



**M.A. COMMUNICATION
AND JOURNALISM
SEMESTER - III (CBCS)
PART - II**

MEDIA ADVOCACY

SUBJECT CODE : 27813

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SYLLABUS

MEDIA ADVOCACY (CORE COURSE)

Semester III

Media Advocacy (Elective Course)

Defining Public Interest, Definition of Public Opinion, Formation and change of Public Opinion, Introduction to Propaganda, Introduction to Social marketing, Public Opinion and Democracy, Public Opinion and thinkers - Aristotle, Plato, Michel de Montaigne, Ferdinand Tönnies, Jeremy Bentham, Adam Smith, Jürgen Habermas, Herbert Blumer, Jean Jacques Rousseau, James Bryce, A. Lawrence Lowell, Walter Lippmann, Lance Bennett. Public Opinion models -The Random Diffusion model of Mass Public Opinion, The Receive-Accept-sample model of public opinion, Models of public opinion influence on leaders, Five Models of Representations. Public Opinion and Political Communication Goals of strategic political communication, Elite Influence on Public Opinion, Interest Groups and Democratic Representation, The Political Media. The Public Opinion Process, Public Opinion and Social Control, Public Opinion and the Middle class, Media and Public Opinion-Influence of Media on Public opinion, Opinion Polls, Media-led campaigns in the World, Media-led campaigns in India.

The course shall comprise of the following units :

Week 1	Democracy, the informed citizen and the media	Communication for Development in the Third World, Srinivas R Melkote, H Leslie Steeves, Sage 2001
Week 2	Public interest, public opinion and the media	
Week 3	Political communication	An Introduction to Political Communication, Brian McNair, Routledge, 1995
Week 4	Manufacturing consent, the sociology of news	
Week 5	News: the politics of illusion	Public Communication Campaigns, Ronald E. Rice, Charles K. Atkin, Sage, 2001
Week 6	Public Relations, Publicity and Propaganda and development	
Week 7	Media advocacy and public health – case studies	Constructing Public Opinion, Justin Lewis, Columbia University Press, 2011
Week 8	Media advocacy and gender – case studies	News: The Politics of Illusion, W Lance Bennett, Longman, 2012
Week 9	Media advocacy and disability – case studies	Sociology of News, Michael Schudson, W W Norton, 2011
Week 10	Media advocacy and child rights	

Week 11	Media advocacy, race and caste – case studies	Cultural Meanings of News: A Text-Reader, Daniel A. Berkowitz, Sage, 2011 News Narratives and News Framing: Constructing Political Reality By Karen S. Johnson-Cartee, Rowman and Littlefield, 2005 The Handbook of Development Communication and Social Change, Karin Gwinn Wilkins, Thomas Tufte, Rafael Obregon, Wiley Blackwell, 2014
Week 12	Media advocacy and minorities – case studies	
Week 13	Media advocacy and citizens' rights – case studies	
Week 14	Planning a media advocacy campaign	
Week 15	Executing a media advocacy campaign	
Total hours	60 hours	



DEMOCRACY, THE INFORMED CITIZEN AND THE MEDIA

Unit Structure

- 1.0. Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2. Democracy: Definition
 - 1.2.1. Democratization and De-Democratization
 - 1.2.2. Media and Democracy
- 1.3. Civic literacy: The Informed Citizen
 - 1.3.1. Who is an Informed Citizen?
 - 1.3.2. Why informed Citizens make Democracy work?
 - 1.3.3. Civic Engagement and Politics
- 1.4. Role of Media to enhance Citizen Knowledge
- 1.5. Informed Citizenry in the Digital Era
- 1.6. Let'ssumup
- 1.7. Questions
- 1.8. References

1.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Definition of democracy and citizenship
- Nature of an informed citizen
- Role of media in creating informed citizens and impact on democracy

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The ability of citizens to acquire accurate information, express themselves freely, participate intelligently in public discourse, and influence public policy is at the core of every effective democracy. How citizens exercise fundamental liberties, as well as their capacity for self-determination and development, are all significantly influenced by the quality of the information they receive. In order to guarantee the existence of such an

environment, a number of parties, including state institutions, civil society organizations, and the family, must make it easier for people to access relevant and reliable information and must refrain from restricting people's freedoms of expression or access to that information.

In India, the media is seen as the fourth pillar of democracy, following the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Journalism plays a crucial role of spreading awareness about the issues in society. Media influences and reflects the mass opinion in a given situation. Under Article 19(1) (a) of the Indian constitution, the media has been given immense power in terms of free speech as it is believed to be the cornerstone of democracy. The main duty of the media is to keep the citizens informed and updated.

This unit will help in understanding the theoretical perspectives of democracy, media and the informed citizen. It will help to describe the nature of an informed citizen and explain the impact of media in a democratic setting. It will also focus on the rise of news digitization and how the latest trends in media and democracy influence and shape an informed citizen.

“Political information is as essential in democratic politics as money is in economics: it acts as the currency of citizenship.”

— Delli Carpini and Keeter,
What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters

1.2. DEMOCRACY: DEFINITION

Democracy is a form of government in which the people are said to rule and the entire populace is represented by elected officials. The people of a country, eligible to be called as the citizens, choose their leaders through the process of voting. Modern political democracy is a form of government in which individuals are entitled to hold leaders accountable for their public deeds through the cooperation of their elected representatives. Democracy is disputed both as a concept and as a political reality. The democratic government needs to be institutionalized, which means that most, if not all, citizens must regularly know, practice, and accept the decisions of the government in order for it to function successfully.

Democracies, like all regimes, rely on the presence of rulers, people who fill certain authority positions and have the authority to order others. The rules that govern how democratic leaders ascend to office and maintain power are what set them apart from non-democratic ones. The statements that democracy is more likely to exist or expand in more developed nations and that all types of regime transitions are more frequent during economic downturns are supported by considerable statistics in past research.

Despite the fact that many existing democracies began as informal, prudential, or customary systems, the preferred method of institutionalization of democracies became the adoption of written laws supported by written constitutions. India is a democratic nation that upholds the rules outlined in its constitution.

1.2.1. Democratization and De-Democratization

Democratization occurs when a country is undergoing significant political shifts to move towards a more democratic political system. Since around 1970, a "global wave of democratization" has been under motion, pulling down 85 dictatorships.

There are claims based of well researched facts that economic growth enhances the possibility of democratic politics. Although some types of authoritarianism are more vulnerable to economic downturns than others, available research also supports the idea that authoritarian governments are more prone to fall amid economic crisis. The economic crisis eventually had an impact on all authoritarian regimes, as people who had fallen into poverty began to criticize their rulers and take the risk of calling for change.

In the past and in the present, transitions from democratic to authoritarian regimes have happened regularly. Regimes have a tendency to become less democratic as categorical inequality among the subjects rises and as public politics become less shielded from it. Numerous European Union (EU) Member States have gone through unprecedented de-democratization processes over the past ten years, which have had detrimental effects on social justice and equality. Equality, openness, universality, rights, inclusion, participation, and contestation are all aspects of democracy as an idea and a way of life.

De-democratization, on the other hand, manifests itself in a variety of ways, including the growth of authoritarian radical right populism and a direct opposition to democratic principles and practices. De-democratization reveals the brittleness but also the tenacity of democratic practices and institutions. The rise of far-right parties is one of its effects on equality. These could potentially have a negative domino effect on more mainstream parties and politics, which could cause them to backtrack on their promises to democratic norms and equality.

1.2.2. Media and Democracy

Democracy requires engaged citizens and news media outlets that give them the knowledge they need to take part in politics effectively. Citizens and the media are mostly unable to fulfill the expectations placed on them. The ability of democracy to endure in spite of citizens and media that fall short of expectations shows that political culture may be more significant than informed citizens and superior media.

However, the role of media in a democracy cannot be ignored. Politicians think that governments may manipulate the media in order to control their citizens. Newspapers, magazines, books, radio, over-the-air and cable television, and the Internet fall under the category of news "media" which disseminate information to broad audiences about current events, particularly political events. Control by the private sector is an alternative to government control through ownership of media or through strict regulation of news content. Critics are also upset that journalists may sidestep controversies that would offend their audience in an effort to keep the largest audiences possible.

The media has been hailed as one of the most important forces in advancing democracy in formerly authoritarian nations, whether by highlighting the flaws of dictatorships or by portraying images of prosperous democratic societies. These examples demonstrate the significant role that contemporary media have had in supporting democratic governance throughout history. Even if the media does not actively promote democracy on a daily basis; they still play a crucial role during crisis. They have more power during these moments because individuals who ordinarily disregard the news throng to the media.

The press is supposed to perform four tasks: (a) offer a platform for the discussion of various, often opposing ideas; (b) give voice to public opinion; (c) act as citizens' eyes and ears to observe the political scene and the performance of politicians; and (d) act as a public watchdog that barks vociferously when it encounters misbehaviour, corruption, and abuses of power in governmental settings (Geddes, 1999). All of these expectations are predicated on the premise that a participatory democracy, in which citizens actively participate in politics, is the optimum form of governance.

Check your progress

1. What is a democracy?
2. Explain the concepts of democratization and de-democratization.
3. How do media act as a significant force in advancing democracy?

1.3. CIVIC LITERACY: THE INFORMED CITIZEN

An old saying goes that a society of sheep would eventually produce a government of wolves. A democracy needs knowledgeable citizens as well as engaged ones in order to function effectively.

There are worries about youth civic engagement and education. There exist pervasive misconceptions which are created in a society about any matter as simple confusion or the product of false assertions made by those with a stake in it. Public misconceptions have a high cost in a democracy. These misconceptions arise for a variety of reasons. Public policy is often intricate. Sorting through all the information available on a

given topic from the media, advocacy organizations, the internet, politicians, and commentators may get tiresome. Additionally, there are always lobbyists, politicians, and other people who are eager to let false impressions persist and work hard to sway public opinion. However, a democratic society depends on its citizen's capacity to distinguish between fact and fiction, to make wise decisions, and to exert pressure on their representatives to behave appropriately. The nation suffers if common people are unable to achieve this or choose not to invest the necessary time and effort.

1.3.1. Who is an Informed Citizen?

The normative basis for interpreting people as news consumers has long been the idea of the informed citizen, which emerged in the age of the printed press. After decades into the digital era, everything is still the same. The "informed citizen" is the ideal audience type assumed by the news media. The informed citizen gathers information. The monitorial citizen supervises or surveils, and can multitask while being watchful. Being "well-informed" is a task that every citizen must meet in order to fulfill their civic responsibilities, and it should also be viewed as a requirement for a politically cohesive community that operates fairly.

In normative theories of democracy, from liberal to participatory to deliberative theory, the informed citizen is taken for granted. Nobody could possibly stay on top of everything that occurs in politics. As seen in critiques of public inclusions and exclusions, choosing the most crucial problems involves its own set of difficulties and is inherently a contentious matter. Fundamentally, it is unclear whether being informed would equate to being a good citizen; being informed is not always necessary for participation in democracy and is not always sufficient in and of itself, however it is considered ideal.

1.3.2. Why informed Citizens make Democracy work?

Since the beginning of democracy, critics have expressed concern that voters might make decisions and cast ballots based solely on appearances. Recent research suggests that candidates who just appear more capable perform better in elections. An informed voter capable of evaluating the candidates for office based on each one of their unique qualifications helps a democracy function better.

Citizens should be concerned about being informed because access to information enables them to keep their government accountable, participate in defining priorities and making decisions, and ensure fairness and equal justice. Governments just possess information in their names; information belongs to the people. By exercising the right to information, citizens strengthen civic virtues and ensure that democracy functions properly. If this fundamental right is not given priority, the democratic system as a whole may be in danger.

1.3.3. Civic Engagement and Politics

To work properly, democracy needs political involvement and civic engagement or citizens' participation in the country's politics. While "participation" is defined in terms of political and civic participatory behaviours, "engagement" is described as having an interest in, paying attention to, or having information, views, ideas, attitudes, or sentiments about either political or civic concerns. Not all organisations support democratic ideas, and civic engagement does not always lead to political engagement and may even deter individuals from it.

In some cases, civic engagement makes people less politically engaged rather than more politically engaged, turning them off of politics. Many organizations don't focus on the kinds of objectives that would be required to encourage democratic citizenship. A more realistic perspective is required to develop actual civic engagement. Oliver (1999) evaluates civic participation using four variables when examining community-level heterogeneity: voting in local elections, getting in touch with locally elected officials, going to community board meetings, and going to voluntary association meetings. Citizens who are actively involved in society are likely to be more tolerant of and devoted to their fellow citizens as well as more knowledgeable about society and its problems.

1.4. ROLE OF MEDIA TO ENHANCE CITIZEN KNOWLEDGE

The increasing use of media is a noticeable and common trend in modern democracies. When it comes to providing accurate and timely information of general interest, journalism serves a crucial social function. Media aids a democracy by keeping its citizens well informed with facts about the current happenings. If media are not safeguarded and there are no requirements for feasibility, the media can be taken over and used for other purposes, losing its value as a source of public benefit.

Few contest the idea that informed citizens are good for democracy, despite differences of opinion over the level of political literacy that citizens should have. A major focus for political communication researchers has been examining the connections between (1) media funding and organization and (2) the provision of political information and public understanding because the majority of citizens obtain their political and current affairs information from the media.

Despite assertions made in media occupational philosophies that they serve the public's information demands, most media do not adequately support citizens in carrying out their civic duties. Public service broadcasting is being demolished in terms of both form and function, and the mainstream media has blended into the entertainment sector. Instead of establishing an "information society," new technologies are producing a media culture where the wealth and poverty inequalities are widening.

1.5. INFORMED CITIZENRY IN THE DIGITAL ERA

People access news and other information while online, using the chance to learn more about a variety of topics outside of current events. However, there are certain hazards involved because there may be factors influencing the information that people receive and how they receive it. Those who use the Internet to get information once are likely to do so again in the future, according to research by Storm, Stone, and Benjamin (2017). If this is the case, as indicated in a Forbes article from June 2016, some threats may manifest given that social networks bias their news feed based on each user's usage patterns.

Due to the new digital consumption models, which have compelled many media sites to shut down, investigative journalism, the migration of advertising to the digital arena, and the pandemic crisis are all in danger. Digital platforms are anonymous, so we don't really understand their internal workings, algorithms, business models, advertising policies and practices, or where and how harmful information is supported. Many of these platforms have encouraged hate speech and disinformation, which has contributed to its unprecedented scope and speed of propagation. It has been more challenging to tell the difference between factual information and manipulation, pinpoint the information's source, and interpret the messages we come across.

We are constantly exposed to information and habitually accept it without inquiry. The growth of "fake news" is made possible by the fact that news organizations occasionally fail to ensure the accuracy of their reporting, especially when there are hidden attempts to spread misinformation. Each citizen must develop critical thinking abilities and dispositions to engage in public life in a conscientious and informed way in order to avoid being held captive by misinformation that may result in poor life decisions that may be damaging to oneself or others. These skills must be disseminated to every member of society through sustainable media and information literacy policies and activities. There is a need to provide people with the resources they require to expand their curiosities, better comprehend their information needs, and engage in informed searches, evaluations, comparisons, uses, and contributions of information and media.

Check your progress

1. Who is an informed citizen? Why are they important to a democracy?
2. What role do media play in enhancing informed citizenry?
3. Explain the digitization of media and its impact on citizens.

1.6. LET'S SUM UP

Citizens of a democratic nation must be able to understand political situation based on correct information available to them by the media, have the freedom to express their views and opinions and participate as well as engage in public discourse and public policy making.

Modern political democracy consists of a government where the citizens hold their elected representatives accountable for their public deeds. The media is seen to play key role in upholding a democracy by keeping a citizen informed. The press gives opens a forum for the common crowd to discuss and debate of ideas which can be contradicting, voice their opinion and help them observe political happenings acting as a watchdog of society.

Therefore, an "informed citizen" is the ideal media audience and stable population of a democratic nation. A democracy works when the media keeps its citizens informed about current events with facts. In today's digital world, it is even more necessary that citizens build their capabilities to understand fact from fiction and consume news that is accurate in order to practice their fundamental rights and duties in a democracy.

1.7. QUESTIONS

1. Write the importance of informed citizens in a democracy.
2. Discuss in detail the relation between civic engagement and politics.
3. Explain the main duties of the press in a democracy.
4. Differentiate between:
 - a. Civic participation and civic engagement
 - b. Authoritarian regime and democratic rule
5. What are the risks for citizens who consume news in a digital setting?

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POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Unit Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Key Concepts in Political Communication
- 2.3 Key Elements of Political Communication
- 2.4 Manufacturing Consent
- 2.5 Sociology of News
- 2.6 Let's Sum it up
- 2.7 Questions
- 2.8 References and further reading

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the concept of Political Communication
- Exploring the key elements of political communication
- Examining the five-filter propaganda model by Noam Chomsky in Indian Context
- Understanding the concept of Sociology of News and its application

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Media advocacy and political communication are two closely linked concepts that refer to the use of media channels to promote specific political agendas or messages.

Media advocacy involves strategically using various media platforms, such as television, radio, newspapers, and social media, to advocate for specific policy changes or raise awareness about certain social issues. It aims to influence public opinion, shape public discourse, and mobilize support for a particular cause or issue. Media advocacy often involves working in collaboration with journalists, media outlets, and other influential individuals or organizations to disseminate information and generate media coverage. It may include activities such as organizing press conferences, writing op-eds or letters to the editor, conducting interviews, producing documentaries or videos, and using social media platforms to engage and mobilize the public.

Political communication refers to the process of disseminating information, ideas, and messages between political actors, such as politicians, political parties, government institutions, interest groups, and the public. It encompasses various forms of communication, including speeches, debates, political campaigns, media interactions, public relations, advertising, and social media engagement. It encompasses various communication channels, including political speeches, campaign advertisements, press releases, debates, public rallies, and social media campaigns.

Similar to advocacy, the primary goal of political communication is also to influence public opinion, shape political discourse, and mobilize support for specific policies, candidates, or political ideologies. It plays a crucial role in democratic societies by facilitating the exchange of information, facilitating political participation, and holding politicians accountable.

The relationship between media advocacy and political communication is symbiotic. While media advocacy utilizes political communication strategies to promote specific causes or policy changes, political communication relies on media advocacy to amplify its messages and connect with the broader public.

Both media advocacy and political communication play significant roles in shaping public perceptions, influencing political outcomes, and facilitating democratic engagement. However, it is important to note that these practices can also be used manipulatively, misleadingly, or for propagandistic purposes, highlighting the need for critical media literacy skills and ethical journalistic standards.

This chapter unpacks the concept of political communication and connects them with advocacy efforts by various interest groups. In the process, it also highlights the presence of propaganda machinery that serves the interests of economic and political elite, as opposed to the marginalised sections of the society. The chapter concludes with the definition and explanation of the concept of ‘sociology of news’, which is a helpful concept in unravelling the mechanisms that underlie the production, content and consumption of news. In a democratic society, such as India, it is very important to understand how various economic, social and political factors influence the working of news media, and the ways in which these factors are manipulated by vested interests for influencing public opinion and policy.

2.2 KEY CONCEPTS IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

- **Agenda Setting**

Agenda setting refers to the ability of the media to influence the salience and importance of certain topics or issues in public perception and discussion. It suggests that the media can shape public opinion by

highlighting specific issues or problems, which in turn affects what people think about and prioritize.

Media advocacy is closely linked to agenda setting, since it is a strategic approach that involves using media platforms to promote or advocate for a specific cause or issue. It involves influencing public opinion, policies, and decision-makers through media channels such as newspapers, television, social media, and other forms of communication.

While agenda setting focuses on the media's influence on public opinion, media advocacy uses that influence to mobilize support, bring attention to an issue, and push for specific policy changes or social actions. Media advocacy often involves creating and disseminating persuasive messages, engaging with media outlets, organizing campaigns or events, and working with other stakeholders to achieve their goals.

