

Original Article

MEDIA AND SOCIETY: A DISCOURSE UPON THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF MEDIA AND IT'S ETHICAL CONCERN

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ABSTRACT

The present century is advancing tremendously in scientific knowledge, information and communication technology, machine learning and artificial intelligence. As a result of advancement in information and communication technology, contemporary human society largely dwell upon the world of media for information gathering as well as information sharing in day-to-day life. The term “Media” has been employed as an umbrella domain that which consists of both mass and social media, acting as communication agencies. Mass media comprises of different modes of communication, such as, the print media (e.g., newspaper, magazines, and books) and the audio-visual media (e.g., radio, television, music, and cinema). This world has also witnessed the revolution in media technologies with the emergence of WWW (World Wide Web) or the internet that which has paved the way to the emergence of social media. Some of the commonly known social media includes – Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, and recognized its acceptance due to its interactivity. Generally, media plays role in disseminating information, news, entertainment, and education to the mass audience. Emergence of ethical concern over media’s role and representation is inevitable since an attitude and perception of an individual towards their surrounding human ecology is being shaped and re-shaped in due course of gathering information. In this paper, media representations (such as, style of reporting using derogatory, exaggerated headlines and languages leading to a moral panic) shall be dealt at length along with the role of media professionals as its impact upon the larger society cannot altogether be discarded and thus, needs to be addressed adequately. In a media driven world, human mind quite often are perceived to be clouded in spite of being considered as rational being (Rene Descartes, a French philosopher, considers humans as rational being). This fact subsequently leads to the necessity of media literacy along with its ethical dimension on the part of individuals of society. Lack of adequate media education and their uses is likely to lead the human society towards downward mobility and hostile human environment. This work is based upon the relevant available literature and individual perceptions (urban and rural, & individuals of different age group) on the impact of media in the society as divers understanding on its presentation is of immense significance in the 21st century. Thus, this work delves into multi-disciplinary approach, considering historical account, sociological dimension, and ethical concern in understanding the media literacy, representation and its impact upon the contemporary society.

Keywords: Media, Media Representation, Moral Panic, Ethics, Rationality, and Upward Social Mobility, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

The present century is advancing tremendously in scientific knowledge, information and communication technology, machine learning and artificial intelligence. As a result of advancement in information and communication technology, contemporary human society largely dwell upon the world of media for information gathering as well as information sharing in day-to-day life. The term "Media" has been employed as an umbrella domain that which consists of both mass and social media, acting as communication agencies. Mass media comprises of different modes of communication, such as, the print media (e.g., newspaper, magazines, and books) and the audio-visual media (e.g., radio, television, music, and cinema). Since the genesis of media in human society, its role in shaping identity formation, value assertion, and social mobility can be perceived. Subsequently, a critical debate emerged in the society at large centering on its role, representation and disseminating information.

Literature Review: The study of media's social impact and associated ethical concerns is critical in understanding contemporary society. [Curran and Redden \(2024\)](#) in *Understanding Media Communication, Power and Social Change* provide a comprehensive overview of media as a powerful institution shaping societal discourse and influencing social transformation. Their analysis reveals media's dual role as a facilitator of democratic participation and as an instrument for reinforcing power imbalances. This duality raises ethical concerns regarding representation, access, and control over media narratives, emphasizing that media is not merely a reflection of society but a dynamic actor in social change [Curran and Redden \(2024\)](#).

Extending this perspective to the digital realm, [Logan and Rawady \(2021\)](#) explore the relationship between social media and their users in *Understanding Social Media Extensions of Their Users*. They conceptualize social media as cognitive and social extensions of individuals, where human interactions are intertwined with technological mediation. This co-construction between users and platform reshapes identity, community, and social norms. Logan and Rawady argue that these extensions create ethical challenges tied to autonomy, privacy and commodification of social life, highlighting the complexity of users' interdependence with technology and the implications for individual and collective behavior [Logan and Rawady \(2021\)](#).

In a more recent examination, [Arthur \(2021\)](#) illustrates in *Social Warming: The Dangerous and polarising effects of social media* how social media exacerbates political and social polarization. He documents how algorithm- driven amplification contributes to fragmenting public opinion, spreading misinformation, and eroding trust in democratic processes. Arthur's analysis incorporates global case studies, emphasizing the ethical global case studies, emphasizing the ethical urgency around platform accountability and the social responsibility of users. His work shows that social media's influence can hinder social cohesion and democratic dialogue, posing significant challenges for the ethical governance of digital communication [Arthur \(2021\)](#).

Together, these works depict a multifaceted discourse on media's societal role and ethical dimensions. Curran and Redden's cultural framework locate media within power struggles that shape social realities through communication. Logan and Rawady bring attention to the evolving nature of social interactions in digital environments, focusing on how social media reconfigures human extensions and challenges traditional ethical notions around privacy and autonomy. Arthur deepens this discourse by addressing the impacts of social media on social warming and polarization, underscoring the pressing ethical concerns around misinformation and societal division.

