MEDIA DYNAMICS BEHIND THE GROWTH FROM INFORMATION SOCIETY TO KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

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Abstract: In the contemporary world, media and information have become influential to the point that they effect human lives. Today, information has become one of the main sources of power and monetary accumulation. present The investigates the historicity of the paradigmatic change from the oral traditions in the nascent stages of society to the present day 'information' oriented society. This historicity focuses on the power play of information within the evolution of society, while using it as a substrate to elucidate the UNESCO's Moscow declaration on Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies in June 2012. The paper aims to understand the urgency and need for knowledge societies, simultaneously highlighting the widening ridge between the informationally rich and informationally poor. The paper also paints a cogent picture of the current situation of the informational divide while placing it within the context of the aforementioned UNESCO's Moscow declaration and the historicity of media and information.

Keywords: History of Communication, Information, Informational Divide, Informational Manipulation, Knowledge Societies, Media, Power Play.

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1. Introduction

The modern era of 'Mediacracy' shows its typical symptoms of a power game in unprecedented ways and styles of digital games and devastative tricks on the weak and poor segments of the society. A permanent phenomenon of Communication Media development in history is that people in power and authority showcase their superiority through control systems, while the suppressed people in the media field try to eradicate that by developing innovative devices. This power struggle remains as old as human civilization, as humans yearn for the authoritative power, which cannot be rehabilitated once tasted. The world today reflects this phenomenon more aptly since many countries depend on information communication for their development and sustenance.

UNESCO's historical document of Mosco declaration on Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies produced by the participants of Mosco International conference held on 24 to 28 June 2012 illustrates clearly an ardent effort to meet with the impending need of the modern world, created by powerful nations exploiting the electronic media explosion. Human rights, democratic principles, and justice are violated when nations use information for their own advantage. This is often presented as an unavoidable stage of development, which could be termed as a revolution or explosion created by the change in communication traditions in history.

The Moscow document talks about New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) which refers to the urgency to a set of recommendations in order to make Global media representation more equal. Their visions and perspectives are drawn from the fluctuating media landscape and the rapid growth of information, mixed with the dynamics of media politics. The declaration notices the effect of media

¹UNESCO, "The Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy," http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/In_Focus/Moscow_Declaration_on_MIL_eng.pdf (18 June 2018).

and information on individuals and societies in the world today, and explains:

In order to succeed in this environment and to resolve problems effectively in every facet of life, individuals, communities and nations should obtain a critical set of competencies to be able to seek, critically evaluate and create new information and knowledge in different forms using existing tools and share these through various channels. The resulting literacy creates new opportunities to improve quality of life.²

The declaration enlists a number of existing and emerging barriers and challenges for the free and effective use of information, being completely aware of the various ways of misuse of information by the powerful. Simultaneously, it also recognizes the huge digital divide in information between the rich and poor sections in various countries. Therefore, the document enumerates the important elements of the lopsided, unequal, and unjust world scenario caused by actual factors.

The declaration enlists the existing limitations restrictions endured by poor nations through the subtle blatant machinations imposed by the rich and powerful agents to take advantage of the digital deficiency. They tried to promote a basic sense of equality of right to information and to cultivate respect for the cultural and linguistic diversity. Change of undue legal barriers for appropriating information and to maintain the freedom of expression and the rights to preserve personal digital information are all supported in the document. They also wanted to correct the lack of cross sectional and interdisciplinary collaboration among mass media outfits and academic organizations in order to nurture the Knowledge Society for the greater benefit of all. All these are the elements of the ongoing fight to establish democratic principles of liberty, equality and fraternity among world nations.

In the battle against the unjust control of media by some giant agents in the field, UNESCO silently but successfully

²UNESCO, "The Moscow Declaration on Media," 1.

made the Mosco conference prove that this has been a global cry for the establishment of a just World Information Communication Order.