Both agenda setting and media advocacy are important concepts in understanding the role of the media in shaping public discourse and influencing social and political change.

- **Public Sphere**

The public sphere describes a domain or space in society where individuals come together to engage in public deliberation, and discussion about matters of common concern. It is a metaphorical arena where citizens can freely express their opinions, exchange ideas, and participate in democratic decision-making processes.

The concept of the public sphere was first introduced by the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas in the 1960s. According to Habermas, the public sphere is characterized by open and inclusive communication, rational argumentation, and the absence of coercion or domination. It is a space separate from the state and the market, where citizens can engage in critical dialogue and shape public opinion.

In the public sphere, individuals can debate and discuss various social, political, and cultural issues, contributing to the formation of public opinion and influencing decision-making processes. This can occur through various channels, such as public meetings, town halls, newspapers, magazines, social media, and online forums.

Ideally, the public sphere serves as a vital component of a functioning democracy, facilitating the exchange of diverse ideas, fostering transparency, and holding those in power accountable. However, in reality, the public sphere can be influenced by power structures, inequalities, and media manipulation, which may limit access, distort information, or marginalize certain voices.

- **Public Opinion**

Public opinion refers to the collective attitudes, beliefs, and views of a specific community or society on a particular issue or topic. It represents the general sentiment and consensus of individuals within a population

regarding various social, political, economic, or cultural matters. Public opinion can be influenced by various factors including personal experiences, media coverage, social interactions, and political campaigns. It plays a crucial role in shaping public policies, decision-making processes, and the overall functioning of a democratic society.

Public opinion can be manipulated by various actors and techniques, such as governments, political parties, private firms, media outlets, social media platforms, influencers, bots, trolls, and hackers. Some of the methods they use to manipulate public opinion are spreading misinformation, using echo chambers, exploiting emotional appeals, and reinforcing cognitive biases. Public opinion manipulation can have serious consequences for democracy, human rights, social cohesion, and public health. Therefore, it is important for the public to be aware of the sources and methods of manipulation, and to develop critical thinking and media literacy skills to evaluate the information they encounter.

- **Propaganda**

Propaganda refers to the deliberate dissemination of information, ideas, or rumors, often by governments, organizations, or individuals, with the aim of shaping public opinion and influencing behavior. Propaganda is typically biased, misleading, or exaggerated and is used to promote a particular agenda, ideology, or cause.

For examples, during World War II, the Nazi regime in Germany used propaganda extensively to promote their ideologies and support their war efforts. One of the most notable examples is the propaganda film called "Triumph of the Will" directed by Leni Riefenstahl. This film portrayed the Nazi party's 1934 Nuremberg rally as a grand and powerful display, promoting the image of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi movement. The film used various visual and editing techniques to create a sense of awe and heroism, aimed at influencing public opinion and gaining support for the Nazi regime.

While public opinion represents the genuine beliefs and perspectives of the people, propaganda seeks to manipulate or sway public opinion by using techniques such as emotional appeal, selective presentation of facts, repetition, and appeals to authority. It often employs persuasive tactics to create a specific perception or narrative, whether it be in politics, advertising, or other domains.

Again, it's important to note that public opinion can be influenced by various factors, including personal experiences, media coverage, social interactions, and propaganda itself. Critical thinking, media literacy, and exposure to diverse sources of information are valuable tools for individuals to evaluate and form their opinions independently.

2.3 KEY ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Effective political communication requires careful consideration of the target audience, understanding of public sentiment, clarity of messaging, and skillful use of various communication channels. It plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, influencing policy decisions, and fostering democratic participation. Political communication involves several key elements:

1. Message Formation: Political actors craft messages tailored to their target audience, considering their values, beliefs, and interests. These messages often aim to persuade, inform, or motivate the public.

2. Media Relations: Political figures engage with various media outlets, such as television, radio, newspapers, and online platforms, to reach a wider audience. They may hold press conferences, give interviews, or issue press releases to convey their messages.

3. Political Campaigns: During elections, political communication intensifies through campaign activities. Candidates and parties develop strategies to connect with voters, including rallies, debates, advertisements, and door-to-door canvassing.

4. Public Opinion Research: Political communication relies on understanding public opinion through polling and surveys. It helps political actors gauge the effectiveness of their messages and adjust their strategies accordingly.

5. Political Advertising: Political campaigns often employ advertising techniques to reach voters. This includes television and radio ads, billboards, online ads, and direct mail campaigns.

6. Social Media and Online Communication: With the rise of social media platforms, political communication has expanded to online spaces. Politicians and political organizations utilize social media to engage with supporters, share information, and shape public discourse.

7. Political Debates: Debates offer a platform for candidates to articulate their views, challenge opponents, and engage with the public. They provide an opportunity for voters to evaluate candidates' positions on various issues.

Check your progress

1. What is political communication?
2. Explain the significance of Public Sphere in shaping Public Opinion.
3. Explain any five elements of political communication with an example of each.

2.4 MANUFACTURING CONSENT

"Manufacturing Consent" has become a widely referenced and influential work in media studies and political communication, critiquing the mainstream media and emphasizing the importance of critical media literacy and independent sources of information.

Written by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman and first published in 1988, Manufacturing Consent theorizes on the role of mass media and in shaping public opinion.

According to Chomsky and Herman, the mass media, which includes mainstream newspapers, television networks, and other dominant sources of information, act as a propaganda system that serves the interests of the powerful elite rather than promoting a free and independent flow of information. They argue that the media manufactures consent by shaping public perception and political discourse in a way that aligns with the agendas of the ruling class. Chomsky and Herman propose a model that outlines five "filters" which determine what news stories are presented and how they are framed:

1. Ownership: The corporate ownership of media outlets leads to media bias in favor of the interests of the powerful elites who own them.

2. Advertising: The reliance on advertising revenue incentivizes media organizations to cater to the interests of advertisers, creating a profit-driven media environment.

3. Sourcing: Journalists tend to rely on official sources, such as government officials or corporate spokespersons, which can result in a narrow range of perspectives and limited critical analysis.

4. Flak: The media face criticism, attacks, and pressure from powerful institutions or interest groups if they challenge the dominant narrative or deviate from the status quo.

5. Ideology: The mainstream media often operate within a framework that promotes the interests of the dominant ideology and perpetuates the status quo, reinforcing existing power structures.

Chomsky and Herman argue that these filters work together to create a system of media manipulation whereby consent is manufactured, shaping public opinion to conform with the interests of the powerful elite.

When analyzing Indian media within the framework of manufacturing consent, several key factors can be observed. Firstly, India has a highly diverse media landscape, with numerous outlets representing different sections of society, political parties, and ideologies. However, many of these outlets are influenced by political parties or corporate interests, leading to biased reporting and a selective dissemination of information. This bias can manifest in the form of propaganda, selective coverage, and even outright censorship.

For example, NDTV was founded by Prannay Roy and Radhika Roy – sister of Brinda Karat, a Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament from Communist Party of India (M). Prannay Roy is the first cousin of Arundhati Roy, a Booker Prize Winner and an influential civil society activist. Recently, the ownership stake in NDTV was acquired by Gautam Adani, the chairperson of Adani Group, an Indian Multinational Conglomerate, reportedly whose interests align closely with that the current Government of India.

Similarly, Network18, that manages the CNN-IBN news channel is owned by Reliance Industries Limited, whose chairperson Mr Mukesh Ambani is purportedly close to the current Prime Minister of India. Among regional channels too, one can witness strong business-political nexus in the ownership of media channels, particularly news channels. For example, Sun TV is owned by billionaire Kalanithi Maran, whose father Murasoli Maran was the former Union Minister of India and brother Dayanidhi Maran is a prominent member of DMK political party and was the Minister of Communications and Information Technology from 2004-2007.

Such ownership patterns of media organizations in India, where many large media conglomerates have close ties to political parties, businessmen, or influential individuals, can result in certain narratives being promoted or silenced to serve the interests of the owners. This concentration of media ownership limits the diversity of perspectives and further reinforces the manufacturing of consent.

Thirdly, the influence of advertisers plays a significant role in shaping the content and narratives in Indian media. Advertisers, which also includes the government that regularly advertises public schemes, tenders and political campaigns, have the power to influence media outlets by either threatening to withdraw their ads or by providing financial incentives for favorable coverage. This can lead to self-censorship and a reluctance to criticize powerful entities, limiting the media's ability to report objectively.

Fourth, the official press release and corporate statements by the both public and private sector undertakings as well as public authorities serve as regular feed of news, requiring little efforts from journalists to gather information. These press releases and statements are often only the most positive communications that the organisations want people to know.

Fifth, the flak works most effectively for diverting public attention away from more pressing issues such as farmer's suicide or deforestation. The most common object of flak is the neighbouring country – Pakistan and the constant skirmish between the two countries.

Lastly, the regulatory framework and government control of media also contribute to the manufacturing of consent. The government can use regulations, licensing, and even coercion to control media outlets, thereby shaping narratives and limiting independent journalism. Additionally, journalists and media professionals face threats, harassment, and legal

actions for reporting on sensitive issues or challenging the government's position, further stifling dissenting voices.

Overall, the concept of manufacturing consent is relevant to the Indian media landscape, where the concentration of ownership, political influence, advertiser pressure, and government control can result in a biased and limited representation of reality. It highlights the need for media literacy, independent journalism, and diverse sources of information to counter the manufacturing of consent and promote a more informed and democratic society.

Five-Filter Model Criticism

The Chomsky propaganda model, suggests that the media in democratic societies operates as a propaganda system, serving the interests of the powerful elite and promoting their ideologies. While this model has gained significant attention and has been widely discussed, it is not without criticism.

1. Limited applicability: Critics argue that the model's applicability is primarily focused on the media in the United States and other Western democracies. It does not take into account the complexities and variations in media systems across different regions, cultures, and political contexts.

2. Overemphasis on elites: The model places significant emphasis on the role of elites in shaping and controlling the media. Critics argue that while the media undoubtedly has some bias towards elites, it is overly simplistic to suggest that all media content is controlled by a small group of powerful individuals. Media organizations also have their own agendas, interests, and biases.

3. Lack of empirical evidence: Critics argue that the model relies heavily on anecdotal evidence and lacks sufficient empirical support. While Chomsky and Herman provided examples and case studies to support their claims, critics suggest that a more comprehensive analysis and empirical research is needed to validate the model's claims.

4. Disregard for media independence: Critics argue that the model underestimates the independence and autonomy of journalists and media organizations. Journalists have their own professional ethics and are not always influenced or controlled by elite interests. Media organizations also have their own internal mechanisms to safeguard against undue influence.

5. Alternative explanations: Critics argue that the model does not sufficiently consider alternative explanations for media biases, such as commercial pressures, audience preferences, and technological constraints. Media organizations may cater to certain narratives or biases based on market demands or to maximize profitability, rather than solely serving elite interests.

Overall, while the Chomsky propaganda model has made useful contributions to the media analysis and critique, it is important to consider

its limitations and explore alternative explanations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of media dynamics.

Check your progress

4. What do you understand by Manufacturing Consent?
5. Explain the five-filter propaganda model espoused by Chomsky and Herman.
6. Examine how Chomsky's Propaganda Model functions in context of India Media.

2.5 SOCIOLOGY OF NEWS

The sociology of news is a field within sociology that examines the production, content, and reception of news media. It investigates how news is produced, circulated, and consumed, and explores the social, cultural, and political factors that shape news production and consumption. The concept has been explained in detail by American sociologist and journalism professor Michael Schudson.

Some key concepts and areas of study within the sociology of news include:

- 1. News organizations:** Examines the structure and organizational routines of news organizations, including the role of ownership, corporate structures, and newsroom practices in shaping news production.
- 2. News values:** Investigates the criteria used by journalists and editors to determine which events and stories are considered newsworthy, and how these values are influenced by social, cultural, and political factors.
- 3. News production process:** Analyzes the process through which news is created, from gathering information to selecting, framing, and presenting news stories. It looks at the role of journalists, editors, and other actors involved in shaping the news.
- 4. Media ownership and concentration:** Studies the ownership patterns and concentration of media outlets, exploring how ownership influences news content and the diversity of perspectives presented.
- 5. Media bias:** Examines the ways in which news content can be biased or influenced by ideological, political, or commercial interests. This involves analyzing both explicit biases and more subtle forms of bias, such as framing, selection of sources, and use of language.
- 6. Audience reception:** Investigates how news is consumed, interpreted, and understood by audiences. It examines factors such as the role of social identity, media literacy, and the influence of media on public opinion and behavior.

7. News and social change: Explores how news media can play a role in shaping public opinion, social norms, and political processes. This includes studying the influence of news in agenda-setting, framing public debates, and the impact of news coverage on social and political movements. This is where the sociology of news comes in direct interaction with media advocacy, particularly with respect to the social movements.

Media advocacy refers to strategic efforts by advocacy groups to shape media coverage and public discourse on issues that concern them. Sociologists study the tactics used by advocacy groups to gain media attention, such as framing issues, cultivating relationships with journalists, and organizing media events. Combined, the two concepts focus on how advocacy groups use news media to advance their causes and how news media cover and respond to advocacy efforts.

Here are some key aspects of the sociology of news and media advocacy:

1. Agenda-setting: Advocacy groups often seek to influence the media's agenda by drawing attention to specific issues or perspectives. Sociologists examine how advocacy efforts can shape the topics and themes covered by news media, as well as the factors that determine which advocacy messages receive media attention.

2. Framing: Advocacy groups and news media use framing to shape how issues are understood and interpreted by the public. Sociologists analyze the framing strategies used by both advocacy groups and journalists, as well as the reception and impact of these frames on public opinion and policy debates.

3. News routines and biases: Sociologists study how news organizations and journalists approach advocacy messages and determine their newsworthiness. They explore the role of news routines, professional norms, and institutional biases in shaping news coverage of advocacy efforts.

4. Political economy: The sociology of news and media advocacy also considers the broader political and economic context in which media and advocacy operate. As explained above under Manufacturing Consent, it examines how media ownership, corporate interests, and financial pressures can affect the extent and nature of news coverage of advocacy issues.

5. Conflict and power dynamics: Sociologists analyze the power dynamics between advocacy groups, news media, and other actors involved in the production and dissemination of news. This includes examining how conflicts of interest, negotiations, and power struggles shape the relationship between advocacy groups and media organizations.

By examining the interaction between news media and advocacy groups, one can gain insights into how social change and public opinion are

influenced and shaped through media processes. Such examination highlights the complexities and power dynamics involved in using news media for advocacy purposes and sheds light on the role of news media in democratic societies.

2.6 LET'S SUM IT UP

Political communication and media advocacy are closely linked together, where both these processes aim at influencing public opinion and shaping policy decisions. In a vibrant democracy such as India, with a rich and diverse media-scape, the dynamics of interplay between political communication and media advocacy can be examined insightfully with the help of Five-Filter Propaganda Model developed by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman. Examining these dynamics leads to greater understanding of the 'sociology of news,' that is the social, economic and political factors that affect content, production and consumption of news, and subsequently shape the discourse and policy decisions.

2.7 QUESTIONS

1. Define political communication and explain how it is linked to media advocacy.
2. What do you understand by the term 'sociology of news?' Explain any five elements that are used for analysing the sociology of news.
3. Differentiate between Public Opinion and Propaganda, using examples from Indian Context.
4. What do you understand by the term Public Sphere? Explain the significance of public sphere for the functioning of a healthy democracy.
5. Explain the phrase 'Manufacturing Consent' as given by Herman and Chomsky. Is the Propaganda Model espoused by Herman and Chomsky relevant to Indian media-scape? Explain with the help of examples.

2.8 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING:

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NEWS: AN ILLUSION OF POLITICS

Unit Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 News: Definition

- a. Press in Democracy
- b. Political News and Public Opinion
- c. Four Information Biases
- d. News – an illusion of politics?

3.3 Citizens and the News Gap

- e. Filling the gap
- f. Press Politics
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- h. News and Media Advocacy – setting the narrative

3.4 Let's Sum it Up

3.5 Questions

3.6 References and further reading

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the role of news and journalism in a democracy
- Exploring the information biases that impact political news reporting
- Examining the reason for decline of press and rise of social media
- Understanding the ways in which journalists create an illusion of politics

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced world, the news plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing political discourse. However, it is essential to critically examine the ways in which news, at times, can become an illusionary tool that distorts our understanding of politics. This chapter explores how the media can manipulate information, create biased narratives, and perpetuate the illusion of politics, often at the expense of truth and impartiality.

The said exploration is important because media advocacy has become an integral component of political news coverage. Media advocacy

organizations exert influence on political news coverage through various means, including framing, selection bias, and agenda-setting. By exploring the interplay between political news and media advocacy, we examine its impact on democracy, public perception, and the role of the media in shaping political discourse. On the one hand, media advocacy can mobilize public engagement, raise awareness about essential issues, and amplify the voices of marginalized groups. It can also hold governments accountable and act as a check on power. However, when media advocacy overtakes impartial reporting, it undermines these goals and objectives.

This chapter uses the definition of news as the entry point for highlighting the role of press and journalism in a democracy, the impact of news in shaping public opinion and the biases that have crept into reporting information, leading to the decline of (trust) in the print media and journalistic process, especially with respect to reporting political news.

With the decline in print readership, the citizens have resorted to other avenues of news, such as television and more importantly social media. The increasing consumption of news through social media has adversely impacted citizen's engagement with the political process. This is exploited by the agencies and organisations that carry out media advocacy campaigns to promote or advocate for a specific agenda or cause. While journalists strive to remain objective, media advocacy organizations and interest groups often employ persuasive techniques to advance their own political, social, or economic interests. These advocacy efforts are not inherently negative; they can contribute to public awareness and mobilize action on important issues. However, the line between advocacy and impartial journalism can sometimes blur, compromising the integrity of political news. The manipulation of news by the powers-that-are leads to a battle of opinions that is dominated by only a handful of people.

3.2 NEWS: DEFINITION AND FUNCTIONS

News plays a pivotal role in our society, providing us with vital information, keeping us informed, and shaping our worldview. It serves as a bridge, connecting us to events happening around the world, enabling us to make informed decisions, and fostering a sense of community. This section explores the significance of news in our lives, its impact on society, and the responsibility it carries.

First and foremost, news acts as a lifeline, delivering us the latest happenings locally, nationally, and internationally. It covers a wide range of topics such as politics, economics, science, entertainment, and sports, ensuring that we stay up-to-date with the ever-changing world. Whether it is a natural disaster, a political development, or a scientific breakthrough, news serves as a reliable source to keep us informed and educated.

Moreover, news plays a crucial role in shaping our worldview and influencing public opinion. It provides us with different perspectives, enabling us to form our own opinions and engage in meaningful

discussions. Through news, we gain insights into various cultures, societies, and ideologies, fostering tolerance, understanding, and empathy. It helps us challenge our preconceived notions and encourages critical thinking, ultimately leading to a more informed and open-minded society.

Furthermore, news acts as a catalyst for change by exposing injustices, corruption, and societal issues. Investigative journalism has the power to hold individuals, organizations, and governments accountable for their actions. News sheds light on human rights violations, environmental crises, and social inequalities, mobilizing public opinion and sparking movements for change. It serves as a watchdog, ensuring transparency and accountability in our society.

However, in an era of fake news and misinformation, it is crucial for news outlets to verify sources, fact-check information, and present a balanced view. The responsibility lies not only with the news organizations but also with the consumers who must be discerning in their consumption and sharing of information.

