
Mediatization and Cultural Change in Nepal

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Abstract

Mediatization is a process of media-influence on society. In this process, people are exposed to types of media and as a result culture, politics, business, sport, education, and other parts of a society undergo change. We can see the massive utilization of social media apps by people in the present globalized context, and Nepal is also following the similar trend. Increasing use of social media apps by people of all walks of life has brought a drastic change in the way of life of Nepali people. The audio-visual effect of media is more remarkable since the use of audio-visual instruments can be clearly visualized during the feasts, rituals and celebration of festivals. People celebrate culture because culture is always important to them, but the diffusion of culture in the present has become instant caused by media. Media of course is a catalyst of macro level change and political transformation, but in case of Nepal it has become a major part of cultural transformation. The problem therefore lies on whether mediatization as a process contributes in general to positive changes or jeopardizes cultural practices in particular. It is because the contents of television, radio, newspaper, movie, music-video, online portal, meeting, school, university, social organization, civil society, etc., are less relevant to public, mediatization has become the agent to mystify culture. This paper recommends the proper utilization of media so as to enrich Nepali culture.

Keywords: *media, culture, change, history, Nepal.*

Introduction

Media has become an important part of social life in this age. It has become an aggregator of both news and entertainment. Massive engagement of people including the kids and aged in mobile phones, laptops, and other screens, in this age of information and communication has helped to the rise of mediatization. Mediatization is a mega process whereby the mass media influences different sectors of society including the culture, education, politics, sports, business, etc. Looking at the impact of media on the macro social level, media can be seen as the catalyst for progressive change, and the influence of media in different social sectors is undisputable but its impact on culture is more remarkable. It enables people to perform the rituals in a more open way. The importance of media cannot be underestimated for its role in reducing the stressful living of people, and facilitating them get relaxed. Besides, the normative aspects of culture are also fulfilled by the use of media. But media also has the strength of commercializing the culture in which the traditional norms and values may put into peril due to excessive mediatization. Therefore, it seems relevant to explore whether culture is affected by mediatization and how.

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Also, the public image of an individual reflects to a great extent with media-influence. People have diversified life and livelihood, and their ethnic, cultural, religious, caste or other identity is remarkably shaped and transformed by mediatization. For instance, people nowadays hesitate to live a traditionally accustomed typical life than to adapt a new lifestyle and orientation to new identity. Hindu people are inserting Christian way of life easily. And once they switch to another religion, the established practice ceases to continue. The opting of a new style, and people's adaptation to it has become more common as a result of mediatization. And, mediatization flows through various digital media indicates that people should have magnetized to it a lot. This paper attempts to look at people's lifestyle and crossmatch it with the media culture with more emphasis given to artificial gestures that people have made so as to become more glamorous. It further seeks to explore whether the mediatized cum gestured glamour has aided in preserving or demolishing traditional culture.

The emergence and growth of media has set people free to celebrate, and not being obliged to follow, the traditional route. This freedom of choice has made people easily used-to of adopting new styles and performances. The change in people's behavior in accordance with media has rendered more challenges to traditional way of celebrating culture. Hence, mediatization as a matter of fact gives a deep impression to the people that the reestablishment of traditional culture is questioned. Despite the fact that mediatization has equal chance of preserving or derailing the traditional culture, it has preserved the culture more in forms and less in essence.

Research Methodology

This paper is a product of both the secondary and primary sources of data. Since the content and form of this paper is purely qualitative, it has given emphasis, while doing literature review, to contents such as culture, change, role of media, etc. It embraces qualitative data from selected books, journals, reports, etc. on the topic mediatization, culture, change and media. Besides, fifty individuals, who are learning or practicing journalism in news media such as radio and television, are inquired on whether mediatization has affected their way of living. The respondents were from 20 to 40 years of age, both the male and female equal in number. All the respondents were interviewed once; each completed within half-an-hour to one full hour. The most common types of responses from all the 50 respondents were generalized to reach the conclusion of this paper.