The conference gathered nearly 130 participants from 40 countries representing all continents, executives and experts of key specialized international governmental and nongovernmental agencies and organizations, leading world experts in the field of knowledge societies building, leading researchers and professors of journalism, librarianship and education; executives and representatives of government authorities responsible for educational institutions and libraries and print and electronic media representatives of international and national associations of media literacy information professionals; representatives organizations and institutions engaged in publishing professional literature on media and information literacy and media practitioners.3

The role and value of information has drastically changed due to the growth of communication media in the modern age. The global invitation proposed by UNESCO emerges from understanding the ground realities created by communication media in the present-day world. Humanity, till the technological age, understood information as their common property. Today, it is the monopoly of the powerful, and hence right to information became an inalienable right for every individual. Unfortunately, in the modern media and globalization, information has become a commodity which can be sold according to the interests and plans of the buyer and the seller.

2. Concept of Knowledge Societies

In the context of modern world media, information and knowledge are commonly recognized as strategic resources for the social, economic, political, educational, technological, and cultural development in the countries around the world. During the last few decades, the radical technological, political and economic transactions have provided not only faster access to information and knowledge. At the same time, they created

³UNESCO, "The Moscow Declaration on Media," 2.

new dependencies, complex situations, standards, strategies, and tools have been proposed. Among them, knowledge societies are one of the notions introduced to describe a new vision that highlights the importance of principles of openness, pluralism, inclusion, and participation in societies. The concept composes of building blocks such as education, cultural diversity, access to information, and freedom of expression as part of society. There is an unjust accumulation and unequal distribution of information by the rich and powerful partners. societies envisage Knowledge а democratic and iust distribution of information.

The media information environment constantly changes in the modern world. To cope with it people groups and nations have to become self-involved, self-directed, and self-acting with time. Knowledge of information communication technology is pre-requisite for the success of the process. Freedom of expression and right to information are basic human rights that remain relevant increasing equally in an interdependent, and global world as they promote greater social inclusion, pluralism, openness, and participation. It is the recognition and understanding of these rights and values that will contribute to bridging the gap between the informationally rich and informationally poor.

The UNESCO's constant interest and effort is to bridge the gap meaningfully with a global consciousness and helping the information society to develop into knowledge society. communities such as publishers, librarians, Professional educators, journalists, and other information and media specialists are crucial for their direct involved in creating, distributing, using, and preserving information as well as knowledge.

UNFSCO mandates and declares directives to build knowledge societies inclusive and information development. The declared role of United Nations is to maintain the peaceful relationships based on democratic principle. The Moscow summit of 2012 symbolizes this effort to reconcile and maintain such peaceful relationships.

3. Background Preparation of Moscow Summit

Before the Moscow world summit, UNESCO had two other different meetings of the summit, one in Geneva on 10-12, December 2003, and the other in Tunis in 2005, to study, discuss and develop clarity on the modern information society. Those summits pursued the UNESCO's attempt to narrow down the digital-divide and accentuate disparities in development. It also aimed at guaranteeing the free flow and equitable access to data, information, best practices, and knowledge in information societies. All the more, they wanted to build international consensus on shared values and principles.

The advent of the internet, social media, and other technological developments such as mobile platforms have brought significant changes in the way we discover, access, produce, and disseminate information. This has practically widened the alienation of the rich and powerful controllers of information from the other major share of uninformed part of society. UNESCO's constant effort to empower through Media information literacy was considered essential to bridge the gap between the informationally rich and poor, a gap that cuts across the countries, social groups, and generations. The Prague Declaration on "Towards an Information Literate Society," and the Alexandria Proclamation on "Informational Literacy and Lifelong Learning" in the early 2000's capitalizes on the significance of information literacy.

As the electronic media flourished in the hands of the developed nations, it could be noticed that unjust exploitation also began to emerge together with the attempts to fight against such abuse. The UNESCO awareness and struggle to make the world, especially the western power barons of the global village, starts almost half a century ago to bring froth the unjust social setup of producing and utilizing of information. UNESCO took efforts to study the situation from early 1970's to

⁴UNESCO, "The World Summit on the Information Society," https://en.unesco.org/themes/building-knowledge-societies/wsis (5 August 2018).

understand the manipulations of information power and the subsequent creation of a social divide in the global scenario.

