



MEDIA AND CULTURAL AWAKENING IN 21ST CENTURY

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I. Introduction:

Mass media has become an essential social institution in modern democratic system. To inform, to interpret, to educate, to evaluate and to advice are the basic factors of mass media.

⁽¹⁾ In this new info-tainment age, the most significant role of media is related cultural awakening. Berger has described modern media as public arts of cultural awakening. ⁽²⁾

About the close relations between media and culture Prem Kirpal has observed that “The culture of a particular society is comprised of three distinct elements: ideas, aesthetic forms and values, largely molded by the traditions of the past and the aspirations for the future.” ⁽³⁾

Media has to pursue cultural ideas with proper aesthetic sense and cultural values. Due to this factor foreign channels like Star and BBC have not sustained in India and other third world countries. It is true that “It is necessary to understand the content of culture in the broad and comprehensive sense.” ⁽⁴⁾ Truth, love and humanity are global cultural values, which have appeal even in the modern global village. It has been rightly observed that “Culture like love will always elude definition and remain awareness beyond words and concepts.” ⁽⁵⁾ In the new world humanity has been appealing to all because of its universal content and message. It would be interesting to study media’s role in cultural awakening in 21st century. The different factors of cultural awakening are having greater relevance to the modern social and cultural life.

II. Sociological perspective:

The relationship between society and culture has been very well explained in different scholarly works. P. Gisbert has observed that “We must devote special attention to two of the widest and most inclusive agencies of social change, the order of culture and the order of civilization, which have a most pervasive influence on social life.” ⁽⁶⁾ Without such approach social change cannot be fastened. Gisbert has further observed that “The idea of culture does

not imply as some authors seem to think, that it is an artificial accomplishment of man.”⁽⁷⁾ In a country like India we cannot understand social implications without catching the cultural pulse of a social group. Here culture is not at all artificial, but it is deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of the people. It has been further observed that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”⁽⁸⁾

Denis McQuail is one of the major advocates of the sociological perspective in cultural awakening According to Denis McQuail”The concept of mass culture refers to a whole range of popular activities and artifacts to entertainments, spectacles, music, books, comics, films, but it has become identified with the typical content of the mass media and especially with the fictional, dramatic and entertainment material which they provide.”⁽⁹⁾

On these grounds it would be interesting to study the different factors of between media and culture in 21st century.

III. The dynamics of media and cultural awakening:

Prof. Raghavan in one of his famous arguments has tried to focus the relationship between media and cultural life in an interesting manner. Prof. Raghavan has truly manifested the facts. According to his opinion, in India culture is rich but media is poor.⁽¹⁰⁾ The culture is base of Indian nationalism. Raghavan has observed that ”India was not only the largest among the Asian and African colonies of the European powers, and the earliest to manifest patriotism; Indian nationalism was remarkable for being more than a gut reaction against foreign rule,”⁽¹¹⁾ Cultural nationalism was base of Indian awakening. There is a wider gap between the media’s performance and cultural settings. In order to bridge this gap there is a need to bridge gap between media and culture. The facets of rich cultural bridge must be reflected in the media content of the print and electronic media in a systematic manner. Keval Kumar has observed that “The understanding of mass cultures depends on our points of view and on what culture means to us.”⁽¹²⁾ Media should have clarity about culture and its consciousness. It has been rightly observed that “Development is a whole it is an integral value loaded, cultural process.”⁽¹³⁾ This process can be accelerated in a better faster way on the basis of understanding deeply rooted cultural processes. The 5000 years rich cultural heritage should be imbibed by mass media for elevating the standards of cultural vehicle. Keval Kumar has observed that “Modes of communication and cultures are not as far apart, nor as distinct from each other”⁽¹⁴⁾ It is true that value is a common formulation on both of them.

- The media should be the mirror of the cultural awakening in 21st century by reflecting the best cultural aspects in India.
- The declining Indian cultural tradition, folk arts must be properly documented for retaining them for the future generations.
- The new cultural expansion through new media should be properly projected in a systematic manner.

