

Advantages of mass media assignment

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Mass media refers collectively to all the media technologies that are intended to reach a large audience via mass communication. There are various forms of mass media such as radio, television, movies, magazines, newspapers and the World Wide Web. Mass Media enjoys a very prominent role in our lives and thus, it is believed to influence our society. There are positive and negative effects of mass media on our society. This essay will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of mass media and state if the advantage or disadvantage outweighs the other.

The first advantage of mass media is that it promotes democracy. Talk shows and debates that are conducted on the radio gives people chance to voice out their opinions and express their views of ideas about a particular issue. This use of radios makes it a “ free market place of ideas” where people get informed of the multiple ideas that can be learned about a topic. Also this advantage of mass media allows arguments to be otherwise of the discussed perspective of an issue to voice out the contrasting feelings of people without the fear of being pointed to by the authorities if opinions are subjective.

Moreover, free press keeps the government under constant monitoring and checks. It helps the general public to question issues that highlight policy failures, maladministration, scandals and corruptions and this makes mass media the voice of the disadvantaged. A long tradition of liberal theorists claimed that a free and independent press within a nation can play a vital role in the process of demagnification by contributing towards the right of expression, thought and conscience, strengthening the responsiveness of

government to all citizens and providing a pluralist platform of political expression for a multiplicity of groups.

Thus, radio being an example shows the positive relationship between mass media and democracy. Furthermore, mass media promotes health education. A way in which societies can grow is through good health and studies assert that media has a responsibility to help people live a healthy life. In Uganda, for instance, FM radios conducted programs where medical doctors were invited to a program to talk about general or specific diseases, their causes, symptoms and how to avoid these diseases or where to seek treatment.

Namely, Radio-Wa conducted a program, Meet The Doctor, on which a doctor from Lira Hospital appeared every Sunday from 5. 00 pm and discussed popular medical issues, such as, current health problems of reproductive health diseases and sexually transmitted diseases, for about an hour.

Through another research, it was found that radio listeners took active part in these kinds of programs and they were able to learn about many diseases that they were suffering from unknowingly. Majority of the listeners were able to cure their diseases. Thus, mass media assists people to keep informed about medical and health issues.

In addition, mass media plays a very vital role in accounting for agricultural trade. Radio, one of the fastest forms of mass communication, has been used in communicating farm information to farmers for a long time and since then radio has been used as a mass communication for agricultural development. Rural communities need information on supply of input, early warning systems for drought and diseases, new technologies and market

price and information about their competitors. Such information through mass media contributes to the expansion of agriculture.

After looking at factor such as the continuing expansion of market oriented agriculture and the increasing complexity of input requirements, studies suggested that there is a need for a continues education of farmers and extensions and thus concluded that radios and television would be a good way to disseminate information to them. Another research showed that 58 % of the respondents regarded radio as the most effective channel for dissemination of agricultural information. Thus information about trade from mass media would likely result in infecting the whole economy along side with the entrepreneurs of such trading businesses.

On the other hand, mass media broadcasts negative information to teen gagers, especially females, about sex related topics. Movies and televisions are two examples of sources from where teens absorb information about sex and sexuality. These sources give unrealistic images of the portrayed topics. A study shows that an average teen eager is exposed to approximately 14000 references of sex of which less than a percent of the references imply information about abstinence, birth control, arrogance risks, and sexually transmitted diseases.

In addition, mass media uses females as sex objects. In most music videos, females are approximately half the time dressed in clothes that expose their breast and rear ends. The sexual attractiveness of music videos and similar imaged mass media encourages teens as well as adults to expose themselves in public, inviting them to become victims of unethical crimes,

such as, rape. Moreover, mass media depicts non realistic body images. This disadvantage of mass media depiction leads majority of the viewers toward unhealthy eating habits.

Young people are getting encouraged by skinny models on the TV to lose weight and get their body into a sexy image. Researchers are claiming that males are becoming more insecure about their physical appearance as advertisements are painting images of idealistic well built muscular body. A study found that girls as young as eight years old are weight conscious and are on strict diets. Many other females smoke to keep their weight off and through research, it is found out that there is approximately 400% increase in eating disorder since 1970. Like females, boys also tend to smoking to lose weight.

A survey by Teens Magazine reported that 27% of the females felt that media pressured them to have a perfect body and 69% of girls state that magazine models influence their thought of being slim and slender. Media's role in portraying unrealistic images of body figures can lead to serious health problems and deadly diseases as attendants to media are evidently being influenced by the false images. In addition, mass media promotes gender and racial unfairness in a society. Women, through media, are treated in disrespectful manners and are referred by the use of unethical words, such as, “ a whore” or “ a slut”.

These kinds of words can be heard over the radio and seen in movies and televisions, for instance, the use of the word “ bitchy” in reference to women can be seen in wrestling programs exposed young children to witness it

without supervision. Advertisements also promote gender biasness as they mostly include women in a sexual way to sell product. A study on advertisements showed that males are only seen in 25% of the advertisements on scantily wears, for example, underwear advertisements. The same study quoted that roughly 62% of white women were noticed in the same kind of advisements and the guru for black women was 53% only.

Also, black women were mostly shown in animal prints and in predatory poses to highlight their powerlessness. Thus, mass media is openly bias towards the sexes and races of different kinds of people. Besides its other disadvantages, mass media is known to lead young children to aggressive violence. Media violence is harmful to kids because of their inability to differentiate between reality and fantasy. A study showed that by the age of 18, an average teen eager has viewed approximately 200000 acts of violence on television, mooring other sources of mass media.

These violent clips increase aggressiveness and anti social behavior in children and it also increases their thirst for violence in the real life. Hence children are traumatized by the violent images and as a result they end up committing violent acts themselves. In conclusion, it is clearly argued that mass media has both advantages and disadvantages. The issues that are discussed in this essay evidently suggest that the disadvantage of mass media outweighs the advantages yet some of the disadvantages of mass media can be avoided.