

Environment communication - Need of the hour

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SUMMARY: News media are the primary source from which people obtain their knowledge of the world's events and issues. Mass media are important sources of awareness towards environmental issues. A significant proportion of people's knowledge about environmental problems is acquired through mass media coverage (newspapers, magazines, television and radio). Media coverage of environmental issues is not only a question of creating a forum for political debate, but it is also a question of providing and managing the kind of information which will enable citizens to make decisions about 'appropriate' behaviour and precautions. There is a need to understand the deeper role that the media can play in raising public awareness and concern about environment. A starting point is the observation that the mass media serve as a primary source of information worldwide. The present study has been undertaken with the objective of assessing the role of Indian newspapers in creating mass concern with environment issues, through the perception of the selected citizens of Baroda city. A survey was conducted to obtain opinions of individuals about the extent of role of Indian newspapers in arousing popular interest by way of disseminating information about the environmental problems. The response strongly suggests a limited role of the Indian press in creating mass concern with environmental issues. Various reasons for the unsuccessful performance of the press have been presented in the findings.

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Mass media can bring about radical changes and improve social situation as it influences our social, civil, cultural, political, economic and aesthetic outlook. Modernization has converted media into an indispensable feature of human activity. However, factors like age, education, economic condition, personal needs and availability of proper components decide the quantum and frequency of media use. This is evident from the fact that most media centres are located in urban areas. The majority of consumers of media products are also concentrated in and around cities and towns.

Media use is an index of development. The greater the use, the higher will be the level of development. As social beings, humans are sustained by mutual interactions, exchange of ideas, information and views with the fellow beings. Illiteracy, which is nothing but absence of education and information is a stumbling block for any aspect of development-social, economic,

political, cultural and even spiritual. Media has become the harbinger of development through the removal of these roadblocks and the provision of information and knowledge.

In India, the ultimate power lies with the people. But a democratic society needs vigilant and informed people who are able to see through the gimmicks of political parties and politicians. Media creates such valuable citizens. Besides, media has done much good to society by exposing various scams, scandals, frauds, embezzlements and many other cases of corruption leading to initiation of enquiries and other processes of prosecution against the perpetrators of these crimes.

The media primarily reinforce existing views that people hold. This means that one should carefully define what goal one wish to achieve through the mass media. Usually this goal will be primarily informational - i.e., one will want to inform people and give those facts or information about

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