The Ideological Impact of Postmodern Media in the Process of Structuring Hyperreality in the Consciousness of Rural Masses (A Case Study in Sri Lanka).

Dr. Dharma Keerthi Sri Ranjan, G. D.

Head, Department of Computer Studies / Center for Media Research, Senior Lecturer, Department of Mass Media, Sri Palee campus, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.
ranjan2007@gmail.com / ranjan@spc.cmb.ac.lk

Abstract: The main aim of this paper is to discuss the social changes and challenges that the rural masses face, brought by the postmodern aspect of the global media. The macro and micro level perspective of this research shows the evidence of cultural dominance of the postmodern features of the media and the media imperialism. According to the evidence of this research, the postmodern aspect of media has been influencing the perception, all the behavioral patterns of the masses and the social structure of Sri Lanka at micro and macro level. Accordingly, this result shows that this influence has not been confined to the customs, traditions, languages, material artifacts, and the entire body of the myths, legends, beliefs and all the other behavioral patterns of the rural masses. But this postmodern aspect of mass media has already led the masses into a hybrid formation. This mediatization and postmodern aspect of the programs compel them to form a semblance and simulacra through the semiotics. Media semiotics in the post modern thoughts of the media is very powerful to create a secondary reality which is more real than the social and physical reality that exists in the current society. In the other way, it means that the media constitute a 'hyperreality' in the human consciousness of Sri Lanka. Symbolic world of the media has always been dominating the existing world and attempts enormously to replace them with the virtual world. Contemporary post modern sense of media has encouraged the masses into the social disintegration from the consciousness of the social integration of the rural masses. Masses are able to expose their contacts, events and phenomena to the faraway places in the world and are able to expand their opportunities into the new virtual sphere of the world.

Keywords: Postmodern Media, Media Influence, Cultural Change, Social De-integration, Virtual Sphere, Hybridizations of the Masses

1. Introduction:

The concept of postmodernism is a social term that has highlighted an area of academic discipline since the mid 1980s. The discipline of postmodernism has been influencing the pattern of art forms, music, film, architecture, literature, technology, fashion, communication, media etc and overall life of the masses. But it is hard to clear when and where postmodernism begins exactly. The knowledge, thinking, behavioral pattern of the traditions and the heritage of postmodernism have offered alternatives for the global culture as a grand tradition. It can never be controlled because it has been extending far beyond any individual's power.

The politics of the postmodernism has been influencing and challenging the national policies and all the social trends of the periphery countries in the world. This has been shaping and reshaping the traditional social and cultural world through due to the rapid development of the mass media in recent decades. Deterritorialization of the nation states of the world in the last decades has been speeded up by the satellite, mobile phones, the internet and the global and transnational media networks such as BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera and Fox News etc. This proliferation of multifunctional approaches such as portable devices like mobile phone and the technological convergence of the media have been facilitating the masses for receiving and sharing the information widely across the borders of the world (Hermida, 2010). This cross-border communication technology has been challenging every aspect of behavior and the thinking pattern of the center and the periphery countries in the world.

2. The Philosophy of Science in Modernism and Postmodernism:

Modernism is a philosophical and social concept that has been affecting the social changes

and the cultural trends of the world. Though, some intellectuals define this as a mode of thinking, the primary tenets of postmodernism can be described as follows.

- The fundamental phenomenon of this existence is language.
- This inquires the reality and all the representations.
- Criticize the metanarratives.
- Raise the arguments against the systems and the method of evaluation.
- Focus upon the power of the relations and the hegemony, (Kuznar 2008).

Accordingly, it is visible that the postmodern conditions are associated with pluralism, exhaustion, pessimism, disappointment and the contradiction of absolute knowledge as a concept. But the concept of modernism is different from the above. It has been characterized by the originality, individualism, purity, expressionism, seriousness, innovation etc.

The first impression of the concept of 'postmodernism' was brought by G. W. F. Hegel (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, 1770 - 1831) (Hamid, 2006; Potter, 2008). He was probably influenced by the German Romantic Movement. Accordingly, the term postmodern was first used around the 1880s in the world. Arnold Toynbee (1889 - 1975) brought the concept of postmodernism to the general public in 1940s (Albright, 2004). The patterns and the structures of postmodernism are mostly associated with cultural trends of the masses (Potter, 2008). This concept was credited rapidly to the public in America after the sociological analysis of C. Wright Mills (1916 – 1962) after the Second World War (Azmi, 2013; Potter, 2008).

