



The impact of Media on Dalit youth: A case study

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Received: 20-Nov.-2018 Accepted on: 17-Jan-2019 Published on: 13-Apr-2019

ABSTRACT

Media is a powerful tool for communication and it plays a significant role in shaping the society. At present, media has become an essential part of youth's life based on their choices and preferences. It has revolutionized the way the youth received information and look at the things. Nowadays, every youth can connect instantly with the global information, news, and entertainment with a push of a button. Therefore, numerous questions have been put up concerning the impact of the media contents on the several aspects of the youth. While media is agreed to be a channel of development of different social groups of society, this study aims to see the media's impact on the Dalit youth of Ajmer District. The objectives are: (1) To explore the beneficial and harmful effects of media on different aspects of Dalit youth; (2) To recommend some measure for proper use of media in right direction to inform and educate the youth. Conclusion: Media has both positive and negative impact on the different aspect inclusive of their future development. Further, several measures have been suggested: (1) to promote healthy usage of media among youth, and (2) to reduce the negative impact of media on youth.

Keywords: Dalit Youth, Impact, Media, Rajasthan

Introduction

Media is a mode of communication that is utilized to disseminate the information to the masses, or used for the purpose of entertainment etc. It plays a pivotal role in every person's life, right from the point when one wakes up till he/she goes to the bed, people are surrounded by the virtual world created by media. The onset of advanced technologies brought drastic technological development from the telegraph to the most widely utilized the internet (Bhavana, 2014). Media is a type of communication that infuses almost every character of modern culture. Nowadays youth have access to all kinds of media i.e. news, music, films, advertisement, YouTube, Video games, Facebook, WhatsApp Messenger, Tweeter, MySpace and so on (Bhavana, 2014).

Youth can learn a lot from the sources of media to enhance their knowledge and through getting involved in social interaction with others in social media. Social media has gain popularity among youth to explore new friendships; to share their views on several issues; to gain social support across the globe; to get connected with wider networks, and; to be socially competent and confident in the society (Chatterjee, 2018; Rawat, 2018; Sahu, 2018). On the contrary, it does

affect youth depending on what type of media they look at (Dixit, 2017). It impacts their perception and opinion on several issues and problems of the society they live in. It is evident from several types of researches across the globe that media does have negative impact on the psyche of the young girls and boys through promotion of pseudo-image of a perfect being as an ideal beauty or image and this is done through advertisement, promotions, magazines etc where sizes of models and movie stars are shown as an exemplify beauty (Bhavana, 2014).

Youth during the developmental stage undergoes changes such as "physiological, psychological and behavioral come with enormous stress (Rana, 2017, p. 275)." This stress affects their relations with friends, family, and society at large. This phase comes with vulnerability, peer pressure, and media which influence their views and perception for different issues like malnutrition (Lakra, 2018). The carefree approach of young people for everything and wish to explore every dimension of society with partial information and experiences gained from the media lead them to youth risky behaviors (Rana, 2017). However, it is difficult to blame wholly media for their deviant behaviors. Media is neither positive nor negative in nature; however, it has a profound impact on the physiological and psychological development of youth (Singh, 2016). Therefore, youth must have a healthy and balanced exposure to the media not only for entertainment but also for intellectual and physical related information.

Media has both positive and negative effects on the youth. Therefore, several questions have been put up concerning the impact of the media contents i.e. print media, audio-visual media and social media on the youth especially Dalit youth in the case of this study. Thus, the present study aims to see media's impact on Dalit youth of Mundoti village of Ajmer district, Rajasthan.

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Cite as: *Integr. J. Soc. Sci.*, 2019, 6(1), 1-5.

©IS Publications IJSS ISSN: 2348-0874

<http://pubs.iscience.in/ijss>

Statement of the Problem

Numerous questions have been put up concerning the impact of the media contents on the different aspects of Dalit youth such as behavioral & mental performance, societal life, political & religious awareness, education & academic performance, latest trend adoption, physical health and so on. There are numerous studies available on the impact of media on youth in the urban context but the relatively negligible amount of research is available in rural context. Therefore, this study is designed to analyze the impact of the media on different aspects of Dalit youth living in Mundoti village.

