



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Media**

**THE IMPACT OF THE GROWING REACH OF MASS COMMUNICATION HAS ITS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS.**

**KEY WORDS:**

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**ABSTRACT**

An attempt has been made to understand both the advantages and the disadvantages of the immense spread of information that has been spurred since the beginning of the twenty-first century. This is still growing and has been aided by technology, reducing the cost of spreading information and the instruments on which people can view it. There are checks that each country imposes concerning this medium to keep the negative effect minimum. The advantages are tremendous, but as in every situation, the negative impact has to be minimised. **Research Question:** An attempt will be made to understand the impact of the growing influence of mass communication on all sections of society. The phenomenal speed at which the internet is now available has led to the increasing influence of such types of communication. This is felt throughout the country, both urban and rural. How far it benefits its users is a question that will be researched in this paper. There are apparent disadvantages to this spread.

**INTRODUCTION**

As the word suggests, mass communication is an attempt to impart and exchange information on a large scale to a wide range of people. It is the process by which an individual or several people, or even an organisation, are in a position to create and transmit messages through any medium to a largely anonymous and heterogeneous audience. This means this spread transgresses across countries irrespective of the culture, behaviour or belief systems.

due to societal endorsement. It indicates that society is encouraging the spread of information and is thirsty for more. The causal effect dominates the advancement of efficient and widespread research in mass communication technology. The speed of imparting knowledge has increased, and the different ways this knowledge spreads have changed phenomenally.

**Different Aspects Of Mass Communication**

Books are the oldest medium of mass communication, and newspapers are the first popular mass medium. It is said that the first known book was written in Egypt around 1400 BC. These books were reproduced when Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press in 1455. This invention was the turning point in mass communication.

The newest mass medium is now the Internet. It has revolutionised communication. In this century, mass communication is professionally engaging, technologically driven and academically soaring. It is no longer information of 'what has happened' but 'what is happening in life' and 'what will happen'.

The different types can be further divided into:

- Advertising
- Journalism
- Public Relations
- Social Media
- Audio Media
- Convergence
- Podcasts
- Radio
- Integrated communication
- Film and television
- Photography
- Interactive Media
- Ebooks

The above are aspects of mass communication, and the numbers are growing continuously. They can be put under five primary headings.

- Newspaper
- TV
- Radio
- Internet
- Magazines

The communication process involves understanding, sharing and meaning, and it consists of eight essential elements:

- Source
- Message
- Channel
- Receiver



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**Figure 1: Different Channels Of Mass Communication**  
Source: shutterstock.com

As the figure above shows, mass communication utilises technology to pass on information efficiently. This information is sought, used, understood and influenced by the original individuals who send it and those who assimilate it. The distinctive nature of mass communication is

- Directed towards a large, heterogenous, anonymous audience
- They are transmitted publicly such that they reach the audience simultaneously and are transient in nature
- They tend to operate within a complex organisation

Over the years, there has been impressive and dynamic growth for which the advancement of technology has been the main trigger. This has advanced to a high stage level primarily

- Feedback
- Environment
- Context
- Interference

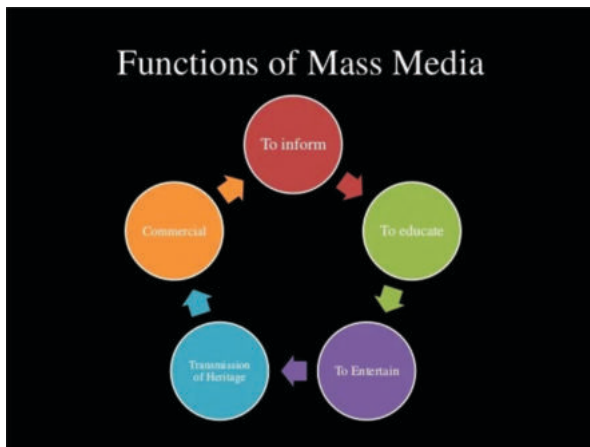
All of these revolve around specific elements, namely a mass or large audience, communication tools, and messages in the form of news, briefing, and information. Along with this, what is essential is fast dissemination of the message and a proper flow of the above.

Besides this, the essential characteristics are that it covers a large area and a heterogenous audience concerning age, interest, needs, feelings, caste, creed, etc. The knowledge is passed through various tools of mass communication. The fundamental problem that may arise is that they may not be a direct feedback method, and it does not discriminate against any audience, which means that the sender needs to be made aware of who is reading their content.

The functions of this communication are to inform, educate, entertain, persuade and transmit different cultures.