IV. Communication gaps in cultural awakening

In Indian media and cultural awakening there prevailed different cultural gaps. Keval J.Kumar has observed that “the word culture too is so comprehensive that it encompasses every facet of our lives from the most superficial to the most profound and intimate.”⁽¹⁵⁾ Hence media should cover all these facets effectively. These can be very well presented below:

- The cultural content is in traditional languages and it is difficult to document them in modern context.
- The texts are in Sanskrit and Pali language which can be described with different interpretations.
- The cultural monuments such as cave temples and Icons require a new introspection.
- The traditional folk arts require a new understanding to suit 21st century atmosphere.
- The role, relevance and effectivity of cultural identity must be transformed through modern media like websites, Whats-up and Face-book etc.

V. Critical analysis

There are pros and cons of cultural awakening. Many a times in the growth of cultural awakening superstitions can also increase. A proper check and investigation of cultural content is required to be examined as under:

- Proper distinction between good and bad. This can help to promote development. Joni Joseph has observed that “it has been found that the media communication is a better promoter of development for these section of rural population who have attained a certain level of socio economic advancement.”⁽¹⁶⁾ These people can imbibe development messages, if they have balanced understanding of culture.
- Proper difference between right and wrong. Such difference can be developed by making distinction between culture and civilization. One is spiritual and the other is materialist. Joseph has observed that “The development communication is more palatable to the socio

economically better off category.”⁽¹⁷⁾ If they are culturally sound they can utilize development messages in a better manner.

- Proper distinction between myth and reality is required to face future challenges of cultural coverage. People embarrass myth without understanding the reality. It has been observed that “Religious ethic is an important factor which determines the media habit.”⁽¹⁸⁾ These habits can be tamed by educating people on cultural grounds.

The coverage of culture is poor in Indian media and it can be improved by making serious and systematic efforts. These challenges can be very well met by adopting different means and measures.

VI. Remedies:

The following remedies can be suggested for improving the cultural content in Indian mass media in 21st century.

- There should be a separate page in national and state level newspapers about cultural coverage.
- The local and regional press can open new ventures by covering different aspects like festivals.
- The folk media’s documentation must be undertaken on priority basis.
- The scriptural arts, paintings and antiques must be very well protected and described in mass media.
- Heritage awareness is required to protect different arts and crafts.
- Indian fine arts, dance, drama and music should be very well preserved and practiced in mass media. The classical music, dance and drama require special treatment.
- Kalidasa’s Sanskrit plays can be very well presented in Indian mass media.
- The different facets of cultural arts available on rural and relatively isolated areas should be very well practiced.
- The folk arts and its related facets can be properly highlighted in Indian print and electronic media.

VII. Summary

Thus all these discussions prove that there is a special understanding of cultural language on Indian mass media. In order to bring awareness in Indian mass media there is a need to bring cultural consciousness and awareness in India mass media.

A new look for cultural broadcasting is also required to cover different cultural activities properly and in befitting manner. The cultural coverage in broadcast media both in

Radio and TV can be very well improved. The present situation about cultural coverage is negative and the content is declining on only movement.

In order to meet all these challenges there is a need to bring awareness in the public mind to protect Indian cultural values, art, crafts and monuments. As well as antiques to take an over view the cultural coverage can be enriched further by supporting it through rare photographs, graphics and different areas of audio visual media support. The negative trend in cultural coverage is creating many complex problems. In order to solve these problems we have to develop a new policy of cultural communication which can be a base for future change.

All these aspects require a special attention to solve different complex problems in the cultural coverage. The basic phenomenon is that the mass media has to play three dimensional roles in cultural change:

- Media has to highlight cultural coverage to bring change in the public attitude.
- The media can very well highlight the success stories of cultural awakening
- The spirit of cultural awakening can be very well supported by media in a competitive and positive manner.

All these aspects require a special attention to save Indian culture which can be elevated on global level and decline of these values can be sustained by creating awareness at all levels.

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