

The Impact of Media on Indian Culture, Values, Ethics and Behavioral Communication

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Abstract

At the onset & without any hesitation, it must be stated that the relationship between media and culture is both all pervasive and symbiotic it is quiet impossible to analyze one in isolation from the other. The boundary between the two is difficult to isolate and if the two areas of contemporary of their interdependence. The impact of mass media in India is very significant and this is clearly apparent through the rising number of advertisers who are capitalizing on these media channels to spread their messages. Rural or urban, regardless of caste and religious boundaries, Indians are glued to television and radio serials.

Key Words: Impact, Culture, Values, Ethics, Media, Communication, Traditional, Social, Structure.

1. Introduction

This article attempts to look at the nature of media – culture scenario in India and to discern the links between the two. On the way to carry out this, we shall proceed through an examination of Indian culture and the place of communication in India through India's history, trying to identify social and technological changes which have influenced the direction of culture's growth and alteration.

“What culture, values & ethics actually means?”

“The tastes in art and manners that are favored by a social group”.

“All the knowledge and values shared by a society”.

Culture: is a shared, learned, symbolic system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shapes and influences perception and behavior -- an abstract "mental blueprint" or "mental code."

Values and Sociology: The ideals, customs, institutions, etc., of a society toward which the people of the group have an affective regard.

Ethics: is the philosophical study of moral values and rules. Ethics is the motivation based on ideas of right and wrong.

Media: In general, “Media “refers to various means of communication. **For Example**, television, radio, and the newspapers are different types of media. The term can also be used as a collective noun for the press or news reporting agencies.

Mass media is a term used to denote a section of the media specifically designed to reach a very large audience such as the population of a nation state. It was coined in the 1920s with the advent of nationwide radio networks, mass-circulation newspapers and magazines, although mass media (like books and manuscripts) were present centuries before the term became common. The term public media has a similar meaning: it is the sum of the public mass distributors of news and entertainment across media such as newspapers, television, radio, broadcasting, which may require union membership in some large markets such as Newspaper Guild, AFTRA, & text publishers.

2. The impact of Mass Media

The impact of mass media in India is very significant and this is clearly apparent through the rising number of advertisers who are capitalizing on these media channels to spread their messages. Rural or urban, regardless of caste and religious boundaries, Indians are glued to television and radio serials. This article aims to examine is the intangible cost involved in this burgeoning mass media culture. “Films are seen once or twice while ad films are seen over and over. Yet the advertising for many of these iconic brands doesn't seem to drive social change in behaviour and values as strongly as some of the heroes and heroines do through their portrayals in films and serials. ”It is the people and their characters that the masses of India seem to identify with.

With regards to their dressing and personifications of themselves, mass media has affected the lives of people in many ways. As village politician Chandraprakash Dwivedi said “Now village girls want to dress like Rani Mukherjee in Bunty aur Babli -- this within four weeks of the release of the film. ” Men want a hairstyle like “Radhe Bhayya” (role performed by Salmaan Khan) in hit movie Tere Naam. Bindis, blouses, and bangles define the concept of beauty for girls in small towns - influenced by the looks of the saas-bahus in the umpteen TV serials beaming into their drawing rooms on various satellite channels. This article aims to answer the question it has put forth above through the examination of the differences in social structures in India from the past to the present; as well as the differences in forms of communication and entertainment. Folk Music, television and cinema will be examined under the category of communication and

entertainment. Communication in India often took on a musical tone, especially in the communication of religious works or literature. Poetry and religious texts were often sung. The advent of television however has made this rather obsolete. Similarly, village theatre and dance (nautanki) has been replaced by cinema and television serials. Social structures in India have also changed with respect to the caste system.

