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Role of Media in Rural Society: A Sociological Study

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Abstract

The soul of India resides in rural areas, about three quarters of population lives in rural India and engaged in agricultural or traditional pursuits. In those remote areas the only means of exchange of information and ideas in the lives of people is mass media. Both print and electronic media, recognized as the fourth pillar of any nation, bear a substantial and crucial social responsibility. These media outlets can serve as guiding lights to inform, enlighten, educate and inspire Indian rural society. There exists a reciprocal influence between media and society. The media's vital role involves delivering accurate, unbiased, timely, constructive, and critical information to the public. It can disseminate details about various initiatives, systems, and procedures to educate rural citizens. Providing wholesome entertainment also falls within the media's responsibilities. Media also giving massage about development to the people for creating mindset for change in society. The media's function is particularly crucial for disadvantaged groups, local language users, and marginalized sections of society. This research paper will discuss the obligations and duties of media towards the rural part of Indian society.

Keywords: Role, Media, Rural Society, Social Development.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between media and rural society is symbiotic. Media loses its significance without rural society, while rural society remains uninformed and isolated without media. This connection is founded on the process of communication. While Indian society possesses basic knowledge on various topics, it lacks comprehensive understanding of cutting-edge technology and media processes. Many citizens are focused on securing essential needs or pursuing advanced technologies, often struggling to grasp and properly utilize them. Media strives to enhance awareness about these issues. Amidst widespread media coverage, numerous individuals seek to acquire and disseminate the latest information, potentially leading to the spread of misconceptions within society. Media can play a vital role in addressing these misunderstandings.

Typically, 'Media' encompasses various communication channels such as newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet. The phrase can also be used to refer to news reporting organisations or the press as a whole. In this situation, the media has the ability to inform, educate, and influence public opinion all at once. Metropolitan, semi metropolitan, urban, semi-urban, rural, and interior/tribal/informationally isolated groups are the six categories into which observations indicate society can be separated. Interestingly, more than 70% of people live in rural areas. These regions are underdeveloped, and their advancement is crucial for the progress of Indian society. As rural Indian communities develop, India will



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emerge as a global leader, given its unparalleled capacity to provide multitalented youth and individuals, favourable climate for diverse agricultural production, natural agricultural processes, artisanal skills, innovative technical solutions (jugaad technology), and fundamental education and learning systems. Anjela Kumari (2009:160) elucidated the distinction between developed and developing nations, stating, 'A developed nation provides most of its citizens with a stable personal environment. A developing country doesn't. The developing countries of today were formerly developed countries. When European commerce was introduced, their political and social institutions diverged, causing them to shift. Political development may be aided by the reintegration of social and political systems if the structure of international trade changes soon. Improving India's rural areas should be the main priority for those who want to see the nation thrive and have an influence on the world stage. According to seasoned journalist Prof. Pradeep Mathur (July-Dec. 2006: 53-54), "India, a country that is positioned to grow into a significant power that may influence global events, has to prioritise rural development. However, this aspiration can only be realized when we achieve internal harmony, equitable economic practices, and social cohesion. True progress stems not from a rigid system that suppresses dissent, but from an inclusive approach where everyone has an equal voice. The pursuit of rural development should aim to empower marginalized sections of society. This embodies the essence of democracy and represents an area where media can and must play a vital role."

McQuail (2000:79-80) outlines the fundamental roles of media in society as follows:

Providing information about events and situations in society and around the world; emphasising power dynamics; and encouraging creativity, adaptation, and advancement.

Providing interpretations, explanations, and commentary on the meanings and information of events; sustaining established authority and norms; promoting socialisation; coordinating various activities; fostering consensus; establishing priority hierarchies and signalling relative status are all examples of correlation.

Continuity Promoting and upholding common ideals; Recognising subcultures and new cultural trends while showcasing the dominant culture.

Providing entertainment, distraction, and relaxation possibilities; reducing social stress.

Mobilisation: Promoting social goals in economic development, politics, war, labour, and sometimes religion.

To fulfil its potential as a global influencer, India must prioritize the advancement of its rural areas. This involves creating a unified nation free from internal conflicts, establishing a just economic framework, and fostering a cohesive social structure. The path to rural development lies in empowering underprivileged groups, which aligns with democratic principles. In this context, the media has a significant responsibility to contribute to and promote these efforts.

