Role of Media in Social Change

Deb Raj Aryal
Tribhuvan University

Abstract
The concept that media has an effective role in social change is a complex question in itself. However, as the media is directly connected with lives of people, it is necessary to focus on this subject-area. This study has been presented on the basis of the ground of mass communication and principles of the media and review analysis of previous studies in this sector. Media content and messages have a deep impact on the mood of readers, sources and viewers. Consequently, the person's concept, perspective and field of thought are affected. Eventually, because of this the individual's behavior will change and in overall scenes of change appear in the society. In the past few years, the number of media in Nepal has been growing exponentially, and our society is not immune to the changes caused by the influence of media.

Key Word: Communication Theory, Media Effects, Social Change.

1. Introduction
Media has a unique identity in the society. Especially, media is an organized institution which brings awareness in people. By providing information, education, knowledge, motivation, surveillance and entertainment media creates awareness in people. Media has got a special recognition in the society for its continuous work in favor of awareness. However, media is not of course different from the society. Media is an important aspect as well as a part of the society (Mc Quail, 2010). All over the world media is considered as the fourth estate of the Nation. Three other major organs of the state are Executive, Legislature and Judiciary respectively. In the state, their role with constitutional and legal status has been determined. But, here, like the Executive, Judiciary and Legislature, the media is not a determined organ of the state. However, just like a citizen, the media is such an organ which bears the right to deal with and monitor all aspects of the state in a free way. The media has been developing in this status since the 18 th century (Turow, 2021).
While analyzing various principles propounded in the context of mass media, journalism and media, the media is found to be significantly influencing the society especially in the field of building public opinion.

According to Hypodermic Needle Theory of media leaves direct and meaningful effects on the minds of the public. Here according to Multi-Step Flow Theory of Paul Lazarsfeld (1944) media affects in level wise. In fact, the contents of the media affect public thoughts and ideas. This fact has been accepted in principle. Not only this, Agenda Setting Theory, propounded by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw (1968), has also prioritized the fact that effects of media fall upon the society. (Baran & Davis, 2012). On the horizon of social contents media not only disseminate information and notices but also viewpoints, ideas and thoughts. As the issues relevant to the citizens' concerns are presented in an attractive way, the citizens accept the media contents. The media for receiving such contents can be newspapers, magazines, radio, television or online portals.

The readers determine the use of such mediums in terms of their facilities, access and necessity. However, the impact is direct, indirect, temporary, long-term and cognitive. Consequently, people's viewpoints, attitudes and behavior change. Thus, the change in the behavior of the people leads to change and transformation in the overall social scenario. Especially, as media plays a role for providing awareness to people through notices and thoughts, it creates circumstance of building public opinion and social pressure on any subject. In cases of injustice, tyranny, corruption, exploitation and irregularity, when the media communicates the contents, the environment of public awareness and social pressure is created. It helps to set up good governance in the society. In fact, in the context of Nepal, nowadays, because of the effective role of the media, assistance is coming to fulfill the desire of establishing good governance in the society.

2. Objectives of Study and Procedure
The fundamental objective of this study is to have a brief study on how the media has played its role in the social change of Nepal. Descriptive method has been followed for this. An attempt as been made to reach a conclusion by analyzing the data collected from
secondary sources. This study has been completed by reviewing the materials brought out in various books, theories, research reports and newspapers.

3. Analysis and Interpretation
The possible impact of media in the society has been analyzed in various angles. In one hand media has directly influenced the society and on the other hand it has been doing indirectly as well. Likewise, from the structure of the society to the form of the society, changes have been brought about by the media. Apart from that, there has been a massive change in the thinking, perception, attitude and behavior of people living in the society because of the content of the media. The media has especially provided the cognitive dose needed for the mental, cognitive and intellectual development of people. Consequently, there will be clarity in their conceptual aspect and slowly their behavior will change. Finally, its victory will be seen in the social outlook.

3.1 Media as the Source of Knowledge
In general, media refers to means of mass communication. It consists of Traditional Media, Modern Media and Online Media. If it is to say more specifically, current digital and social networks based on computers and the internet are all media, from the way of mockery, mocking, pointing, shouting, to newspapers, magazines, movies, radio, television and computers and the internet that is also depicted as a means of mass communication.