3. Traditional forms of communication and entertainment

The culture of India is one of the oldest cultures in the world and yet it is so diverse as to be impossible to pin down and define. The South, North, and Northeast have their own distinct cultures and almost every state has carved out its own cultural niche. In spite of the diversity, it's bound by a common thread as one civilization perhaps because of its shared history of colonisation and the following struggle for independence from the British. Culture and its preservation matters a great deal to Indians, at least in rhetoric. The Government of India has even formulated a "Cultural Policy" which lays out three major objectives as preserving the cultural heritage of India, inculcating Indian art consciousness amongst Indians and promoting high standards in creative and performing arts. Unfortunately, it seems the advent of mass media has made the cultural policy redundant as performing arts seem to have virtually disappeared for the masses of India. In the past, Indian drama and theatre were a significant part of "Indian culture" and some of the oldest plays in the world originated from India.

Music, drama and literature have all changed with time and are now digitally enhanced and are available to a wider base of people. The television and print revolutions have granted access to these forms of media to the masses across India. Villages often have their own newspapers and access to television is readily available to the majority. Bollywood cinema is not restricted to the urban community and is in fact highly popular with the rural masses. The ease of making cassette tapes and now compact discs has allowed for a very widespread distribution of music; opposing the need for traditional folk singers and concerts. Bhojpuri folk music is an example of a dying genre of music that is now regaining some following due to overseas Diaspora groups desperate to maintain their links to their dialect. As Ajeet Praimsingh, leader of the Bhojpuri singing group D'Bhuyaa Saaj said, "we don't speak Bhojpuri anymore, so all that we sing is by the ear. But we love this form of music and we perform quite often". In *Cassette Culture*, Peter Manuel tells how a new mass medium, the portable cassette player, caused a major upheaval in popular culture in the world's second-largest country. The advent of cassette technology in the 1980s transformed India's popular music industry from the virtual monopoly of a single multinational LP manufacturer to a free-for-all among hundreds of local cassette producers. The result was a revolution in the quantity, quality, and variety of Indian popular music and its patterns of dissemination and consumption. Television has had a more or less similar impact due to its widespread reach. It is nearly impossible to establish the precise number of people with access to a television set in "the poor world", as James Murdoch, chief executive of STAR TV Group told a cable conference in India; due to the fact that individual cable subscribers sometimes pass on the service illegally to an entire neighborhood. "Moreover, in parts of the developing world, large numbers of people often crowd into one house or cafe to watch television, a factor that is hard to quantify". In the case of India, media empires have had to adjust their strategies to suit the Indian context. STAR TV realized that its mainly American oriented programming was only reaching a tiny, although wealthy, urban audience. It therefore started adding Hindi subtitles to Hollywood films broadcast on its 24-hour channel and dubbing popular U.S. soaps into Hindi. In October 1996, STAR Plus began telecasting programs in English and Hindi. In 1999, it claimed 19 million viewers in India. Another example of this cultural hybridity is Zee TV, India's first private Hindi-language satellite channel.

Zee was launched in October 1992 and depended initially on recycled programming. It then broke television taboos by broadcasting programs about sex, relationships, and horoscopes. The channel thrives on a mixture of Hindi film, serials, musical countdowns, and quiz contests. Zee's innovative programming includes news in "**Hinglish**". Despite the influence of the English language in India, the biggest media growth is in regional languages. Even U.S. series like "Friends" (known as "Hello Friends" in India) have been hybridized, although the latter has not been as successful as expected—the lifestyle of the Hyderabad versions of the New Yorker originals did not settle in the Indian imagination. Such television shows are the prime example of how American culture has become more popular in India than Indian culture.

4. Changes in Social Structure

In Kirk Johnson's study of a small town two hours away from Mumbai city where television had just reached, he noted how television upset existing social structures and created new ones.

The people of India belong to thousands of castes and caste like groups: hierarchy ordered, named groups into which members are born. Caste members are expected to marry within the group and follow caste rules pertaining to diet, avoidance of ritual pollution, and many other aspects of life. With the advent of mass media and channels of communication and information, the Brahmins who have traditionally been at the top of the caste system have been

replaced by those with colour television sets in their homes, shows in Kirk Johnson studies. The next level seems now to be those with access to black and white TVs. Caste lines have been faint in the search to gain access to information; which in itself is not a bad thing.