In addition, the rise of digital media has revolutionized the way people consume news. Social media platforms and online news websites have made information more accessible and instantaneous. However, this has also brought challenges such as the spread of misinformation, echo chambers, and the erosion of trust in traditional news sources. It is essential for citizens to be media literate, questioning the credibility of sources and cross-checking information before accepting it as truth.

a. Press in Democracy

The link between press and democracy is a critical one. News plays a vital role in a democratic society by providing citizens with information that is necessary for them to make informed decisions and participate in the political process. Here are some of the keyways in which news and democracy are connected:

- **Information flow:** News organizations act as intermediaries between the government and the citizens, disseminating important information about public policies, legislation, elections, and other key issues. This facilitates transparency, accountability, and public scrutiny of those in power.
- **Watchdog function:** News outlets serve as watchdogs, holding those in power accountable for their actions and exposing corruption, abuse of power, and other misconduct. This helps maintain the checks and balances essential for a functioning democracy, ensuring that those in power are held responsible for their actions.
- **Public opinion formation:** Citizens rely on news to understand different perspectives and form their opinions on various social and political issues. A diverse and independent news media allows for the

expression and representation of diverse voices, enabling citizens to make informed judgments.

- **Electoral process:** News plays a crucial role during elections by providing information about candidates, their positions, and the overall political landscape. Citizens rely on news to evaluate candidates and make informed choices while casting their votes.
- **Public discourse:** News media serves as a platform for public discourse and debate, allowing citizens to engage in conversations about important issues affecting society. This exchange of ideas is essential for a vibrant democracy and informed decision-making.
- **Accountability and transparency:** A well-functioning news media contributes to a transparent and accountable government. When news organizations investigate and report on public officials' actions, it helps prevent abuses of power and ensures that governments are transparent and responsive to the needs and concerns of the public.
- It is important to note that the quality and integrity of news are critical for its role in democracy. Journalistic ethics, independence, fact-checking, and a commitment to truth are essential for ensuring that the news media effectively serves democracy.

b. Political News and Public Opinion

There are several types of political news stories and features that are commonly covered by news organizations. These include:

- **Breaking news:** These are stories that report on significant political events or developments as they happen. Breaking news stories often cover events like elections, political scandals, policy announcements, or major political speeches.
- **Investigative reporting:** Investigative journalism involves in-depth research and analysis to expose political corruption, misconduct, or unethical behavior. These stories aim to hold politicians and government officials accountable by revealing hidden information or uncovering wrongdoing.
- **Policy analysis:** These stories focus on analyzing and explaining government policies, legislation, and their potential impact. It involves examining issues like healthcare reform, taxation, immigration, or environmental policies and exploring the various perspectives, arguments, and consequences related to these policies.
- **Political interviews:** These features involve conducting interviews with political leaders, government officials, or experts to elicit their views on specific topics or current affairs. Political interviews aim to provide

insights into the decision-making processes, policies, and ideologies of politicians.

- **Op-eds and opinion pieces:** These articles present the viewpoints and arguments of journalists, columnists, or guest contributors on political issues. Op-eds and opinion pieces provide analysis, commentary, and personal perspectives on political events or policies. They often aim to generate debate and discussion among readers.
- **Features and profiles:** These stories go beyond the immediate news cycle and provide in-depth profiles of political figures or explorations of major political phenomena. They may focus on the personal background, career trajectory, or political ideologies of political leaders, or provide insights into broader political trends or movements.
- **Election coverage:** During elections, news organizations extensively cover the campaigning, debates, polling, and results. This includes reporting on candidate profiles, campaign strategies, voter turnout, and analysis of election results.
- **Press conferences and briefings:** These stories involve reporting on press conferences or briefings held by politicians or government officials. Journalists ask questions and gather information on policies, decisions, or major announcements made during these events.
- News, especially of political nature, and public opinion formation are interconnected and significantly influence society. It's essential for individuals to critically analyze news sources, verify information, and consider multiple perspectives to form well-rounded opinions. Additionally, social media and online platforms have a significant impact on opinion formation, as they can create echo chambers and filter bubbles, reinforcing existing beliefs and limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints.
- Public opinion can, in turn, impact policymaking, societal trends, and cultural shifts. Therefore, fostering a media landscape that promotes transparency, journalistic integrity, and diverse perspectives is crucial for a well-informed and engaged society.
- Thus, the news media plays a vital role in disseminating political information to the public, shaping their perspectives, and influencing their opinions on various issues. Objective and accurate reporting is crucial for informed decision-making, but biases and misinformation can also affect public opinion. The next section discusses four prominent information biases that plague political news reporting.

Check your progress

1. What is public opinion
2. Discuss election coverage
3. What is the function of a watchdog?

c. Four Information Biases

There are several types of information biases that can influence the way news is presented and perceived. Lance Bennett (2016), on the basis of his analysis of political news stories in American media has espoused four types of information biases. These are Personalisation bias, Dramatisation / Sensationalisation bias, Fragmentation Bias and Authority-Disorder Bias.

- **Personalisation Bias:** A lot of media reports tend to focus on the individual political actors or ‘personalities’ and their personal stories, rather than the larger institutional, social and political contexts of policies enacted by these personalities. Such form of reporting aims to swing public’s preferences on the basis of emotional appeal rather than rational arguments. Personalisation bias tends to ‘downplay the bigger picture,’ and only focuses on key political figures in a campaign/event/debate. This leads to the creation of a passive audience that only consumes the information and stories in media, rather than participating actively in public debates. Through personalisation bias, journalists create an illusion of political news, without providing any substantial information to the citizens.
- **Dramatization Bias:** Dramatization bias refers to the tendency of the media to emphasize dramatic or ‘live action’ stories with ‘flashy headlines’ in order to attract audience attention or generate higher ratings. This bias can lead to an overemphasis on sensational events or gossip, rather than in-depth coverage of substantive policy issues. Sensationalism can distort public perceptions and prioritize entertainment value over journalistic integrity, with the result that serious social problems are lost in the drama.
- **Fragmentation Bias:** Fragmentation bias occurs when news stories are reported in a way that they are isolated from each other and their larger contexts. This is again a result of event and personality focused news formula, which presents the event as self-contained, without historical and socio-political contexts. A major function of journalists is to join the dots and put things in perspective for the readers. However, this journalistic function is compromised in the chase for greater clicks and audience viewership. News outlets may have their own agendas or biases, consciously or unconsciously, leading to a cherry-picking of stories that align with their editorial stance or attract higher viewership. This bias can result in an incomplete or skewed representation of important issues, as some perspectives may be overlooked or ignored.

- **Authority-Disorder Bias:** Authority-disorder bias refers to the tendency of news media to focus on the government and the system and challenge it through negative stories or events, often through the lens of conflict, crisis, or controversy. Negative news tends to grab people's attention more than positive news, which can drive higher viewership or readership. However, this bias can create a distorted view of the world, perpetuating a sense of fear, anxiety, and cynicism among audiences. At the same time, it keeps the focus intact on authority figures and their response, thus overshadowing solutions to societal challenges and public opinion.

According to Bennett, journalists use these information biases in their attempt to simplify complex political/policy related news stories for their publics with shorter-than-ever attention span. The struggle for eye-balls spirals into personality or iconcentric reporting, which also enables necessitates that journalists keep their stories alive, even when there are no new developments. This branding of news as infotainment has had serious repercussions for the creation of an informed citizenry, as is highlighted in the next section.

d. News – an illusion of politics?

The news often perpetuates an illusion of politics by presenting stories that focus on political drama rather than substantive policy discussions. This illusion creates the perception that politics is purely a game of power struggles and personality clashes, rather than a means to address important societal issues.

One aspect of this illusion is the emphasis on superficial political debates and conflict. News outlets often focus on contentious soundbites, heated exchanges, and personal attacks between politicians, rather than delving into the nuanced details of policy proposals. This leads to a distorted view of politics, where the focus is on theatrics rather than substance.

Furthermore, the news tends to prioritize scandalous or sensational stories, which can further contribute to the illusion of politics. Instead of highlighting the everyday work and accomplishments of politicians, the media often sensationalizes controversies, scandals, and divisive issues. This sensationalism not only captures more attention but also reinforces the perception that politics is all about chaos and drama.

The 24-hour news cycle also plays a role in perpetuating this illusion. To fill airtime and maintain viewer engagement, news outlets frequently engage in repetitive analysis and speculation, often overhyping and exaggerating political events. This repetition and exaggeration can distort the public's perception of the significance and impact of certain political developments.

In addition, the news often relies on a narrow range of sources, such as political pundits and party insiders, who may have their own biases and agendas. By relying heavily on these sources, the media can further

reinforce certain narratives and perspectives, while neglecting alternative viewpoints and voices.

All these factors contribute to an illusion of politics that focuses on personalities, conflicts, and scandals, rather than on the substantial discussions and decisions that shape public policy. This illusion can create a disillusioned and disengaged public, perpetuating the notion that politics is nothing more than a spectacle and discouraging meaningful civic participation.

3.3 CITIZENS AND THE NEWS GAP

In the modern world, access to reliable and unbiased information is crucial for the functioning of democratic societies. However, the existence of a news gap poses a significant challenge, as it hinders the equitable distribution of news and knowledge across different populations.

The news gap refers to the disparity in access to news and information among various segments of society. This divide can manifest in different ways, such as unequal access to quality journalism, limited coverage of specific regions or communities, or disparities in media consumption habits. The news gap is exacerbated by various factors, including socioeconomic status, geographical location, education level, and digital literacy.

Causes of the News Gap:

- **Economic Factors:** Traditional news sources heavily rely on advertising revenue, which often leads to a concentration of media ownership. This concentration can result in reduced coverage of certain communities or issues that are not considered economically viable.
- **Digital Divide:** The increasing reliance on digital platforms for news consumption has created a digital divide, with those lacking internet access or digital literacy skills being left behind. This divide disproportionately affects marginalized communities, exacerbating the news gap.
- **Media Bias and Polarization:** The rise of partisan media outlets and social media echo chambers has contributed to the news gap. Biased reporting and the spread of misinformation further deepen ideological divides, making it harder for individuals to access balanced and accurate information.

Consequences of the News Gap:

- **Diminished Civic Engagement:** Lack of access to diverse news sources limits citizens' ability to make informed decisions and actively participate in public discourse. This undermines the democratic process and weakens the accountability of institutions.

- **Social Inequality:** The news gap perpetuates existing social inequalities by denying marginalized communities the opportunity to have their voices heard and their concerns addressed. It reinforces stereotypes, fosters discrimination, and contributes to a lack of empathy and understanding.
- **Threat to Democracy:** A well-functioning democracy depends on an informed citizenry. The news gap undermines this foundation, as it allows misinformation and disinformation to thrive, eroding trust in democratic institutions and creating fertile ground for manipulation and propaganda.

The news gap is accompanied by decline in press and journalism and the rise of social media as the primary news outlet for the citizens across various age groups. Among other factors, the decline of press and journalism can also be attributed to the diminishing resources allocated to newsrooms. Budget cuts, staff layoffs, and the closure of smaller news outlets have significantly hampered the ability of journalists to conduct in-depth investigations and hold those in power accountable. On the one hand, the pressure to publish news quickly in the era of instant gratification has led to a decline in fact-checking and adherence to rigorous journalistic standards. On the other hand, the pressure to continuously chase a story has led to greater dramatization, sensationalization and fragmentation of news (broadly termed as Information Bias, discussed above). The information bias create an illusion of politics and journalism, while missing the larger context and informed discussion among the people.

a. Filling the gap – Social media as primary news media

The advent of social media has revolutionized the way news is disseminated and consumed by the masses. Social media platforms have become primary sources for news updates, replacing traditional media outlets. This section will explore the impact of news on social media, discussing its advantages, disadvantages, and the importance of responsible consumption.

One of the most significant advantages of news on social media is its immediacy. Gone are the days when people had to wait for the morning newspaper or evening news bulletin to get the latest updates. With just a few clicks, users can access real-time news updates on their smartphones or computers. This instant access to information allows individuals to stay informed about current events, breaking news, and developments from around the world.

Furthermore, social media enables news to reach a wider audience. Unlike traditional media, which has geographical limitations, social media platforms have a global reach. News can be shared, retweeted, and reposted by users, increasing its visibility and potential impact. This democratization of news allows for diverse perspectives and voices to be

heard, challenging the dominance of mainstream media (Johnson-Cartee, 2004).

However, with these advantages come several disadvantages. The fast-paced nature of social media often leads to the spread of misinformation and fake news. Due to the lack of editorial oversight and fact-checking mechanisms, false or misleading information can easily go viral, causing confusion and panic among users. This issue has become particularly relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, where misinformation about the virus, treatments, and vaccines has proliferated on social media platforms.

Another disadvantage of news on social media is the potential for echo chambers and confirmation bias. Users tend to follow and engage with content that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs and opinions. This selective exposure can create echo chambers, where individuals are only exposed to information that reinforces their own perspectives. This can hinder critical thinking, dialogue, and the ability to consider alternative viewpoints (Bode 2016).

In light of these disadvantages, it is crucial for users to practice responsible consumption of news on social media. Individuals should verify information from multiple sources, fact-check claims before sharing, and critically evaluate the credibility of the sources they encounter. Media literacy and digital literacy programs should be promoted to help users navigate the complexities of the online news landscape and discern reliable sources from unreliable ones.

Social media has also emerged as an important tool for media advocacy because it provides umpteen number of fora to the politicians and special interest-groups to publicize their cause and garner public attention. One can blog, tweet, post stories, trends, reels, videos, advertisements, and marketing campaigns in the guise of political and human-interest news to create interest and engagement.

b. Press Politics

Press politics refers to the relationship between the press and political entities, such as government officials, political parties, or interest groups. It focuses on how the media covers and reports on political events, issues, and actors. Press politics can involve various aspects, including the influence of political forces on media organizations, journalists' biases and motivations, and the effects of media coverage on public opinion and political processes.

In press politics, government officials and political actors may seek to shape media narratives by providing information, issuing statements, or controlling access to events or sources. Journalists, in turn, play a crucial role in press politics by deciding which stories to cover, how to frame them, and which sources to include. Media organizations also face pressures and incentives that can influence their coverage, such as

commercial interests, ideological leanings, and the need to attract audiences.

Media advocacy, on the other hand, is a form of strategic communication that aims to promote specific political or social causes through media outlets. Advocacy groups or organizations engage in media advocacy to influence public opinion, shape policy agendas, or mobilize support for their goals. This can involve activities such as creating press releases, organizing media events, conducting interviews, or utilizing social media platforms.

In both press politics and media advocacy, the interaction between media and politics has significant implications for democratic processes, transparency, and the public's access to information. Therefore, media advocacy often involves press politics, where the advocacy groups and organisations exploit like-minded connections within the journalist community and media houses for coverage about their issues.

c. Spinning the News

Spinning the news, also known as media spin or spin doctoring, refers to the deliberate manipulation or presentation of information by media outlets, public relations professionals, or politicians to influence public perception and shape the narrative in their favor. This can involve using carefully crafted language, selective reporting, or emphasizing certain aspects while downplaying others to sway public opinion or support a particular agenda.

The practice of spinning the news is often seen as a form of bias or propaganda, as it can distort the truth and mislead audiences. It can be employed by various entities, such as corporations, governments, or political campaigns, to control the way events or issues are perceived by the public (Chalmers and Shotton, 2016).

Media spins are regularly used by political public relations professionals, who often work closely with news organizations to ensure their message is accurately conveyed and positively framed. They may provide press releases, arrange interviews, or offer exclusive access to politicians or parties to shape the coverage and public perception. Political actors, through their media teams, use news to control and manipulate information in a way that presents them in a favorable light. They may strategically leak information to news outlets or use press briefings and conferences to shape the narrative surrounding their actions.

d. News and Media Advocacy – setting the illusion

Media advocacy and news intersect in many ways through agenda setting, framing, public awareness and engagement, influencing policymakers, promoting dialogue and monitoring government actions. Media advocacy uses news and news media as tools for advocating their cause, sometimes

bypassing objectivity and journalism ethics in an attempt to control and manipulate information.

Manipulation of information by media outlets and advocacy groups often creates an illusion of politics, discussed in the first section. An important aspect contributing to the illusion of politics is the creation of biased narratives by media outlets. By selecting specific stories, framing them in a particular manner, and selectively quoting politicians or experts, the media can shape public opinion and perpetuate a particular ideological agenda. This tendency to present a one-sided perspective undermines the essence of a democratic society, as it limits the diversity of ideas and stifles healthy debate.

The influence of corporate interests further exacerbates the illusion of politics in the media. In many cases, media organizations are owned by conglomerates with vested interests in specific policies or industries. Consequently, news outlets may prioritize narratives that align with the financial interests of their owners, compromising the objectivity and impartiality of their reporting. This undue influence of corporate interests can lead to the suppression of certain stories or the amplification of others, distorting the public's understanding of political events.

Political bias of media outlets too can manifest in the form of selective reporting, framing, or even omission of information that does not align with the outlet's editorial stance. This creates an environment where individuals are more likely to consume news that confirms their existing beliefs, reinforcing echo chambers and hindering the formation of a well-informed and diverse citizenry.

All these mechanisms are used by advocacy groups in an attempt to win maximum eyeballs and therefore support, for their cause/interests. In such a media environment, citizens as consumers of news and information, must be aware of potential spin and manipulation. They must strive to obtain information from multiple credible sources to gain a more balanced understanding of any given topic. Critical thinking and media literacy are essential in identifying and evaluating the presence of spin in news reporting.

Check your progress

1. What is spinning of news?
2. Give a example of a news spin
3. What do you mean by press politics?

3.4 LET'S SUM IT UP

Media advocacy is linked intricately with the processes of journalism and news-making. The link between the two, accompanied by certain trends in media landscape, often creates an illusion of politics, where the political information and news reports in the media subvert any substantial discussion of civic problems and policies. Instead, the news focus on

highlighting political actors, their narratives and dramatizing any political event as a piece of entertainment, devoid of any real political context.

3.5 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- What do you understand by the term ‘press politics?’
- Explain how news media creates an illusion of politics. Give examples to support your answer.
- Who are spin doctors? What role do they play in media advocacy?
- Comment on the decline of press and journalism, with examples from India.
- What are different forms of political news reports? Explain any three with the help of examples.
- Discuss the impact of growth of social media as primary news media for the citizens.

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MANUFACTURING CONSENT AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF NEWS

Unit Structure

- 4.0. Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2. Manufacturing Consent: Mass media's political economy
 - 4.2.1. Propaganda based Communication Model
 - 4.2.2. The five news filters
 - 4.2.3. Impact on media organizations
 - 4.2.4. Propaganda in the Information Age
- 4.3. The Sociology of News
 - 4.3.1. Media centralization and media bias
- 4.4. Components of news-making
 - 4.3.1. News sources and news audience
 - 4.3.2. Political culture of news
- 4.5. Digital and global evolution of news
- 4.6. Let's sum up
- 4.7. Questions
- 4.8. References

4.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Concept of manufacturing consent
- Impact of propaganda on media and news
- The sociology of news and its digital evolution

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Mass media functions as a means of disseminating messages and information to the public. It is their role to educate, entertain, and inform, as well as impart people with the values, beliefs, and ethical rules that will

inculcate in them the wider society's institutional frameworks. In a society of a wealthy few and tough class struggles, filling this perspective necessitates organized propaganda.

In nations where a state bureaucracy wields power, monopolistic control over the media, sometimes supplemented by government censorship, makes it evident that the media serves the interests of a ruling class. It is considerably more difficult to witness a propaganda system in action when the media is private and official censorship does not exist. This is especially true where the media actively competes, attacks and exposes corporate and governmental misconduct on a regular basis, and aggressively portrays itself as a voice for free speech and the general public interest. What is not apparent (and stays hidden in the media) is the limited character of such critiques, as well as the massive disparity in command of resources, and its impact on both access to a private media system and its behaviour and performance.