Review of the literature

Gangopadhyay. (2012) Women have traditionally been portrayed in Indian ads in a variety of settings and situations. The way women are portrayed in Indian ads has changed dramatically over time, reflecting shifting social mores and standards. At first, a lot of advertisements reinforced stereotyped gender roles by showing women in traditional roles like housewives and carers. However, as Indian society progressed and women gained more independence and opportunities, advertisements began to reflect these changes. Modern Indian ads now often depict women as confident professionals, entrepreneurs, and decisionmakers, breaking away from traditional gender norms. While this shift is a positive sign of



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progress towards gender equality, challenges remain. There are still certain ads that objectify women and uphold unattainable beauty standards, underscoring the need for ongoing attention to encourage more inclusive and strong representations of women in Indian advertising. All things considered, the representation of women in Indian ads shows how gender roles are continuously changing in society, with both encouraging developments and enduring difficulties.

Choudhury Payel Sen (2011) asserts in his paper "Media in Development Communication" that communication has numerous uses beyond merely disseminating data and facts. It is frequently employed to motivate people to engage in positive activities. This kind of conversation is referred to as "development communication."

Everett Rogers defined communication for development as "the use of communication to promote development". As a result, it may be defined as a mode of communication that disseminates useful knowledge to local populations. Aside from its socializing function, which aims to preserve some of society's long-standing norms and values, development communication also plays a transformative function, helping to steer social change in the direction of the generation's current preference for personal cleanliness in an increasingly competitive market.

Das, Rupsayar (2012). The representation of violence against women in Indian print media is a complex and evolving issue. While the media serves as a powerful tool to shed light on these critical societal problems, it often faces challenges in striking a balance between raising awareness and maintaining ethical reporting standards. Sensationalism, victim-blaming, and the depersonalization of victims remain concerns, as they can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and fail to address the root causes of such violence. However, there is a growing recognition of the media's responsibility in shaping public opinion and influencing social change. With an emphasis on the larger context and structural problems surrounding violence against women, advocates and organisations are putting up endless effort to promote more responsible and sensitive reporting. A safer and more just society for all can be fostered by the Indian print media by offering truthful, sympathetic, and context-rich coverage.

S. Bakshi (2011). Information and communication technology's importance in remote places to provide widespread access to information and communication technology, nations all around the world use programs like public service funds and other forms of government initiatives. due to their significant contribution to the nation's progress. The use of information and communication technology may give people in rural areas access to markets, banking, financial services and employment prospects in urban and suburban areas.

Various media technologies are designed to reach large audiences. Electronic or broadcast media, such as television, radio, films, and certain visual devices like cameras and video recorders, disseminate information electronically. In contrast, print media utilize physical objects to convey information, including newspapers, magazines, brochures, newsletters, books, leaflets, and pamphlets (**Potter, 2008**).

A development journalist is one who actively seeks out local sources of knowledge in addition to the wellproduced press releases and briefings from well-funded international organisations. These journalists need to have the guts to offer locally created answers to urgent development problems. By giving voice to the voiceless, analysing a nation's strengths and flaws, and figuring out how to help the country, they use journalism as a tool for social justice by travelling to remote locations to report on occurrences (Fleury, 2008).

As prior research indicates, the unequal distribution of media is not limited to urban and rural regions; it also occurs within these regions. In the majority of developing nations, radio is more generally accessible



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than television, which has the biggest disparity. Even radio access differs by social class, though. In developing countries, the majority of rural residents are reported to be "under communication." Similar to how other resources are distributed unevenly, there are still significant disparities that limit the potential use of mass media in rural areas. There are also significant questions about how information might contribute to more equitable rural development, even in areas with widespread access to mass media

(Pisal, 2014).

Additionally, it was noted that only 51% of African women over the age of 15 are literate, whereas 67% of men are. Because of this circumstance, it was claimed that women's entrepreneurship is an untapped potential source of social cohesion, economic growth, and job creation (Nwoye, 2007).

There are differing opinions on mass media's role in society, with some viewing it as a sedative for the masses and others considering it essential to human civilization. In our globalized, knowledge-driven world, adaptation is necessary to keep pace with ongoing changes. Mass media often faces ethical scrutiny, and at times, it disseminates inaccurate information that disrupts social harmony. Media professionals have a duty to thoroughly investigate matters before publishing. They should prioritize factual, impartial, and truthful reporting over sensationalized narratives. Media should remain unbiased and strive to foster political, economic, social, and cultural citizenship (Pradipta, 2012).

