THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN EDUCATION AND PAUCITY DECLINE

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers an overview of the different roles the mass media can play in positive social change, particularly with respect to education and the reduction of poverty. It addresses issues pertaining to vulnerable areas of the community in which education is most crucial, such as where gender, disability and high incidences of HIV intersect. It is here that the role the popular media, new media technologies, and entertainment education initiatives need to make a significant impact. The strengths and limitations of media initiatives such as youth education through radio, public information campaigns and educational dramas will be considered in light of the implications for media policy and effective communication. Working from the understanding that the media should be integral to the functioning of a healthy society, and that media texts and technologies can have a significant impact on understanding and behaviour, this paper will address media initiatives related to education and poverty reduction. The implications for media policy, governance, and citizens in a democracy will be explored with a view to envisioning practical ways to direct aspects of media and communication technologies towards social change.

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INTRODUCTION:

The present day world is facing two general problems-"information explosions" and the "population explosion". Information explosion means an explosion of knowledge. Today, throughout the world, social and technological changes are taking place rapidly due to expanding world of information. So there is explosion of knowledge. New frontiers of knowledge are opening day by day and the horizon of human knowledge and understanding is expanding very fast.

On the other hand, with the explosion of knowledge there is also population explosion. The student population is immensely increasing year by year due to the growth of population and democratisation of education with varying levels of motivation and aspiration. The problem of" population explosion" is more serious in the developing countries than the developed one. India is facing serious difficulties both from population as well as information explosion.

So the two general factors – "information explosion" and " Population explosion" have posed critical problems for education-more things to be learnt and more people to be taught. Today there is a cry for "more education to more people in less time". For solving these problems successfully, educational technology consisting of various media of mass communication are essentially required. Both qualitative improvement and quantitative expansion of education can be facilitated and accelerated with the help of this mass media under educational technology. So the mass-media has come to our rescue to tackle this problem.

The question this research seeks to address is this: How can media communication trends and technologies contribute to education and poverty reduction? The media affect us in many ways: as a major socialising influence, a carrier of culture, a source of information, education and entertainment, an important factor in political communication and participatory democracy, and a communicator of ideological values and norms, attitudes and beliefs. The media also both represents and constructs conceptions of what constitutes a successful and valued life, along with what is considered to be deficient, deviant, marginalised or undesirable. In all these ways, the media exert an influence on identity formation and associated issues to do with stigma, self-esteem, social relations, economic and political positions. For instance, the way in which socio-

economic status is framed in the entertainment and news media significantly influences how audiences feel about social equity and how they treat those who are impoverished, homeless, or unemployed. As the media analyst Diana Kendall argues: "myths and negative perceptions about the working class and the poor create a reality that seemingly justifies the superior positions of the upper-middle and upper classes and establishes them as entitled to their privileged position in the stratification system" (Kendall, 2005: 2-3). While it is true that lack of education is a strong determinant of poverty, it is also clear that more affluent members of society and media practitioners themselves require education *about* poverty if this situation is to improve.

When considering the relationship between the media, education and poverty a number of aspects warrant attention, among them: media content (representations, stereotypes, absences), media technologies (issues of access and technological determinism), and media policies (which address language, technology, content, and scheduling). Significantly, media content, technologies and policies all convey discourses about both poverty and education that frame the way these matters are constructed and thought of in society. The discourse or body of ideas circulating in society about a particular topic or social group can influence the way that we think and feel about others and the way that we behave. Discourses of class conveyed by the media include constructions of the poor and homeless as a 'problem' associated with crime, disease, laziness and substance abuse; as dehumanised statistics; as individual instances of suffering detached from broader contributing factors like unemployment; as lazy, ignorant, or otherwise responsible for their own misfortune, and many variations on these themes (Kendall, 2005: 94-5). Frequently the poor and uneducated are simply overlooked and rendered invisible in the media in favour of press and entertainment media that enables the voices and viewpoints of more prominent and affluent members of society to be expressed. For this reason, publications such as *The Big Issue* are important because they enable a degree of visibility, empowerment and self representation.

In offering an overview of the complex relationships between media, education and poverty, this paper will consider the importance of media technologies, global media flows, and examples drawn from radio and television programming, education-entertainment initiatives, and public service announcements with particular attention to media related to the most vulnerable members

of our community who are disadvantaged by gender, health and disability. After establishing a frame of reference with regard to the role that the media plays in social and political life, I will return to each point and discuss how it is implicated in the role of the media in social change.