Significance of the Study

This study would help us to know the impact of media especially print media, audio-visual media and social media on Dalit youth. It informs how media is impacting the lives of the youth, deterioration of societal tolerance, and the ethics of the society. Further, it creates awareness among youth that proper usage of media: (1) would be educational and informative; (2) enhance the cognition level of youth; (3) improve their public lives, and; (4) help them to be a responsible citizen in nature. Furthermore, it would help media houses to consider those issues and produce

Aim & Objectives

The primary aim of the proposed research is to the impact of media on the Dalit youth of Mundoti village. The objectives of the study are: (1) To explore the beneficial and harmful effects of media on different aspects of Dalit youth such as behavioral & mental performance, societal life, political & religious awareness, education & academic performance, latest trend adoption, physical health and so on and; (2) To recommend some measure for proper use of media in right direction to inform and educate the youth.

Research Methodology

The research design of the study is Case Study. The authors have undertaken the interview method and used the unstructured interview as a tool to collect response from the respondents. The universe of the study is the youth population of \pm 550 of Mundoti Village situated near to the Central University of Rajasthan. The sample size is 50 youth from Dhanni (Residence area of Dalit Community). The sampling is Purposive. The inclusion criteria of the sample is as follows: (1) Dalit Youth; (2) Age must be between (15-29) years and lives in the village; (3) Working or non-working; (4) Education must be intermediate and above; (5) Participative in nature. The exclusion criterion is as follows: (1) Mentally Challenged youth and; (2) Non-participative in nature.

Limitation: The study is conducted only in one village. Therefore, the upshot of the results might not resemble with larger area taken for the study.

Community Profile

Name of the village – Mundoti

Panchayat – Nallu

Sarpanch of the village – Shri Sukavir Gujjar

The Mundoti village was established about five hundred years ago. The entire name of the village is Mundoti Narukan. It is located 2.3 kilometres from the Central University of Rajasthan. Bandar Sindri village is located in the south; Nalu,

Dantri and Lendra villages are located in the west and Sirohi village in the north. It has a population of around 3000 people and consists of 382 households. The voters' list is of around 1750 people. The main languages are Marwari and Hindi. The dominant religion is Hinduism and there are 20 different castes i.e. Rajput, Brahmin, Lohar, Gujjar, Balai, Bhargav, Khandelwal, Daroga, Harijan, Meena, Rana, Khumar, Khumawat, Goshai, Jangid, Bangri, Jatt, Regar, Sein, and Khatik. The untouchability and casteism still exist within the village. People are not allowed to enter the temple consecrated for the upper castes. Therefore, Dalit community has established temples within their location. The village economy is based largely on agriculture and cattle rearing. Maximum revenue is generated from Dairy products and selling of crops such as wheat, vegetables, bajra, chana, and pluses. Other occupations include daily wage labour in MNREGA and marble mines, government services, petty shops, small contractors, and self-employed. There are many problems such as lack of health centre in the community, sanitation problems, alcohol consumption and tobacco use, drainage problems, and no water pipeline at homes.

Dalit Community: Dalit community lives in the extension of the village which is commonly known as Dhanni in the local language. The total population of the Dhanni is around \pm 500. The main occupation and source of income of the people is agricultural and cattle rearing. Agricultural landholding is not much among this group. Therefore, for survival farmers works on other's land keeping a ratio of 60:40. Some people are in government service i.e. Army, Para Military Forces, teachers etc. Some have petty shops, contractors i.e. house construction and whitewashing and others are involved in daily wage activities. The untouchability still exists among them. Harijans are not allowed to enter the temples that are consecrated for their needs.