How communication is disseminated helps in building public opinion, persuading beliefs, thought processes, and views of people, educating them, entertaining, providing preliminary information of many things, and bringing the truth and facts to the people, along with cultural transmission.

The scope of this medium is immense and is used in trade and commerce, social affairs, human resource management, political affairs and education.



**Figure 2: Scope Of Mass Communication**  
 Source: [https://anasedady.wordpress.com/2017/02/15/\\_\\_\\_tra shed/](https://anasedady.wordpress.com/2017/02/15/___tra shed/)

**Reasons For The Recent Spread**

In earlier times, mass communication took time, but it was far-reaching. The fact that it reached various lands did change cultures thought processes, knowledge and values. The spread of communication also led to political and social changes. Any significant political or social movement can be traced back to mass communication.

As Britain industrialised in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, urbanisation increased and developed a mass audience who sought information and development. This is when magazines, newspapers, telegraphs, and telephones were invented and rapidly expanded. Motion picture and radio in the early 1900s and television in the 1940s and 50s led to a different speed at which communication progressed. In the 1970s, cable TV was invented, challenging the traditional program distribution system.

As this started developing, owning a television set became a necessity. There were hardly any homes which did not boast of

a television. This was true even for emerging market economies like India. A television which was a luxury earlier, was now a necessity. Due to this, households started making conscious decisions on what they would like to view and what not.

This resulted in a revolution in the television manufacturing industry, leading to intelligent TVs and a gamut of alternative communication mediums. The spread of cable TV, satellite radio stations, newspapers, and magazines and the vast reach of the internet have led it to touch more people than ever before. The whole universe is connected and helps increase business opportunities, spread art and culture, and give voice to the voiceless.

The main reason for the vast spread is the advancement in technology. The moment the world's countries opened their borders for liberalisation and globalisation, the world became one. Along with this, the fast pace of research and development and the invention of the internet has automatically led to the world being treated as 'one'. Wireless signals, satellites, undersea cables and other advanced technology have helped communication by ensuring instant messages and other forms of data to any location on the planet. Communication today is instantaneous.

The rise of near-instant communication via electronic mail, instant messaging, voice over internet protocol (VOID), telephone calls, two-way interactive video calls, discussion forums, blogs and social networking has allowed people to find their voice and express themselves through social media. The internet has connected us as well as divided us like nothing before.



**Figure 3: Depiction Of Varied Sources Of Mass Communication**  
 Source- Leverage Edu

**Advantages Of Mass Communication**

Worldwide, mass communication has improved our ability to keep in touch. It has provided the world with entertainment, which has led to a massive demand for the entertainment industry. The linkage of impact has led to increasing job opportunities in all spheres connected to this activity.

It gives a voice to the voiceless as there are several mediums where even people who are not connected, shy, but who feel for certain things can express their views and sentiments. Due to the widespread use of this medium, such voices can reach far and wide. It has also allowed freedom of speech, universality, commercial communication, helping business ventures, and continuous real-time updates are always available are some of the positives of mass communication.

**Disadvantages Of Mass Communication**

Some of the significant disadvantages of this medium are

- Untrustworthy news
- Sometimes one must consciously trust "half of what you see and none of what you hear". Influential individuals use this medium to convince the public to believe what they want by

showing them what they want. News that is not authenticated might have adverse effects. Misinformation is used to manipulate people, which can most easily be achieved through the spread of media. This spreads hatred and animosity.

- Fake news

The spread of fake news has increased as this type of communication has become universal. This could lead to unrest and security issues for the government. The country has to be vigilant and control the spread to save the lives of its citizens.

- Empowering the already powerful

A large portion of the media is bought by compelling people leading to the wealthy and those connected to have a far louder voice than the rest of the population. This is true in India, as the ownership pattern of most television news channels is in the hands of a few rich and powerful. This results in news matters being imparted in a biased manner. The option of such media being neutral then doesn't exist.

- Leads to significant health issues

Health issues arise through the alteration of people's thoughts. The medium can become highly addictive, compelling people to watch them nonstop, leading to hearing and vision issues. Besides this, watching continuously is an unproductive activity of undesired information.

- As a source for spreading misinformation and hatred

There is no guarantee that what one reads and hears is reliable. Specific sources of information may be more reliable than others, but there is no fool proof method to indicate the authenticity of the data. As the internet has grown in popularity, it exposes people to material which inculcates hatred and terrorism.

- It may advocate incorrect values.

This platform often encourages incorrect qualities like drug use, smoking and other such nefarious activities which are impressionable and may have a significant following. The government has instituted sensor boards such that these items have a restricted audience. Despite these checks, certain mediums don't fall under censorship.