Media is an undeniably swift, extensive, and influential communication channel. Its reach extends beyond a broad audience, significantly impacting a nation's political landscape and societal culture. The term "Media" encompasses films, television programs, and journalism (including newspapers and news channels). Discussions on "Ethics and Media" typically center on journalistic ethics, which shape public opinion and influence society. Media coverage spans from weather predictions to fortune-telling, seemingly addressing all topics. Given its substantial influence, any unethical or irresponsible actions in media can potentially destabilize the foundations of our comfortable existence (Anwesha Mohanty, 2012).

Research Problem

The sociological question of how the media affects rural development in India, is an interesting and relevant one. it provides an ideal setting for research on rural development, a critical issue in India. The complex dynamics of how media, including both conventional and digital forms, influences rural communities' socioeconomic development are explored in this study problem. It seeks to disentangle the complex connections between information sharing, media consumption patterns, and the influence on rural attitudes, perceptions, and participation in development projects. Additionally, this study highlights the potential and constraints that the media faces in addressing these important issues and promises to provide insight into the relative importance of local vs national media outlets in the context of rural development. The research findings, which highlight the transformative power of media in this setting, are ultimately anticipated to inspire policies and practices that can lead to more successful rural development initiatives in Nanded and beyond.

1. RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS

Despite reaching even the most isolated villages and doing their best to disseminate information as quickly as possible, there are still issues with educating, raising awareness, and advancing rural society. The issues surrounding rural development were broken down into seven categories by Dr. Sambhaji (Oct. 2014-March 2015: 339–340): people, agriculture, infrastructure, economic, social and cultural, leadership, and administrative level. However, I believe that we can separate the issues of rural development in these



regions. - India's rural development is hampered by a wide range of intricate issues at different levels. Here is a detailed examination of each:

A. Individual Level:

Widespread illiteracy and lack of awareness among individuals hinder their ability to access opportunities and improve their livelihoods.

B. Family Level:

High levels of poverty and unemployment within families limit access to basic necessities and education, perpetuating a cycle of deprivation.

C. Psychological Level:

Adoption of contemporary techniques and technologies might be hampered by traditional attitudes and resistance to change, which can delay progress.

D. Professional Level:

Limited non-farm employment opportunities lead to underemployment and seasonal unemployment, restricting economic diversification.

E. Agricultural Level:

Dependence on agriculture exposes communities to risks from unpredictable weather patterns and market fluctuations, leading to distress.

F. Indian Weather Level:

Extreme weather events brought on by climate change have an effect on crop yields and water availability, which in turn affects rural lives.

G. Infrastructural Level:

Inadequate infrastructure, such as poor roads and limited access to electricity, hampers connectivity and access to services.

H. Local Area Level:

Regional disparities and lack of tailored development programs fail to address specific local needs, leading to uneven progress.

I. Social Level:

Issues like caste discrimination and gender inequality restrict social mobility and participation in development activities.

J. Economic Level:

Limited access to credit and markets, coupled with income inequality, stifles economic growth and entrepreneurship.

K. Political Level:

Weak local governance and inadequate representation hinder effective planning and implementation of development initiatives.

L. Cultural Level:

Deep-rooted cultural practices and beliefs can sometimes resist modernization, affecting health, education, and social reforms.

M. Leadership Level:

Lack of visionary leadership at the local level can result in poor mobilization of resources and community participation.

N. Administrative Level:

Bureaucratic inefficiencies and vaguely framed organizational objectives can delay project



implementation and reduce effectiveness.

O. Media and Mass Communication Level:

Awareness of development prospects and programs is restricted by inadequate communication channels, particularly in rural areas where mass media is prevalent.

P. Interest Level:

Low levels of community engagement and participation in development processes can lead to poorly tailored interventions and lack of ownership.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach, focusing on education, infrastructure development, social reforms, and effective governance to ensure sustainable rural development.

2. Examining issues in rural development and offering general solutions -

Young people in rural India are not interested in their own personal development. because they don't want to endure any more suffering. They enjoy working in a conventional manner. Their trust in technology is seldom maintained. They frequently looked at other people's faces to make decisions for them. They believe that it is the duty of a leader, a strong individual, a hero, or, finally, that their problems cannot be resolved. They forgot that cooperation and understanding are the only ways to win any battle. Introversion, aggression, sluggishness, aversion to change and competition, lack of initiative, etc. are some of the factors contributing to the advancement and development of rural areas.