Dalit Youth' Profile: Dalit youth population is in between 100 to 150. Maximum youth fall in the age group of 15 – 20 years. Youth fall under five categories: (1) Students from intermediate to graduation level; (2) Daily wage workers; (3) Running small business; (4) Government services and; (5) Agricultural sector. Apart from above-mentioned activities, every youth get involved in the household activity. The favourite leisure activities of the youth are: to play cricket & marbles, chit-chat in groups outside the periphery of their houses, riding bikes and roaming on the street of their village. Almost every youth has a mobile phone but only a few carry smartphones. They have access to almost all sorts of media. Overall, Dalit youth are exposed to all media contents and they do show the impact of the media on them.

Impact of Media on Dalit Youth

Print Media

Print media is a significant source of information and communication. It is the crucial tool that helps each person to share and communicate with the public at large. Primarily, "it is used as the medium for getting information, advertisement, marketing, entertainment, expression and criticism, art and talents, and other forms of human interaction." Apart from positive information, it does disseminate "false and misleading information and data." Therefore, the print media provides both positive and negative information (Singh, 2015). Further, it also influences our perception and ideology.

Print Media and Dalit Youth of Mundoti Village

In Mundoti village, Dalit youth use newspaper for getting information on jobs, government schemes and several issues happening in the district, state, and nation. They also subscribe magazines related to the Dalit issues for information on the development of Dalit caste. Many times news on the atrocities against Dalit community hurts their sentiments and shakes their tolerance for the other community. The conversation with one youth said the following things:

Even after 70 years of Independence, still, there is existence of casteism and untouchability in India. There is hidden hesitation among us to mingle with upper castes. We hardly go to the village from Dhanni. Though we study in the same class and same school still we feel hesitant to have friendship and visit the places of upper caste youth of our village.

Some different views which came up during the conversation with me:

We do not believe in upper caste and lower caste all are one before the constitution of India. The caste system is created to oppress the weaker & marginalized sections of the society. If upper caste tried to do some wrong to us than we'll not keep mum. The time has changed now we are not going to tolerate any of their mischief behaviour against our females and beloved ones.

Impact of Print Media on Dalit Youth

Some of the identified impacts of print media on Dalit youth living in Mundoti village are as follows:

1. Positive

- a. According to the Dalit youth, print media in the form of newspaper and magazines (both national and regional) are the major sources of information for them on the government sector, the private sector, information on rights and duties, government schemes for weaker & marginalized section, national integration and unity. For the Dalit youth print media is the Mirror of the Society.
- b. It helps Dalit youth to update themselves on current affairs on local, state, national and world news. Further, it helps them to prepare for several competitive examinations to get suitable jobs.
- c. Dalits youth are very much active in politics and moreover interested in politics. This media gives the valuable information on local, state and national politics.

2. Negative

- a. News on atrocities against Dalit community on several issues creates a kind of fear, insecurity, and lack of freedom of expression, inequality and hatred for other castes among Dalit youth. This further adds to the emotional disturbance, sadness & anger for being born in Dalit caste. Furthermore, among other youth, it has developed intolerance and jealousy for upper caste society.
- b. Some youth have developed aggression and rough character under the influence of the messages of community magazines whose basic purpose is to disseminate negative news and exaggerate certain news to draw attention and support from the Dalit population.

Audio & Audio-Video Media

Audio & Audio-Video Media have several impacts on the young people. Sometimes it impacts through (1) television programs & commercial advertisement, (2) Radio programs, (3) Video games and (4) Internet access to several websites.

Media advertisement and commercialization of the alcohol have given boost to the alcohol consumption use especially among youth. Even the Bollywood famous numbers on alcohol like Char Bottle Vodka, Ham ka pinni hai much more similar portrayal have greatly contributed and encouraged the youth to get into it. Further, many movies and famous program series show actors using cigarette, drug use, alcohol consumption and involved in extramarital sexual affairs and violent behaviors. The glorification of such acts in media makes it difficult for youth to inculcate healthy behavior and avoid risky behaviors.