According to the experiences of the contemporary world, the Post-modern expressions have been manifesting in the graphic design (Drucker & McVarish, 2009), planning and urban design (Harvey, 1990), architecture (Nesbitt, 1996), music (Albright, 2004), digital communications and media, visual arts (Desmond, 2011), Literature, language and linguistics (Burke, 2010), political science (Ashley & Walker, 1990), and philosophy (Deely, 1992), music, movie, theatre, dance, historiography, criticism, theology, and anything appeared currently in culture in general (Postmodernism, 1993- The Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory's). Accordingly postmodernism is a widely spread concept and it attempts to reconstruct the social issues of the world.

The main aim of postmodernism is to deconstruct or rewrite the constructions, open the closed systems of the society and culture resulted from modernism (Foster, 1983). Jean-François Lyotard (1924 -1998) describes this concept in the ground of incredulity towards the master narratives. He further analyses that the post modern condition makes the master narratives (metanarratives) less effective and deconstruct the ideologies and the social system (Lyotard, 1984).

Frederic Jameson says that post modernism is a progression based on culture and arts in the aiming of configuring the economy and politics in the world. He has introduced this as the "late capitalism" (Jameson, 1991).

3. Cultural Logic of the Postmodern Media:

Mass media is the most powerful in creating the pattern of globalization. According to the constructivist minded scholars, the concept of globalization can be considered as an inescapable and undeniable part of the contemporary experiences (Bauman, 1998; Gill, 1991; Luke, 1993). "Postmodernism" and "mass media" are inseparably inter-woven components in the contemporary world. The modern media of the world is proficient in assisting the short-term, intermediate-term, and long-term effects on the masses (Iuhaş, 2012; Schifirneţ, 2009).

The current postmodern condition of the media is particularly superseding the existing cultural contents of the masses through the programs. Modernism aspect of mass media presents critiques of the popular consuming patterns and attempt to make it exceed itself. But postmodern content of mass media emphasizes the sheer commercialization in order to keep them reliant on a process of cultural logic of late capitalism.

Contemporary global media compel the masses into the economic base thinking. This monopoly of media capitalism is very powerful and has created the new forms of business multinational and transnational beyond any national borders. Accordingly, the mass media and its new technologies insist the masses on a new economic world system. American economic and popular cultural domination popularize and integrate into immense proliferation of aesthetic innovation throughout the world, with the new experimentations and the ideations of postmodernism. These televisual spectacles challenge the moral and ethical boundaries of decencies and taste of the culture of the masses (Hoijer, 2004; 1996). Through these non-stop visual media broadcasts, the public are paused to construct the events in the perception and ask them for the live consumerism. This has created a new insight into the psyche of the masses.

The postmodern media refuse the traditional cultural forms and codes of understanding (master narratives, the truth and the reality obscured by the ideologies) and the historical conditions. Postmodern media does not allow the masses to dominate our own culture and the social order, but it paves the way for the concomitants of a different systematic modification of capitalistic ideology and for the new types of de-personalizing interactions.

Contemporary contents of the media are breaking down the distinction between "high" and "low" intensity of the culture. They manifest the depthless of the contents of the programs and create the literal flatness and try to maintain the qualitative superficiality. According to the psychic experiences gained by many categorizations of programs, it is visible that the priority of the contents of the media has been given to the space rather than the time duration.

The programs of the modern era of the media maintain the faith, hierarchies of social-class and ethnic / national values, social and cultural unity. But media in the postmodern era construct the hyperreality that challenge the power of modernistic thinking of reality, and truth. They maintain the disunity, social and cultural pluralism, and new evaluation of pop traditions, hybrid cultural forms and ethnic unity for the sake of cultural unity. Postmodern media celebrates the parodies consumer products, portraying them in the multiple images in the advertisements. It dominates the fragmentation of the sensibility, conflicting identities and de-centered of self. Cultural materials of some programs are highlight the Poly-sexual, polymorphous sexual, homo-social realities, horizontal relations and differentiations. The post modernistic media has invented new traditions into the social structure and has been crucial to the construction of new national cultural frameworks.

4. The Structural Formation of the Methods of Research and Its Scientific Approach:

In this research, I concentrated on the structuralisms' view in order to research into the postmodern aspect of media and its impact on the rural masses of Sri Lanka. After identifying the sample, the researcher selected the sample according to the probability method. The population for this study was 1000 and the samples were based on the rural and urban areas in the seven districts in Sri Lanka.