4. MacBride Commission

In 1977 UNESCO set up an international commission for the study of the communication problems under the chairmanship of Sean MacBride, the Irish Nobel Laureate, with erudite representatives from 15 different countries. The aim of this move was to analyze the communication problems in modern societies, particularly relating to mass media and news, to consider the emergence of new technologies and to suggest a kind of communication order to diminish those problems. The concentration of media, commercialization of media, and unequal access to information and communication were the problems identified by the Commission. The Commission called for democratization of communication and strengthening of national media. This was a historical step by the United Nations Organization in its fight against the manipulation of information communication by the powerful in the world as such.

The MacBride Report, titled as "Many Voices One World" was published by UNESCO in 1980. While the report had strong international support, it was condemned by the United States and the United Kingdom, who withdrew from UNESCO in protest in 1984 and 1985 respectively. That was a global disaster in the struggle to keep in check the unequal control of information by the rich and powerful, even though later the US and UK joined back in 2003 and 1997, respectively, due to other pressures and concerns.

The widespread availability of cellular phones, the rise of the Internet, and the new phenomenon of citizen journalism has changed the communication landscape significantly since 1980's. Since then, many active NGOs have campaigned from the intergovernmental realm to civil society. The one-way flow of news and media has been balanced, thanks to the introduction of new media, cultural products, and news sources. The fight for the right to communicate successfully continues in society, asserting it as a fundamental right all over the world. The fight of the suffering majority finds success as new media methods are developed to undermine the inequality within the built in structures. According to Harold Innis the prevalent media traditions of a particular period of time would decide the social structures, ruling system, power practice, leadership roles, learning habits, norms of truth, relationship styles, and value systems of the society. The power struggle and social controls will be based on information capturing and its dissemination or sharing, done in the system. The present-day efforts to develop a knowledge society from the information society based on the principle of pluralism, equality, and cultural varieties and right of information is part of the inherent dynamism of information communication development of humanity.

5. Situations during Oral Tradition

Initially, human society communicated within small societies with oral tradition. The peculiarities of these small communities were shaped based on the quality and limitation of oral communication. Dynamic speakers and exciting story tellers captured better attention of the crowd, and these oral experts turned out to be the natural leaders for people to share and clarify their urge for stories and information. The society was very lucid without much of structural clutches and controls. The relationship within a tribe was very strong and the members of other tribes were often treated as the other.

The final ruling authority of the tribe used to be the elder, who is also the religious leader or priest. Whenever a conflict arose people would come to the elder for a final decision; he hears both sides and makes his judgement which is considered final. In more complicated cases when two groups of the tribe are on the verge of a split or grave fight, the elder takes recourse to Oracle; he goes into a trance as if he had a direct contact with the divine, and whatever is revealed to him he

⁵Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964.

utters as an Oracle. In the trance state whatever the Elder uttered was understood as the will of God, and the revelation given was to be accepted by everyone. Therefore, it was Theocracy, rule of faith in God, which prevailed during the period of oral communication.

Declining concrete principles, however, created differences of opinions and tensions in society. The Oracles which were the ultimate source and norm of truth seemed to be fluctuating as the utterances differed according to the relationships and interests of the elder. These were subsequently questioned by the more intelligent members of the group. These were some of the first public revolts against the misuse of authority. A desire arose to concretize the revealed will of God in writing rocks, stones, clay or metal tablets with specific symbols or emblems. Thus writing became very crucial to human history.

The written tradition emerged in society due to the shortcomings of the oral tradition. It was also the victory of the public against the misuse of authoritative power by the priestly class of Elders, who had the command and control of the society by giving the final judgements. Once the Will of God is solidified in rock or clay tablets it became the norm of the society as the written Will of God, and were treasured in huge temples. The temple protection was entrusted to influential people with military power who came to be known as kings. This is how power structures developed with the inception of writing.