Media sector has extended along with exploration and development occurred in the field of science and information technology. Before 1455 there was no Printing Technology in the world. After, a German, Jones Gutenburg invented the printing machine the mass communication sector got a significant achievement. After that, modernity, uniqueness and diversity were gradually noticed in the printing sector. Radio communication developed after 1920s and television broadcasting after 1926s. Not only this, after the development of the Internet in 1970s, a remarkable leap has been created in the enhancement of the media field. In fact, the development in the field of communication technology has made the media sector easier, accessible, recordable, less expensive and most widespread. Especially after the 20th century, the scope of media use has grown
significantly. Media itself is an organized institution that creates, distributes and displays content and messages.

Here, the relationship between inter objects and messages is related information and knowledge. In fact, the media has created the basis for the flow of knowledge by communicating messages, content, ideas, perceptions and perspectives. In this sense, the media itself is a source of knowledge. Here knowledge is the information about the truth. To get informed about the facts. Media plays a special role in letting people know about truths and facts.

As the media is the basis of acquiring knowledge, it helps in the psychological, cognitive and intellectual development of people. Especially based on the work performed by the media, it has established itself as a source of knowledge. The key function of the media is to see for information, produce messages, communicate information, educate, entertain and inspire.

3.2 Formulation of Concepts and Viewpoints

In fact, the formation of concepts and viewpoints in people is prepared from the basis of obtaining knowledge. There are many ways, methods and institutions for people to get knowledge. People get information through process of five senses like Seeing, Smelling, Tasting, Touching and Listening.

After acquiring the information in the aforementioned way, people gain knowledge about what the reality is or of course, information about the truth is received. In fact, knowledge is the knowledge of truth. Obviously, the truth is the understanding of things. Another
question that needs to be understood here is that people have the inherent ability to obtain knowledge. Every individual has got such capacity. However, there may be a difference in quantity. Factors such as internal and external environment, psychology, opportunity, readiness and awareness determine the aspect of acquiring information. Consequently, the amount of knowledge differs from person to person. Especially intellectual, Mental and cognitive development of people is a natural process. The power needed for that is inherent in people. Those powers in people can be mentioned as follows.

- Power of Receiving
- Power of Memorization
- Power of Observing
- Power of Thinking
- Power of Imagine
- Power of Generalization
- Power of judgment
- Power of problem solving

Man has developed his concept about the country, time and situation from the aforementioned inherent forces. And, on the basis of that concept, he creates a special perspective and develops behavior. There are various types of structures, institutions and aspects in society. An important part of that is the media. In this sense, it is said that media plays a role in creating concepts, perspectives and ideas.

3.3 Role of Media in Building Public Opinion

Creation of public opinion is a very important aspect. The public opinion determines how any society will be prepared politically, socially, culturally and economically. Public opinion is the common belief, feeling or opinion of people in any particular society. Public opinion is representative. Especially in a modern, secular, democratic and civilized society, the issue of public opinion is considered inevitable.

Various institutions, characters and aspects play their role from their respective levels to create public opinion in the society. Political institutions, social organizations, different mechanisms of the state and opinion leaders are also involved in this task. This is natural.
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Especially since the collection, production, distribution, transmission and display of messages and inter-objects is the main accountability of the media, the media has made that assignment the main goal. The media has basically focused its attention and efforts on inter-objects. In this sense, the influence of media is comparatively more than other aspects. The role played by the media in terms of public opinion formation has also been mentioned on a theoretical basis. Especially the theories related to media influence come to be relevant for this purpose. One of those theories is 'Hypodermic Needle Theory'.

According to which it is said that the media has a direct and meaningful effect on the mood of the readers and listeners. It compares media messages to gunshots and hypodermic needles. Just as when a gunshot hits an animal, it immediately collapses, and a subcutaneous injection has a quick effect on the human body, in the same way, media content also affects people's mood. Similarly, according to 'Multi-Step Flow Theory' effects of the media fall upon level wise. This means media does not directly affect the readers. The effects fall upon them in a level wise process through Opinion Leaders. Here there are ideological campaigners between media and readers. Those who have access to the media, community leaders, educated individuals, political-social workers are called opinion leaders. Again, media content influences people's thoughts and opinions.

Similarly, in the Agenda Setting Theory, propounded by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw (1968) the logic has been put forward that the media has a deep influence on the society. The media creates an agenda on various contemporary issues of the society and conveys it to the public. People usually develop their opinions based on the agenda of the media. From which public opinion is prepared as expected. Similarly, Cultivation Theory, Medium is the Message; Diffusion of Innovation etc. have been propounded based on the influence of the media on the society.