Education is the process of learning and knowing, which is not restricted to our school text-books. It is a holistic process and continues through our life. Even the regular happenings and events around us educate us, in one or the other way. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the existence of human beings is fruitless without education. An educated person has the ability to change the world, as he/she is brimming with confidence and assured of making the right moves. It Makes Better Citizens, Ensures A Productive Future, Opens New Vistas, Spreads Awareness, Helps In Decision-Making, Bolsters Confidence.

The term media is derived from Medium, which means carrier or mode. Media denotes an item specifically designed to reach a large audience or viewers. The term was first used with the advent of newspapers and magazines. However, with the passage of time, the term broadened by the inventions of radio, TV, cinemas and Internet. In the world of today, media has become almost as necessary as food and clothing. It is true that media is playing an outstanding role in strengthening the society. Its duty is to inform, educate and entertain the people. It helps us to know current situation around the world. The media has a strong social and cultural impact upon society. Because of its inherent ability to reach large number of public, it is widely used to convey message to build public opinion and awareness. The role of media in education is evident today by the number of computer labs, television sets and libraries that have become part of curriculum in most schools today.

THE USE OF MEDIA IN TEACHING – LEARNING PROCESS

Learning is a process to acquire knowledge. It needs hard work and sometimes will make students frustrated and get bored, so that they lose their attention to a lesson. In this case, the use of media in teaching- learning process is needed to attract students' attention and to make teaching learning activities more interesting and also effective. The use of media is questioning whether it really helps teaching learning activities or not. Based on that assumption, the writer wants to find out the fact of the use of media in teaching- learning process, whether media can

help teaching- learning process or not. By reading this article, readers will get a real experience of the use of media, which can help learning process. Besides, they will also know some obstacles that may arise from the use of media, how to overcome them, and detail example of how to conduct teaching- learning process by using media, especially globe and map. This article will provide an interview of a teacher's experience in implementing media for teaching social studies.

MEDIA POLICY, DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL EQUITY:

Media comes in different forms and each form affects the way students learn and interpret information. Media has brought the world closer (globalization) so that now students from different universities in different parts of the world are connected through a mere internet connection. Amidst the information revolution mass media has become such a massive part of our lives. 2. Role of Mass Media in providing Education Mass media :- Television programs, internet websites, feature-length films, newspapers, music tapes and CDs, magazines, billboards, radio programs: essentially, a tool/technology which is used by someone to transmit a message to a large external audience is called mass media. John Dewey stated that education could not be limited within teacher and taught without social environment. So mass media is one such potent force in the social environment of education. Through modern electronic techniques and technologies, mass media prove that education is, really comprehensive not confined within four walls of the classroom. Really, mass media are the educational medium for the mass and mass education. Irrespective of caste, color, geographical, sociological, economical diversities mass media prove as an important means for the education to all. Mankind gets a great deal of information from the widespread mass media i.e. newspaper, TV, radio, magazines, journals, films, etc. It is estimated that mass media may substitute the real classroom teaching in future.

The capabilities approach suggests that policies should be devised to optimise the capabilities of all members of society to function and flourish, based on a complex measure of quality of life that includes life expectancy, health care, political participation, and educational and employment opportunities that enhance freedom of choice and support the capacity to lead a creative and rewarding life. (Nussbaum, 19952). Nussbaum points out that members of different demographics in society need varying resources if they are to achieve equal opportunities in

these areas. In every area of public policy we must strive for a more equitable distribution of attention and resources – but equity does not mean 'the same' because different groups require differing measures of resources. Consider, for instance, the situation of women in relation to poverty and unemployment. As women frequently receive only a small proportion of economic and educational opportunities and benefits by comparison with men, they require proportionately more assistance to achieve a similar quality of life given that the average employment participation rates of women are half those of men and "Even when women are employed, their situation is undercut by pervasive wage discrimination and by long hours of unpaid household labour" (Nussbaum, 1995: 2).

As a socialising force and a source of information and entertainment, the media has the potential to be an agent for social change or a tool to maintain hegemonic power structures. The ideal of the role of the media in supporting positive social change is somewhat compromised by the transnational, oligopolistic character of the media industry.

The nature of patterns of media ownership and control partly determine the impact that the media has on society, but the content of media texts is also important. The influence of the media on identity formation, especially on the perpetuation of stereotypes that support patriarchal, racist or classist ideologies, has been well documented in academic literature. Media images and stories contribute to how individuals develop understandings of self and other, and they describe the social world in ways that invite the media recipient to recognise her or his own position within it. The influence of the media on identity formation is exerted in several ways. It encompasses the way the media functions to naturalise the dominant ideology and to define what counts as 'normal', 'central' and 'valuable', and it includes the processes of cognitive scripting and role modelling that occur as audience members observe, identify with, and in some cases imitate what they see in the media. In this way the media influences perceptions of the importance of different economic groups and other aspects of identity such as age, ability, nationality, gender, ethnicity and religion. The topic of media and identity gives rise to debates about proportionate representation, self-representation and the relationship between language and culture. Because of the influence that the media can have on society, it is important to question the nature of the media content available both locally and globally.

