

Mjmc1: paper:1

Topic:5:3 Normative Theories of Mass Media

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Normative theories explain how the media 'ought to' or can be "expected to" operate under the prevailing set of political-economic circumstances. Since each society controls its mass media in accordance with its policies and needs, it formulates its own separate press theory. Therefore, each theory is connected with the kind of political system in which the society has to conduct its socio-economic political affairs.

Normative theory is based on the classification of the world's national media systems into four categories.

5:3:1 Authoritarian Theory

The theory holds that press and other media should always be subordinate to established authority and should do nothing to undermine it. The Authoritarian Theory justifies advance censorship and punishment for deviation from externally set guidelines.

5:3:2 Free press Theory

This theory, also called 'libertarian Theory'. It is based on the fundamental right of an individual to freedom of expression, which is regarded as the main legitimating principle for print media in liberal democracies.

5:3:3 Social Responsibility Theory

This theory is based on the assumption that media serve essential functions in society .

This theory has led to the establishment of self regulatory bodies like the press council which is responsible for

Drawing up of status to protect editorial and journalistic practice ,

Framing of codes of ethics,

Ensuring implementation of anti-monopoly legislation ;and

regulation of advertising.

5:3:4 Communist Media Theory

This is also known as the Soviet Media Theory. The Russian media were reorganized after the Revolution of 1917. This theory is derived mainly from the basic tenets of Marx and Engels. It envisages media to be under the control of the working class whose interest they are meant to serve.

5:3:5 Development communication Theory

Some common conditions of developing countries that limit the potential benefits of other theories are called development communication theory. They are:

The absence of communication infrastructure,

dependence on the developed world for hardware and software,

the commitment of these societies to economic, political and social development as a primary national task, and

the developing countries awareness of their similar identity and interest in international politics.

5:3:6 Democratic-Participant Media Theory

The main feature of the democratic participant theory relates to the needs, interests, and aspirations of the active receiver in a political society. It is concerned with the right to information, the right to answer back,

the right to use the means of communication for interaction in the small scale settings of the community.