Even while everyone is aware of television shows, movies, and material possessions, they all turn away when talking about rural development. Family members occasionally oppose progress as well. Some family members make up the scenes if the leader of the household decides to do something different. If a family member gets a job or starts a small business, they lose sight of the importance of the family and begin to shun it. For the entire family, this becomes an intolerable and dire situation. Another factor is the psychological state. Change is sometimes necessary, but family members don't like it. Even while change requires greater adjustment and has more challenges, not everyone is psychologically ready for it. Thus, that person merely wastes time playing psychological games only Fighting spirit is a better way to alter one's psychological perspective. Our rural residents are also not up to date professionally. Some people become so professional that they sacrifice quality and control by using chemicals to increase production. Some people, however, are occupied with conventional methods. Our rural residents are unwilling to sell their goods at their own peril. They are entirely dependent on local agents, who take advantage of them. According to Ranjit Rajadhyaksha (2004:26-27), "Migration from villages to towns has been steadily increasing over the last hundred years." The "push" factor in this case has likely been more significant than the "pull" factor: the poorer tenants and workers, who make up the most vulnerable segment of the rural population, have been forced to the cities and plantations by the rising pressure of population on land. Compared to "wet" or irrigated areas, "dry" or non-irrigated areas have been more susceptible to excessive pressure. Depending on the weather, our rural area in India can produce. In terms of agriculture, our rural Indians can earn more money, but nature alone is the cause of loss or defeat. Progress can be attributed to area-wise output, but it can also be negatively impacted by agents, joint land ownership, and the abuse of rural people's simplicity. This issue can be resolved by allocating facilities equally. The benefits of agriculture are also impacted by a number of issues, such as floods, droughts, gale storms, conflict, politics, adequate water supplies, swampy or barren agricultural land, heavy or little rain, etc. Rural Indians are also having issues with infrastructure. For a rural individual, farming involves



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numerous processes, from ploughing the land to selling the crops. Private loans can occasionally be the main source of conflict for farmers and rural residents. Illiteracy and high interest rates are the main causes of many loan repayment issues. Mediators profit from their ignorance. Responsible people are not interested in informing the rural populace about government initiatives, services, and plans. The rural population is socially cohesive and feels like WE. However, they suffer greatly as they advance and reap the rewards. No one wants to give others access to its potential advantages. Emotions and simplicity stand in the way of their growth. The negative aspects of the process of complete rural development include the caste system, hierarchy, untouchability, rituals, religious activities, orthodoxy, traditional commercial practices, inadequate transportation and communication systems, etc. Because of the political and economic processes, rural growth is always delayed. Any nation's primary focus should be the development of its rural areas, but this is not the case. Self-employment, cultural heritage, traditional famous work, handicrafts, and area-specific particular things can all earn bread and butter if the government plans to support the advantages of rural areas. Degrees shouldn't be awarded for education. The goal should be to improve manual labour and agricultural operations. Farmers, gardeners, architects, masons, carpenters, electricians, technicians, mechanics, blacksmiths, manufacturers, drivers, tailors, textile makers, and planners are all skilled among our Indian rural residents. The amount of money earned per capita will rise if more manual labour is rewarded. Additionally, rural society will remain oblivious to poverty, migration, unemployment, and idleness. Parties and political leaders might focus on this concept. Gandhi ji also encouraged hand jobs, small businesses, self-employment, and raising per capita income. Her ideas about SWAROZGAR education and the growth of rural or traditional areas represent the overall development of rural India or society. Our Indian culture depends on hard work, work is worship, optimistic nature, simple living and high thinking, season and nature wise living style, healthy and timely food and routine work habits, early to bed and early to rise concept, honesty, punctuality and sincerity, Feeling of VASUDHAIV KUTUMBAKAM and helpful nature. If we will be truthful and honest by nature, nobody can be corrupt. The development and education of rural society should be the responsibility of our administration as well. They can serve as a conduit between rural society and the government. Our Indian rural civilisation will become the most developed and productive if everyone performs their part honestly and doesn't take away from others' advantages. The development and education of rural society can be greatly aided by the media. The media is an effective communication instrument. The media can draw attention to rural issues, its planning, and their remedies. Governmental or non-governmental organisations can use the media to encourage urban communities to relocate to rural areas, support the development of rural communities, and launch cooperative ventures with rural residents. The national leaders should aim to improve our rural communities, encourage the next generation to choose farming and traditional business based on current demand, provide education based on self-employment, and launch small enterprises if the Indian government wants to restore India's position as a global leader. Narula, Uma (2006:2-3) "Interaction between ourselves, others, and our internal and external environments is essentially communication." Narula went on to say, "There are many ways for people to stay in touch with each other, and communication is a social process." In addition to being spoken, written, nonverbal, visual, or olfactory, the messages in a shared environment could also be laws, customs, practices, clothing codes, gestures, buildings, flags, gardens, exhibits, etc. Our media has the power to pique rural residents' enthusiasm in contributing to India's development. The secret to rapid and seamless development and progress is each Indian's degree of interest. McQuail (2000:84-85) described how media and development are related. "The theory of media and development has many variations, but the majority