MEDIA, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL CHANGE:

The global village is an image of a world in which everyone's voice has a chance to be heard. Interactive media facilitates participation in global communication and debates, offering entry into public space. The globalization of communication enables us to share in each other's lives (as members of Internet communities; by means of mediated participation in events like the World Cup or the call for aid to tsunami victims, and so on). In this ideal communication environment, the mass media continues to play an important role in democracy, informing people and generating discussion about events and issues worldwide. The globalization of communication is seen as an agent of empowerment, education and equality. The technology used to communicate a message also structures the way we think and interact and perceive the world. We are beginning to see ourselves as members of a unified 'rainbow nation' and as global citizens in part because new communication technologies have enabled us to relate to each other in this way. Different media also relate to different ways of organizing power. As information flow, speed and volume increase, decreasing sensitivity to distance and diminishing production costs lead to benefits for local media producers and rural communities (Fourier, 2001: 611). The media can, therefore, work to foster development and education, facilitating access to valuable information about health care, agricultural techniques and education. The global reach of information also has an impact on transparency and accountability with regard to political policy and practices.

MARKET FORCES VERSUS HUMAN NEEDS AND INTERESTS:

 In addition to technology, language is also important as a carrier of culture and a means of forming communities. It was the decline of Latin and the proliferation of books printed in popular vernaculars that created new reading publics: "These fellow readers to whom they were connected through print formed, in their secular, particular visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community" (Anderson 1991:44). Historically, capitalism functioned as a force that helped to define the boundaries of the nation, and to define the nation's power structures because books, newspapers and documents were printed in the most commercially viable languages – so some language groups, oral vernaculars and dialects died or were marginalized while others were fixed and legitimated. In the contemporary media environment a similar process is happening on a global scale as English increasingly becomes the language of

mass communication, thereby contributing to processes of inclusion and exclusion based on linguistic capabilities.

India features an astonishing degree of cultural and linguistic diversity, and the national media industry must serve the needs of twelve language groups, including sign language. When India media were restructured after apartheid and private broadcasting corporations entered a market previously controlled by the government, there was some debate as to whether the free market would independently develop media services to cater to the different language groups and cultures within India Those with commercial media interests argued that the different sectors of Indian society would define new markets, and media suppliers would meet their diverse demands. However, the different language groups are characterised by different demographics, locations, spending power, and by the unequal social relations entrenched by apartheid and colonialism.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE-COSTS AND COMMUNICATION:

The ability to communicate is a basic human right that is denied to some according to their ability to gain access to technology. Without basic telecommunications services, groups are not able to fully participate in the global economy, participate meaningfully in political discourse, or even socially interact with the global village. (Snow, 2001: 21)

Because of economic and educational barriers, information and communication technologies can be seen as instrumental in creating a 'digital divide' widening the gap between those with access to information and communication technology and those without. The term 'digital divide' encompasses the gap between the rich and the poor, developed nations and developing nations, white and black, male and female, young and old, urban and rural, the able bodied and the disabled, English speaking populations and others. When marginalized groups are neither represented in nor adequately served by the media and afforded equal access to it, the resulting inequity constitutes a danger to both democracy and development. The next section of this paper examines the strengths and limitations of selected South African media initiatives that are explicitly concerned with education and development.

Mass media present the opportunity to communicate to large numbers of people and to target particular groups of people. Mass communication is significantly different from other forms of communication. They note that mass communication has the capacity to reach 'simultaneously' many thousands of people who are not related to the sender. It depends on 'technical devices' or 'machines' to quickly distribute messages to diverse audiences often unknown to each other. It is accessible to many people, but may be avoided. It is orchestrated by specialists whose intent is to persuade potential audiences of the benefits of their attention. It is 'controlled by gatekeepers' who censor the content of messages. And finally, unlike one-to-one communication, it produces only minimal, delayed feedback to its senders.

However, mass communication simultaneously presents opportunities and limitations, both of which require consideration when planning mass media assisted eradication of social problems such as child abuse and neglect. 'The strength of the mass media . . . lies in helping to put issues on the public agenda, in reinforcing local efforts, in raising consciousness about . . . issues and in conveying simple information . . . The limitations of the mass media are that they are less effective in conveying complex information, in teaching skills, in shifting attitudes and beliefs, and in changing behaviour in the absence of other enabling factors.'