The media, among other things, serve and propagate on behalf of the major societal interests that control and finance them. These officials have significant objectives and values on behalf of the large societal interests that control and finance them, and they are well positioned to define and constrain media policy. This is generally accomplished by the selection of right-thinking professionals and the internalization of priorities and definitions of newsworthiness that conform to the institution's policy by editors and working journalists.

“I don't believe anyone challenges the reality that the manufacture of consent is capable of enormous refinements. The potential for manipulation available to anyone who comprehends the process is obvious.”

- Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion, 1922/1977

4.2. MANUFACTURING CONSENT: MASS MEDIA’S POLITICAL ECONOMY

The propaganda model of communication is used by the mass communication media in the U.S. to carry out a system-supportive propaganda function by relying on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship without overt coercion. The term "structural factors" refers to elements like ownership and control, reliance on other significant revenue sources (particularly, advertisers), ties and shared interests between the media and those who produce the news and have the authority to define and interpret it. The media is now more reliant than ever on the primary definers who provide the news and support the media by supplying readily available and affordable material due to the concentration of the media and the reduction in resources allocated to journalism.

Robert W. McChesney defines healthy journalism as having four traits. The first quality is that journalists must be thorough and extensive in their coverage of the elite. The second is to ensure that the news being created considers the demands of the greater public, as their authority is based on information rather than property. Third, it must be truthful and have processes in place to ensure this. Finally, a diverse variety of perspectives on a wide range of topics is required to provide insight and depth on what is happening, what is about to happen, and what should be done about it. Journalism should instead provide a "rigorous account" of those in power, meet the information needs of all classes and people, be truthful, and act as an early warning system that provides a "wide range of informed opinions on the most important issues of our time."

As the digital era continues to shift consumers towards new media, the mass media are surely undergoing significant changes in platform, technology, and economic structure such as crowd funding, social media. This shift has shaken traditional financial structures and corporate strategies. However, new power structures have arisen as a result of this more open system of information and news generation. Information availability can now be skewed or impacted by "search, aggregation, and digital distribution infrastructures".

4.2.1. Propaganda based Communication Model

Propaganda is the planned utilization of information to persuade people in order to change their behaviours. Anyone who wants to advocate their ideas may develop a propaganda model. In contrast to the concept of ideology which acts instinctively, propaganda works on purpose. The phrase propaganda model refers to the media and comprises five filters that describe how news is "filtered" and altered into content that meets the demands and interests of those with more power and income, particularly businesses and the government.

A propaganda model based on communication addresses wealth and power disparity and its multidimensional consequences on mass-media attitudes and decisions. It tracks the paths taken by money and power to pick out news suitable for publication, marginalize opposition, and enable the government and dominant business interests to communicate with the public.

4.2.2. The five news filters

The propaganda model for the production of citizen consent outlines five editorially distorting filters that are believed to impact news coverage in the mass communication medium:

1. The dominant mass-media firms' size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation
2. Advertising as the principal source of money for the media

3. Sourcing of the media which relies on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power
4. "Flak" as a means of disciplining the media
5. "Anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism.

These aspects interact and reinforce one another. The raw material of news must pass through these filters before it is fit for printing. They establish the premises of discourse and interpretation, as well as the definition of what is noteworthy in the first place, and they explain the foundation and operations of what are essentially propaganda efforts. The elite control of the media and the exclusion of dissidents arising from the implementation of these filters happen so organically that media news people, who often behave with complete integrity and goodwill, start convincing themselves that they choose and interpret the news "objectively" and on the grounds of ethical journalistic principles.

- **Size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media:** The requirement for a considerable amount of investment to possess media with any significant reach was applicable a century or more ago, and it has become increasingly effective over time. The media is divided into tiers, with the top tier consisting between 10 and 24 systems in terms of prestige, resources, and reach. This top tier, together with the government and wire services, defines the news agenda and provides much of the national and international news to the lower echelons of the media, as well as the general public. Non-media corporations have gained a substantial presence in the mass media, while large media companies have diversified beyond the media sphere. The dominant media firms are quite large businesses; they are controlled by very wealthy people or by managers who are subject to sharp constraints by owners and other market-profit-oriented forces; and they are closely intertwined with other major corporations, banks, and government, and have significant common interests. This is the first major filter that will influence news selection.

- **Advertising license to do business:** With the growth of advertising, journals that attracted advertisers could afford a copy price that was far lower than production expenses. As a result, an advertising-based system tends to drive out of existence or into marginality media companies and types that rely solely on sales revenue. Advertising has had a significant role in creating concentration, even among competitors who are equally focused on generating advertising revenue. A market share and advertising advantage for one newspaper or television station will provide it with additional revenue to compete more effectively- promote more aggressively, buy more salable features and programs- while the disadvantaged rival must add expenses it cannot afford to try to stem the cumulative process of dwindling market (and revenue) share. The crunch is often fatal, and it explains the demise of many large-circulation newspapers and magazines, as well as the decline in the quantity of newspapers.

- **Sourcing:** Bureaucracies produce a significant volume of material that satisfies the requirements of news organizations for consistent, planned flows. To mitigate financial risk, news media companies manipulate their reporting to favour government and corporate policies in order to remain in business. Since the internet has a decentralized and global architecture, sourcing as a filter differs from broadcasting. According to Manuel Castells, the internet enables mass-self-communication, which means that a bigger number of producers online can reach a larger audience than the broadcast approach.

- **Flak and the enforcers:** The term "flak" refers to negative reactions to a media remark or programme in the form of letters, telegrams, phone calls, petitions, lawsuits, speeches and bills, and other forms of complaint, threat, and punitive action. It can be organised centrally or locally, or it can be made up of completely independent actions by individuals. Flak can be costly to the media, either in terms of lost advertising income or the costs of legal defense or defending the media outlet's public reputation. Flak can be orchestrated by powerful private influence groups like think tanks. The prospect of receiving criticism can dissuade people from reporting certain facts or thoughts. Lobbying for specific interests has been extended to social media in the digital age, and is no longer limited to centralized media agencies, but rather tries to directly broadcast political messages to as many internet users as possible.

- **Anticommunism as a national religion and control mechanism:** Ideology is a broad phrase with multiple connotations, ranging from individual or group meanings or worldviews to the concept of false consciousness. The advantage of a critical notion of ideology over a broad one is that it allows normative assessments about what constitutes a good society. Herman and Chomsky discuss neoliberal ideology, Western ideology, anti-Communist ideology, national-security ideology, right-wing ideology, and national-security ideology. In a critical sense, ideology can be defined as a semiotic process in which humans practice the production and dissemination of information, meanings, ideas, beliefs, systems, artefacts, systems, and institutions that justify or naturalize dominance and exploitation. The semiotic level of domination and exploitation is referred to as ideology. In times of crisis, many kinds of ideas are likely to be expressed and contested in public communication. It is a meta-form of communication that justifies and defends the use of instrumental reason on the internet. Internet neoliberal philosophies present the online realm as a frontier for investments that generate a better world. They ignore issues of inequality, digital labour, class, and exploitation.

4.2.3. Impact on media organizations

The propaganda model characterizes society's primary pillars as profit-seekers. These include public domain, corporate entities, media organizations, governments, and so on. Media organizations (broadcast, print, and internet) are ranked last because of their impressionable and exploitative nature. The first level depicts the public sphere, in which influential ideologies within the people can influence mainstream media

goals. The second level accounts for the media's source of information as corporate enterprises are affluent enough to offer information to media organizations while maintaining control over where marketers can sell their commercials and stories. In the end there are the global powers governments which have the most financial wealth and organizational strength, thus making media organization the most reliant on them for financial stability and political direction.

4.2.4. Propaganda in the Information Age

The basic difference between old and contemporary propaganda lies in the distinction between participatory and passive types of information consumption. Propaganda in the digital age represents an evolved sort of manipulation that provides actors with an infinite number of options, both benign and malignant. While the roots of this new form are semi-accidental, it has still opened up previously unavailable chances for human manipulation and abuse. We are merely at the beginning of a new period of population-centric competition, which is now being conducted across the entire society.

When we publish, remark, like, share, and search in the digital era, we are participating in information processing and knowledge formation in ways we did not previously. We are agents in our own information consumption, which is a subtle but significant shift. We are mostly passive observers when we read, watch, or listen to traditional forms of media (print, television, radio). We decide what to believe and what to reject at a safe distance from the subject. Traditional propaganda was always hampered by the fact that those who were subjected to it retained sufficient information.

Cognitive investment takes the form of participation. When people are involved in the narrative, they react differently. They are immersed in the tale as it unfolds, and it becomes a part of their everyday life. Posting, commenting, tagging, and sharing are no longer removed from the topic matter.

Controlling the flow of information at this level is once again the province of the state, and it will almost certainly kill off any remaining arrogance about a global online community, not to mention the absurd concept that increasing connectedness is an unqualified good. While states regain control of network flows, a fundamental transformation in how humans engage with information has occurred. Humans in the digital age are part of a new, usually unintentional transformation in the way they engage with knowledge, power, and authority, with far-reaching ramifications for everything they do. It's difficult to predict if a new status quo will embed and stabilize, allowing social and political institutions to catch up, deliberate, and adjust, or if the current interregnum will be a more permanent position.

Check your progress

1. What is propaganda?
2. Explain the concepts of manufacturing consent.
3. How does propaganda impact media organizations?

4.3. THE SOCIOLOGY OF NEWS

Sociologists have viewed news work to be "socially constructed," "purposeful behaviour," "ideological construct," "ritual behaviour," and a "gatekeeping process" since the early days of the sociology of news work. These intellectual themes refer to how journalists make news and the elements that influence its production. Early sociology of news work viewed journalism as rational: top-down (individual, media routines, organisational, and institutional) and influenced by social and cultural elements. News was thought to be a self-contained profession influenced by internal and external forces, and there was little recognition of human agency among news employees who worked with the forces of news production.

Gatekeeping aspects alter news frames, emphasis, placement, and marketing. However, since the advent of the Internet and the ability for audience members to participate in news production processes, qualitative sociological studies of news labour have depicted journalism as a complicated web of networks. This shift in view presents obstacles for scholars who design and implement methodological, conceptual, and practical studies on news work. Concerned with how news is created and how formats and routines influence how news events are treated, research examined how organisational settings, news format, audience, scheduling, and news-gathering technology generate news bias and an account of social life. Journalistic routines and news formats affect meaning, raising questions about the independence and neutrality of journalistic standards, principles, and practises. The shift in meaning also implies that news and news conventions are the result of organisational structures, technological constraints, and routines.

4.3.1. Media centralization and media bias

Media centralization occurs when less number of people or organizations controls massive shares of media organization. Centralized mass media is owned and controlled by a single central entity. Such centralization or ownership of media leads to media bias.

There are two kinds of bias in the media. One bias, known as ideology, demonstrates a news outlet's desire to influence reader opinions in a specific direction. The second bias, known as spin, represents the outlet's effort to generate an impressive tale. If the bias is due to newspaper ideology, boosting the range of perspectives helps get the truth out. However, if the bias is spin, competition just exaggerates it and keeps aggregate information from being true.

In the absence of spin, competition corrects ideological prejudices. However, in the absence of ideology, competition just reinforces spin biases. The political bias of a media outlet is reduced by competition since it is driven by producer preferences. However, consumer-driven media bias- the need to convey a clear story- is amplified by competition.

“The conventional picture of how the system functions is seriously at odds with reality (if) the powerful are able to modify the discourse's underlying assumptions.”

- Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky,
Manufacturing Consent, 1988

4.4. COMPONENTS OF NEWS-MAKING

The media seeks tales that are newsworthy. A story must have some qualities in order to be judged as newsworthy. These components decide the process of making news.

- **Timing:** A story must be current and new. A story is newsworthy if it occurred today rather than last month.
- **Prominence:** Important individuals, celebrities, and well-known businesses are newsworthy.
- **Human Interest:** These stories are intended to elicit an emotional response such as sadness or humour.
- **Impact:** The significance of the tale is related to how many individuals it affects. A story that impacts a large number of individuals is more noteworthy than one that affects only a small number of people.
- **Proximity:** The location of the story. Journalists are more interested in tales about their own country, state, or region than in stories about other countries, states, or regions.

Another crucial factor to consider is the news agenda. The rivalry for news coverage among articles will influence whether a story is published. For example, if a large news event breaks, such as a local natural disaster, the natural disaster will dominate the majority of the news stories for that day.

4.4.1. News sources and news audience

News sources can be verified individuals, organizations and documents that will give information to journalist for a news story. Sources are great for learning about people's emotions, opinions, and general sentiments at the time of an occurrence. In journalistic vernacular, the source refers to the contacts or persons from whom the reporter obtains valuable

information for news. A source in journalism can be an individual, company, document, or combination of these that can supply information to spark a new narrative. A reputable source is required for a report to be regarded verified and for a news organization to keep its reputation.

It is impossible for a reporter to keep track of everything that happens around him and also collect information for media reporting. In such a case, the reporter must rely on persons outside the media organization for which he or she works to obtain information. These individuals provide the reporter with information and details regarding events that would otherwise be impossible for the reporter to obtain. Normally, reporters have credible sources at various locations such as government or other offices, hospitals, local body offices, state secretariats, assemblies, Deputy Commissioner's office, police headquarters, educational institutes, politicians, public relations officers, and even peons or other subordinate employees of various organizations. Primary or secondary sources, official or unauthorized, can all be used. When reporters or correspondents gather information from sources or go to the scene to cover an event, the information is considered to have come from primary sources. News from news agencies, on the other hand, can be said to come from secondary sources.

For a journalist, sources are extremely important. However, they should exercise caution when making connections. In order to build a strong chain of sources, they must remember that the sources should be able to give you accurate information. Behind the sources, there should be no malice or personal bias.

The audience for journalistic messages is, in some respects, the most clear and pre-determined of the three communications professionals' work. Journalists write for publications or make reports for media sources that have a lot of data on their readers or viewers. Journalists know what articles people read because they can track digital readership. To begin the message analysis process, journalists must ask a series of questions about their target audience that will assist them in identifying the treatment of the issue about which they will be writing and making decisions about the type of reporting they must perform.

Understanding the target audience for the media outlet for whom they are preparing a news story will assist clarify some of the issues?

- **Who:** Who reads and watches the publication? Who is interested in this topic? Who needs to be informed about this subject? Who is the media organization hoping to entice with its offerings?
- **What:** What information would a potential audience member want to know about the subject? What type of report would be the most useful or beneficial to the audience? What kind of data will be useful? What is the audience already aware of?

- **Where:** Where else may people who are interested in the subject obtain information? Where should I propose my story concept as a freelancer?
- **When:** When does the audience require this information (is it breaking news, or will it be utilized for analysis after the event?)
- **Why:** Why is the audience interested in this information? Sometimes an audience member simply wants to pass the time by reading news briefs on a mobile device while waiting in queue or eating alone at a restaurant. Sometimes an audience member is required to respond to a specific question. Each of these "why" questions recommends a different communication method.
- **How:** How should we communicate with the audience? How much background do they need to comprehend what we're writing? How technological can we get? How do you think the audience will react to this report?

4.4.2. Political culture of news

There are two illusions about the media that should be debunked. One is that there is a free and independent press. That is a misconception that the media perpetuates. Another popular misconception is that we have a liberal press. The media, specifically the many mainstream newspapers, journals, radio and television stations, is practically swamped with conservative commentators who groan about not getting enough exposure in the liberal media. Conservatives keep reporters leaning to the right by complaining about a "liberal" media to signal that they do not favour a liberal perspective. They in fact dominate the talk programmes and the media, receiving the majority of the exposure due to corporate backing and sponsorship.

Who controls the mainstream media? When it comes to reporters, there are two types. The first type is a reporter who knows that they are being censored and tied to the politics of news and news making. When a reporter crosses too many lines, it is signalled from above that he or she is getting too near to the story. So they have to exercise caution. They can only go so far. These are usually former reporters who have become disillusioned with the industry. The other type is oblivious to this fact. They have no difficulties with the necessity for self-censorship and do not believe it occurs become enraged if you do. They do not agree of being controlled and manipulated.

4.5. DIGITAL AND GLOBAL EVOLUTION OF NEWS

Digital technologies have definitely created novel chances for collecting events and releasing information. Online journalism promised to usher in a new era of news reporting, one that would serve to rewire the planet into a virtual community of global citizens actively engaged in collective, collaborative forms of news creating, according to some supporters. The primary distinction between 'participatory journalism' and 'citizen

journalism' is that with citizen journalism, the news-making process is totally taken away from journalists and given to the people, who have become both producers and users of the news.

Journalists should not just open up the news process; they should also transform journalism from a lecture to a conversation with citizens, and they should urge citizens to engage in the various stages of the editorial news-making process. Above all, they must come to accept that they can no longer do so. Control over the gate keeping process can be claimed, but this control must be shared with the public.

Check your progress

1. What is media centralization and media bias?
2. What makes news?
3. Explain the digital evolution of news.

4.6. LET'S SUM UP

Mass media is known to serve the general public with information they need. However, media is subject to propaganda model just like other aspects of the modern society. The five filters of propaganda model of communication significantly reduce the variety of news that passes through the gates. Messages from and about dissidents and weak, unorganized individuals and groups, both domestic and foreign, have a disadvantage in terms of sourcing costs and credibility, and they frequently do not align with the ideology or interests of the gatekeepers and other powerful parties who influence the filtering process.

The quality of coverage should also be more directly and coarsely portrayed in positioning, headline, word usage, and other techniques of generating interest and indignation. We would expect strict limits on the variety of opinions authorized in the opinion columns. Good victims will be presented prominently and dramatically, humanized, and their victimization will be given the information and context in story building that would generate reader attention and sympathetic feeling. Unworthy victims, on the other hand, will receive only minor details, scant humanization, and little context to arouse and outrage. Meanwhile, because of the influence of establishment sources, flak machines, and anti-Communist propaganda, ideology, there will be outcries that the deserving victims are being ignored, that the undeserving are being treated with excessive and unquestioning charity, and that the media's liberal, combative (if not hostile) reporting is failing.

To summarize, a propagandist approach to media coverage implies a systematic and highly political dichotomization of news coverage based on usefulness to major domestic power interests. This should be visible in dichotomized story choices as well as the volume and quality of coverage. Such dichotomization in the mass media is massive and systematic: not only are choices for publicity and suppression understandable in terms of

system advantage, but the modes of handling favoured and inconvenient materials (placement, tone, context, fullness of treatment) differ in ways that serve political ends.

Social systems include the internet and social media platforms. Power should thus be examined in terms of its economic, political, and cultural components. The capitalist economy of modern civilization is founded on the accumulation of monetary capital. According to Pierre Bourdieu, political (influence) and cultural power (reputation) are important factors. Power is contradictory in class societies. It is structured as an economic, political, and cultural contradiction. It is not predetermined which pole is more powerful under specific conditions. Those that control resources typically have a power advantage. Given structural conflicts, there is always the possibility of actual social struggles. These possibilities, however, are not realized automatically.

4.7. QUESTIONS

1. Write short notes on:
 - a. Structural factors
 - b. Traits of healthy journalism
 - c. Five news filters
2. Discuss the propaganda model based on communication. Explain its relevance in the information age.
3. Explain the political culture of news.
4. What do you understand by the sociology of news?
5. Explain the importance of news sources and news audience.