This collection of perspectives underscores that media -especially digital media-exerts profound influence on social structures, behaviors, and public discourse, necessitating ongoing ethical scrutiny. The balance between empowering democratic engagement and mitigating harm from inequality, privacy breaches, and polarization remains a pivotal challenge as media continues to evolve in society.

Objective: The objective of this work is to explore the media representation in the contemporary world. In many ways its influence in shaping an individual attitude and human society at large cannot also be denied. Thus, a critical analysis on its representation is of immense necessity. Further, this work delves into inter-disciplinary approach, considering sociological dimension and ethical concern in understanding the media literacy, representation and its impact upon the contemporary society.

Significance: The populace of this century is largely dwelling upon the world of media ranging from entertainment to education. Undoubtedly, media has been regarded as important agent in disseminating education to the masses. However, the very query on its credibility in disseminating education needs to be addressed adequately. It is often perceived that citizens of different age groups engage themselves in the world of media rarely on attaining education. This work would be helpful to the interested reader in understanding both pros and cons of media. Blind adoption to the advancing technologies may not serve the purpose of welfare of human kind. Rather its limitation, and usefulness needs to be assessed in an appropriate manner.

Methodology: Qualitative approach is adopted by analysing available relevant literatures on media, ethics and society. Observation on different groups of people (urban - rural, children - elder, etc.) and its impact upon social, educational sectors has been discussed. It is observed that in every sphere of human life and people of different age groups media has its influence.

MEDIA AND ITS REPRESENTATION

The history of human civilization has witnessed the emergence of the print media, the audio-visual media in the early phase of technological advancement. Today, both print as well as audio-visual media is seen expanding to a larger number. This world has

also witnessed the revolution in media technologies with the emergence of WWW (World Wide Web) or the internet that which has paved the way to the emergence of social media. Some of the commonly known social media includes – Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, and recognized its acceptance due to its interactivity. As a result, there is also appearance of 3G, 4G, 5G mobile phones and laptop computers around the globe displaying the power of science and technology worldwide. In a nutshell, the use of interpersonal and interactive media delivery system has been facilitated with the convergence of new media technologies paving greater way to interact with one another. Generally, media plays role in disseminating information, news, entertainment, and a platform for public debate and expression, and education to the greater mass audience. There are three prominent ways of thinking about the role of the media. First, one sees the media as serving the public good: holding power to account, enabling society both to cohere and adapt to change, providing a rich source of pleasure and facilitating a deliberate democracy. Another tradition contends that the media represent the world in ways that serve elite power and privilege. A third tradition portrays the media as a battleground between elite and popular forces [Curran and Redden \(2024\)](#).

This is the century where 24 hours rolling news channels, online news. Media representations, such as, style of reporting using derogatory, exaggerated headlines and languages leading to a moral panic has been addressed along with the role of media professionals as its impact upon the larger society cannot altogether be discarded. 'Yellow journalism' is used pejoratively to refer to journalist practices that focus on scandals and scams by publishing sensational news. Such practices aim at titillating the minds of the people. They have scant regard for fundamental norms and take to exaggeration, over - representation and lopsided presentation to gain quick grounds [Mohanty \(2007\)](#). In a media driven world, human mind quite often is perceived to be clouded in spite of being considered as rational being (Rene Descartes, a French philosopher, considers humans as rational being). At a very first glance of information gathering an individual tend to fill his mind irrespective of any news as broadcasted in the media without even justifying the source, authenticity and reliability of news. Rationality of an individual seems to be tempted and deceived in believing even a false news to be true.

ETHICAL CONCERN ON MEDIA

Emergence of ethical concern over media's role and representation is inevitable since an attitude and perception of an individual towards their surrounding human ecology is being shaped and re-shaped in due course of gathering information. Here the question of ethics arises whereby the ownership of media and profession of journalism ought to maintain bias free ethic for the interest of the greater citizens. The issue of disseminating accurate news should be at the paramount of media ethics. Responsibilities lie in all the media personals, such as, news editor, news writer, in what is being published or broadcast. Hence, gathering, analysing, reviewing and broadcasting of accurate news with a sense of responsibility and greater goodness cannot be segregated from media ethics.

Integrity, independence and accountability constitute the core principles of journalist ethics. Integrity demands that media be objective, truthful and accurate. This requires unprejudiced mind and independence on part of the reporters and editors [Mohanty \(2007\)](#). However, in the present scenario emergence of some of the medias are prone to gain ground in the consumer market rather than maintaining the core principles of journalism. One may not also be wrong in asserting that in the present decade access to media is one of the key resources in political arena. Whereas media representative is expected to be guarded by its ethics of remaining free from any political bias, not to be absorbed to any sort of favouritism. That is to refrain from any kind of biasness towards any ideology, racial bias, and social bias ought to be cherished.

CONCLUSION

Considering the representation of media in the present decade leads to the necessity of media literacy on the part of individuals of society. Lack of adequate media education and their uses is likely to lead the human society towards downward mobility and hostile human environment. On the other hand, media's representation of any news, events, etc. has to be meant for the upliftment of the greater society and harmonious existence of all.

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