CLASS: III M.A., POLITICAL SCIENCE

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UNIT-I

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MASS MEDIA

The term mass media was coined around 1920s with the advent of nationwide radio networks and of mass-circulation newspapers and magazines. The history of human communication and the development of speech can be viewed as one of the defining characteristics in the transition to human civilisation. The use of pictures and writing allowed communication to move beyond the face-to-face requirements of direct speech and facilitated the development of trade and monetary exchange across large distances.

Mass media helps in connecting people and "brings the globe into our glance". Let us take a look into the history as well as origin of mass media, which is also popularly known as public media.

The information distributed to people on a large scale through the use of television, radio, movies, newspapers, Internet, magazines and books is termed as Mass Media

Mass Media has been evolving through the ancient periods when kings patronized their writers and poets for writing books and creating dramas. The power of mass media is known to the world. It has thrown away mighty dynasties and created new empires. Mass media has helped in creating social awareness and has also provided people with an easy way of living life. The print media played an important part in the historical events such as, The Renaissance, The American War of Independence, The French Revolution and many more…

The mass media started evolving as early as 3300 B.C., when the Egyptians perfected the hieroglyphics. This writing system was based on symbols. Later in 1500 B.C., the Semites devised the alphabets with consonants. It was around 800 B.C. that the vowels were introduced into the alphabet by the Greeks.

Many books were written in ancient times, but sources confirm that the first printed book was the 'Diamond Sutra' written in China in 868 A.D. But with the slow spread of literacy in China and the high cost of paper in the country, printing lacked the speed required to reach large numbers of people. However, printing technology quickly evolved in Europe. In 1400 A.D., Johannes Gutenberg, a German goldsmith, invented the printing press of movable type, which is said to be based on screw bases. The first book was printed in the year 1453 A.D. One of

the books that were printed was, 'The Gutenberg Bible'. From a single city in Germany, the printing press spread all over Europe, like a wild fire. In 1468 A.D. William Caxton produced a book with the first printed advertisement in England. By the year 1500 A.D., two million copies of books were printed in these countries. In the next hundred years, the printing rose to two hundred million copies.

SIGNIFICANCE OF MASS MEDIA

- To reveal head-lining news stories

- To give information about real-world issues

- To learn and know about the world

- To reveal information for the masses to know

- To reveal release dates on upcoming albums, television programmes, movies and video games

- To advertise products of corporations

MASS MEDIA IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Media constitute the fourth pillar of democracy. The role of the media is vital in generating a democratic culture that extends beyond the political system and becomes engrained in the public consciousness over time. Media is supplying the political information that voters base their decisions on. They identify problems in our society and serve as a medium for deliberation. They also serve as watchdogs that we rely on for uncovering errors and wrongdoings by those who have power. Media is vital in generating a democratic culture that extends beyond the political system and becomes engrained in the public consciousness over time. The role of media in a democracy is as crucial as that of the politicians and should never be underestimated.

This rationale is based on the notion that democracy – which recognises that people have the right to elect a government of their choosing – cannot exist in any meaningful way without the right to freedom of expression. There are many aspects to this rationale, but the fundamental concept is that in order for democracy to be effective, the citizenry that votes in elections and engages in public processes with government must be informed and must have the right to participate freely in public discourse. If there is no freedom of expression – if people are not free to share information and express a range of ideas, opinions and political views; and, the corollary to that, if people are not free to receive information in the form of a range of ideas, opinions and political views – they will not be sufficiently well informed to make appropriate and meaningful political choices, whether at the ballot box or in their interactions with government more generally.

The media can play a positive role in democracy only if there is an enabling environment that allows them to do so. They need the requisite skills for the kind of indepth reporting that a new democracy requires. There should also be mechanisms to ensure they are held accountable to the public and that ethical and professional standards are upheld. Media independence is guaranteed if media organizations are financially viable, free from intervention of media owners and the state, and operate in a competitive environment. The media should also be accessible to as wide a segment of society as possible. Efforts to help the media should be directed toward: the protection of press rights, enhancing media accountability, building media capacity and democratising media access.

Building independent media in developing countries requires more than freedom of speech, skilled journalists, or strong business management skills. Enabling independent media to perform the crucial roles of being a watchdog over government and educating people about the issues that affect their lives also requires supporting organizations such as trade unions and professional associations for journalists, and a public educated about these roles and responsibilities of media and their function in a democratic and open society. If a democracy is to run smoothly in any country, it is a must that the media in all fairness should be given full autonomy and a free hand it deserves in airing its views among the people and no unnecessary restrictions should be imposed on it.