Campaigns, and other forms of media education and entertainment (such as television programs, film and live productions), may be targeted at all families with a view to encouraging positive attitudes toward children and stopping abuse before it starts or is even considered (primary prevention). Groups of people identified as particularly susceptible to abusive behaviour may be targeted (secondary prevention). Further, a campaign or program may target families in which abuse has already occurred with the intention of preventing recurrence of the abuse (tertiary prevention).

EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT:

India is one of the world leaders in media projects that combine education and entertainment, known as 'edutainment media'. The edutainment movement began much by accident in India telecast literacy programmes classes, creating a small business that enabled them to raise out of poverty and provide a good upbringing for child. The impact of this television programme on

local audiences was as unintended as it was astonishing: Later the Dordarsan telecasting educational programmes to the people and now nearly 25 channels, Radio (Gnanavani) and universities like IGNOU Play an important role in telecasting educational programmes particularly to the college students. Nowadays, many educational establishments are beginning to embrace social media into their everyday life. It is a well-known fact that Twitter and Facebook are considered to be the fastest ways of finding information that might be of great value for all students. Remarkably, these websites can be easily used for creating a discussion in the classroom. Interestingly, it is possible to create a chat room that can be embedded later to some blog and scheduled to open at a specified time. Actually, all teachers can easily pull new stories from any of these online sources and the students can put any questions in order to develop the further discussion of the previously downloaded article. Speaking about various blogs, they can be utilized to encourage creative writing and to enrich grammar skills. Thus, the professors here are welcome to suggest their requirements for writing projects that are to be fulfilled by the students within certain deadlines.

Simplemente María (*Simply María*) is remembered as the most popular *telenovela,* television soap opera, ever aired in Latin America, a region where most television systems broadcast a dozen dramas a day. -inspired literacy campaigns. (Acker, 2000.)

 Evidence of the impulse to combine education and entertainment are also present in media .The traditional model of health education relies on a predominantly one-way transmission of information from health care providers to communities and patients. This takes the form of public information campaigns, pamphlets, and interpersonal delivery of information. Such a communication model often mistakenly assumes that people retain and act on information conveyed in the form of text, facts, figures, rules and warnings.

Part of the value of the *Steps* project is that it functions to reframe sexual activity and traditional practices by positioning them in a web of cause and effect, agency and choice in a way that is relevant to cultural and interpersonal contexts rather than being abstract or medicalised. Here storytelling plays a significant role in communication and education. Narrative is a way of making meaning by organising events into causal sequences, illustrating consequences over time.

This is the kind of understanding that the complex, contextual, interpersonal narratives of radio and screen media can offer, and that health-care pamphlets and Public Service Announcement slogans cannot. This is why I believe that the *Steps* films constitute a media intervention with the capacity to initiate positive social change.

The *Steps* films can function to either reinforce or change beliefs and behaviours because of the 'truth status' documentary holds and because of their 'home grown' nature and, therefore, the special relevance they hold to the communities they represent. Here the strength of the films' non-didactic approach and their potential to open up spaces for audience members to ask questions and debate issues and actions is in tension with *Steps'* objectives as a responsible media advocacy campaign. This tension springs from the efforts to represent extremely complex and difficult situations in a way that acknowledges their complexity, but also makes it possible for members of the communities in which the films are screened to see a way forward in dealing with similar issues in our own lives: to take 'steps to the future', and to make that future one worth embracing.

PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Public information campaigns are media campaigns that specifically aim to meet educative goals, but use short format advertising based strategies in print media, radio or television rather than longer narratives to communicate information and behaviour change messages.

Part of the 'responsibility' involved in corporate social responsibility initiatives is to ensure adequate research and thus to maximize the effectiveness of the interventions that the company is supporting. Sponsors who undertake to cover the hard costs of printing a pro bono campaign, hosting an advertising competition, or broadcasting a publicity campaign should also make a commitment to testing the messages they put their name to. Research is not a corner of the budget that can safely be cut in the area of child education. Here, social responsibility also extends to the academic community: carefully constructed needs assessments, media effects research and ethnographic audience studies can help literacy meet its communication objectives. To help resolve issues related to the use of commercial communication strategies for media

advocacy purposes, academic institutions should make their expertise available and contribute to creating and testing well-directed campaigns with clear, informative messages, defined goals and achievable outcomes.