Video games are trending among youth. It can be either computer games or mobiles games. Youth spend long hours in these games which have immensely contributed to the poor health, poor academic performance, less social interaction, addiction, aggressive nature and so on. Another is the internet access; the use of the internet has both psychological and physical impact on the youth. The internet can be used as a tool for getting information across the globe within no time but it can be used other way also. Nowadays youth are prone to use internet for visiting adult sites which are easily accessible in our country. This websites immensely affects the behavior of the youth and put them at the risk of their lives.

Audio & Audio-Video Media and Dalit Youth of Mundoti Village

Dalit youth of Mundoti village have good access to the audio-visual media. They are more inclined towards watching television programs, listening radio, mobile videos games but have less access to the internet facilities.

Television: Youth are fond of Bollywood movies & music videos and on regular basis visit the local movie theatre for watching latest Bollywood movies. They do watch news channels to update themselves globally. Daily television programmes are quite famous among young girls. They spent around 2 to 3 hours to watch prime time shows. Television programmes series such as Sasural Simar Ka, Indian Idol, the Kapil Sharma Show, and many more.

Radio: Radio as audio media is famous among the youth of Mundoti Village. They love to listen to radio especially regional music. According to the author's observation, youth continuously listen to regional music on the radio and perform their day-to-day activities such as household work, while going and coming from the school, during agriculture & leisure time and so on. Often they play loud music while riding a bike and driving motor vehicles. Music becomes part and partial of their lives. Generally, youth prefer latest Bollywood bites and regional hardcore music.

Internet: They generally use internet facilities for filling up of employment form, scholarship forms and to fetch other government schemes. Some youth have the account on Gmail and Yahoo mail for communication. Youth studying in the Central University of Rajasthan have regular internet access in comparison to the others. They have good awareness on the internet usage and its facilities.

Impact of Audio & Audio-Video Media on Dalit Youth

Some of the identified impacts of audio & audio-video media on the Dalit youth of Mundoti village are as follows:

1. Positive

- a. The harmony, love, and peace among the different communities showed in numerous Bollywood movies and television programs series have contributed immensely to level up the tolerance of Dalit youth. Further, it has shaped the behavioral activities and value diversity of the youth. Furthermore, it has made them the responsible citizens of our nation.
- b. Information fetched from Audio & Audio-video media enabled Dalit youth to be culturally, socially, physically, and academically competent in order to confront the several challenging issues.
- c. Exposure to several media contents and motivational movies created a sense of Purpose among Dalit youth.
- d. The connection of the youth with the family member, peers, and community members has been improved. This is because of the exposure of the youth to the media contents where movies, television programs and videos promote the family relations, love & respect for the neighborhood, and respect for ethics of society and nation.
- e. Awareness among Dalit youth about open defecation, toilets construction, healthy living and many more have increased.

2. Negative

- a. The continuous exposure of the Dalit youth to audio and audio-video media contents have raised several issues such as
 - Addition of movies, music videos and television programs.
 - Violent Character and lack of concentration on studies and other works.
 - Emotional disturbance especially among female youth.
 - To make money through illegal means and distress of unsuccessful life can be seen among Dalit youth.
- b. There is a high prevalence of alcohol consumption and tobacco use among Dalit youth. There are several other factors but one among them is the influence of movies and music videos of regional and Bollywood that contributes towards the increase in alcohol consumption and tobacco use among Dalit youth.
- c. Young girls have developed poor eating habits due to watching television while eating their meals at home. Young boys are eating less and sometimes one meal per day to look physically lean and develop six packs like models and Bollywood actors. They want to get identified with the pseudo image created by media i.e. 'Lean is good'.
- d. The author has observed that youth are developing Rowdy character and doing all sorts of non-sense activities such as rash riding & driving, bunking school lectures, using slang words, adult talks and much more.

Social Media

Social media is a new media and it has many characteristics. It has several features such as communication, messaging, image transfer, audio & video calling, and many more. It is the fastest and cheapest medium to get connected to the world within a few seconds. It is useful for all age form depending upon their requirement. There is a rapid increase in the users of social media across the globe and the majority of the users are from youth population. There is a major shift of youth's interest from television and radio users to the social media users. Therefore, this section of society is greatly getting influenced with the trends and information provided from the social media. Further, it has an impact on the behavior and perception of the youth living across the globe (Shabir et al., 2014).