Review of Literature on Mediatization and Society

Media is a social construct, one major component of society, but the way society is shaped by it has been quite interesting. Both the media and society are interconnected with each other. Compared to society's role in allowing media to evolve, the trend is shifting, and the media is playing a more decisive role in shaping and reshaping the social trajectory. Emile Durkheim's theory revolves around the unity, integration and order in society in which the media can play a contributing role.

Let's start from the ritual. The function of ritual in Emile Durkheim's theory is its capacity of maintaining and restoring social unity through certain core symbols and the generation of

collective sentiments, the channeling of social conflict and persuading members of a society to conform to the common values and norms (Mervi Panti and Johanna Sumiala, 2009, p. 122).

Society probably shares the collective sentiments and values to the other members of another society that maintains the solidarity in the life of people in the society. The change in generation does not mean the absolute transformation of culture in the society indeed, the other generation though bears a nominal change tends to stick to the culture through various means and media they see, hear and learn. In Nepal too, youngsters follow the same culture and tradition the older people value at past time. They are mediatized through audio visual effect that various multimedia and social media in their real life and live the similar life they perceive from that media.

Mediatization and religion

No one could have predicted the emergence of tricolor cockades, liberty trees, red liberty caps, patriotic altars, or goddesses of liberty. They were all created, some from popular sources and others more self-consciously by the leaders, in the heat of excitement in the months that followed the fall of the Bastille (Alexander, 1988, p. 27).

Mediatization as the process, which molds people in a distinctive way of life they undertake or are imposed to follow through the jurisdiction of media. The creation of human understandings, perception and interpretation flows in the name of social ethics, religious believes, economic predicament through media that inaugurated the culture as the way of living in the society. Self-realization and media both lead to the cultural development among individual in the society. So, mediatization on people is both the effect of consciousness and learning from the outer world. All the culture and the lifestyle that people develop are the consequence of human creation and copy from the society. So, religion through its discipline, value system, and ethics maintain culture in the society permanently.

“The sacred therefore has its origins in a surplus of energy created by an extraordinarily high level of social exchange is then invested in some objects which is taken to represent collective ideas” (Alexander, 1988, p. 27). Taking religion for instance is the outcome of transmission from the despotic to infirm that ascertains the viability of the people in the country or in the area they dwell. The religion people stick to is nonetheless the creation of the high-level individuals that the ordinary heed and make a life as a culture. The elites use the religion as the most puissant weapon in order to navigate the people in the route they fabricate that is indeed so-called culture or the adaptive mechanism of people in certain area, society or the nation.

Hence, mediatization in Nepal has affected the religion that has transformed the belief, system and value of the nation. The transformation from the primitive to modern era under religion in order to set the culture and value system is the effect of mediatization in the Nation with regard to digitization, internet system like new media.

Mediatization and history

The essential point is, however, established in that work: that ‘if there is one truth that history teaches us beyond doubt; it is that religion embraces a smaller portion of social life. Originally it pervades everything; everything social’s religious... (Giddens, 1872).

History being a powerful record of the past events bears a great potentiality to influence people once again with the fact people cannot evade the occurrence with their will. Instead history affects the entire life of the people consciously or unconsciously. For instance, people in Nepal follow the same religion as their forefathers follow and that is the effect of history. People in most of the cases can deny the embrace of other religion besides their history. So, history plays the dominant role in shaping the life of individual under certain track. Despite the fact that some have set about the practice of changing the religion, the total change is nominal in this case that cannot be specified as mediatization instead the former practice that is theorized in the society or set in the society that mass follow is mediatization.

Discussion

Mediatization is misguiding people in society

Media is such a powerful realm that inculcates innumerable aspects of life; media indoctrinate an individual to move in a certain orbit of established life of an individual in the society. In such a situation of implantation of certain culture, people capture either positive or negative portion from the access of media and apply similar way of life. So, the information media escalated to the public might not necessarily spread proper guidance to the people despite its necessity in the society. Hence, people in Nepal are probable to face similar occurrences to be taken into account under social issues that this study explores.