The priestly class shared their authority with kings to take care of the will of God and the temporalities attached to that in a limited way. In building the temples and safeguarding the Divine Will inscribed on tablets the priests insisted that the tabernacles should be kept in the Holy of Holies, as they are revealed will of God. Nobody other than the priests were allowed to enter and read or interpret the revealed will of God. Thus the clerical class institutionalised their control and authority. The reading, understanding, and interpreting of the Will of God was declared as the prerogative of the priests, and hence they were to learn and practise literacy. In most of the cultures only the members of the priestly class were allowed to learn the sacred literature, and thus a division took place within society between the literate and illiterate. Thus, the priests and kings began monopolizing and controlling information to subjugate and rule the masses. The priestly class commanded the power to even correct, punish, and dethrone the ruling king, as they had sole control over information on the Will of God, which was absolute.

6. Legal Systems and Social Structures

With the introduction of written tradition, knowledge became the interpretation of the written Will of God accessible only to the priestly class. The interpretation of Divine Will took the form of laws and regulations in society. The energy and workforce of society was systematically organized and structuralized, making the socio-cultural and economic development of the society faster and wider. As the structured organization of society garnered more power, authorities became sponsors of art, architecture, and culture at this period. They used the tax and contributions of common people in order to create lasting monuments for the kings or their beloved. Royal secrets or official secrets were established and insisted to conceal the evil functioning of the people in authority.

During this period of socially organized force based on legalized and structuralized system, agriculture becomes a more profitable economic resource. Unlike the nomadic life, people began to occupy and own land to cultivate ensuring the legal right for private property, probably to avoid possible conflicts and fights on landed property. Re-writing the scriptures, reading and interpreting the original revelations, etc. were the prerogatives of priests and monks, who formed the ultimate clerical authority during the rule of aristocracy in a society.

Monasteries thrived during this period. Monasteries owned large farm lands where the monks worked hard and brought out great produce. Apart from the hours of manual work in the farms and prayers in the oratory, the monks spent their

valuable time in developing mechanical devices to help humanity in their practical life. Monasteries thus became the houses of spiritual growth, intellectual learning, and creating technical and industrial devices which eventually created the industrial revolution in the West. Print technology was one of the technical devices they discovered to help people who were rewriting the scriptures as a profession, which later led to a total transformation of the prevailing communication systems and social traditions.

The revolutionary change that the print media brought in the field of communication primarily was to destroy the power monopoly of priests to read and interpret the ultimate revelation in the scriptures, kept in the holy of holies of the temples. The Holy Bible was the first book that was printed and it became the first book in the living rooms of people. The official church reacted against the use of the Scriptures by the common people, though they could not resist it effectively because of this new media technology's capability for mass production.

Since print media gave power to individuals they began to claim that the ruling authority must be decided by themselves. As a result, democracy thrived with governments being composed of the people, by the people, and for the people with underlying democratic features of liberty, equality, fraternity. The Church and state became separate in their roles and powers, and the Church confined themselves to the spiritual realm of faith and morals.

Various visions were developed and interpreted since the ultimate truth became accessible for the individuals within society. The individual became the prime or central reality within the structured society. Whoever gave better visions for society became the leaders who were looked up to by the common masses. Instead of religious leaders, intellectual leaders took over the roles: the scientists like Copernicus, Einstein, Darwin, Isaac Newton, Galileo; philosophers like Hegel, Immanuel Kant, Frederic Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger; psychologists like Sigmund Freud, Karl Jung; sociologists like Augustus Comte, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and many others commanded the attention and acceptance of the people.

Rationalism and idealism thrived as a result of open sharing of visions by intellectuals. Primacy of reason, nature, imagination, and humanity were synthesized into a Worldview that gained wide ascent in the west leading to revolutionary development in art, philosophy and politics. The goals of a rational human society were considered to be knowledge, freedom, and happiness. This development can be seen in the emergence of Renaissance as a cultural movement whose influence was felt in literature, philosophy, art, music, politics, religion etc. Since rationalism and ideologies prevailed during the reign of print media, the economic-political world struggled between Capitalism and Communism under the leadership of USA and USSR. Rational thinking and ideologies based on empirical science became predominantly powerful during the time of print media.

In this culture, the norms of truth were rational convictions and idealism. The drawback of this growth was the over emphasis on the rational knowledge and the lack of importance for emotional realities. Even though reason has power, it is emotions that move human beings to work hard and fast to make achievements. Emotions devoid of reason can lead people to foolishness, just as reason without emotions can make him dull and dry.