However, such interaction means that traditional social structures have been destroyed and more people are flocking to the cities that they see on television in the hopes of achieving the material goods that are telecast. This has resulted indirectly in an increasing number of unemployed in the cities as well as a growing number of slums, as these internal migrants are often lowly skilled and unable to find suitable jobs in the city.

5. Media And Society

One of the most heated issues debated, ever since the invention of the television is the effects of media violence on society. Many try to wipe it out, but will undoubtedly fail. It has great educational and entertainment value. There have even been studies showing that viewing television violence will actually relieve stress. For these reasons, televised violence, including fights, with or without weapons, resulting in bloodshed, will never diminish. Many parents try to shelter their kids from the violence portrayed on television. They only look at the negative aspect because the parents complain by saying the violence only teaches their children how to kill and to get away with it. Television is the most credible and believable source of information on the reality of the world. It teaches that the world is a violent and untrustworthy place. It reports on how the world really works. Televised violence cultivates dominant assumptions about how conflict and power work in the world. Violence is an important fact of life. It is very much part of the human condition. The media cannot pretend that violence does not exist. Televised violence orients people to their environment. It helps them understand their world. It serves as a mirror in which people examine themselves, their institutions, and their values. The exposure of children to televised violence is functional to the extent that it prepares them to cope with reality. Conflict is important for children to grow up with. It is part of their life.

6. Media & Youth Violence

"The problem of youth violence cannot be attributed to one cause alone. The media plays its part, regaling young children and adolescents with programming that is amazingly violent in content. The orgy of unnecessary violence continues into adulthood. Viewers and listeners become desensitized to the sufferings of others. Movies and songs teach young people to be selfish and self-centered, and to denigrate and devalue feelings of empathy and compassion. Some people do indeed imitate what they see on television. But the media is not the only model. Parents and guardians provide ethical guidance and moral direction. Nevertheless, not all young people enjoy the benefits of a healthy and wholesome upbringing. Many come from broken homes, and all exist in a society that is increasingly atomized and dysfunctional. The media may help, but it is society itself that urges on individuals toward the commission of violent acts."

7. Media Violence Facts and Statistics

Prevalence of Media Violence: The *Television Violence Monitoring Project* examined the amount of violence on American television for three consecutive years, as well as contextual variables that may make it more likely for aggression and violence to be accepted, learned, and imitated. They found:

- 61 percent of television programs contain some violence, and only 4 percent of television programs with violent content feature an "antiviolence" theme.
- 44 percent of the violent interactions on television involve perpetrators who have some attractive qualities worthy of emulation.
- 43 percent of violent scenes involve humor either directed at the violence or used by characters involved with violence.
- Nearly 75 percent of violent scenes on television feature no immediate punishment for or condemnation of violence.
- 40 percent of programs feature "bad" characters that are never or rarely punished for their aggressive actions.

The report notes that many television programs fail to depict the harmful consequences of violence. Specifically, it finds that of all violent behavioral interactions on television, 58 percent depict no pain, 47 percent depict no harm, and 40 percent depict harm unrealistically. Of all violent scenes on television, 86 percent feature no blood or gore. Only 16 percent of violent programs feature the long-term, realistic consequences of violence.

8. Recent Contribution Of Media To Culture

Shah Rukh Khan becomes Dr Shah Rukh Khan on Friday. The Bollywood superstar is to be presented an honorary doctorate in arts and culture by Britain's Bedfordshire University at a ceremony in London for his contributions to culture. Shah Rukh was nominated by Routes to Roots, a non-government organization that works across the SAARC region to bring South Asian people together. Another Example for contribution in favour of Indian, according to Indian Super star is Amitabh Bachchan Turns Down Australian Ph D : Amitabh Bachchan has turned down a Ph D degree from Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, on the wake of racist attacks on Indian students in Australia.

According to Amitabh, "I have been witnessing, with great dismay and shock, the recent violent attacks on Indian students in Australia, on the electronic media the entire day. I mean no disrespect to the institution that honours me, but under the present circumstances, where citizens of my own country are subjected to such acts of inhuman horror, my conscience does not permit me to accept this decoration from a country that perpetrates such indignity to my fellow countrymen.

