CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION

The mass media of communication operate in and for and with mass society, and both are alive and constantly changing sometimes, the changes seem to be revolutionary. Most times, though the changes in the mass media and in society start slowly and are linked.

In daily human activities, communicating is the most used conscious action. The mass media bring to the communication process an intensity and complexity that is overwhelming unless examined carefully. The viewpoint of mass media is that every part of the process is influenced by every other part of the whole.

In a republic such as ours, the mass media play a vital role. Since a democracy cannot succeed without the support of the people, mass communication networks allow the public and their representatives to interact on a rapid, responsive and representative basis. The government and the governed inform and shape each other using mass communication.

The mass media have changed the world. It has had a vital impact on the American political process. In India also, media has
played a significant role in the socio-cultural and political mainstream. Mass media are revolutionizing the socialization of young and are becoming a vibrant part of our lives.

The impact of mass communication has been felt in a more intensive form with the advent of electronic media, since it can reach a larger number of people and is much quicker.

The mobilizing action of electronic media was apparent during the Vietnam war. In retrospect, it seems clear that the battles in Vietnam were never able to generate much support from the American people. The war in Vietnam was the first war which was reported live and in colour on television, without government censorship. Perhaps seeing the war so intimately in all its gruesome detail, made the majority of Americans decide against it.

It is not difficult to understand the great interest which the mass media have attracted since their early days, nor why they have been subject to so much public scrutiny and regulation as well as theorizing. The conduct of democratic (undemocratic) politics, nationally and internationally, depends more and more on mass media, and there are few significant social issues which are addressed without some consideration of the role of the mass media, whether for
good or ill.

The positive view of transnationalization has taken several forms, beginning with the notion that mass communication could be the primary ‘mobility multiplier’ to spread modern ways and democracy. Global communication may seem to extend the shared symbolic space, helping to liberate people from the constraints of place and time - thus extending ‘Semitic power’. More recently, International Communication has been celebrated as the potential basis of a new world order of international peace and understanding.

In the modern age new electronic media has compelled the society to study its varied impacts on socio-cultural life. The new media have bridged differences both between media and also between public and private definition of communication activities. Rise of post modern culture indicates the way of life-style prevail in the society. It is a complex and obscure concept which has received no satisfactory statement but it involves several ideas which are relevant to the present subject. Its political implication is to the effect that the ‘enlightenment project’ has now reached its historic end, especially the emphasis on material progress, egalitarianism, economic and social reality and the socially planned objectives. Postmodernist culture is volatile, illogical, kaleidoscopic and hedonistic. In mass
media terms, it favours audio-visual media over-print and current fashion over tradition. The virtues of individualism and of the free market are more in vogue then was the case a decade or two ago. Class system are also said to be weaker, under the impact of more democratic cultural and political arrangement and to move the service based occupational structure, although clear evidence of growth of an 'underclass, consisting mainly of new poor, has massed celebration of new prosperity. The same can be said of the growing global gap between rich and poor countries, which has an even more explosive potential. In many countries, there is said to be less social solidarity, more privatization, weaker collective ties and more interpersonal crime and disorder. Family institutions are said to be on the decline. These institutions are threaten by assault of new multi-channel electronic media. The feature of postmodernism described above seem to make it a very appropriate theory for the electronic media age, but they also challenge traditional theories about the effects and social role of the mass media in the society. Postmodernist thinking is fundamentally in tension with the varying idea of storing valued information and culture and redistributing it according to some agreed notions of public interest, which involve assumption of utility, justice, equality and rationality. Greater
prosperity, openness, value relativity, individual consumerism and economic liberalism all seem to weight in this direction, leaving aside any changes occurring in the media themselves.

With the rapid growth of multi-channel electronic media in last few years the consumerist behaviour is also growing. This decade has been immensely activity in the marketing and advertising world with proliferating brands, fragmented audiences and escalating media costs. Currently, advertisers have to grapple with the realities of sky-rocketing media budgets and target audiences that are becoming difficult to pin down.

After a diet of Doordarshan and more Doordarshan, the Indian viewer now faces a plethora of choices - from the ‘Bold and Beautiful’ and ‘Bay watch’, to ‘Antakshari’ and ‘Superhit Muqabala’. Increasing media option have created distinctive segments with distinct media consumption habits.

In this environment, profiling target consumer using demographics alone will result in suboptimal media buying with a high level of wastage. However, a detailed psychogrpahic profile of the target audience can be used not only to relate to the target consumer, but also to arrive at media graphics on a profile of media consumption
habits of the target consumer.

In 1952 ‘Calalina Swim Suit Company’ established the ‘Miss Universe Incorporate’. The top brass of the company planned and developed a new concept, to organise the ‘Beauty Contests’ and increased their market trade by presenting the contestants in swim suits. Today Miss Universe has become the largest show in the world. These contests have changed the definition of the beauty. More than 150 countries in the world telecast this program live and more than 50 crores people watch it on the television.