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SHAPING OPINIONS

Unit Structure

- 5.0. Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2. Why Journalism matters in a changing Information System
 - 5.2.1. How to improve news?
 - 5.2.2. Politicians and the Media: A Mutually Beneficial Relationship
- 2.3. Correlating News to Political Power
- 5.3. News Stories: Information Biases
 - 5.3.1. Public opinion and information processing
 - 5.3.2. How media shapes public opinion
- 5.4. Politicians, Journalists and the Media
 - 5.4.1. How journalists cover news
 - 5.4.2. Routines and professional standards in Journalism
 - 5.4.3. Objectivity, Fairness, Balance, and Truth: A professional vocabulary
- 5.5. The News Political Economy
- 5.6. Let's sum up
- 5.7. Questions
- 5.8. References

5.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Importance of journalism in an information era
- News bias and public opinion formation
- Journalistic news coverage and political manipulation of media

Many critics are concerned that the quality of reporting is deteriorating as journalism organizations struggle to find stable niches in this complex information environment, contributing to the growing number of citizens who have stopped following news produced by traditional journalism organizations. The average time spent each day on legacy news sources among those who continue to use them decreases considerably across each generation, from elderly to young folks.

While the legacy news media is unlikely to perish, its dominance is being challenged by new forms of content production and delivery that incorporate more audience participation and even sidestep traditional journalism in content creation. The emergent information order preserves some echoes of what we traditionally thought of as news: vital information given in a timely manner to those who want to know it. The legacy news organizations that anchored that system have been hit with a slew of setbacks, including competition from an onslaught of Smartphone applications and specialized internet platforms that an increasing number of people find more in tune with their lifestyles. More information is being mechanized, machine-digested, and provided through highly personalized channels. When people share the information that flows via their gadgets, they frequently alter and add commentary to help it spread across certain social networks. The participation of viewers in the production and distribution of information alters the clean one-to-many communication logic that characterized the mass media age. Social media use a many-to-many logic that incorporates people in the communication process more interactively.

Many communication researchers and journalists are concerned about the erosion of traditional news based on journalistic investigations and provided by news organizations as what individuals need to know about their reality. Others contend that the traditional news industry has rarely lived up to the watchdog journalism ideal of holding leaders accountable. Furthermore, there is so much information available online that it is simple to get informed if one is truly interested.

“You (media people) do not own the eyes. You do not own the press, which has been separated between professional and amateur zones. You have no control over production on the new platform, which is not one-way. There is a new power dynamic between you and us. The audience is simply the public made more real, less fictional, more capable, and less predictable. That should be welcomed by the media.”

- Jay Rosen to mass media representatives on a mythical manifesto

5.2. WHY JOURNALISM MATTERS IN A CHANGING INFORMATION SYSTEM

Most people may not be concerned about the press system's troubles because there seems to be so many information providers that it is difficult to keep up with them. Entering any topic into an internet search engine results in several of websites with information on it. Many blogs, webzines, and online news organizations, however, are simply repurposing the diminishing journalism content provided by increasingly vulnerable news organizations. Despite evidence that problems with accountability or watchdog journalism existed long before news organizations faced financial difficulties or lost audiences, many proposals are aimed at strengthening the financial health of current journalism organizations.

The immediate issue is that as long as there is free news outlets, those charging for the same content are unlikely to attract a large number of paying clients. Whether the common Internet adage "information wants to be free" is true, those who provide independent information want to be remunerated. Despite these apparent constraints, there is still a compelling case to be made that independent journalism is the sole hope for regular and trustworthy information about what people in power are doing. Without it, democracy goes dark, leaving the government to police itself while promoting its own actions through public relations, propaganda, or spin.

5.2.1. How to improve news?

News organizations must revert to their primary values of educating the public about government and public life in a timely and accurate manner. When journalists attempt to cover critical subjects, they are frequently caught up in lengthy political skirmishes that move the focus away from the fundamental concerns and onto power struggles and spin. Because disagreement and battles are supposed to attract listeners, news organizations often exaggerate the political drama at the expense of more essential information.

A major obstruction is a commercial media system that has been in a downward spiral of falling audiences, revenues, and product quality for decades. Consequently, the existing system has become obsessed with delivering preferred consumers to advertisers, often to little avail. Online information sites can send advertising graphics to each individual in significantly more personalized ways, so that different people see various ads in the same article, and even different articles on the same site. When the Internet suddenly became a cheaper and more precise means of targeting both ads and content to consumers, advertisers and audiences began to shift away from traditional media forms, leaving news as an outlier in the media picture. Most other democracies have better understood the value of protecting such a valuable public good by figuring

out how to support it through public subsidies, similar to how defense, public safety, education, and health care have all been variously supported or subsidized as public goods.

Despite polls suggesting that people would like higher-quality news reporting, many people under 30 cannot image scheduling time to watch the evening news or sitting in front of shouting commentators like their parents or grandparents would. Many individuals are turned off by news coverage that emphasize the game of politics and squabbling between parties. Distributing those reports via clumsy newspapers or planned broadcasts frequently conflicts with how people seek information in mobile lifestyles. Younger citizens might prefer to use Facebook to seek for topics of interest or to follow links to YouTube videos sent by trustworthy friends. It may appear more authentic to watch accounts from other citizens who upload mobile phone recordings to YouTube than to have reporters interpret the same occurrences. Undeniably, in many circumstances, distinguishing reporters from ordinary individuals in technologically equipped crowds at the scene of events becomes difficult.

5.2.2. Politicians and the Media: A mutually beneficial relationship

Control and smart use of information are essential for power and influence. Despite growing public skepticism, news making remains the most significant method of putting topics on the public agenda. The concept of agenda setting entails using the news to affect what the public considers significant to think about in society and politics. As news making is important for public relations, politicians ranging from presidents to environmentalists to anti-tax groups have learned to go public by finding means to get their political statements into the news.

The paradox of mediated politics is that being informed about public issues sometimes entails taking cues from familiar sources that use the news to shape stories around their partisan opinions. When this influence process is effective, the news not only teaches people what to think about, but it can also tell them what not to think about.

Desperation to reach audiences (who frequently avoid this type of communication) has caused many politicians to pollute the well of politics by negative campaigning and ranting against government as the origin of all evils. After warning voters about people like them, politicians are obliged to recruit communication experts to sell themselves and their ideas to increasingly cautious and weary publics. To media-savvy audiences—and young individuals are among the most knowledgeable media consumers—these staged political acts can appear forced and fake. Without a doubt, reality television and political comedy frequently appear more authentic than political acts intended for journalism. Communication professors have used the term "infotainment" to describe news that mimics entertainment. The characters in political programming, on the other hand, appear less sympathetic and emotionally approachable than the young and vulnerable individuals in reality shows.

5.2.3. Correlating News to Political Power

Many contentious political stories raise worrisome considerations about what journalists should do when authorities say things that contradict accessible information. The question is whether one version of a narrative should be so dominant simply because other government officials are too afraid or hesitant to contradict it. There are numerous versions on this quandary. What if there are two sides to a tale that is being disputed within official circles of power, but one of them is likely false? Should both sides of a story be told when one is most likely false? Should a story be permitted to become one-sided when there is information to contradict it but senior officials are just unwilling to speak out? Finding an answer would necessitate releasing the press from its reliance on the government and powerful officials as its source of reality.

This type of "he said, she said" journalism may be one of the reasons why the news performs a poor job of informing the public and clarifying rather than complicating key problems. Despite the press's apparent responsibility in sorting out facts and evidence, journalists have a surprisingly difficult time when politicians throw up distortions and blatant lies. This strange reporting system is the product of the mainstream press's long-standing adherence to a standard of balance, fairness, or objectivity. Journalists cannot become involved in telling the audience what is really going on if they wish to look neutral or unbiased. Rather, journalists must channel representations of reality through external sources, and the most trustworthy sources are those elected by the public and with the authority to alter political results. Those in authority may also have reasons to obfuscate or distort the issues, ranging from their own value biases to saying what they must in order to maintain their financial backing.

This reporting method means that when government is running properly and elected officials are giving competing solutions to policy challenges, the news is loaded with opposing viewpoints that may assist engaged citizens think critically about national decisions. On the other hand, if certain powerful forces advocate deceptive or untruthful spin in the service of powerful interests, those ideas are presented as equally genuine alongside more realistic interpretations of events.

Similarly, political parties may opt not to raise doubts about terrible ideas because they are difficult to explain to inattentive publics, or because they fear being punished in elections by emotionally aroused publics who embrace the opposing side's spin. When this occurs, poor ideas become the prevailing news framing. If journalists utilized independent evidence to counter such stories, they would be accused of bias or of pushing their own agendas. As a result, spin reigns supreme.

1. Why is journalism important in the new information age?
2. Explain the relationship between politicians and media.
3. How can journalists and media representatives work towards providing the public with better news?

5.3. NEWS STORIES: INFORMATION BIASES

Journalists are supposed to have a liberal bias, yet news articles are personalized, dramatized, fragmented, and described based on the bias of authority or disorder.

The trend to **personalize news** would be less concerning if human-interest angles were exploited to entice people to engage in more serious consideration of themes and problems. The fundamental issue with personalized news is that the emphasis on personal problems is rarely linked to in-depth analysis.

Even when a sizable percentage of the audience rejects personalized news formats, as was the case during the chaotic journalistic and political preoccupations of the time, **dramatization**, like personalization, would not be a problem if it was utilized primarily as an attention-focusing method to offer more background and context surrounding events. When drama is used to focus on human strife and travail, or farce and fragility, the wider importance of events is readily forgotten in waves of immediate feeling. The potential benefits of drama to enlighten and explain are lost in favour of melodrama's lower tendency to excite, outrage, and further personalize events.

The emphasis on the personal and dramatic aspects of events feeds into a third information characteristic of the news: the isolation of tales from each other and from their larger settings, resulting in fragmented and difficult-to-assemble information in the news. The fragmentation of knowledge begins with a focus on individual players rather than the political circumstances within which they function. The employment of theatrical frameworks, which make occurrences into self-contained isolated experiences, then adds to the fragmentation. The **fragmentation of information** is exacerbated by the strict space constraints imposed by practically all media for fear of boring readers and viewers with too much information. The problem of fragmentation worsens within the confines of geography and time, as many people experience on a daily basis.

The news is fascinated with **order**, as well as the associated topic of whether authorities are capable of maintaining or restoring it. It's easy to see why these general story elements are so important in news: they're versatile and infinite themes that may be blended endlessly within personalized, dramatized, and fragmented news events. When the dramatic restoration of normalcy is not a feasible frame for an event, the news may immediately undermine authority itself, maybe by publicizing the newest

scandal charge against a leader or by opening the news gates to one politician prepared to attack another.

5.3.1.Public opinion and information processing

It is difficult to mould and even more difficult to govern public opinion. Those involved in politics, however, frequently devote considerable attention to these challenges. The exorbitant expenses of securing the support of very tiny numbers of so-called swing voters in elections, for example, demonstrate that the struggle for opinion is arduous, expensive, and rarely certain. Citizens live in a noisy media environment where entertainment, fashion, sports, weather, and shopping take precedence over politics. Simply capturing the attention of preoccupied and frequently disinterested citizens necessitates drastic methods, usually incorporating very dramatic and personal messages that are repeated repeatedly.

5.3.2. How media shapes public opinion

News media organizations influence citizens' opinions and attitudes by many factors. These organizations are capable of shaping basic perceptions of the government and the electoral candidates and the public is often unaware of such media influence – and bias. In order to make better decisions that will maintain their values and the integrity of a democratic nation, while taking advantage of the information being provided by the news outlets in terms of their coverage, consistency, and accountability, the citizens must be well informed and cautious about what kind of news and information they are absorbing from such media.

To begin, public opinion is nothing more than an aggregate of individuals' thoughts, views, beliefs, and attitudes about a specific subject matter, as expressed by a comparatively substantial sector of society. Mass media, such as news channels, the internet (social media), newspapers, and so on, have the ability to change people's perceptions on a given problem. All of these examples contribute to the formation of public opinion, depending on the veracity of the news and how people understand it.

Mass media and social media can also "activate" dormant sentiments, motivating people to take action. For example, just before an election, voters who previously had only a modest inclination for one party or candidate may be inspired by media coverage not only to vote but also to contribute money or aid a party organization in some other way.

5.4. POLITICIANS, JOURNALISTS AND THE MEDIA

It's hardly surprising that the news is full of carefully crafted versions of events. The capacity to make the public version of a situation believable, regardless of how actual circumstances are twisted or simplified in the process, is a measure of skill in the political trade. Politicians are known to create compelling agendas in order to compel journalists to report according to it. Much has changed in the news in recent years, but one important pattern remains: most political news still comes from government officials. In many ways, officials appear to be an obvious and

relevant source of knowledge on politics, which typically entails government activity. Allowing officials to set the news agenda, however, not only gives them a greater say in what the public thinks about and how they think about it, but it also allows them to deploy strategic communication technologies that shape the very realities- the issues, situations, and images of citizen involvement- that are portrayed in the news itself.

Message shaping and framing are critical abilities of strategic political communication, and the fundamentals of news management are strategized to achieve the political objective, such as prefabricated news stories, video news releases, strategic polling, controlling events, and producing phoney events.

5.4.1. How journalists cover news

Journalists are continuously under pressure to standardize, behave, and agree as a group, that is, to not deviate from the primary flow of information provided by the government political viewpoint into the news while legitimizing that viewpoint as broad and realistic.

Government and political communication offices may set the tone and boundaries of hard news so effectively that spin from established sources may be reported to balance a story even when there is little evidence to support it. The pursuit of balance can become so ritualized that news organizations may impose it even when investigative reporters uncover circumstances in which the evidence appears to be obviously stacked on one side.

5.4.2. Routines and professional standards in Journalism

The origins of modern journalism can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth-century economic and social conditions surrounding the growth of mass-market news. According to David Mindich's historical perspective, key components of objective journalism evolved at quite different times and under unusual conditions. The inverted pyramid style, for example, may have originated with a non-journalist, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who wrote a series of crucial Civil War communiqués. By the year 1848, the formation of the Associated Press (AP) was the first significant step towards standardized news.

AP pooled reporters and selling the same story to hundreds, and later thousands, of publications, news became a successful mass-market commodity. Due to its broad marketability, it had to be shorn of its overt political overtones in order to appeal to news organizations of all political stripes. It was the birth of an early prototype of objective reporting. Furthermore, the necessity to deliver short messages via an overburdened mail system was followed by the dissemination of national news via telegraph wires, which likewise required a simpler, standardized reporting format. The who, what, where, when, and why of an event might be economically communicated and easily recreated and enriched on the

other end. As the mass media market expanded, so did the demand for reporters.

Whereas producing a persuasive political essay needed ability in argumentation and political analysis, writing stories, which are the primary medium for talking about ordinary events, was significantly easier. The use of stories also ensured that the news was understandable to the rising mass-market audience.

5.4.3. Objectivity, Fairness, Balance, and Truth: A professional vocabulary

Professional practices that reflect journalism norms of objectivity and independence generate situations that consistently favour the reporting of government perspectives. Simultaneously, the independence and objectivity postures established by the adoption of these professional practices offer the idea that the final news is the best available portrayal of reality. In short, professional journalism standards bring a skewed political viewpoint into the news while legitimizing that viewpoint as broad and realistic.

5.5.THE NEWS POLITICAL ECONOMY

Despite declining viewership and readership, corporate news media continues to generate light news. In the last two decades, there have been fewer stories about politics and policy, as well as what governments and businesses are doing, and softer fare about celebrities in rehab, shootings, accidents, and mayhem.

The basic reason is that important news is more expensive to report because it frequently necessitates the time and initiative of experienced journalists who know who to call, what questions to ask, and where to go for leads. Soft news frequently does not require any reporters at all, with the exception of potentially sending a camera crew to record fires, floods, accidents, and other disasters that can be staged back at the studio.

Reducing the money spent on reporters, remote news bureaus and other features of excellent journalism increased earnings so much that many news organizations were purchased primarily for their investment potential during the media mergers of the 1990s and early 2000s. Profits of 23 per cent per year were common, and they were soon required by distant corporate owners.

Check your progress

1. List out the professional standards of journalism.
2. How is news covered by journalists in the information age?
3. Explain the political economy of news.

5.6. LET'S SUM UP

The myth of a free press and a free people, as well as its guiding concept of objective reporting, appear to bring distinct but persuasive benefits to diverse groups. There is, however, an irony here: the groups at the top of the power pyramid get material advantages of power and control, while the groups at the bottom sacrifice real power (since the myth serves to limit their political involvement) for psychological reassurances. Thus, the more widespread support there is for the concept of fair or objective media, the more firmly established power disparities develop.

The future of media and politics can only be improved if all three involved parties- citizens, journalists, and legislators- work towards a better press coverage.

Citizens are what makes a democracy and for whom the media reports and functions. Therefore, each member of a society must make the effort to consume the right information passed to them. Citizens must try to recognize stereotypes and story plot formulas, look for information that contradicts the plot, look for more sources of information to validate partisan statements, try to recognize the use of spin and news control and learn to be critical. As the prime news audience, they must not depend on just one news source and look for alternative points of view, such as political comedy.

Journalists, who are the main carriers of the news, mediators between the government and the public and holders of the fourth pillar of democracy must ensure that bring the right news. They must refuse to use the typical plot formulas, define political situations in ways that are understandable to the general public, remember to explain why the tale is important, maintain media monopolistic control, try to increase public broadcasting money (and give it a more creative mission) and strengthen public service obligations for cable and broadcast licensees.

Balancing democracy and corporate social responsibility is what news organizations should strive for and further be held accountable for it.

5.7. QUESTIONS

1. Explain how journalism has evolved into the digital information era.
2. What are the four news information biases?
3. What is public opinion? How do politicians use media to shape public opinion?
4. Explain how news coverage can be fixed in today's time.
5. Do political powers influence news? How can the media protect itself from such bias?

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PUBLIC RELATIONS, PUBLICITY AND PROPAGANDA AND DEVELOPMENT

Unit Structure

- 6.0. Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2. Understanding concepts of communication
 - 6.2.1. Public Relations
 - 6.2.2. Propaganda
 - 6.2.3. Marketing
 - 6.2.4. Publicity
 - 6.2.5. Advertising
- 6.3. Differences and similarities between key concepts
 - 6.3.1. Public Relations vs. Advertising vs. Publicity
 - 6.3.2. Public Relations vs. Propaganda
 - 6.3.3. Advertising vs. Propaganda
 - 6.3.4. Public Relations vs. Marketing
 - 6.3.5. Advertising vs. Marketing
 - 6.3.6. Publicity vs. Propaganda
- 6.4. History and development of Political Propaganda and Public Relations
- 6.5. Let's sum up
- 6.6. Questions
- 6.7. References

6.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Concepts of communication
- Differences and similarities between key concepts
- History and development of political propaganda and PR

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a multimodal discipline with increasing complexities and competition in society. Media professionals have to confront the obstacles of making their messages more clearly focused and appealing to their target audiences in order to elicit the desired response from them.

Understanding the terminologies in mass communication such as publicity, advertising, marketing, and propaganda, as well as their functions in public relations and discussing their roles in specific situations will help in decoding their similarities and distinctions. Analyzing media's role in advertising and publicity, as well as the concept of corporate advertising, political propaganda and its significance in public relations will help in assessing the overall communication system and public opinion.

6.2. UNDERSTANDING CONCEPTS OF COMMUNICATION

Marketing, advertising, publicity, propaganda and public relations are all vital components of communication. Although they differ in idea, their purpose is comparable and interconnected. Their essence is the same: compelling communication. They aim to communicate information to a certain audience via mass media in a planned manner.

The term 'PR' stands for public relations. The Institute of Public Relations in the United States defines public relations as "the deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics." Publicity refers to a deliberate and calculated endeavour to manage the public's perception of a subject while propaganda is the endeavour to persuade others to do something by appealing to their thoughts and feelings. In a broad sense, publicity would tend to draw people's or entities' attention to a specific subject. It usually aims to raise public awareness and establish favourable perceptions of a product, person, service, cause, or organization.