Positive transformation of culture and religion is necessary

Media is the most powerful agenda in this digital and cybernetic age that enfolds the brain of people that has a drastic effect in religion in Nepal. Religion as suggested by Emile Durkheim in his "Division of Labor in Society" is the derivation of interest upon the cultural process inclined to theoretical autonomy. As the believe system that is religion sets people in a certain discipline most probably into a religion, media draws the similar effect in the life of people while the consequence might be either constructive or obstructive. Therefore, establishment of culture from religion in life of people is to be aimed to be embellished with the productive consequences through mediatization.

Unnecessary appeal to media may jeopardize historical aspects of a nation

Mediatization is such a critical structural change in the society that media illuminates determining the behavior, knowledge and belief among the people. in this case, if media happens to impart the irresponsible message to the group, people would behave in an irresponsible manner in the society that brings changes. Hence, the role of mediatization is prominent in case of historical tempo that establishes the promising role in the society in order to establish practically dynamic society.

Sociology of media studies the relationship between society and media. It is definitely true in the sense that the investigation and inspection of the recorded history in the world and the nation or the society has till the date brought a slight or a gigantic transformation in the life of the people. History is the major part of life of people that has a potentiality to swerve the society into more comprehensive, advanced and compatible life. It cannot be denied that people have brought the advancement in their lifestyle through the history or historical occurrences with the correction in

the omission of the flaws in the past time. So, similar is case in the life of Nepalese people in Nepal that they have brought some changes in their life through the correction in historical fallacies. Hence, in such a manner, history has brought mediatization effect among the people in Nepal.

Mediatization shapes trends and lifestyle

The tradition that people develop through mediatization is the effect of trend in the society that is transferred from one person to another person in the society. The morality of people that they enhance is the structure of tradition that they are compelled to follow or follow with their own wish and will in the society. This is due to mediatization that they willingly or unwillingly embrace the lifestyle of the other people within themselves in order to develop or maintain or establish as a culture in that society in their own society. So, mediatization only counts those approaches that are established in the society despite a short period change in the society.

Mediatization let the people to establish the culture as a theorized mechanism in the society. Only the social transformation practiced momentarily is considered to be the consequence of mediatization. This very consequence of swerving the society into different direction from the native ones to the foreign culture has hypnotized the people in the society. For instance, the local cultures and traditions of Nepal such as “dhimebaaja”, “panchebaaja”, “Tyamkuli”, “Ropai”, “Jhijhiya”, and so on fail to present themselves as international ones but instead started becoming rare in the society.

Mediatization promotes uncensored adoption of western pop culture

While embracing the culture through mediatization, people get both positive and negative message or probably inhibit positive or negative behavior in their life. Undoubtedly, the pop culture of international value has lured the society into its grasp while ignoring the culture from Nepalese society. Nepalese people could not make own culture their pop-culture instead are embracing the western culture and practicing that as their pop culture. For instance, in the eastern culture like Nepal, birthdays are meant to be celebrated inflaming the oil lamp in “sukunda”- a traditional oil lamp vessel in Nepal for the long life of the particular person. While in contrary, the western people blow out the lamp and cut the cake while celebrating the birthdays believing that the smoke from the candles would carry their wishes to the God or the smoke would help ward off the evil spirits. However, at this modern age in order to show their modernization, people in Nepal have started imitating the western culture of blowing out the candle light instead of lighting up the oil lamp due to the effect of mediatization inspired from the western culture.