Several systematic research studies reveal that the mass media so far have not been effective instruments to inform and prepare the society about women’s new roles in national development. Over the years, woman’s image has gone through several unjust projections at the hands of media. The advertising world continues to use women to peddle its products and to present women as sexual object. The educated women is projected as insensitive, self-centred and uncaring. The economically independent women is shown as domineering and ruthless. The women is considered ideal only when she is in her nurturing roles and as a supportive supplement to man.
Large scale cable networks and trans-national satellite broadcasting (TNSB) are both too new for any discernable impact to be visible or measurable. Therefore, the effects have to be deduced on the basis of trends, observations and perceived impact. A survey conducted in Delhi in 1992 indicated some perception with regard to TNSB and cable network. It was reported that 60 percent respondents felt that they would have a socio-cultural effect for the younger generation. The reactions include the view that the younger generation will adopt the western life style, that music channel (MTV) will hamper their studies and they will be more inclined to migrate to the west. 35 percent felt that foreign serials are "not relevant to our culture, history, religion and society", and 42 percent said that the foreign serials, "are always glorifying western society and their culture, which will adversely affect our children and youth."

CMS researchers made it a point to talk to groups of students and youth - who are considered the most vulnerable to the impact of television, more specially to the cable television. The interaction revealed that there is a neglect of sports, affecting the health of the young, and continuous watching leads in many cases to impairment of eyesight and the need to wear spectacles or contact lenses. Young people are led prematurely into a world of sexual fantasy by watching
some of the Zee TV programmes. Some of them practise violence. It was reported in a Delhi elite school that a student mixed laxative (given to horses with food), and feed it to his unsuspecting schoolmates. It almost led to the death of few of the victims. The boy who did it had seen it done in one of the movies shown on television.

Contrasting impressions of the effect of cable TV on communication and interaction between family members were voiced by member in focus group sessions in 1993. Some felt that family ties had improved, while some other said that members of the family were each separately glued to the small screen, without any interaction by way of conversation taking place. Some participants felt that TV was a source of conflict within the family because of differing views on what programmes should be watched.

Today, electronic media intervention in the name of entertainment has deteriorated our family system brutally. For the last some years, late night's movies on the name of adult entertainment are proceeding the vulgarity in the society. Doordarshan and movie club had started the late night movies. These movies were telecasted around 11 p.m. and there was no bar on 'Carry on behind', ‘Salam Bombay’ type sex and comedian movies.
There is a deep association between late night's movies and crime. In the last few years sex crime in adolescents have increased rapidly. In Meghalaya, students of 'Don Bosco' School murdered three catholic Padris. When teenagers see their parents watching television till late night, they obviously are eager to know why they are not allowed to watch these programmes. This contradiction leads them in a different direction. In Ajmer many students indulged in a sex scandal. Students of Madras Jawahar Navodaya School murdered their thirty seven classmates. These incidents have occurred recently during just the last three years.

Policy makers cannot be unaware of the fact that during the last four decades a number of studies and reports having official sanction and/or the support of very reputed experts have clearly related western TV and cinema to an increase in violence, crime, aggressiveness and a host of problems relating to health and community life. Children and teenagers are worst affected. In the United States of America, for instance, such indications have come from reputed sources like the National Commission on this cause and prevention of violence (1972), the American Medical Association (1976), the National Institute of Mental Health (1982), the Attorney Generals task force on family violence (1984), the American Academy
of Pediatrics (1984) and the American Psychological Association (1985, 92). If even more recent conformation of the relationship between TV and violence/crime is needed, the well documented reports of groups led by Elisabeth Newson (in the United Kingdom in 1989) which give alarming information of the havoc caused by television and warn against any efforts to underestimate the damage. At a time when evidence of the damage done by TV, is piling up rapidly in several countries, many people in our country are supporting the policy of rapid spread of foreign multichannel network, and programmes with their extra emphasis on sex and violence. Instead of opposing this trend, they take this to be a fact accomplish and in addition, use this as a pretext for extending this invasion to the written word. Their argument is that as the more influential foreign multichannel networks are already here, what is the harm in also allowing foreign newspapers and magazines?

Bad as the damage done by television and tabloids is, its high visibility (for example in the form of obscene pictures) also serves as a warning to sensible people to maintain their distance. How dangerous this can be from the point of view of developing countries and their solidarity has been revealed time and again. However the
electronic media, if utilized with restrain can have a positive influence in national development as is event from the crusading role of the electronic as seen in the exposes like Watergate.

In conclusion we can map out the relation between media and changed socio-cultural identity in terms of two main dimensions, time and space. Time is chosen because endurance can be considered a central aspect of all cultures and degree of endurance the test of silence and significance. Media channels and content can range from the very local to the most global, carrying geographically and culturally remote messages.

Obviously mass media has revolutionized the world’s socio-political and cultural streams of life. The continuous assaulting multi-channel programmes of the new electronic media have created an alarming situation for our nation. The way of life style being proceeded by multi-channel media for the young generation must be checked by introducing healthy, creative and scientific programmes. In spite of adverse global communication influence some national policy decision should be adopted to give way to the value based programmes. With this background, let us proceed to the review of pertinent literature.