The researcher administered the technique of observation, technique of participant observation, technique of questionnaire, technique of interview, technique of case studies in order to collect the data in the field. These techniques were administered in the seven districts in Sri Lanka in order to identify the influence of mass media on the masses' needs, attitudes, interests common values, etc. in the rural areas.

All the techniques of data collection were focused mostly on the news paper readers and the audience of radio, television, internet and the social media in relation to age, gender, occupation, civil status, education and economic background and got the result of the cross sectional experience.

The techniques that I used in this research for data analysis were qualitative and quantitative. The overall procedure of data analyzing and interpreting was the mixed method. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of data, the empirical generalization was conducted.

5. The Influence of Postmodern Media on the Life of the Rural Masses:

According to the sociological analysis, the mass media of Sri Lanka has been promoting not just products, but moods, attitudes, thoughts and the sense of what is and is not important for the individual consciousness and not for the social integration of the masses. The programs are increasingly diverse aiming at all ages, backgrounds, incomes and attitudes. This influential pattern of the various social, political and economic programs of the mass media has been revolutionizing the landscape of villages in Sri Lanka in the recent years. The TV and the internet are dominating the mass media and are playing an influential part in culture, as do the other forms of media.

Accordingly, mass media has become a permanent member of the culture and has framed the mediated modernity of Sri Lanka. This media imperialism leads the masses into the most extensive systemic account of cultural globalization. The brilliance of this media system is to make the entire process seem not normal or natural for the rural life that the very art of social construction appears in their mind invisibly. In fact, the media constantly delivers the masses its own philosophy which is created aesthetically based on the human nature. This process has set new social stands, and continues to influence the overall opinion regarding the nature of the world for the life of the rural masses. This shows the power of the media and its strategy of the reinforcement and legitimization of the dominance of the western social norms and values.

The other aspect of the media of Sri Lanka is the dissemination of knowledge and ideologies against the development of working groups

through the creation of false consciousness. This happens magically and forms them in the mass consciousness at micro and macro levels which affect the condition of the everyday life of the masses. Individuals are connected to the larger social world through the information (Table 1).

Age and Life Change:-					
Table 1– Profile of Age					
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
Age	Orientation of Daily Routine towards Global Context (DRG)	4.43	.592	20.400**	.000
	Motivation for the Technological Usage (MTU)	4.18	1.090	1.809	.771
	Increase of Life Experience and Expectations (ILEE)	4.13	1.088	18.412**	.001

Source: *Survey data, 2015 / 2016 - Kruskal-Wallis Test*

** $\alpha = \leq .01$

Post modern conditions of the programs of media create self-reflective properties as new systems in the consciousness and cultural order of the masses. This artistic media play a crucial role in almost all phases of daily existence. The influence and the impact of media in both contents (Macro and Micro) and process on all areas of rural life are undeniable. Accordingly, the relationship between media and life of the masses does not remain static, they change the social life conditions and make new strategies which help to create competing domestic image among the other neighbors.

The main coefficients of reproduction of the life pattern are extended in the following tables (Tables 2 – 6) to measure the values of the media influence and its impact on age, education, occupation, monthly income, gender and civil status of the population in the sample. The association of values of the coefficients with the independent variables is ideally important in this research to measure the influence and impact of the media on the rural life of the masses.

Gender and Life Change:-					
Table 2 – Profile of Gender					
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig.
Gender	Orientation of Daily Routine towards Global Context (DRG)	4.43	.592	120239.500	.242
	Motivation for the Technological Usage (MTU)	4.18	1.090	119542.000	.194
	Increase of Life Experience and Expectations (ILEE)	4.13	1.088	116575.000*	.046

Source: *Survey data, 2015 / 2016; Mann-Whitney Test*

* $\alpha = \leq .05$

Civil Status and Life Change:-					
Table 3– Profile of Civil Status					
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig.
Civil Status	Orientation of Daily Routine towards Global Context (DRG)	4.43	.592	107828.000	.420
	Motivation for the Technological Usage (MTU)	4.18	1.090	109352.000	.696
	Increase of Life Experience and Expectations (ILEE)	4.13	1.088	110484.500	.919

Source: *Survey data, 2015 / 2016; Mann-Whitney Test*

Education and Life Change:-

Table 4– Profile of Education

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
Education	Orientation of Daily Routine towards Global Context (DRG)	4.43	.592	14.972**	.001
	Motivation for the Technological Usage (MTU)	4.18	1.090	3.247	.355
	Increase of Life Experience and Expectations (ILEE)	4.13	1.088	6.485	.090

Source: Survey data, 2015 / 2016; