

Media analysis

Business



Today's society is marked by widespread inequality; to make matters worse, it has become an acceptable aspect in life. Society is divided into the have and the have-nots; the upper class, middle class and the lower class.

Inequality can be found in all aspects of society, be it social class, race, ethnicity, sex, nationality or even a person's profession. Antonio Gramsci was an Italian Marxist, he agreed with the Marxist ideology of how society is divided between the ruling class and the working class and its role in society, however, did not agree on the Marxists view of how the ruling class used their power this is according to Burke. Marxist theory mainly dealt with how the ruling class used force to have their interests in society catered for, he felt that they did not understand the techniques that the ruling class used to gain control over the working class without necessarily resulting to using force. He felt that in society due to what he referred to as "ideological hegemony"; people had come to accept the class division as acceptable in order for the society to exist. In the United States, the issue of inequality is basic especially when it comes to social and the racial inequality, this has resulted into discrimination among people who feel that for instance their neighbor who is of a different race is not equal to them based only on the physical appearance. People do not judge others based on merits but rather based on their personal opinions. According to Bergel, the inequality leads to ranking system in society, 'the rank indicates a person's position in society' the rank leads to social stratification; individual and group, individual stratification is based on personal achievements while group stratification is based on achievements of the individuals who make the group.

Religion, ethnicity or even political inclination can sometimes be used to rate a person's social position (pg. 5-7). Ideologies and belief systems are spread through the media in today's world, it is what Antonio Gramsci referred to as "organs of ideological transmission", the media consists of print; books, newspapers and magazines and broadcast; radio, television, internet and cinema, there are also other medias like cellular phones. The media in general is a source of information and entertainment; in United States a majority of people have access to mass media. The mass media always has messages that they want to convey to the audience. The televisions, internet, magazines and films are very popular in United States, majority of people have subscribed to some particular channels on the television, and some specific magazines, while they watch specific films and use the internet almost all the time.

These sources of information and entertainment always carry particular topics such as fashion, lifestyle and gossip. Majority of topics featured in them are of the celebrities in the United States; those in society who are always on the limelight. They may include actors and actresses, prominent business men, sports personalities and performing artistes. Television, Movies and Internet In United States, the number of Caucasian personalities in the media is very high compared to other racial groups who do not appear much in the movies, magazine covers and advertisements. In most movies and popular television shows, the couples who are rich and successful are of the Caucasian descent. The image conveyed to the viewers is that of the Caucasians being superior to other races.

Television and movies have brought to the light the inequalities especially between the whites and the African Americans in United States and their perceptions of each other. They have particularly concentrated on portraying and highlighting the African Americans in a negative light. The television shows and movies focus on showing them as crime oriented people who are always involved in crimes and breaking of the law, this is according to Balkaran in his article on mass media and racism. He also says that young African American men are classified as gangsters and drug dealers thereby crushing their resilience and their ambitions of working hard to make something of themselves. News items are always on the negative aspects of the African American community, if the story is not tragic or terrorizing, or of gangsters shooting, then that is not news at all. Music and magazines This is also an area where inequality is found in the United States, the magazines that a person subscribes to and the music that a person listens to is determined by the person's race.

Some magazines feature only white models from cover to cover and only tips and products that can work on white people, while others target the African American market. Most magazines also feature stories on white celebrities only without giving much information on the African American celebrities. Rap music which is full of violence and use of derogatory language is performed and listened to by the majority of African Americans; the white people are associated with music which has less violence and conveys a positive message in most cases.