CONCLUSION:

The social and ethical implications arising from media and communication policies (including the development and dispersal of new media technologies, the patterns of media ownership, control, and the production of media content emerging from a small range of sources) are of great magnitude. On the positive side, the media has an important role to play in education, information sharing, democracy and entertainment, and the responsibilities associated with this role only become greater as the global reach of information expands. The media is capable of helping to build tolerance and understanding developed through cross-cultural sharing and through the imagined communities and relationships facilitated by technologies that help to bridge space, time and cultural differences. The media has the potential to expand the sphere of moral concern by fostering a sense of interconnectedness with people around the world, and by informing us of the interlinked chains of responsibility to one another, alerting us to the issues faced by distant others. John B. Thompson states that "In an increasingly interconnected world, the horizons of responsibility extend increasingly to others who are distant in space and time as well as to a non-human world".   Even more so in local media which represents members of our own community who are not far distant from our own lives, mass communication brings the issues surrounding poverty reduction and education into our homes and makes these problems a matter for our concern, triggering emotional responses, ethical deliberation and, potentially, action.

The media has the power of educating people, the good and the bad. Since it affect the eyes, the ears and the mind simultaneously nothing can overcome the influence of the media. The media in the advanced society should perform a noble mission of enlightening people and discourage sectarian, communal and divisive trends. . On one hand television and newspapers particularly, have provide extremely useful education content.   The power of media is so extensive and huge; it can be used to educate people with very little cost. Media today is to inform the people about the latest happening around them and the world. They cover all aspects of our interest like

weather, politics, war, health, finance, science, fashion, music, etc. The need for more and more news has evolved into creation of dedicated TV & radio channels and magazines. People can listen, watch and read latest news whenever and wherever they want.

Mass media have proved to help in classifying concepts, stimulating group and individual activities, developing a collective critical awareness, changing attitudes, imposing a new structure or organization on certain subjects and encouraging originality and creativeness. Therefore, teachers have to be properly motivated and made interested in the use of such materials. And they have also to be trained and oriented in the adequate use and maintenance of the materials.

As we know, good teachers are not born, they are made. Training in the methods, techniques, use of various means and media help a teacher to be good and efficient. All illustrative materials will be "aids" to his teaching. His educational outputs will be optimized through judicious uses of modem methods, techniques, means and mass media Educational research has also proved that instruction can be greatly improved through the wise selection and utilization of modem media of communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS :

Strategies to realize the beneficial aspects of the mass media might include the following:

• Media visibility and self-representation: It is important to facilitate inclusiveness and increased visibility of diverse identities in the media. People from different social groups are best qualified to change perceptions and attitudes towards themselves and to share their experiences with others. They should therefore play a central role in the development of strategies and media texts.

• Encourage diversification of media ownership and support independent media.

• Media policy should be designed from the point of view of the needs of the users, the citizens. Policy must play an important role in regulating new technological developments and the manner in which they are made accessible to various sectors of the population – not just to the majority of people or to those with the most purchasing power.

• Utilise ICTs to promote education and empowerment, giving citizens access to information.

• One way for the media to be more socially responsible is to be more self-reflexive and to make the issues relating to media representations, roles, responsibilities and their effects more visible in the media itself.

• Public Service Broadcasting: National broadcasters should function to facilitate social change by offering accessible, viable and attractive alternatives to global media products. Create media policies that strengthen public service requirements and local content requirements for commercial broadcasters.

• Use the public service broadcasters to promote media literacy and other forms of education via public information campaigns. Simple messages tagged to the classification guidelines accompanying film and television programmes can help to raise media literacy and diminish negative media effects. Recognise and discredit or resist the use of stereotypes, labels, unsubstantiated opinion.

• Develop media issues and awareness projects aimed at journalists, members of the media industry, and the public. Encourage people to think about and debate the roles and effects of the media on talkback radio, web-based discussions, etc.

• Encourage an ethic of corporate social responsibility in the media by giving recognition to pro-bono media representation and to sponsorship of initiatives that utilise the media as an agent of positive social change.

• Facilitate a sense of cultural citizenship by developing media production and media analysis skills in educational institutions and community centres and encourage corporate sponsorship of academic media research and local media production.

• Strategies such as these can help to create a situation in which the media contribute to the establishment of an ethic of care, contributing to education and poverty reduction. The media can be harnessed to alter and diversify existing discourses of poverty, once the strengths and limitations of current modes of deploying technology, communicating representations and constructing media policies are recognised. The media's role in education and poverty reduction can be reshaped by proactive media policies, enabling media technologies, and by raising awareness amongst media practitioners, presenters and the public about the different discourses

of poverty and different educative strategies that are communicated to us and by us in everyday life.

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