Mediatization is instrumental towards erosion of traditional culture

Another social issue found during the study is ignorance of own culture in Nepal. That means people ignore the culture of Nepal in Nepal forgetting to make it a pop-culture, instead are under the influence of the western culture making them Nepal’s pop-culture. Indeed, the third world culture has always been the subject of the rarity in case of mediatization and the first and second world cultures are always under the focal point or highlights. In this case, another example is about the celebration of New Year. People in Nepal are more interested in New Year of Gregorian calendar rather than new years of own country. “Nepal Sambat” that Newari people celebrate is not only the date related to Newars; instead represents the entire country. Therefore, Nepalese

people are actually supposed to celebrate “Nepal Sambat” instead of western “New Year” in order to promote and maintain the culture of own country. Despite the promotion of the own culture, people are influenced to the mediatization of the other countries besides Nepal and that is not the sign of positivity to the country. In the case of “Nepal Sambat”, it represents the national calendar that represents the whole country so is the calendar of the whole country that all Nepalese necessitate to follow as an established culture in the nation.

Mediatization encourages excessive indulging with digital realm

The digitization has transformed the society in order to get dependent on one another throughout the world with the consequence of effect of mediatization. Furthermore, mediatization is the process to develop the individual that directs towards globalization, industrialization, and commercialization and in all towards the enlightenment. Through mediatization people can inhabit a better life than they lived in their past time. And through the change in life, they can change the pattern of the culture that becomes possible through mediatization. In a different note, Mediatization has brought a lot of negative impacts on people in Nepal. People appear more engaged to the social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, Instagram, Snap chat, and many more apps in their cell phone rather than gathering physically with people as it used to be some decades ago. Moreover, husbands have a little or no time to have conversation face to face with their wives even during the time of lunch and dinner, however they would rather share their offerings, views, or points in virtual chatting via their cell phones. The case exists not only at the familial events, instead can be seen also during various formal programs where the speech delivered on the stage goes unheard and ignored by the people who simply are found engaged in mobile.

Mediatization creates strict adherence to religion and culture

The perspective of religion is one of the worthy entities for mediatizing people in the society and its effect has been witnessed in Nepal too. Nepal with its diversified religions has put its impact upon people in the society from various perspectives. Moreover, in case of Hinduism as Nepal though follows the diversified religions is more prone to Hinduism. For instance, people do not enter into the temple with their shoe on. People taking off their shoe while entering into temple, is the effect of established culture that had been developed as a theory in the society of Nepal since ancient times is the religious effect of mediatization in Nepal.

Since the beginning of origin of the religion, people possibly got mediatized with their respect towards the religion. Also, in the name of God and religion the sentiments of people are more attached that could easily mediatize people in the nation. This very propaganda was well understood by the ancient dictators who easily mediatized people through various discourses such as books, films, plays, and music on religion. So, probably most of the Nepalese people since the ancient time till the date are living under the discipline created in the name of religion developed as culture in Nepal.

Mediatization helps to role in new culture

Pop culture has been one of the operative entities in the society driving the society into another level with the development of digitization at contemporary phase that is prevalent in case of religion too. during earlier days, religion has set the established culture in the society; however,

with the transformation of the society, digitization has set pop culture through mediatization in Nepal. The cultural upheaval tends to transform the society into various aspects of life such as celebration of birthdays in western style, celebration of New Year in a lavish form while giving less emphasis to Nepalese New Year, dressing styles and many more affecting the mainstream culture in the society of Nepal.

With the emergence of new media that is the medium used under the facility of internet in order to communicate in the society, nation or at international level, the mediatization effects on all age groups has gradually brought transformation. The transformation particularly in religion is being negative. From a child to an old man, internet like new media has changed the perspective of religion at present time and has minimized the use of old media like newspaper, radio, TV, banner, hoarding board. The excessive use of new media has globalized the Nation where people learn numerous lessons that they apply in their life and develop as a culture in totality. The horizon of knowledge has inclined more to the western one than aboriginal one.

Mediatization brings unhealthy changes to learning habit and preferences.

The historical consequence of mediatization since the beginning has brought the several effects in the society. The conditions of events of mediatizing people since past time till the contemporary era has brought contradictory effects upon the society. The learning habit of people changed with the change in the epoch in the nation. Over the world, there exists countless ways of exhibition through media that the individual learns from over the times. In Nepal too, people learned from television, advertisement, TikTok and YouTube videos and through Facebook. As time passed, perhaps the learning behavior too differed with the motion of time. So, behavior of people changed with the change in time and technological development in Nepal.