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believe that individual motivation and modern (i.e., secular, materialist, Western, individualist, etc.) methods are the key to change," he stated. Individuals must be motivated to "get on" (McLelland, 1961; Hagen, 1962). the mainstream media's contribution. Numerous technological and social breakthroughs that are crucial to modernisation can be disseminated and adopted with their assistance (Rogers, 1962, 1976; Rogers and Shoemaker, 1973). They are able to teach literacy as well as other vital skills and methods. They can promote a "state of mind" that is supportive of modernity (Lerner, 1958), particularly the ability to envision a different way of living. The Western-inspired media, according to Lerner, are "mobility multipliers." Thirdly, it was believed that mass communication was crucial to the growth of democratic politics, particularly through elections, and national unity in newly formed countries (excolonies) (Pye, 1963). The media is still a powerful instrument for bringing about change in "developing" nations, but its use is severely constrained by its high cost and reliance on infrastructure. Additionally, they are negatively linked to dependency and cultural imperialism.

It is evident from studying McQuail's theory of media and development that development can occur quickly with the aid of media. The media has a wide range of responsibilities because it is seen as the fourth leg of democracy. The following are some of the media's social obligations:

- The media should provide rural readers with timely, accurate, and fair information in an approachable, regional, and enjoyable manner.
- A few columns should be designed to provide information for rural planning in an easy-to-read format.
- The media should educate the rural populace about the many rural development initiatives, their goals, and the extent to which the most impoverished members of society can participate. They ought to produce incisive news articles explaining why the rural populace is unable to profit from the initiatives aimed for their development.
- Public officials' corruption, nepotism, favouritism, and duty neglect in carrying out rural development programs should be openly revealed to the government and the general public.
- The media ought to draw attention to the initiatives that create jobs.
- The media should research, critically explain, and disseminate information on the issues and solutions facing child labourers and rural women labourers.
- The rural public can be educated by the media about science, new technologies, inventions, success stories, rural resources, productivity enhancement programs, health care services, family planning programs, laws and regulations (to prevent domestic violence, dowries, cruelty, rape, female foeticide, sexual assault, and awareness of the maternity benefits act, minimum wages act, equal remuneration act, etc.), small savings methods, the educational system, the benefits of girls, etc.
- It is the duty of the media to inform the rural populace about the advantages of water and sanitation systems.
- The public should be informed via the media about the rural housing system and electrification.
- Social transformation must be heralded by the media.
- The media ought to represent rural humanity.
- The media should present an accurate, thorough, and perceptive report on the events in a meaningful context.
- Opinions and facts must be supported by critical analysis and objectivity.
- The media must facilitate two-way conversation between readers and various societal organisations.
- The media should publish or deliver articles about small industries.



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- The media can critically evaluate issues like poverty, unemployment, ignorance, and agricultural crises, among others.
- The rural mass can be easily developed through motivation, and the media can do it flawlessly.
- Through media attention, new agricultural technologies and methods can be disseminated.
- To boost growth, the media should inspire young people in rural India to work hard in their agricultural fields and make use of the newest technologies.
- In order to improve the situation of villages, the media should prepare to write articles about the village visit program.

CONCLUSION

Finally, but just as importantly, I can state that the media may contribute significantly to the growth of rural communities and agricultural endeavours. The constructive and critical approach taken by the media helps to establish India as a developed nation. However, the public's trust and independence are necessary for the media. Research is also needed to offer useful suggestions for the development of the rural Indian community.

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