- At times acts as a breach of privacy.

More often than not, media employees tend to breach people's privacy. The term given to such a set of individuals is 'paparazzi'. This is especially rampant concerning celebrities and significant and wealthy individuals. This is a practice prevalent throughout the world. This restricted and confidential information is sometimes used to blackmail companies, wealthy industrialists, politicians and other influential individuals.

- Could Lead To A Decline In Productivity

Several working individuals waste their time and energy 'binge-watching' instead of working productively. Televisions installed in office premises may lead to employees not giving their best.

- May Reduce The Heterogeneity Of Cultures

Before the advent of mass media, a mix of cultures was essential as it reflected in the thought process, interaction, communication and different manners of dressing of various individuals. But with the widespread use of media, most of this differentiation has yet to become non-existent.

- It Could Be Subject To Hacking.

Media is typically used to disseminate knowledge but is simultaneously utilised to distort information. There have been a large number of cases where accounts have been hacked, which has resulted in huge losses. Cybercriminals exploit the personal information they get from social media to

hold people for ransom.

- At Times It Does Not Represent The Opinion Of The People In General.

There are significant instances when public opinion differs from what is expressed in the media as it is controlled by powerful politicians who only want to stream their point of view.

- Attempts To Give Booze And Drugs A Guise Of Legitimacy

The type of serials beamed on Over The Top (OTT) platforms may tend to legitimise booze and drugs, which hurt impressionable minds.

- Overtakes Personal Connections

The addiction to television and phones is so acute that in most family gatherings, what is so apparently noticed is that almost all the guests are busy with their instruments leading to a tendency to be disinterested and a loner.

- Source Of Inappropriate Material For Children

It is tough to control what young children watch. The easy accessibility of almost all materials can be highly detrimental to young minds. Recently, some mechanisms have been developed to restrict the content children watch.

- Availability May Be Restricted.

Newspaper is the only medium still inexpensive; most others have a high value leading to restricted availability. In most cases, the instrument and subsequent add-ons in the form of the internet, data, etc., lead to their increasing costs.

- It May Promote False Identity.

As the medium of communication today can hide an individual's original identity, many people operate under different names and portray what they are not. This allows them to express their inner desires, insecurities and fears. This may or may not be good, as most individuals need to consult a psychologist or a psychiatrist to cure these issues.

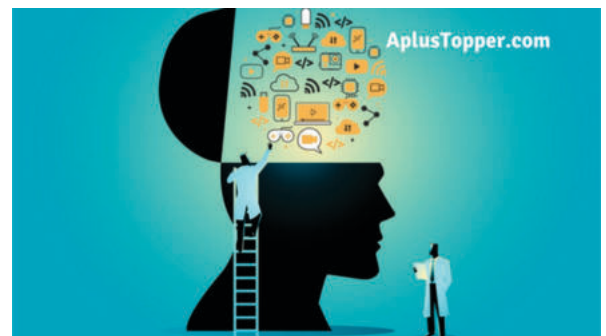


Figure 4: Disadvantages Of Mass Media

Source: Aplusopper.com

### CONCLUSION

As a medium of communication in the current decade, mass media has made immense strides concerning its reach and content. With the spread of technology, the format in which information is being passed on to various citizens of the society is different and varied. Everyone can access all the other forms if they understand the technology and use the tools provided. This knowledge is easily understandable by the younger generations in the country.

In India, when it opened its doors to the world after the 1991 reforms brought in its wake all the effects of globalisation and liberalisation in every which way. As the world started developing technology concerning the internet, data and smartphones, India, with its vast population, took advantage of this medium. It provided all of it to its people at highly inexpensive rates. This, in turn, resulted in the reach of knowledge increasing to every nook and corner of the

country.

How this information is used is solely dependent on the consumer. In various instances, the government has shut off internet connections whenever it has found that it would lead to dangerous consequences like riots, loss of lives and threats to the security of its citizens. This indicates the negative impact of the spread of false information, given the accessibility and availability of this medium. The government has also spread information and knowledge on the various types of schemes that it has introduced for the marginalised sections of society like the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women. This has further led to the positive use of this widespread medium.

Individuals have used varied ways of spreading information by trying to hide their personalities and appearing to be what they are not. This is a psychological side of the possibility of hiding your identity. Here there could be both advantages and disadvantages. Much knowledge is freely available with the click of a button and the help of various search engines; these have positive and negative aspects.

Thus one has to be extremely wary of how this spread of information is used to improve society. There would have to be checks and balances on the negative aspect both adopted by the government of the country and the search engines themselves and adults safeguarding the extent of information they would like to pass on to young minds.

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