The case might be different in different countries unlike Nepal. However, the varieties of cases bring the variations in the learning behavior of people indifferent regions and they learn in different ways and present in the same way they learn. Nevertheless, they learn the same thing displayed in media but none other than that and built the same culture as they view. Throughout the historical instances, the children during past time used to get engaged in physical games, but no more now. Due to effect of social Media now, these children are affected as they started engaging themselves in the digital gaming system such as Pub G and Free Fire instead of playing outdoors unlike the children earlier used to do. In the past, children used to play the games such as "Dandi-Biyo", "Bagh-Chal", Hocky, Game Ball, "Gitti" etc. However, the technological era has swerved the mind of the children and totally driven them towards digital devices ignoring the people around. That is why the children and the adults both have become as the broiler chickens that are confined inside the four walls. Mediatization is similar to other meta- processes that are set up on each and every human being and their experiences. People get mediatized by hook or by crook with their yearnings or repulsion in their pace of life through various means and measures most probably the media and set them as their culture.

Mediatization enables artificiality than creativity

Mediatization has assisted in establishment of culture in the society. Nevertheless, the change in the society is not considered to be mediatization, instead mediatization is a theorized approach in the society. It is not a short terminology that depicts the short term changes but in fact, the mediatization is a holistic approach. Media has the outrageous potentiality to brainwash the mind

of the people in order to mediatize them and let the culture establish among certain integrated group of people, community or the society in the nation and abroad. Despite the fact that mediatization assist people learn much more behaviors, develop knowledge and enhance self, the effect of mediatization in Nepal has driven Nepalese into the world of isolation, confined within a limited space and change in the culture or influence from the international society that has made a great difference in culture of Nepal due to mediatization under social, religion and historical basis. That is to say that the culture of the country is heading towards the negative mediatization rather than positive mediatization due to the effect of globalization in the world and also is the consequence of new media.

Mediatization is a wheel of wider social change

Mediatization has brought drastic effect in the established culture of nation with the flourishing of new media in the nation that is internet through which people started learning behavior from all around the world. Mediatization has affected in every single and minor behavior of people in Nepal. However, the effect has been more prone to westernization rather than localization that is a negative social impact of native culture in the society and nation. For instance, the intake of the medicine in inappropriate time and inappropriate amount acts as poison and similar is with vitamin that results in the food poisoning in the body of people with wrong amount of vitamin consumption and so is with the case of mediatization. That is the reason, positive mediatization is essential for the contribution of development of the world so, media is obliged to focus on such content that changes the youngsters to feel responsible towards the nation, society and the old parents and grandparents in the family. Again, mediatization has impact on the established religion of the nation that people follow due to burgeoning of technological advancement as a new medium that is internet through which people utilize and mobilize in their daily lives in order to theorize in the real life. The utilization of new media has brought transformation in the sector of religion in the nation. The culture set with the maintained discipline has brought transformation of religion bringing change in the set of values and system in Nepal. Hence, mediatization with all other aspects has also brought transformation in case of religion in the nation.

Conclusion

Media has played a significant role for the transformation of history of Nepal and has rendered both the positive and negative impact, however the negative impact exceeds the positive impacts. We can see the alteration of mechanization in which Nepal has swerved into a different paradigm of history that has brought cons rather than pros. Modern people have experienced isolation, misguidance, break-away from native culture, heading towards westernization due to high-scale mediatization in Nepal. This study demonstrates the life of people in Nepal in a way that the mediatization has flourished certain culture under three arenas including social, religious and historical. To conclude, the way of life of Nepali people, particularly the youths, and their behavior is affected by mediatization to its fullest extent, and the artificial exposition of people during social, cultural, political and market activities verify that the native or the distinct culture is on the verge of collapse.

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