"This is indeed a grand gesture, sure to get some media attention

9. Culture cops & media

If communication is the backbone of human social identities, values and institutions, dramatic changes in the means of communication have the most profound impacts on social, cultural, economic and political questions. One has only to look back at the sweeping changes brought about by the techniques of long-distance communication since the growth of the electric telegraph in the second half of the 19th century to appreciate how profound the effects of modern communication have been all over the world.

Revolutionary as the means of long-distance communication were to many people of late 19th century, to us their effects may now seem mild as compared to the global impacts of the mass-media technologies and empires that have come into existence during the second half of the 20th century.

According to a recent study from the Pew Internet & American Life project (Lenhardt & Madden, 2005), more than one-half of all teens have created media content, and roughly one third of teens who use the Internet have shared content they produced. In many cases, these teens are actively involved in what we are calling participatory cultures .A participatory culture is a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices .A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created.

Media: conflict with Culture: Culture is an essential part of conflict and conflict resolution. Cultures are like underground rivers that run through our lives and relationships, giving us messages that shape our perceptions, attributions, judgments, and ideas of self and other. Though cultures are powerful, they are often unconscious, influencing conflict and attempts to resolve conflict in imperceptible ways.

The Hindu-Muslim Conflict in Bollywood Films

10.The Religious Conflict as a Blockbuster

The Bollywood wave has reached our western shores. But how much screen time is actually devoted to politically and socially critical issues in these Indian films, which are primarily about love, consumption, and affluence, it's an important question?

In "*Veer - Zaara*" Yash Chopra intentionally highlighted the conflict between Hindus and Muslims and dressed it up as popular entertainment | Millions of people in India adore Bollywood films. But in the West too, this popular film genre is attracting an ever-growing following. At first glance But Bollywood does not restrict itself to these obviously entertaining cinematic effects, it also tackles controversial issues like the religious conflict between Muslims and Hindus, which is reflected in the tense power-politics played out between the neighboring states of India and Pakistan. "*Veer – Zara*", for example, is loosely based on the story of Romeo and Juliet. Director Yash Chopra intentionally highlighted the conflict between Hindus and Muslims and dressed it up as popular entertainment.

Other example for the same is Hindi movie "SARFAROSH: The Indian movie Safarosh is an intense drama of terrorism & insurgency in our country. It revolves around an assistant commissioner, police , Amir khan who takes on terrorists , who are out to ruin the peace of the country. The films make the name of neighboring country as the conflict creator. Naseeruddin shah is shown as being the one who creates & encourages the spread of terrorism in country. The movie tried to explain some of the main reason for the spread & insurgency of terrorism in India.

11.Conclusion

Other than dress; many other aspects of culture have been sacrificed in favour of western influences. Folk music and travelling singers have given way to cassettes and compact discs; nautanki shows have dissolved under the pressure and competition brought forth by television and cinema. The traditions of storytelling have also taken a back seat due to cassette playbacks of discourses and the ease with which printed material is cheaply available. Just as traditions have gone 'out of fashion', it seems that many beliefs have done so as well. Television has reached a stage where even religious discourse is broadcast, negating the need for temple visits and religious-social gatherings. Infrastructure and the mass media influences that it has brought with it have created a culture where person to person interaction has nearly stopped. Information is relayed to us through media channels, radio, television, books and newspapers. It seems almost as

if we have entered an era of “cognitive imperialism” where as Carolyn Martin famously commented, “*Western civilization was the center of the stage play for which the rest of the world was an awestruck audience*”. The interaction between the media and the people it impacts is ever changing and evolving; the Indian-themed but Hollywood made movie, “*Monsoon wedding*”, demonstrates how globalization and the media reveal striking features in cultural contexts. Societies like India’s are being affected by globalization and the western influences that are a large part of it, but their interest also plays an active role in fostering it.

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