educational flavor.

It is clear that we all live in a media - rich environment that affects each one of us directly and indirectly in our daily life. Mass media remain permanent in our society and dependence on their content make them important in our daily life.

Asking whether the mass media have any impact on their audiences is like asking whether a mother has any impact on the development of her child. Thus, mass media have wide ranging influence affecting everything from our day-to-day activities. This influence is not measurable, as it does not always occur to the same extent nor at the same time for the majority of the population. But the effects are continually present because mass communication is an ongoing process involving interaction between the content made available by media institutions and the messages constructed by audiences.

Today, the global news flow is largely in the hands of the big world news agencies. These Western news agencies and a handful of powerful, mainly U.S based transnational corporations such as AOL Time Warner, Viacom and Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. are dominating the global mass media. These media giants control the entire field, from magazines and newspapers to television channels and networks, film production and book publishing. They have a powerful influence in shaping global mass media. A Yomiuri Shimbun reader complained that the information given by the Western analysts and journalists in the Japanese media available in English reflects the political decisions of Western diplomacy and often does not correspond with the whole truth.

While another reader³⁶⁾ blamed the NHK's general channel's news coverage, after the horrifying explosions in Bali on October 13, 2002, that has claimed over 200 lives and injured many more, that should have been NHK's first story on the 7.00 p.m. news on the night of October 14. But instead, had to first sit through a full 16 minutes of Japanese abductee "news" (although there has been nothing new to add for quite sometime). The issue of the abductees returning to Japan is important and of national interest, but more important news in other parts of the world relevant to the general public should be given priority, as we rely on the mass media as the primary source of information to make sense of our lives.

Footnotes

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