The emphasis in the definitions distinguishes them in form, but in practice, all of these revolve around the well-known communication theory. In its most basic form, communication can be defined as the transfer of information from one entity to another. The communication process is comprised of four major components. Encoding, medium of transmission, decoding, and feedback are among the components. There are two additional components in the process, which are represented by the sender and the recipient. The sender initiates communication, and the recipient concludes it.

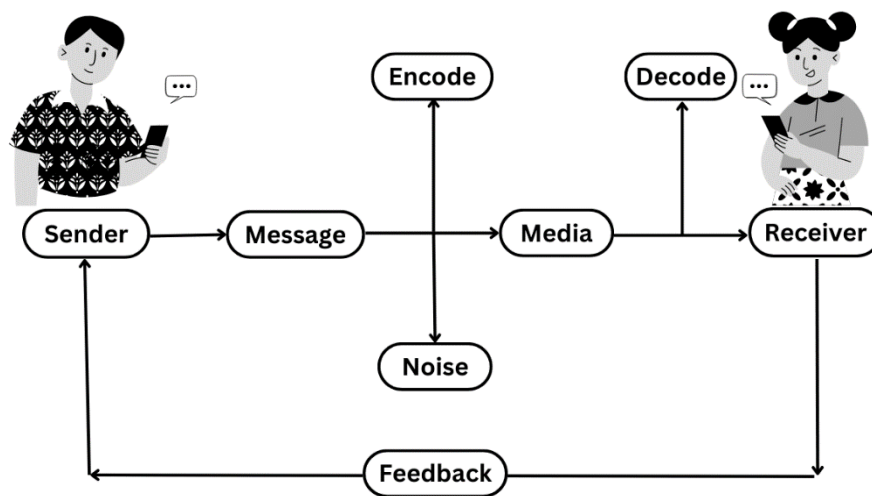


Figure 1: Communication Process

PR is not the same as publicity, propaganda, or advertising. Each of these is a component of public relations, yet each has restrictions. The spreading of information about an organization in order to attract attention or publicize products or activities is referred to as public relations. The goal of publicity is to gain awareness, develop an image, and gain the approval of the target audience. Advertising is the purchase of space in media to encourage product sales. Public Relations, on the other hand, has a far broader meaning and impact, and is more nuanced and persuasive in nature. Let's understand each of these concepts in more detail.

6.2.1. Public Relations

Public relations is a management function that assesses public attitudes, establishes policies and procedures of an individual or organization that are in the public interest, and implements a plan of action to gain public understanding and approval.

Public relations comprise the abilities of advertising, publicity, and other communication techniques that necessitate knowledge of psychology for effective persuasion. The goals of public relations are to inform people about the institutions' main activities, to highlight the special services available in the institutions, to discuss activities received by the nation and society, the role of the organization in the field of research and development, and to promote and propagate human values in life.

6.2.2. Propaganda

Propaganda is an intentional attempt to persuade people to think and subsequently act in a way that the source desires. Propaganda has long been a political and military strategy. It has always been a feature of military recruitment; however it was previously limited to colourful uniforms or military parades. Any administration actively striving to mobilize its populace has always required propaganda.

Propaganda is a non-objective set of messages directed to the general public that can be facts, rumours, half-truths, and so on, and is typically intended to manipulate the group's opinion, ideas, views, or attitude towards something in order to support a cause, change a social trend, or advance a political agenda by using language-persuasive techniques to elicit an irrational or emotional response from them.

Propaganda can be positive or negative, emphasizing the positive aspects and righteousness of an idea or group while misrepresenting facts and truths and concealing criticisms and counter-arguments. It can take the shape of a speech, a movie, a documentary, a short film, music, a speech, artwork, or anything else. It makes an attempt to convey one side of an issue as if it were the absolute truth.

Another concept similar to this is lobbying. Lobbying entails 'educating' specific sectors of the public more intensely in order to gain their support. A lobbyist is similar to an advocate who represents an organization in state legislatures.

6.2.3. Marketing

Marketing is a management practice that deals with the purchase and sale of goods and services. Marketing activities include product design, warehousing, packaging, advertising, branding, selling, and pricing. Marketing encompasses everything a firm does to acquire and keep clients.

6.2.4. Publicity

Public relations are frequently confused with publicity. Publicity is a free write-up on a company's product or service, and issue, in the news columns or editorial columns of a newspaper or magazine, or in non-commercial time on television and radio. It is information developed and disseminated by journalists (media) on their own initiative or at the request of the company/organization's spokeswoman. Publicity messages are not paid for in the same way that advertising is. It is the outcome of important "news" about the product or service, company, or an event related to the product or organization. In the reporter's or editor's opinion, it must be fundamentally fascinating, novel, informative, and necessary for media readers or viewers.

6.2.5. Advertising

Advertising is the paid presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by a specific sponsor. It is also used for both selling and buying. It is not a complete public relations strategy, but rather a public relations tool. Advertising is a non-personal and persuasive mode of communication in which the sponsor pays for the placement of the advertisement. Advertising is done with the goal of reaching the greatest number of individuals in the shortest amount of time.

Advertisement is a method of disseminating information through print or electronic media. It is utilized by everyone in general, and especially by the business classes, to spread and provide information about their upcoming items. The government utilizes advertisement to inform the public about its choices, policies, and employment opportunities in government services, among other things. Advertising also aids in the development and maintenance of the brand image of a product or service as well as the enhancement of its values (as perceived by customers).

Check your progress

1. What is PR?
2. Explain the process of communication.
3. How is publicity different from public relations?

6.3. DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN KEY CONCEPTS

For marketing, advertising, publicity, propaganda, and public relations, there are certain similarities as well as differences, especially with publicity being part of the wider PR process.

6.3.1. Public Relations vs. Advertising vs. Publicity

Advertising aims to increase profit and revenue from sales generated by specialized advertisements. PR is to raise awareness and build a broader reputation for a company or brand through networking and other forms of communication.

Public relations and advertising are conceptually similar as both are intended to increase positive awareness of a company or product. Another similarity is that in both circumstances, the corporation would frequently tailor its message to a specific audience. This could include people who live in a specific place, people of a certain age, gender, or social status, or people who have specific interests or hobbies.

Advertising and publicity are directed towards certain target groups, such as customers, distributors, and merchants. They primarily deal with sales. They are a component of the marketing mix. However, the goals of public relations are far broader, because a corporation is concerned with more than just profits. This is when things become complicated. Obviously, the fundamental goal of a business is to sell its goods and services and make a profit. But none of this can happen economically or efficiently unless every other aspect of the business contributes. The strength of a chain is determined by its weakest link. Public relations can make certain that each link in the chain is solid.

Publicity and public relations have different aims. The purpose of public relations is to transmit all forms of information about a firm, brand, or people in order to raise public awareness. The purpose of public relations is to draw attention to specific characteristics of a brand. PR is concerned with reputation management through generating positive media publicity in order to influence public opinion. PR is concerned with maintaining positive relationships with anyone who has an interest in the company, and it reaches a broader audience than marketing, including consumers, media, employees, and stakeholders. It is not about selling a product, but about influencing public opinion.

The primary function of PR is to direct media attention to a company's or organization's products or services, whether through news coverage, feature stories, or blogs. All of these are employed in public relations; in higher education, we leverage alumni, faculty, and academic research in articles to generate exposure for an institution. The distinction between the two is found in the final purpose of each; publicity does not attempt to affect public opinion in any particular direction. It just directs the public's attention to something. PR, on the other hand, particularly strives to build and sustain good opinions, and when done incorrectly, the results can be disastrous.

6.3.2. Public Relations vs. Propaganda

Propaganda and public relations are comparable in several ways: both strive to change perceptions and affect public opinion, both use mass media, and both target specific audiences. The end goal for both is to compel individuals to take action.

The most significant distinction is the truthfulness of the messaging. Propaganda manipulates the public's perception of an ideal, cause, or political agenda by employing bias, half-truths, misinformation, and terror. Propaganda seeks to instill a mindset of us versus them - you vs. the other.

Public relations employ verifiable facts. To convey information between an organization or individual and its public, public relations rely on logic and, at times, emotion.

6.3.3. Advertising vs. Propaganda

Advertising is frequently mistaken as the term propaganda, but the two are entirely different. Propaganda is a component of a major cognitive campaign mostly employed by political parties or social groups to disseminate information that is skewed or deceptive in order to promote their point of view. Advertising is an intended sponsor's effort to persuade the target audience with a highly personalized message, i.e. advertisement, concerning the product or service, in order to enhance the company's sales. Propaganda, on the other hand, is a unidirectional style of communication meant to promote a specific idea, viewpoint, or political cause.

Advertising frequently informs individuals "what to buy," i.e., which product, out of hundreds of items and kinds, best meets their needs. Propaganda, on the other hand, instructs people "what to think" since it is a purposeful message given in such a way as to manipulate the target group's thinking abilities and adopt a certain notion or behaviour. In today's world, whether we recognize it or not, advertising and propaganda are widely used and ever-present. While advertising is used to promote the sale of a product or service, propaganda is used to favour, oppose, or criticize a person, idea, trend, or cause in order to achieve a specific political or economic goal.

6.3.4. Public Relations vs. Marketing

Their goals are vastly different. Marketing's goal is to reach customers and persuade them to think, believe, or take some form of sales-related action; it is about selling a product or service. PR is more about 'selling' a firm or organization by favourably controlling public opinion.

Furthermore, public relations involve third-party endorsements; we provide information and stories to journalists, who use them in their work because they are actually intriguing. Unlike in marketing, they are not compensated for any features. This makes PR more genuine and authentic than any of the areas to which it is compared.

6.3.5. Advertising vs. Marketing

While marketing is the overall strategy for communicating with people about your business, advertising is typically a paid type of message that is intended to drive to sales. Advertising might be temporary for a special promotion or continuing, but it usually necessitates a financial investment.

6.3.6. Publicity vs. Propaganda

While propaganda is an intentional and guided campaign to influence people to adopt a certain viewpoint by persuasive techniques, publicity focuses on sharing information, preserving a subject's public image, and is constantly promoted.

6.4. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Propaganda denotes a committee of cardinals or an association for the propagation of a doctrine. In the 14th century, Pope Gregory established an organization to propagate the word of the Bible. In the 17th century, the Roman Catholic Church established a propaganda college to counterbalance the activities of the Protestants, and this organization was known as the "Institute of Propaganda." As a result, propaganda was not initially seen negatively. In reality, it was only during WWII that the term "propaganda" acquired a negative meaning. Gobbles used to claim that changing an atmosphere allowed one to absorb anything said and that one was free to twist facts or even lie to attain one's goals.

The evolution of public relations occurred in the United States of America, when a mass agitation was carried out between 1860-65 and 1900 to remove a railway route. The motto raised there was 'Public be informed,' which eventually became the Public Relation principle.

When discussing the history of public relations, some experts recount prehistoric events such as 'The Sermon of Mounts' and other such historic occurrences to demonstrate that the tradition of public relations is very old. Inevitably, the way public relations are described today will no longer suffice to maintain it in the category of PR.

Earlier some ruling persons, Rajas, Samrats, Dharamgurus, poets, and other experts were concerned about the people's verdict, but their efforts should be categorized as public leisure. When the western countries experienced the industrial revolution in the mid-nineteenth century, the PR system arose. Previously, during the French Revolution, the message of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity was widely disseminated, creating a suitable environment for revolutionaries. However, this message was the result of the current situation rather than scientific reasoning or any methodology. On the contrary, in the twentieth century, the campaign effort of Bolshevik revolutionaries was better coordinated. People were drawn to their posters, leaflets, and other printed materials.

People's attention was drawn to their posters, pamphlets, and other printouts, but that does not fall under the current definition of PR. The 'committee for faith propaganda' of Roman Catholics or the 'Institute of propaganda' (founded to train priests for Dharam-prachar), which were formed between the 15th and 17th centuries, also do not fall under the current definition of PR. Actually, the profession or practice of public relations that we are discussing today began in America in the middle of the nineteenth century and grew fast towards the end of the century. People such as Mark Twain reacted harshly to the entrepreneur William Henry Vanderbilt's comment "public be dammed."

People reacted and moved away from industrialists who talked about Laissez Faire. Nowadays, not only in Western countries, but also in India, most institutions have Public Relations divisions staffed by dedicated employees. During the British Raj, the role of public relations was already recognized in central government agencies. 'War Propaganda Departments' were established at the central and state levels during WWII. Its importance became clear after independence. Many projects in the country, such as economic development and social consciousness, would not have been possible without the cooperation of the people.

As a result, public relations job was completed in a systematic manner. A cadre of public relations experts was formed in many states, and they were involved in press relations, publication, and other similar tasks. Some government information bureaus serve as public relations agents. On the one hand, the rise of electronic media such as Akashwani, Doordarshan, and a huge number of private channels has been rapid, while on the other

hand, audio-visual mediums such as video-films are widely employed. Not only on a national level, but also on an international level, a UNESCO chapter has been accepted that addresses the need for autonomous, enlarged, and balanced information propaganda in order to eliminate differentiation and establish a harmonious atmosphere all over the world.

Check your progress

1. Is advertising and marketing the same?
2. Explain the role of PR in the 19th century.
3. How is publicity different from other forms of communication?

6.5. LET'S SUM UP

This chapter familiarizes the reader with the ideas of public relations, marketing, propaganda, advertising and publicity to comprehend how they are interrelated tools of communication. Publicity and advertising are two important tools employed by PR practitioners.

Defining each of these concepts helps understand their objectives and meanings. All of them are parts of persuasive communication and share some fundamental commonalities, such as the use of mass media channels, the identification of target audiences, and the design of messages, among others. Outlining the differences and similarities between them gives an idea about each of their nature, scope, restrictions, and functions.

6.6. QUESTIONS

1. Write short notes on:
 - a. Marketing
 - b. Advertising
 - c. Publicity
 - d. Public Relations
 - e. Propaganda
2. List out the main differences and similarities between:
 - a. Marketing and advertising
 - b. Publicity and PR
 - c. PR and propaganda
3. How do publicity and advertising act as major tools of PR?
4. Write in detail how PR and political propaganda has evolved from the past few centuries?
5. Is propaganda a positive or negative tool of mass communication? Justify your answer with an example.

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MEDIA ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Unit Structure

7.0. Objectives

7.1 Introduction

7.2. Media advocacy: A tool for improved environments and population protection

7.2.1. Theories under Media Advocacy

7.2.2. Health Communication via Media Advocacy

7.3. Promoting Public Health in the Media

7.4. Case Studies on media advocacy for public health

7.4.1. Awareness for efficient tobacco reduction in India: Bihar case study

7.4.2. Using social marketing to advance public health: a case study by Rescue Agency

7.4.3. A case study of media advocacy during COVID-19 in Kolkata

7.5. Let's sum up

7.6. Questions

7.7. References

7.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Media advocacy and public health
- How media can improve

7.1. INTRODUCTION

It is novel and helpful to use the media to promote public health. A key tactic for the prevention of issues with public health is media advocacy. The way in which health issues are covered on television, radio, and in the press has a significant impact on how we perceive them and how we respond to them. Important public health policy decisions are frequently taken only after they have been brought to public attention by the media. Giving individuals a message is the primary objective of a conventional communication approach. Advocates for the media offer people a voice.

Media advocacy combines advocacy, politics, science, and communications to accomplish public health objectives. In this chapter, we will discuss how media advocacy helps public health's social justice foundation while tackling the problems of public health.

7.2. MEDIA ADVOCACY: A TOOL FOR IMPROVED ENVIRONMENTS AND POPULATION PROTECTION

Media advocacy uses theories from political science, cognitive linguistics, sociology, and other fields concerned with how public opinion is formed and political behaviour is influenced to advance and support community organizing and policy advocacy. Agenda-setting and media-framing theories, in particular, support and guide media advocacy practice. Media advocacy is more about raising voices in a democratic process and utilizing policy to change institutions and conditions than it is about conveying a message.

The majority of health communications approach their target audiences as customers, providing them with information to lower their risk of getting sick or hurt. Other communication techniques are based on exchange ideas, which hold that a lack of knowledge is the root cause of the health issue. These strategies target the problem-affected individuals with top-down messaging encouraging healthy behaviour.

Utilizing the power of the media to exert pressure on decision-makers for policy change, media advocates target policy makers and those who can be mobilized to influence them rather than the people with the health problem. The policy decision maker, who may be a single individual or a small group of committee members, is the narrow target audience for media lobbying. Although the policy reform will ultimately have an impact on entire populations, its scope is limited. People who are involved in media advocacy are more able to comprehend the value and scope of news coverage, the necessity of actively altering it, and the best ways to do it.

7.2.1. Theories under Media Advocacy

Political science, communications, and cognitive linguistics are just a few of the theoretical underpinnings and disciplines that are used in media advocacy since it combines science, politics, and advocacy. The fundamental ideas that guide media advocacy strategy are agenda setting and framing.

- **Setting an agenda:** News media set the agenda and parameters of debate for policy makers and the public so successful policy advocates pay attention to the news because it largely determines what issues we collectively think about, how we think about them and what kinds of alternatives are considered viable. Issues are not taken seriously by the

general public or policy makers until they are visible, and issues are not visible unless the media has made them so. Advocates for public health cannot afford for their challenges to go undetected or for them to be caught off guard when the day's events thrust them into the spotlight. Advocates that use media advocacy are more equipped to generate news about their issues and respond to it.

- **Framing:** A crucial aspect of media advocacy is framing, which is the process by which individuals derive meaning from all types of content, including words, images, and interactions. According to cognitive linguists, every audience has preconceived notions about how the world functions, why problems arise, and who is in charge of solving them when they encounter new information. Framing is the process of integrating new information with one's prior knowledge. People automatically and unconsciously compare new information with previously formed beliefs that have been reinforced in their thinking through time. The default frame is what we refer to as these established habits of thinking.

7.2.2. Health Communication via Media Advocacy

Since they all aim to attract attention on a tactical level—attention from the general public, policy makers, and the news—media advocacy can be confused with other health communication methods like social marketing or public information campaigns. A small audience of one or two people—such as members of a parliamentary committee or a school board, for instance—who have the authority to decide on the policies that will shape the conditions in a particular setting may be reached by media advocates via mass communication. The techniques and tactics of media advocacy maintain a clear focus on aiding in political and community activism. Public policy that promotes health is advanced through the strategic use of mass media to facilitate community organizing. By establishing the topic and guiding the conversation so that policy solutions are covered in news stories about health challenges, media advocacy aims to exert pressure on decision-makers. People can participate actively in the political process of bringing about change by using media advocacy.

Tobacco and alcohol control advocates saw the policy successes of public interest and consumer groups working on related issues in the late 1980s, which led to the development of media advocacy, the strategic use of mass media to support community organizing and advance good public policies. In contrast to public health initiatives, public interest activists used a variety of strategies and tactics that are more frequently used in political campaigns. The public health perspective offered a strong theoretical and scientific foundation for enacting change. As a result, a strategy that combines lobbying, politics, and science have been developed to advance public health objectives.

Media advocates practice at the political level to influence policy rather than intervening at the individual level to change behaviour. Research and theories from disciplines include political science, social psychology, and mass communication, such as agenda shaping and framing, are used in

media advocacy. The application of this study includes coalition building, policy advocacy, and community organizing.

Media advocacy has a number of drawbacks. A specific policy objective is needed for media advocacy. The media advocacy effort will be dispersed and ineffectual if the approach is unclear and the aim has not been clearly defined. Since media advocacy aims to empower citizens to demand change, it frequently concentrates on policy advocacy, which may necessitate lobbying that government entities and some nonprofit organizations are not permitted to engage in. Some practitioners won't be able to take part in every component of a media advocacy campaign because of the political nature of media advocacy. The ability to reach so many people simultaneously with a single message is a major limitation. However, this ability can also serve as a distraction from the policy aim. Media advocacy should not be viewed as a stand-alone strategy but rather as a tool to support community organizing and policy lobbying. Media advocacy draws the public's and policymakers' attention to the policies that can transform the social and physical environment so that it promotes health. It is a strategy used to speed up and amp up community organizing and policy advocacy.

