

The Influence and Functions of Media in the Lives of Individuals

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Introduction to Media Functions

Since the evolution of mass communication, the roles and effects of media have been under debate, and bundles of studies have been conducted on these subjects. (Pew Research Center, 2024) Earlier studies of mass communication's effects and role were based upon an assumption that mass communication has direct effects on audiences and the audiences were assumed to be passive taking direct effects from media content. (Reuters Institute, 2024) Such studies gave birth to the hyper needle theory of mass media also called the magic bullet theory. Besides the studies of the effects, the roles of media in people's lives have also been under discussion from the early 1920s till the date Industrialization brought revolutionary changes in the structure of society. (Associated Press, 2024) Industries in order to make the availability of workforce made colonies near the factories and plants. People from various backgrounds started living there pursuing their jobs and a new contemporary society came into being where, for information people relied on mass communication channels such as radio, newspaper, and television. (American Psychological Association, 2023) A certain sense of alienation caused by the disassociation from the community and the breakdown of the family system pushed members of contemporary society to spend more time with television and other media.

Evolution and Public Role of Mass Media

Different media types were used for different purposes, for instance, movies were the prime source of entertainment, newspapers for news, and so on. However, all of the media became a mix of functions being served by them. Mass media, as it became the primary source of information started playing roles in the lives of the media and certain effects of media were observed on audiences in several effects studies.

Invasion from Mars, Surgeon General's Report, Chapel Hill Study, Charlotte Study, Television in the Lives of Children, Why We Fight series, IOWA studies, and Political communication campaign study in 1972 are the milestones in investigating the functions and roles of media in people's lives. Basic theories of mass communication were evolved based on the findings of these studies.

Media as per its functions and roles is an essential part of a society and is often called the fourth pillar of the state. Some functions of mass media inherently serve the public, such as watchdog function, surveillance, a cultural Glue, entertainment, dissemination and diffusion of innovation, social norms validation, etc.

The Watchdog Function

The media serves as a watchdog for society and the public. This implies that the media keeps an eye on the actions and policies of the state and keeps the general public aware of what and how the government is performing its functions. The pros and cons of public policies and regulations are brought to the public regularly. This eyekeeping of media is not limited to the government only rather all other institutions holding any level of societal power are watched by media to serve the purpose of general awareness to the public.

Information and News Distribution

The circulation of news and information about society, nation, and the world is a general and important role of media and is listed in the three major prime roles of [mass media in society](#) by Lasswell in the year of 1948. Lasswell mentions that the other two functions are consensus and socialization. Surveillance involves following up on previous news events and covering current events.

Social Integration and Cohesion

Media keeps the various and diverse segments of society together by sending messages that help build unity, solidarity, and harmony in its operating society. It caters to the information and entertainment needs of all fragments in the society and considers them a nation as a whole. Hence, the media works as a cultural glue among the segments of the society.

The Entertainment Function

Entertainment is the function that is served at the largest by media around the world. Entertainment in itself serves many uses and gratification for the audiences. Entertainment has taken several forms and genres catering to the audiences' specific and personalized tastes and interests, covering every segment of the audience, from kids to women, men to the elderly.

Media Framing and the Construction of Reality

The relationship tends to how the media presents actualities we use to travel through the world. The data obtained through mass correspondence isn't objective and without inclination. Individuals amusingly state "It must be valid if it's on the web." However, we don't believe that in ages past individuals must have definitely expressed it "must be valid" in light of the fact that it was on the radio. This announcement makes one wonder how valid the media is. Can we devour media without addressing the thought process and plan? Somebody chooses, orchestrates, translates, alters, and

investigates the data utilized as a part of the media. In the event that you approach any individual who works for a noteworthy unscripted television, if what we check is a reasonable portrayal of what truly happens, the individual would most likely let you know “no.”

Sensationalism in Media

The news business has a familiar axiom: “On the off chance that it drains, it drives,” which features the possibility of Sensationalization. Sensationalization is how the media advances the most hair-raising messages to titillate purchasers. Elliot watches, “Media chiefs think as far as customers instead of subjects. Great news coverage offers, yet sadly, awful news-casting offers, too. Also, terrible news coverage stories that essentially rehash government claims or that strengthen what people in general need to hear instead of offering autonomous announcing – are less expensive and less demanding to deliver”.

Mobilization During Crises

Mass media capacities to activate individuals amid times of emergency (McQuail, 1994). Recollect the Boston Marathon Bombing. Notwithstanding your relationship to the occurrence, Americans felt the assault as a country, and individuals took after the news until they found the culprits. With moment access to media and data, we can witness similar occasions occurring continuously elsewhere, activating a substantial populace of individuals around a specific occasion. The online group Reddit.com is a key case of the web’s proactivity. While the FBI was examining the shelling, the Reddit people group was posting witness photographs and attempting to help distinguish the guilty parties. Individuals felt they were having any effect.

Status Conferral and Social Norms

Mass media can approve the status and standards of specific people, developments, associations, or items. The approval of specific individuals or gatherings serves to authorize social standards (Lazarsfeld and Merton). On the off chance that you consider most TV shows and sitcoms, who are the essential characters? What sex and ethnicity are most of the stars? What sexual orientation and ethnicity are those that play crooks or those thought unusual? The media approves specific social standards while lessening contrasts and varieties from those standards. A lot of feedback centers around how certain gatherings are advanced and others are minimized by how they are depicted in broad communications.

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