Social Media and Dalit Youth of Mundoti Village

In Mundoti village, Dalit youth mostly use Wats App Messenger and few have their accounts on Facebook. Not all youth have Smartphones but those who have Smartphone use social media to get connected to the world. Mostly, they use Wats App Messenger for calling, texting, video sharing (sometimes sharing adult videos or controversial MMS), and pictures sharing. Social media has enabled Dalit youth to get connected to the outside world. This media has greatly influenced their perception and ideology towards several things.

Impact of Social Media on Dalit Youth

Some of the identified impacts on Dalit youth of Mundoti village are as follows:

1. Positive

- a. It has enabled youth to get connected social with other sections of the society. It also helps them to establish their own identity at a social level an expression of their ideology and perception.
- b. It has developed communication skills of the Dalit youth and has helped them to share their views, ideas and experiences on numerous issues to every section of the society irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex or nation.
- c. Youth realised their self-worth and developed self-confidence using social media.

2. Negative

- a. Viral videos of Dalit atrocities on social media develop insecurity, anger, fear and hatred among Dalit youth for caste system and against those who promote caste system.
- b. Several behavioral changes such as irritation, argumentative character, loss of interpersonal relations, loss of identity & creation of false identity and many more are seen among youth.

Recommendations

Some measures recommended after critical analysis of the information given from the respondents which are as follows:

1. Promotion of Media which is

- a. Fact Finding: Proper use of media ethics, to present the news on the issues with proper analysis of facts on the ground

realities. Media should not exaggerate and create sensational news without proper homework on the ground realities. Media houses should filter the news prior to air it for the public. Further, avoidance of dissemination of negative information to touch people's sentiments and breaks the peace of the nation.

b. Nation Building: Showing news which promotes nation building and integration. For example, stories of martyrdom of soldiers, scientists who contributed to technological development, social workers who brought change in the perception of society and many more.

c. Free from politics and casteism: Media should be free from the pressures of political and caste. News channels should avoid unfruitful panel discussion on religion, caste, and gender for Television Rating Point (TRP).

2. Proper use of media can enhance their academic performance; their skills; social life; adoption of latest technologies; reduction of risky behavior; competence level; confidence; connections with family, peer, and community; and tolerance towards other community.

3. Youth should use social media for dissemination of valuable information for avoiding dissemination of adult, communal and indecent videos which have adverse effects on the young minds. They should avoid spreading of defamation and hatred videos among their social groups for peace and harmony in the nation. There should be watchdog software which prevents indecent videos from being viral at social sites and among the social media users. Such indecent videos should be deleted permanently from the sites (Shabir et al., 2014).

4. Institutions should develop a curriculum for training the youth at schools, colleges and universities to properly using the media for drawing information for the advancement of the mental knowledge. They must be sensitized about the adverse effects of misuse of media especially internet and social media for their lives and society at large.

Conclusion

This study even though limited in its nature clearly depicts valuable information on the impact of media on different aspects of Dalit youth in Mundoti village. The study highlighted the importance of media i.e. print media, audio & audio-video media and most recently social media. Subsequently, the author presented both positive and negative impacts of print media, audio & audio-video media and social media on the Dalit youth of Mundoti village. Media has immensely impacted the different aspect such as behavioral & mental performance, societal life, political & religious awareness, education & academic performance, latest trend adoption, and physical health of Dalit youth of Mundoti village. There are several underlying factors impacting Dalit youth lives in Mundoti village apart from media which are not

discussed in this study. Thereafter, the researcher has suggested some measure after the careful scrutiny of the data collected from the respondents. Researchers promoted the positive media i.e. news with proper fact-findings and proper use of media ethics for the dissemination of information to the masses. Another recommendation is to create awareness among the youth on the proper use of media and its features for their development and nation building. Further, to reduce the adverse of media on their development period. Overall, the study though limited in nature presents the impact of media on the lives of the Dalit youth living in the Mundoti village.

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