Check your progress

1. What is media advocacy?
2. Explain health communication.
3. How can media be used as an effective tool for health communication?

7.3. PROMOTING PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE MEDIA

To achieve the ambitious goal of public health and enhance the socioeconomic determinants of health, policy is a crucial tool. The frameworks and guidelines by which we live are defined by policies. Public health professionals and community activists must be involved in policy creation and lobbying if they are to make significant and long-lasting improvements to social conditions and physical surroundings.

A tool for individuals working upstream on primary prevention policies that change surroundings is media advocacy. Public health advocates must be able to demonstrate that factors other than genetics and individual choice also have an impact on health in order to change the debate's parameters and ensure that upstream policy options are equally examined. The practice of addressing the socioeconomic determinants of health is infused with social justice values through media campaigning.

Evaluation of media advocacy is tough. Whether the targeted policy is adopted is the primary outcome indicator for media advocacy. However, it can be difficult to separate the effects of community organizing, policy lobbying, other events, or secular trends from the effects of media campaigning because policies can take years, if not decades, to pass. Due to these factors, the majority of evaluations of media advocacy are

qualitative case studies that outline the media advocacy process. The theoretical underpinnings of media advocacy have been validated by a few experiments. Due to the fact that tobacco and alcohol control policies were adopted initially, the majority of analyses of media advocacy have focused on these initiatives. Media advocacy should begin to emerge as media advocates broaden their scope of work.

Media advocates constantly evaluate their outcomes by looking at the news coverage they produce to see if they achieved their goals, how the topic was handled, and whether it appeared in publications read by their target(s). Media advocates assess success beyond a single campaign by looking at whether they have become as a go-to source for journalists. Advocates have a fantastic opportunity to contribute their data and knowledge to the stories that are written about their topic once they are a source for reporters. For media supporters, the long-term goal is to establish credibility as a media source. Additionally, media activists can evaluate whether their efforts were successful in increasing public support for the overarching objective.

Community involvement is not always the primary goal of media advocacy, but a strong campaign can gauge its success in part by the level of support it receives from the local population. After all, the more advocates for public health there are, the more pressure there will be on policymakers to develop solid public health policies.

7.4. CASE STUDIES ON MEDIA ADVOCACY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

7.4.1. Awareness for efficient tobacco reduction in India: Bihar case study

Bihar has one of the highest rates of adult tobacco consumption (54%) in the world. In Bihar, 62% of men smoke, this is higher than the national average; while over 40% of women smoke. Although more than 43% of adults in Bihar smoke beedis, the state has the highest rate of smokeless tobacco usage (49%) in the nation, and khaini—a concoction of sundried tobacco and slaked lime—is the most widely used tobacco product there. Nearly 60% of young people are said to use cigarettes in one way or another, which is a relatively high rate.

Efforts were initiated in building capacity of law enforcers and NGOs for effective implementation of tobacco control laws in the state of Bihar. Within two years of the initiative, 7 capacity building workshops were held with assistance from the State Health Society, Bihar, and SEEDS. Through these training, 196 law enforcement officers from the Health, Police, Food and Drug, Education, and other departments, 135 members of grassroots NGO staff, and 37 members of the local media were made aware of tobacco control laws and regulations.

Over the course of two years, the project's overall tobacco control activities got remarkable media coverage, including more than 50 news items in Bihar's print and online media that highlighted the state's progress in tobacco control. The activities conducted at the state and district levels attracted ongoing interest. The media extensively covered the capacity-building seminars and the strengthening of tobacco control procedures. Media representatives routinely took part in workshops and highlighted the project's successful tobacco control advancements. The State Health Society's active support and the cooperative tobacco control strategy were highly received by the media.

Given the severity of the tobacco epidemic in Bihar and the state's progress on tobacco control measures, a full feature praising the project's accomplishments in 2011 was written in a top national daily on the collaborative approach. Due to creative government-NGO partnership to advance tobacco control in the state, these training sessions received extensive coverage in the state's and districts' mainstream and vernacular media. The development of tobacco control infrastructure outside of the project districts was caused by the project's framework. The state's effective tobacco control measures now have a supportive atmosphere thanks to ongoing media coverage of the many facets of tobacco control.

7.4.2. Using social marketing to advance public health: a case study by Rescue Agency

American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) were disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 epidemic that struck the US early in 2019. Nevertheless, Tribal nations in the South and Eastern parts of the US struggled to reach the advised target of 75-80% community immunization acceptance despite subsequent efforts to disseminate the vaccine when it became available. In order to create a social marketing campaign to raise COVID-19 vaccination rates among American Indian and Alaska Native people in the Southeast United States, Rescue Agency performed research in collaboration with Tribal groups.

Some AI/AN populations resisted embracing these public health initiatives during the pandemic. A paper from the Urban Indian Health Institute suggests that Native tribes' reluctance to get the COVID-19 vaccine may be related to a longstanding mistrust of state institutions that has its roots in decades of colonization, genocide, and medical experimentation.

The problem was figuring out how to boost vaccination rates in a population that had previously experienced problems with the US healthcare system and still experiences polarized views on COVID-19. The main objective was to determine significant audience insights that would be applied to a media campaign for COVID-19 vaccinations. Through the use of a screening questionnaire, three groups of people were identified who expressed hesitation about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine: the Wait-and-Seers, the Maybe Nevers, and the Nevers. The Wait-and-Seers were the main target group for this campaign because,

according to current research, they were more receptive to communication efforts.

To better understand overall attitudes towards vaccinations and opportunities for additional education among these audiences, research was also done with Maybe Nevers and Never using a mixed-methods research strategy to analyze the knowledge, attitudes, and values of a sample of Tribal people who indicated vaccine reluctance within the three audience categories.

The main reason participants reported being hesitant to get vaccinated was a lack of study on or "proof" of the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. Concerns about vaccinations were also linked to principles of the individual, such as the freedom of choice and autonomy. Among this population, obtaining the vaccination is believed to have a number of advantages, such as the capacity to shield close relatives or elderly loved ones from unwelcome disease. By vaccination portion, some of the obstacles and motivators varied. Based on these conclusions, a strategic strategy on how to create a message that was in line with the target audience's varied characteristics and values was created. The main messaging campaign aimed to persuade adults who were Wait & See vaccine-hesitant to reevaluate their reasons for getting immunised, such as the safety of elderly and at-risk family members. Personalised messages were also developed to meet other important discoveries, such the demand for individual freedom.

Based on the results of this formative research, the Vax-A-Nation campaign was completely designed by Rescue Agency by 2021. Finding the right outlets to spread the campaign message was the last step of the campaign launch. Conversations with study participants and subject-matter specialists led to the conclusion that Tribal leaders would serve as the campaign's primary launcher. The campaign also came with a toolbox that could be customized and distributed by Tribal nations to their local populations.

The campaign serves as an example of how crucial it is to comprehend audience's unique traits and to modify messages in order to reflect their ideals. An innovative strategy for health promotion and public health practices has shown to be the use of social marketing as a tool for changing health behaviour.

7.4.3. A case study of media advocacy during COVID-19 in Kolkata

Due to the increasing number of corona cases, West Bengal initially issued a complete lockdown of all educational institutions and a partial lockdown in other sectors on March 16, 2020. The West Bengal corona problem was not mentioned on the top page of regional newspaper Anandabazar Patrika for March 16; instead, the first lead featured Maharashtra, indicating that Bengal still lacked its first case. On the national page, the regional page, and the international page, the preventive steps were reiterated numerous times.

Provocative language was used towards government and health professionals. From May on, a few more began to invade, including "Red Zone," "Green Zone," and "Orange Zone." From the first of May onward, the zones were designated according to the local Covid-19 instances. The number of cases in the area was the main focus, with awareness of the usage of "masks" and "sanitizer" taking the backseat. By June 2020; it was difficult to find news about Covid-19 or health awareness on the front pages of local newspapers due to the tension between India and China at the time. At that point, social distance had begun to fade into myth.

In September, a new direction in health communication through newspaper articles emerged. September was the month shortly prior to West Bengal Durga Puja, which was its largest event. The phrases "second wave," "masks," and "social distancing" can be found in every article of alternative news. Since awareness began in September, there was a probability that Bengal would experience a second corona wave in October. It is clear from the discourse analysis of West Bengal's most widely read regional newspaper that a full circle has been completed from raising awareness to moving towards stringent measures, breaking the chain, slowing down measures, to more politically neutral health-related news, and back to a focus on raising awareness.

The majority of the male readers preferred to read political news above public health news among all the reasons. In comparison to younger generations, elderly generations read newspapers more frequently. The age group of 60 and older reads more news about public health than the younger generation, which is more interested in political news.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, newspaper articles supported a major discourse of social cognitive behaviour thanks to media promotion. In the first several months, it was discovered that dread was a common theme in the newspapers. The front-page headlines eventually revealed significant differences in their discourses. The audience prefers current technology when it comes to learning about the condition, despite the fact that newspapers are one of the viable communication media, according to the audience behaviour analysis. Therefore, it can be seen that there are other forms of communication outside newspapers, particularly new media, which is chosen by the population.

Newspapers are the most important media for informing the public throughout the epidemic, nevertheless, when authenticity and accuracy of the content are taken into account. Newspapers were able to keep up with media campaigning throughout the Covid-19 pandemic in Kolkata by advancing scientific understanding.

Check your progress

1. Explain how policy is a crucial tool used by media advocates in promoting public health.
2. How can you evaluate media advocacy?
3. Explain the importance of newspapers in promoting public health in today's digital age.

7.5. LET'S SUM UP

The goal of public health is to make conditions better so that everyone can retain their health and prevent disability and early death. The act of adapting to new circumstances is essentially political since it forces decision-makers to balance divergent interests over finite resources. One of the few strategies available to public health professionals for influencing public discussion of these issues and ensuring that health is given priority is media advocacy.

In order to encourage a democratic process where citizens and others can engage in decisions that affect the neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, and communities that determine their health, media advocates employ mass media in its most potent form. By assisting public health professionals, activists, and citizens in framing their concerns so that the landscape of conditions is visible and public health solutions are illuminated, media advocacy accelerates and amplifies community organizing and policy lobbying.

7.6. QUESTIONS

1. Explain the role of media advocacy in promoting public health and improved environments.
2. Write about the theoretical underpinning of media advocacy and health communication.
3. What are the limitations of media advocacy in promoting public health?
4. Give an example of how media advocacy has helped improve health communication in society.
5. Create a media strategy campaign to promote the use of Ayurvedic medicines in urban cities.

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MEDIA ADVOCACY AND CHILD RIGHTS

Unit Structure

- 8.0. Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2. Children's Rights and the Media
- 8.3. Using media advocacy as an instrument to promote child rights in India
 - 8.3.1. Issues regarding children and media exposure
- 8.4. Media Network on Child Rights and Development (MNCRD)
- 8.5. Let's sum up
- 8.6. Questions
- 8.7. References

8.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Media advocacy and child rights
- How media can help promote rights of children

8.1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the topic of children's rights has come to the attention of the entire world. This inspired numerous organizations to concentrate on advancing children's rights in other nations. Unfortunately, the participatory and effective procedures utilized to advance these rights are lacking, which compels us to use new ones.

There is no disputing the fact that there have been numerous instances of "good" journalism recently that have raised widespread awareness of concerns involving children's rights, particularly child safety. The miserable conditions of children living in shelter homes, attracted a lot of media attention and brazenly called into question the accountability of the decision-makers.

8.2. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND THE MEDIA

Developmental issues such as child rights necessitate proper media attention. In newspapers, periodicals, radio stations, and television stations, stories about child rights issues should be regarded as matters of

national importance. Do kids possess rights? What are they, if so? And in a society that has been significantly altered by the media that children consume and interact with, how are these rights to be understood and upheld? The solutions to the issues surrounding children's rights are neither as simple as they neither appear nor as widely accepted as many people thinks they ought to be. The issues become more complicated and the solutions more divisive when we consider how media affects children.

The definition of a child's rights is an entitlement provided by the law that aims to safeguard male or female children from abuse and other actions that could endanger them. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [5] is a treaty/pact that member countries have ratified and put into effect with the intention of safeguarding and preserving children from all kinds of abuse. The UN pushed its members to domesticate the UNCRC in their respective nations. The following are listed as a child's rights in the Child Rights Act of 2003:

- **Right to Survival and Development:** Every kid has the right to live and develop into an adult, regardless of their nation, tribe, religion, status, or background.
- **Right to Name:** Male or female children under the age of 18 have the right to a name that distinguishes them from other people. This requires that each child have a name by which they can be identified.
- **Right to Private and Family Life:** By law, a kid is entitled to a place to live with a family. This means that everyone has the right to respect a child's right to privacy in his or her own family or home.
- **Freedom of Association and Peaceful Assembly:** A child has the right to interact freely and without restriction with everyone, regardless of their ethnicity, sex, religion, cultural background, or age. In other words, a child has the freedom to socialize with whomever they choose, as well as the right to live in a tranquil household or community, as the case may be.
- **Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion:** A child is free to believe whatever religion they want to without adult, parental, or guardian interference. They also have the right to think about whatever they choose and have the freedom to have a conscience, which is the ability to know what is right or wrong.
- **Right to Freedom of Movement:** Every youngster has the right to be able to move freely from one area to another without any restrictions.
- **Right to Freedom from Discrimination:** The freedom from all forms of discrimination and unfairness in society is a fundamental right for children. In other words, society has no right to treat children unfairly and as inferior human beings.

- **Right to Dignity:** Every kid has the right to be treated with respect for their own dignity, which means that society, in particular parents, guardians, and society, has a responsibility to do so. This means that children should always be spoken to respectfully because it could lower their self-esteem. Even though it's obviously wrong, children shouldn't be forced to work in jobs or environments that will diminish their dignity. Examples of such jobs include child prostitution, child trafficking, child abuse, and other activities that can lower a kid's dignity.
- **Right to Leisure, Recreation, and Cultural Activities:** According to the law, every child is entitled to the enjoyment of leisure, recreation, and cultural activities throughout their childhood. This means that a child should be permitted to take a nap after school or on any other day, as well as to play and be taken to recreation areas like beaches, theme parks, museums, theatres, and other stress-relieving locations. They should be permitted to learn about their culture, which comprises of their beliefs and language, as well as any folklore or stories that are culturally based, and they have the right to engage in and learn about cultural events.
- **Right to Healthcare:** According to the UNCRC, a male or female child has the right to be healthy and to receive appropriate health care from the day of birth until adulthood. It is expected of parents and guardians to engage in healthy behaviours that will benefit the child. These procedures include polio vaccinations, prenatal care, and postpartum care.
- **Right to Parental care, Protection and Maintenance:** Every kid is entitled to good parental care, which includes correct upbringing, protection from damage, and maintenance of the child's development till adulthood, according to the law.
- **Right of a Child to Free, Compulsory and Universal Primary Education:** Every youngster needs access to primary education. So, every child has the legal right to get at least a fundamental education. This means that regardless of the child's gender, every parent or guardian is responsible for ensuring that the youngster receives an education.
- **Right of an Unborn Child to Protection against Harm:** A pregnant lady has a responsibility to protect her unborn child by going to her antenatal check-ups, where a medical professional will do a scan to make sure the child is in a healthy location, as well as by receiving additional medical treatments. Additionally, the woman must abstain from behaviours that can harm the unborn child, such as consuming drugs or alcohol.

Check your progress

1. Explain how media can help in advancing children's rights.
2. Do children have any rights? Explain.
3. How does media affect children?

8.3. USING MEDIA ADVOCACY AS AN INSTRUMENT TO PROMOTE CHILD RIGHTS IN INDIA

The largest percentage of children in the world resides in India. Additionally, it boasts one of the largest and most complicated media ecosystems in the entire world, together with over three million civil society organizations (csos). India, a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, has passed numerous ground-breaking laws and activities to protect children's rights. However, poor budgetary allocation for children has resulted in significant execution gaps.

According to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the written and audiovisual media are crucial in attempts to put the Convention's standards and guiding principles into practice. The media has already played a significant role in raising awareness of the Convention and its provisions in many nations.

The media may be crucial in observing how the rights of children are actually upheld. The media presents an "image" of the child in their reporting; they reflect and shape perceptions of what youngsters are like and how they behave. This portrayal could inspire respect for young people and express that respect, but it also has the potential to reinforce stereotypes and prejudices that could harm public opinion and politicians. The rights of children benefit from nuanced and knowledgeable reporting.

Given that current technology, including satellites, satellite channels, the internet, computers, and mobile phones, has reduced the world to a small village, using the media to advocate for children's rights can be quite effective right now. Thus, we may advocate for children's rights not just on a national level but also on a worldwide level by using the media to highlight the issues that children face in their communities. By doing this, we will convey a message about development education to all the other nations in the world about the issues children face and the violations of their rights. Various international NGOs working on the subject of human rights will also help us. Several parties are required in order to effectively and successfully advocate for children's rights through the media. Together, they can accomplish this goal. These parties can include the state, foreign NGOs, businesses, and local communities.

Through their many areas, they can offer technical assistance, qualified people resources, and funding. They work together to accomplish this goal. The government, foreign NGOs, the commercial sector, and local communities are some examples of these parties. Each of these parties has an extremely crucial role to play that makes the entire circle complete.

Through their many areas, they can offer technical assistance, skilled labour, and financial resources.

For example, the government can provide technical support through its national councils, like the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), which can offer qualified volunteers through their institutions, like Mass Media majors. By airing them on its national TV and radio channels and mentioning them in its national publications, the government can also assist the media initiatives undertaken to advance children's rights. Additionally, the private sector can help with this idea by providing funds for relevant activities and production firms to assist in the creation of specific media activities. As for NGOs, it is their job to build programs that bring together various media activities that support children's rights in order to transform this idea from its abstract form into a concrete one. This responsibility will be split between the NGOs and local development organizations.

As significant as the aforementioned parties' roles are, we must emphasize that without children's involvement, a crucial element of the process would be lost because no one can express an idea, an issue, or a message more effectively than its source. Children must therefore be at the center of the entire process of making this idea a reality. They must be included at every level of the process, from planning through review. We must accept their suggestions and assign them a portion of the responsibility for carrying out the various activities.

Children can be so amazing and offer so much. To enable these kids to participate effectively, we must, nevertheless, increase their capacities and skills. This can be achieved by providing them with the necessary training, such as in interviews, photography, story writing, leadership, and training trainers. They can also go to seminars to learn about their responsibilities to themselves, other kids in their communities, and the law. Children can also get knowledge from peers who have already engaged in initiatives connected to supporting children's rights in the media.

8.3.1. Issues regarding children and media exposure

It is crucial that media outlets themselves do not mistreat kids. A child's identity should be safeguarded in reporting on issues like family conflict, sexual abuse, and engagement in criminal activity. Thankfully, the media has voluntarily decided to follow laws that safeguard children's privacy in several nations; but, these moral standards are not always upheld. Concern has also been raised regarding how media violence and pornography, in particular, on television programs, can affect youngsters. How to shield children from violence in television, video games, and other contemporary media is a topic of discussion in a number of nations.

Again, attempts at voluntary agreements have been made, with varying results. Article 17 of the Convention raises this specific issue and urges the creation of adequate rules "for the protection of the child from information and material harmful to his or her well-being." Journalists must be conscious of the effects of their reporting. For all those who work

to expand the acknowledgement of children's rights, the cooperation of media organizations and journalists, as well as their attitude towards preserving the rights and dignity of children and young adults, is crucial. Reporting and documenting child protection issues entails much more than merely covering a stunning news story. Bringing up the subject of children's rights and protection in public discourse and policy making results in a serious attempt to document the path taken to obtain justice.

