

The Role of Media in Shaping Public Opinion

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The Essay

When Malala Yousufzai survived an assassination attempt in ~~2011~~ 2012, her story spread like a wildfire through Global Media. What could have been a forgotten tragedy

instead ignited a worldwide movement for girl's education, proving that the media has the power to turn voices into revolutions. This ^{was} Role of Media that a tragedy turned into a revolution. The role of media in shaping public opinion is not a new phenomenon. Tracing back in the era of Enlightenment, it was the media who facilitated the spread of ideas related to rationalism, individual rights, and scientific progress contributing to the rise of modern democratic ideals. Today, media is considered as "Fourth Estate", because of its increasing scope and relevance in the globalized world. Therefore, media serves as a powerful tool, possessing both positive and negative aspects in shaping public opinion. On one hand, it disseminates information, promotes public awareness and political participation. On the other hand, it can perpetuate

Sensationalism, misinformation, propaganda and agenda-setting, highlighting the need for regulations and digital literacy to ensure responsible media practices and create a balance.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, wrote a pamphlet in 1858, "Essay on the causes of the Indian Revolt", in which he attributed the Mutiny to British ignorance of the Indian mind.

This is a clear indication that how much knowing public opinion held importance for a stable society and for a government to ~~build trust~~ between the masses and ~~sustain their rule~~. In

the 21st century, with increased democratic norms, public opinion is of great importance than past. States needs to know the public opinion to formulate policies for a prosperous and smoothly running functions of the state.

To begin with the print media which played a key role in influencing public opinion from ancient times till today. In past, due to absence of other modes of media, politicians, governments and religious scholars mainly used print media for dissemination of informations. They also used print media to influence public perceptions about them. When they needed masses for their political interests, they used print media to manipulate public in favour of them. Print media has been used during social movements and human rights movement. One example of print media shaping public opinion is role of newspapers in the Pakistan movement. Leaders of Pakistan movement wrote columns, pamphlets and news to public to support Pakistan movement. So a major role was played by print media in shaping public

opinion towards Pakistan Movement. Similarly, in many other occasions all over the world, Print media played a prominent role.

The second type of media is Electronic media, which has become an integral part of the world.

With the emergence of electronic media, the spread of news and reports have become very easy and quick. Therefore, it is very effective in influencing

public opinion. Electronic media plays a crucial role in

shaping public opinion through spread of news and in spreading awareness. For instance,

after every hour, ^{there are news headlines} ~~there is~~ News Headlines in channels on Television, and also breaking news,

which quickly share things to public. Similarly, it also plays a role in agenda-setting or goal-setting, by frequent

prioritization of any news

will be seen by public differently, they perceive that news as very important. Suppose governments want people support in controlling climate change, then by frequent repetition of climate related news on electronic media influence public opinion and perception about climate change.

Another type of media is digital and social media, which is now largely used and important one. Social media has spread like wildfire in world, because of its accessibility through mobile phones and laptops etc. Social and digital media are very quick to influence public opinion.

Any news or campaign goes viral within minutes and due to absence of censorship and controlling, that content played frequently which influence public opinion. For instance, #MeToo hashtag, went viral and it

influenced Public opinion in a great
extent. That's why Social and digital
Plays a crucial role in shaping
Public opinion.