7. Evolution, Revolution and Explosion

When we look back it becomes very clear that the growth of media tradition from oral to the written was a natural evolution. The transition from written to print was a complete revolution with its industrial project. The media growth from print to electronic was an explosion. Photography and videography coupled with audiography and radiography were fuelled by computer operations which changed the media world unimaginably.

The electronic media transformed the communication language of humanity from verbal to audio-visual language.

The technology was designed to communicate things more effectively with sounds and sights than with words. This created a totally new language of emotional communication and reduced the power of rational communication. The audiovisual language became the preferred language of the majority of humanity. The visuals and sounds would permeate the emotions and passions in humans rather than reasons and intellect. The audio, visual, and emotional world of humans were resurrected with vigour and power in electronic media, which were previously neglected in the print media.

8. Multiple Forms of Power and Media

In the course of human history, people believed that 'might is power' as it could inherit authority. Because they believed that the ultimate might remained with God, they maintained the rule of Theocracy during oral tradition. Subsequently, they realized that might could be influenced by various means, and thereby people who amassed wealth became mighty. Thus the Aristocracy ruled during the written tradition. Later, humanity recognized intellectual power, where real rational planning and intelligent execution brought better results from the resources. When the human mind was recognized as the seat of power, democracy became the rule. Now, we are amidst a dramatic change in the situation. Today, ideas have become more redundant if they are not channelized and communicated properly. This channelizing and communication of ideas happens through media, which captures the emotions and passions of society. Ultimately 'media is power,' emerges as the rule in the present day media-centric world.

In every stage of development within media, we can notice the aberrations of the attitude of people in positions of responsibility. Their unjust power usage to safeguard their selfish interests have provoked the intelligent members of the community to discover smarter ways of using technology to correct and, at the same time, overcome the misuse of power. In oral traditions the Elder of the tribe, the religious head, or priest, used the revelation of divine Will for

their own benefit. This provoked the intelligent members of the society to question the changing nature of the eternal Will of God. It bridled the misuse of authority by the priests and introduced the method of imprinting the divine will within written traditions of communication media. Foregoing the resistance from the priestly class they successfully established and enjoyed the good results of the new media development.

The legalization, structuralization, and absolute control over society transformed the clergy and religious groups into owners of huge agricultural land and property. Only the ruling leaders had their tastes and interests safeguarded and nurtured. Their patronage and mercy were sought for growth in the cultural and artistic areas. The individual interests or initiatives of the artists were secondary to those of their patrons. The right to monarchy or kingship was mostly a family heredity and not acquired by merit or talent. This supremacy of the institution over the individual kept the general public no better than slaves.

Technological device of print demolished the monopoly of priests and kings in authority. Aristocracy was dethroned, priesthood was disinvested of power and social authority. The resistance from the part of kings was met with the bloodshed of revolution in most of the cases. Church and other religious authorities tried strongly to cling on to the authority, but lost miserably as the intellectuals and secular rational visionaries took it on to themselves. The world leadership was separated from the church leadership. Russia and America took over the world leadership through the world wars and cold wars. Secular terror and secular hope kept them in a kind of balance of power equations and world peace.

9. Electronic Media Magic

Introduction of electronics and the invention of computers made explosive changes within global scenario. Communication power spread far and wide, fast and furious. Audio visual language became fascinating and flashy. Media publicity and power control came to rule humanity through

novel tricks and treats. American capitalistic investment and control of communication dethroned USSR into shambles. Together with that, ideological fight for the world leadership gave way to pragmatic practice of power structure. New power structures and styles did not give any one nation or group absolute power. It is the conglomerates or networks that come to control the power authority in the modern world of digital electronics.

Right to information becomes something to be fought for in the modern world as information, which needs to be common to all individuals, lost its role in the public purview. The fastrack nature, wide collection, preservation, and controlled dissemination of information is commanded and controlled by the monetary agents for their own interest. This leads to unjust social structures appearing in newer and mightier forms as history takes new turns with new media technologies.