The challenge of raising widespread knowledge about children's rights requires a substantial, long-term commitment and strong political resolve. In our nation, there are millions of hungry children who also live in incredibly unsafe conditions, are frequently molested, and work as children rather than attending school. It is extremely difficult for modern media to ethically continue covering child rights issues and keep them alive.

8.4. MEDIA NETWORK ON CHILD RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT (MNCRD)

The Media Network on Child Rights and Development (MNCRD) is a thriving, membership-driven media organization with the mission of educating and preparing children and the media to cover topics related to child rights and development. In order to achieve policy change and execution, it collaborates with the government, civil society, collaborating partners, kids, and journalists to make sure that children's voices and issues are heard in the media.

- **Vision:** A society in which the rights of children are recognized, given top priority, and upheld.
- **Mission:** We strive to provide child rights programming, media/advocacy/awareness-raising skills, and involve them in promoting the upholding of children's rights and welfare by interacting with the media, civil society organizations, children, traditional leaders, elected representatives, and pertinent government departments.

OBJECTIVES:

- Bringing attention to the issue of children
- Promoting the protection of children's rights
- To encourage media activism on children to encourage professionalism, moral principles, and veracity in reporting on children
- To advance gender equality and safe maternity as two factors contributing to the advancement of healthy children
- To encourage the use of electronic, print, and ict to highlight concerns affecting children.
- Creating skills and providing resources to aid and nurture journalists who wish to cover children's issues

- To host events that would highlight and encourage children's potential
- To learn about and look into factors that make kids vulnerable
- Increasing children's potential and fighting for their rights

The Children's News Agency (CNA), with funding from Save the Children International (SCI), the British Council, Hivos Southern Africa Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and the East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), empowers children with media skills to influence government, civil society, parents, and elected representatives to take up roles in upholding child rights. The Children's Media Monitoring Project (CMMP) keeps an eye on the news to identify accurate and unreliable reporting. The youngsters visit newsrooms to ask editors about their reporting after the media's transgressions are revealed, with assistance from the Zambian offices of Save the Youngsters International (SCI) and ESARO. The Child Discussion or Dialogue Forums (CDF) or main hall debates, which are sponsored by Save the Children and the Commonwealth Foundation, bring journalists together with members of civil society, child rights advocates, government officials, and elected officials to discuss issues pertaining to children's rights.

With assistance from the Firelight Foundation, the Commonwealth Foundation, and the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, media training increases the capacity of the media to ask questions that hold responsible parties accountable. Duty bearers and children are featured on radio programs, and listeners have the chance to call the panelists to ask questions concerning the Firelight Foundation-supported protection of children's rights. Activities for child development and protection involve the general public and responsibility bearers. The Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA), Commonwealth Foundation, British Council, and Firelight Foundation support child development and protection activities that engage the public and duty bearers on a range of issues, including education, health, birth registration, social protection, child safeguarding, child rights programming, sexual gender-based violence/HIV, and child abuse, using platforms to hold people accountable.

Check your progress

1. How can media advocacy be used to promote child rights?
2. Explain the vision and mission of MNCRD.
3. Are children at risk when exposed to the media?

8.5. LET'S SUM UP

Media can be used as a powerful weapon for advancing children's rights. This is so that different degrees of individuals can be persuaded, and their level of awareness of a particular issue increases. We have TV, for instance, with all of its programs and talk shows that may address a wide range of subjects and speak to a variety of people. TV series and shows have tackled a variety of issues in the past, including drug addiction and

domestic issues, and have proven to be more persuasive and successful than orientation sessions or other conventional methods of imparting information or offering counsel.

Additionally, newspapers are particularly efficient at making a particular subject seem important and relevant to the general audience. Besides, there are other media forms, such as plays, conferences, and documentaries that could have a comparable impact on supporting children's rights.

8.6. QUESTIONS

1. Explain the role of media advocacy in promoting children's rights in India.
2. Write a note on Media Network on Child Rights and Development. How does it help in advancing child rights via media?
3. Is it dangerous to use media to improve children's conditions? How can this be tackled?
4. List down some of the rights of children provided by UNCRC.
5. Create a media advocacy campaign to advance children's basic rights in a village near your hometown.
6. There has been an incident of child sexual abuse in your niece's school. Plan a media strategy to help children understand this issue and how this can be prevented in the future. Remember to be sensitive about it, with the aim to protect the children without scaring them or harming their innocence. Ensure to add different concepts like the 'good touch' and 'bad touch'.

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MEDIA ADVOCACY AND DISABILITY

Unit Structure

- 9.0. Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2. Media Advocacy as a tool for highlighting issues of disability
 - 9.2.1. Social media and disability advocacy organizations
 - 9.2.2. Video Advocacy
- 9.3. Case studies on media advocacy for disability
 - 9.3.1. Disability & Media Alliance Project
 - 9.3.2. Ethiopia's FEAPD, in collaboration with the ILO-SPPFM Project
 - 9.3.3. Voice of Specially-Abled People (VOSAP)
 - 9.3.4. Handbook for Civil Society Organizations by UNESCO
- 9.4. Let's sum up
- 9.5. Questions
- 9.6. References

9.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Media advocacy and disability
- How media can be used to promote disability

9.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, we learned how utilizing the media to improve public health and gender issues is beneficial. The use of any medium to advance an organization's or a business's aims or goals that stem from the group's vision and mission is known as media advocacy. Media advocates, or those who seek to promote organizations and causes, are aware that the media can reach the widest audience in the shortest amount of time with a public or social policy message.

Media advocacy can be used as a crucial strategy for preventing problems with disability. Our perceptions of disability and disabled people are considerably influenced by how they are presented to us by the media. Policies and laws revolving around disability are often based on how they have been covered by the media. A traditional communication strategy's main goal is to convey a message to people.

The general public should be made aware of the real causes or factors that contribute to disabilities and the difficulties surrounding them, as well as the idea of a united community. It can be used to encourage other professionals and citizens to learn more about and get involved with disability concerns in general.

To achieve these goals, media advocacy incorporates advocacy, politics, science, and communications. In this chapter, we'll learn how media advocacy promotes benefits for persons with disabilities and the role of social media regarding the same.

9.2. MEDIA ADVOCACY AS A TOOL FOR HIGHLIGHTING ISSUES OF DISABILITY

Practically every facet of life involves the media, especially the Internet in today's time. In many ways, the Internet has changed how people with (or without) disabilities access information, communicate with one another, and form communities. The Internet, along with technological advancements and devices like computers, smartphones, and tablets, as well as software to access the Internet, has played a large role in this. We see how individuals, journalistic organizations, political parties, civic authorities, etc. attempt to traverse this terrain in this era of evolving communication patterns. In and through digital media, new and prospective forms of communities and power are negotiated but remain in relation to offline systems. Social media today is used by both individuals and many organizations.

Although the entire effect of such advancements is still unknown, it is widely agreed that they will have a long-term impact on our society. The great bulk of research on disabilities and online media to date has emphasized accessibility and access. Given that people with disabilities use the Internet and social media less than the average person; these issues are still valid today. This disparity supports the notion of a "digital divide," which remains a common issue among internet researchers.

9.2.1. Social media and disability advocacy organizations

Social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to communicate with one another, to make new acquaintances, to exchange and receive knowledge about many topics, and maybe to garner public sympathy for their cause. Additionally, advocacy groups use social media to educate and encourage their members, to represent their members' interests in society.

Today, we increasingly observe how advocacy groups, including those working in the disability field, use social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Snapchat to promote their organizations among their current members and attract new ones, foster a sense of community among their users, and participate in public discourse on issues affecting their users. Over the past ten years, social media, as embodied by major global media firms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube, has risen in significance and size in the lives of many people seeking information, entertainment, and community. Around 2 billion individuals use social media globally, and as of late 2018, Facebook had 2.2 billion monthly users worldwide, YouTube had 1.9 billion, and Instagram had 1 billion users.

Both our daily lives and important political processes are allegedly impacted by social media. It influences how we see our own self-identity and how we are represented, and through a number of media, we establish our own unique public "brand" and (perhaps) connect in novel ways that cross conventional boundaries. In order to share experiences, strengthen identities, and take action, new interest-based groups are formed.

Social media is purportedly capable of facilitating large-scale social mobilization, with well-known examples being the Arab Spring upheavals or the 2016 US presidential election. According to media researchers like Hjarvard (2013) and Lundby (2014), anyone with a message to spread can do so in modern culture. They refer to the process as "mediatization" because it involves conforming to media logics. We observe it, for instance, in politics, both in terms of religion and business. The message must be 'packaged' into media-friendly chunks and disseminated to the general public via (increasingly digital) media outlets.

The influence of a digital gap on handicapped people's lives has been extensively discussed in the past ten years, with the majority of the writing focusing on concerns related to accessibility and social inclusion. As a result, it may be said that these difficulties are relevant to both disability and internet studies' main points. Generally speaking, advocacy work is seen as a prominent aspect of nonprofit organizations' operations since it enables them to interact with and represent their constituents. Giving voice to many viewpoints and demands, advancing social and/or economic justice, fostering a more active civil society, and enhancing democracy and equality of opportunity are a few examples of this type of activity. It's a common belief that advocacy organizations can use social media to spark dialogues that quickly spread among various populations.

On the other hand the majority of organizations receive little to no attention, and advocacy organizations do not always provide messages that spark extensive dialogues among social media users. The bulk of organizations get little to no attention in social media user dialogues. However, in public settings, dialogues typically social media communication is frequently referred to as the soul of democracy and is used to raise awareness of advocacy topics that are seen as significant by the constituency.

9.2.2. Video Advocacy

Video advocacy creates documentary campaigns for social and political change using modern picture technology, as well as visual proof, first-person narratives, and precise audience targeting. In many sectors, including disability, organized advocacy and grassroots action have been greatly influenced by video advocacy, which has also emerged as a powerful new instrument for the non-profit social justice sector. Digital technology, especially the pervasive use of video storytelling, has exploded as communications media have changed because it encourages a culture of involvement and sharing.

Check your progress

1. What is video advocacy?
2. Explain the role of social media in disability advocacy organizations.
3. How does the digital gap influence the lives of handicapped people?

9.3. CASE STUDIES ON MEDIA ADVOCACY FOR DISABILITY

Some people promote the moral presumption that the best ways to fight for the good cause is through picketing, chanting, and public fervour. However, current technology, namely social networking sites and mobile apps, offers a plethora of new avenues to campaign for the rights of persons with disabilities as digitalization quickly spreads into our homes, schools, and places of employment. People who use social networking sites frequently have heard about subcultures on the internet, including Asian-American Twitter, Black Twitter, and Feminist Twitter

These online subcultures frequently discuss sociocultural concerns that affect local neighbourhoods and inspire viral hashtags like #Being Asian, #Black Lives Matter, and #MeToo that captivate the attention of the mainstream media. A developing phenomenon that might be referred to as Disability Twitter is among these social issues and frequently intersects with them. Here, disabled activists discuss cultural, social, and political issues that affect the disability community using hashtags like #Crip The Vote (accessible voting), #Disability Too White (limited representation of people of colour with disabilities), and #Suck It Ableism (ban on plastic straws). They also share personal narratives accompanied by hashtags like #Ableds Are Exhausting, #Disabled And Cute, and #This Is Ableism. Such initiatives have been expanded to social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, further bringing disability rights to the attention of internet users everywhere and fostering discussion and accessibility-related solutions.

With mobile devices connecting two-thirds of the world's population, using phone apps has become commonplace for many individuals. While many people use these applications for work and play, others use them to promote causes connected to justice, particularly access for those with

disabilities. For instance, Wheelmap is a website that enables users to find and mark locations that are accessible in seven different languages. A traffic light system that indicates green markings are wheelchair accessible, yellow markings have limited wheelchair access, and red markings are not wheelchair accessible is used to rate each place.

9.3.1. Disability & Media Alliance Project

The Disability and Media Alliance Project (D-MAP) was started by DREDF in 2008. The programme aims to shift the focus away from sensational, syrupy, and inaccurate disability coverage that undercuts the legal and public policy developments of the previous 25 years and towards coverage that increases public awareness and aids in the eradication of disability discrimination.

With the intention of advancing factual reporting of disability issues and fostering good perceptions of persons with disabilities, D-MAP is a framework for monitoring and informing disability coverage in news reports, dramatic representations, and reporting on the Internet.

Images and stories in the media shape ideas and create social norms. People with disabilities have been subjected to inaccurate portrayals, slander, and underrepresentation in the news and entertainment industries. Despite the fact that the disability rights movement has made significant progress over the past 30 years via the adoption of laws, policies, and civil rights campaigns, our movement has not yet succeeded in changing the attitudes of those who do not have a disability. Many people still do not recognize disabilities as issues of rights. People with disabilities are rarely regarded as individuals outside of the context of their infirmities because stigmas and fears about them are so deeply embedded in our culture and the media. People with disabilities have been institutionalized, degraded, and abandoned in their wake for generations.

Negative and false views and attitudes about what it means to live with a handicap have been left in their wake by the history of humiliating, isolating, and institutionalizing individuals with disabilities. The media's coverage, which frequently depends on outdated prejudices and inaccurate information, embraces and reflects these attitudes. Disability requires more in-depth and critical consideration. The media may be a significant ally in eradicating stigma and false information, changing public opinions, ending prejudice, and increasing public knowledge.

9.3.2. Ethiopia's FEAPD, in collaboration with the ILO-SPPFM Project

The EU-funded ILO/UNICEF joint project on "Improving Synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management (SP-PFM)" partnered with the Federation of Ethiopian Associations of Persons with Disabilities (FEAPD) to support capacity building and stronger advocacy among media practitioners on disability inclusion within social protection systems in order to promote efforts towards increasing knowledge of disability rights and inclusion among stakeholders in Ethiopia.

A training workshop was held on September 22 and 23, 2022 at the Adama Robi Hotel, by FEAPD and the ILO-SPPFM Project. It was attended by 27 people from media outlets, social security organizations, the government, and civil society organizations. The training's main goals were to increase the media's contribution to the country's inclusive social protection systems, provide opportunities for learning and experience sharing among various media institutions in order to encourage increased investment in inclusive social protection by all actors, at all levels. The workshop generated enthusiasm among public and private media outlets to promote disability problems in media programming in addition to knowledge development and information sharing on disability inclusion in social protection systems.

Nine media outlets agreed to submit a proposal to FEAPD for the formulation of a program, the production of a media product, and the dissemination of information on the inclusion of people with disabilities in social protection through TV, radio, and print media after the training workshop. As a result, these media organizations committed to fighting for the inclusion of people with disabilities in social protection, focusing on the following issues: "Disability assessment for social protection using a human-rights approach."

Accessibility, the provision of assistive devices, the availability of sign language interpreters, and other services that could be categorised as disability support services and included in the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). Additional transfers for people with impairments to cover the costs of their disabilities in interventions involving cash transfers under the PSNP.

The government is expected to review the National Social Protection Strategy (2016) and the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP 2014) in favour of mainstreaming disability in PSNP programs using a twin-track approach (inclusion and/or disability-focused services) and to create additional fiscal space to accommodate for disability costs and the provision of disability-focused services. As a result, individuals with disabilities will be better able to participate in the Public Works (PW) and Direct Support) parts of the national PSNP V program, and they will also be able to take advantage of more concessions that will enhance their quality of life and that of their families.

9.3.3. Voice of Specially-Abled People (VOSAP)

The Voice of Specially-Abled People (VOSAP) organization, based in India, developed a phone app with the same name that crowd sources accessibility data for use in educating and raising awareness among community leaders. Users of VOSAP can also vow to take action in favour of those with disabilities so that communities can communicate with related parties.

Another smartphone app with a self-reporting feature is Parking Mobility, though users can report abuse of handicapped parking spaces using this service. Such complaints are sent to the local law enforcement in cooperating areas, and tickets are mailed to the owner of the car. Numerous other phone apps for personal assistance are available, including Medication Reminder for those with Alzheimer's and dementia and Be My Eyes (navigation for the blind and visually impaired), RogerVoice (subtitled phone calls), Miracle Modus (self-relief for Autistic people), and Be My Eyes (navigation for the blind and visually impaired). These several phone apps have made it possible for users to advocate for themselves and distribute accessibility knowledge in a variety of ways.

9.3.4. Handbook for Civil Society Organizations by UNESCO

A new book titled Making Yourself Heard/Getting Your Message Across: A Handbook for Civil Society Organisations was formally released by UNESCO on August 27, 2021. The Media Diversity Institute commissioned this work, which was created as part of the UNESCO project "Towards Inclusion: Strengthening the Capacity of Chinese Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to Advocate for Marginalised Groups through increased Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Skills" with the goal of helping CSOs understand the media agenda and provide effective advocacy tactics.

The Handbook includes practical advice along with globally and locally pertinent case studies regarding the situations and problems CSO may encounter when dealing with the media, from making the first contact, writing press releases, to conducting interviews and camouflaging. Its original English version was written by Mr. Mike Jempson, Honorary Director of the MediaWise Trust, and its Chinese case studies were written by Ms. Li Jun, Associate Professor from Shantou University. Ms. Peng Yujiao and Ms. Pan Meihao from Beijing Enable Sister Centre (BEST) introduced their media campaign titled "Stories of women with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic" on behalf of the project's beneficiaries. A total of 28 interview articles detailing the lives of 28 women with various forms of disabilities from throughout China were published on BEST Wechat Account as part of the campaign from February to May 2020. The story series has amassed over 10,000 views from the neighbourhood and wider public as of May 2020. The discussion sparked by the tale has drawn more than 300 women with impairments.

They gave insightful input on the difficulties experienced by women with disabilities throughout the pandemic. BEST implemented an online project called "Warm Heart Package" in response to their indicated requirements, and as a result, 161 disabled women have received help by receiving medical supplies during lockdown times.

The Chinese UN system is dedicated to assisting more people, especially the poor and marginalized, including individuals with disabilities, to benefit from better living conditions and more chances for economic, social, and cultural development. UNESCO strives to increase the capacity

of journalists, media professionals, and CSOs in reporting on and advocating for people with disabilities and other marginalized groups in a human rights-based way as a member of the UN Country Team and Chair of the UN Theme Group on Disability in China. Media and information literacy (MIL) is promoted by UNESCO as a crucial skill for employment and success in all facets of life. MIL-competent citizens are aware, involved, and empowered. They are also able to recognize the hazards of misinformation as well as the cycle of bigotry and exclusion. By equipping citizens, especially young people, the elderly, and members of marginalized groups with MIL competences, more voices may be heard, digital inclusion is enabled, and social inclusion opportunities are improved.

Check your progress

1. Explain how mobile apps are used by media advocates in raising awareness on disability issues.
2. How has social media created online subcultures to discuss and advocate issues regarding disability?
3. Explain how the media's coverage has negatively impacted persons with disabilities.

9.4. LET'S SUM UP

As seen, the media and digital technology have created innovative approaches to problems important to the disability community, enabling allies and self-advocates sharing information about resources, triumphs, and current difficulties. The significance of disability rights, access, and representation in the 21st century is thus made clearer by just opening your computer, tablet, or phone to traverse these concerns and other related intersecting causes.

9.5. QUESTIONS

1. Explain the role of media advocacy in improving the lives of the disabled people in India.
2. Write about the relation between internet and media advocacy organization in raising awareness about disabilities.
3. With the help of a case study, explain how the media can be useful in eradicating stigma and false information, changing public opinions and increasing public awareness regarding disabilities.
4. Explain in detail any two case studies on how media advocacy has helped improve the situation of disabilities.
5. Create a media advocacy campaign to help increase awareness of the issues faced by blind people in rural areas.

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