According to the principles mentioned above, it has been confirmed on the basis of research that the media has an effect on the state of mind of people. In that sense, the Nepali society is not in a situation where the influence of the media can be affected.
3.4 Nepali Media in the Context of Social Change

Comparing the condition, a hundred years ago and today, the visual facts show that there has been a significant change in Nepali society. There have been extensive changes in education, health, physical infrastructure, economic management, political system, living style, eating habits and lifestyle. Similarly, if there is an increase in awareness about health, they will be sensitive to gender discrimination. Behavior has evolved. Likewise, there has been a change in the traditional thinking of untouchable, social exclusion and caste discrimination. Issues such as people's participation in social activities, inclusiveness, and women's direct role in the decision-making process are also gaining preference. The amount of monitoring and pressure through the media has increased on issues such as equality, participation, inclusiveness and mainstreaming. Consequently, the scope of social change and social transformation is gradually extending.

In this way, behind changes in Nepali society, different elements have played their respective roles. There is no doubt about it. However, one of the important reasons for this is the increase in people's concepts, attitudes and thinking. Nepali media has played an important role in this. The media has played a positive role in making people clear about the concept, making them aware, alert, and well-informed and motivating them as a whole.

It has also made people able to talk and talk about their issues. Consequently, there have been extensive changes in the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of Nepal. However, the development of media in Nepal has not been very long. Volume Number Counting Gorkhapatra daily published in 1901 (1958 B.S.) as the first newspaper, the journey of Nepali journalism has reached 121 years. Sudhasagar was published in 1898 (1955 B.S) as the first newspaper in Nepal. After that, Gorkhapatra was published as the first news magazine in 1901. Almost 50 years after the beginning of print media, Radio Nepal was established in 1950 (2007 B.S.). Likewise, the television has been started only after 1984 (2041 B. S.). However, in the recent phase, the development of newspapers, radio, television and online media in Nepal has been numerically significant.

Table-1: Numerical description of media in Nepal
According to Table-1, at present 9 thousand 911 newspapers are registered for publication in Nepal. This data is according to the records till 2023 B.S. kept by Press Council Nepal. In which the number of regularly published magazines is only 963. Likewise, according to Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, the number of FM and radio stations in Nepal is 744 and the number of televisions is more than 200. This number is for satellite television. Only the number of televisions is 875. Similarly, the number of online magazines is more than 3 thousand. With the increase in the number of media in Nepal, there has also been diversity in the range of topics given by media. The fact that the media gives a bit more priority to political issues has been found in the research (Bista, 2078).

However in recent times, it has been noticed that preference has been given to themes like economic, social, cultural, foreign affairs, women, tribes, inclusion and development, education, health, agriculture and environment. Therefore, it seems that it plays a significant role in the matter of social awareness. Due to the content coming in the media, there has been a change in people's concepts and attitudes. As a result, the Nepali society is gradually changing.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The media sector, which has been an integral part of modern society, has now become a matter of mandatory necessity for the common people. The use of media has become indispensable not only from the point of view of information collection, production and distribution but also from the point of view of knowledge creation and acquisition. In this competitive world of the 21st century, it is hardly probable to live in an absolute manner without the use of media. The main task of the media in society is to find, process, produce, distribute, transmit, broadcast and display information. For this, the required base is society. Society is both source and destination for media. In this process, there should
be harmony among monitoring, vigilance, responsibility and accountability. Theoretically, it is desirable to have a balance among the mentioned aspects by estimating the impact that the media can have on the society. The media has a deep effect on people's moods, attitudes and ideologies. It leads to a change in the conceptual view of the concerned person. Consequently, its opportunity is manifested in people's behavior.

If there is an element of information and knowledge in the content of media, then every human being has the inherent capacity to receive it. As a result of the inherent ability of people and the effectiveness of media, there is a change in the social landscape. However, access to the media and inclination towards it must be mandatory among the common people.

In the last few decades, the effect of media has been noticed profoundly in Nepali society. The impact of media in Nepali society has appeared as the effect of the number of media, its diversity and the extension of inter-objects. Due to influence of the media, signs of positive change have been seen in the economic, political and social fields of Nepali society.

Especially, in the matter of social discrimination, violence and inclusion, the content of the media has done task of making people aware. Besides, people have been brought to a level where they can speak and raise issues about their fundamental rights. In this perspective, Nepali society expects more responsible and responsible media role towards the society.

References