

## Book Reviews

**Guntasha K. Tulsi and Nidhi Madan (2022), *Media and Communication: A Handbook for Students*, New Delhi: Worldview Publication, 368 pp., Rs. 425, ISBN 9789382267515**

*Reviewed by Mansi Grover*

The book *Media and Communication: A Handbook for Students* is specifically curated for the Generic Elective paper for undergraduate courses and constitutes critical essays, case studies, and supplementary material providing wider perspectives. The editors, Guntasha K. Tulsi and Nidhi Madan, have insightfully anthologized the articles together in a book with an interesting thought-provoking cover designed by Tanya Verma. The cover of the book gives a glimpse into the broad category of 'Mass Media' and the variety of topics it encompasses, ranging from print media to digital technology.

The book carefully traces the evolutionary nature of mass media beginning with the first unit, "Understanding Mass Media and Mass Communication: Evolution and Ethicality" which offers an understanding of mass media and communication ranging from print media to radio to television. Sunaina Dua and Sarita Anand with their introductory essay lay the foundation for the essays ahead, focusing on the basics of communication. They go on to give a detailed introduction to mass communication and briefly address many pivotal aspects of mass communication that are discussed in the later articles. This unit is deftly crafted in the way it manoeuvres from the emergence and evolution of print media to television and radio locating significant historical moments. In the essay, "Evolution and Elements of Print Media: The Newspaper and its Relevance in Contemporary Times", Debasree Basu and Neha Jingala explore the history and burgeoning of print technology from Johannes Gutenberg's printing press in the fifteenth century to the gradual dissemination of print cultures in China, Japan, and Korea. They also examine the role of the Press in India during colonial times, it becoming instrumental in the nationalist struggle. The

first unit emerges as a historiography of mass media in India where the editors have placed Indrani Das Gupta's article, "Mapping the Historical Evolution of Radio and Television in India: A Critical Assessment" right after the article on print media. The article maps the development of radio and television in India, locating the similarity in their functional value, their ideological content, and their specific historical formations. The next article by Priyadarshini Bhattacharya "Indian Cinema: A Celluloid Journey Through Time" charts the evolution of cinema since its inception in the late 1800s and lays down an exhaustive study of 'Indian' cinema. The last two articles of this unit, "How Paid News Undermines Democracy" by Paranjay Guha Thakurta and Sourodipto Sanyal, and "Media Accountability and Ethical Journalism Through Self-Regulation in India: A Critical Analysis" by Meera Mathew focus on consequential concerns in a functioning democracy related to paid news, corporatization of media and its self-regulation.

The next unit titled "Digital Media and Communication" probes into the contemporary and new-age forms of mass media. The essay "Cyber Media: An Overview" by Sangeeta Mittal gives a layered understanding of the much-used terms 'cyber' and 'media' by talking about their multiplicity as well as their ubiquity and invisibility. The subsequent article by Madhumita Chakraborty analyses the way social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, have penetrated society and there is no revert to a social media-less world. Trishant Srivastava, a screenwriter based in Mumbai, in his article, "The Rise of OTT Platforms in India" delineates the algorithms that govern an OTT platform, its content, and viewership. Sanchita Khurana in "Looking At How We Look: Visuality and Mass Media" outlines the role of visuality and vision in mass media ranging from photography, cinema, and television to exhibitions, advertisements, and new media. She draws from theories in visual culture to conceptualize the politics of 'gaze' and 'spectacle.'

Sanchita Khurana's article lays the path for the next unit, "Advertisement: An Overview" which begins with an introductory article by Shruti Goel - "Introduction to Advertising." It studies the various aspects of advertising such as communication, information, non-personal presentation, persuasion, and profit maximization. It goes on to give a brief history of advertising in the West and in India. The Indian independence struggle became a watershed time for the emergence of mass media in India in

totality. Advertising too saw its growth in India during the Swadeshi Movement which led to the emergence of indigenous industries. The essay goes on to list important and memorable advertisements in India from 1940-2000. It further elucidates advertising as a marketing tool focusing on the AIDA model of advertising and the USP quotient. Swati Chandra's article talks about the art of advertising and storyboarding. She discusses the various aspects of storyboarding and how a story of an advertisement is built step-by-step. The last two articles of this unit focus on the self-regulating body for advertising called the Advertising Standard Council of India. This section is followed by an interview with Giri Balasubramaniam conducted by Guntasha K.Tulsi.

The last unit "Creating Content for Media" is structured around the understanding gained from the previous three units. It consists of case studies as well as articles on news writing, report writing, and script writing for television and radio. There is also an article that talks about creating an effective OTT content strategy. The editors have made the text student-friendly by providing writing samples that will help students form a framework when they attempt to write for media. There is an exhaustive glossary towards the end that takes care of the important keywords and their definitions. If one glosses over the list of contributors, one can notice the efforts of the editors in putting together this book. The list of contributors is interdisciplinary including scholars, teachers, and eminent media personalities from diverse fields brought together under the broad spectrum of mass media and communication.

On the whole, the book delineates various theoretical and pedagogical techniques for studying mass media as a discipline. It is a much-needed text for the teachers and students that weaves together the ever-changing terrain of mass media under one tapestry in a diachronic manner. The scope of the book is wide-ranging and the editors have tried to succinctly create a historical trajectory of mass media, but there are some areas left curtailed, understandably. The inclusion of a foundational chapter elaborating on the major theories of mass media could have given a contextual grounding to the existing collection of essays. Some prior knowledge about art, culture, and representation will help the students in understanding the intersection of media and industry in a more analytical way. However, that does not undermine the comprehensiveness of the book and the way the editors have explored the multi-dimensional nature of mass media.