Media has a very big role to play in a democracy and its stature is in no way less than that of politicians. Hence it is rightly called the fourth Pillar of democracy i.e. Fourth Estate. It is through media that people become aware of so many aspects of life of which they are normally ignorant. Democracy is meaningless without a free, neutral and active media. Media is often referred to as the fourth branch of government because of the power they wield and the oversight function they exercise. The media's key role in democratic governance has been recognized since the late 17th century, and remains a fundamental principle of modern-day democratic theory and practice.

The role of the press as 'watchdog' is a traditional characterisation of the role of the news media in particular. This watchdog role can take many forms depending on the nature of the medium concerned, as well as on the state of democracy and development in a particular country. Essentially, this role is to provide information – to be the 'eyes and ears' of the public in monitoring what is happening in public life by reporting on daily events as they unfold.

MEDIA FREEDOM

Media freedom, freedom of various kinds of media and sources of communication to operate in political and civil society. The term media freedom extends the traditional idea of the freedom of the press to electronic media, such as radio, television, and the Internet. The term acknowledges that the media in modern societies consist of more than print sources. Media freedom is generally held to be necessary for democratic societies. Individuals generally

cannot get sufficient information on their own to make informed decisions on public matters, so they rely on media to provide information. In addition, the media are an outlet for public discussion and opinion and generally fulfill the functions of seeking truth, educating the public, and serving as a watchdog over government.

Free media help ensure that the democratic principle of publicity—sometimes referred to as transparency—is satisfied. Publicity refers to making information about the operations of government public and provides the opportunity for public debate and scrutiny of matters of public concern. Many think that this function of the media prevents and corrects abuses of power. Conversely, the media provide information about citizen opinion and concerns to political leaders and others in power. Media freedom, and its protection of the principles of publicity, can be curtailed both by excessive government control and regulation and by market forces and practices. Other influences that can reduce the effectiveness of media are increases in elite or private modes of communication that evade public scrutiny, the reduced literacy of consumers of media, and lack of access to media for use by the public.

Media freedom implies media responsibility and accountability. If free media are going to fulfill their vital functions, then the public needs assurance that the media are seeking the truth and acting to guard the public interest. Government regulations on media seek to ensure that media act within the parameters of public interest. However, many argue that all or many government regulations interfere with media freedom and violate the public's right to choose and own media sources. On the other hand, government regulations may be necessary to control corporate media outlets that dominate the public's access to information.

FOURTH ESTATE

The term Fourth Estate or fourth power refers to the press and news media both in explicit capacity of advocacy and implicit ability to frame political issues. Though it is not formally recognized as a part of a political system, it wields significant indirect social influence.

The derivation of the term fourth estate arises from the traditional European concept of the three estates of the realm: the clergy, the nobility, and the commoners. The equivalent term "fourth power" is somewhat uncommon in English, but it is used in many European languages, including Italian (quarto potere), German (Vierte Gewalt), Spanish (Cuarto poder),

In the United States, the term fourth estate is sometimes used to place the press alongside the three branches of government: legislative, executive and judicial. The fourth estate refers to the watchdog role of the press, one that is important to a functioning democracy.

"In current use 'the press' usually carries with it the aura of 'freedom of the press' enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, while press critics usually label it, with a sneer, 'the media.'" Origins of Fourth Estate The term "fourth estate" is often attributed to British politician Edmund Burke.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MASS MEDIA

- To inform the public, provide information and amusement, generate political ideas ideas, mobilize political and social...

- To play the role of political accountability and provide checks and balances, keeping an eye on public officials and...

- To play the role of a direct political actor when revelations by the media spark political crises and legal action, e.g.

- To play an accountability role, vis-à-vis the private sector and NGOs reporting on their activities and...

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Media ethics is the best division of applied ethics dealing with the specific ethical principles and standards of media, including broadcast media, film, theatre, the arts, print media and the internet. The field covers many varied and highly controversial topics, ranging from war journalism to Benetton ad campaigns. Media ethics promotes and defends values such as a universal respect for life and the rule of law and legality. Media Ethics defines and deals with ethical questions about how media should use the information in a proper manner.

The code of ethics in media was created by a suggestion from the 1947 Hutchins Commission. They suggested that newspapers, broadcasters and journalists had started to become more responsible for journalism and thought they should be held accountable.

KINDS OF MASS MEDIA

- Journalism.

- Social Media.

- Films.

- Television.

- Radio.

- Advertising.

- Public Relations.

- Books, Magazines, Newspapers and Journals.

- Photography.

- Audio Media like Community Radio, Podcasts.