The word 'information' takes prominence as a jargon within the media world. A country's developmental plans depend on the richness of information in possession or any information it is capable of buying from third parties. This eventually, excruciatingly widens the digital divide among the masses. Today, information collection, its presentation, and its sharing relies on the cyber space technology. Everybody uses it, communicates with it, collects information, and spend their days connected to it in a numbing sense of pleasure.

The digital media produced another amazing reality of storing and sharing huge loads of information globally through the World Wide Web. The internet provides us with a fascinating virtual and actual reality. Various collections of information as single or multiple units are collected and connected as circles, which then are interrelated with concentric circles of networks as the World Wide Web, and are open to anyone who wants to share it actively or passively. This model of media network connecting the global information data sharing system has turned out to be the new model of power structure in the world directed by the electronic media, which does not have a central point of authority and no hierarchical structure to put a check on the workings of the system. But, the net works effectively as a coordinated system in which every link is responsible, and works in an interactive dynamics of give and take.

When one nation or global agency seems to exploit or control the information, and use it for business advantages, different countries suffering from similar problems of disadvantages and sharing parallel hopes of liberation began to join together as a networking system. Such collaborations to create a joined network system has led to unions like OPEC nations, G7 nations, G9 nations, SARC nations, European union, African union, Arab League, Common Wealth of Nations, APEC, NATO, G15, WTO, WFTU, APFIC, CTBTO, and NSG. These united networks also interact with each other in the style of interrelated concentric circles of the World Wide Web. Today, real world power concentrates in such global networks. This style of network authority seems to be the social contribution of modern Digital Media to humanity.

In the power struggle of the modern world using information as a commodity creating an unjust gap between the informationally rich and poor, the network approach is bringing up a new way for balanced growth. The most powerful and effective network organization in the world today is perhaps the United Nations Organization with multifarious wings like UNESCO. This network system of authority has high voltage utility in the modern world to lead it to a new concept of authority.

10. Conclusion

As pope Francis said in his message for 53rd World day of social communications,

In this complex scenario it may be useful to reflect again on the metaphor of 'Net' which was the basis of the internet to begin with to rediscover its positive potential. The image of the net invites us to reflect on the multiplicity of lines and intersections that ensure its stability in the absence of a center, or hierarchical structure, a form of vertical organization. The 'net' works because all the elements share responsibility.6

The peculiar might, control, mutual respect, inspiration, influence, and balance of an inclusive network system of study, planning and execution of a new world order of information highlighted here beautifully. As communication are happened in history at every development stage when people in authority begin to take monopoly and control of the power, newer technologies come up with techniques of disrupting this accumulation of power and wealth.

UNESCO is trying to achieve with its ardent efforts to form a knowledge society from the information society. In the modern world of information society a shift can be seen from manual labour to mental labour. The primary form of production in the present economy has shifted from goodsbased to knowledge-based. The information replaces material goods as the most important driving force of economic activity. Today we produce various types of knowledge instead of consumer goods, shifting production from factories information society. This kind of growth has widened the gap of the digital divide in the world due to the technological innovation and unequal dissemination.

The concept of knowledge societies includes a dimension of cultural, economical, political and, institutional transformation, with a more pluralistic and developmental perspective. The knowledge in question is important not only for economic growth but also for empowering and developing all sectors of society. This is the ideological attitude which UNESCO wants to hold on and promote. In the growth process of the communication media emergence of struggles and their balancing is the inevitable part of the process. Existing power structures and authoritative aspirants will always try to

messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html> (3 July 2018).

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⁶Pope Francis, "'We are members one of another' (Eph 4, 25): From social network communities to the human community," Message, 53rd World Communications Day http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/ en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20190124_

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monopolize the media power for self-gain. History witnesses the emergence of new technologies which always manage to secure new methods to break and balance the materialism and power hunger of the rich and powerful.

The world networks like UNESCO will have to continue their incessant efforts to embolden the network techniques in finer and effective ways in the modern world. The fast growing and all pervading information society should grow into an equal sharing democratic knowledge society based on ethical values and humanistic principles. Hopefully, a newer technological discovery by the intelligent digital generation will practically make it easy and enjoyable in the near future. This process will continue in history with emerging authorities trying to control and balance media techniques for a flourishing democratic humanity.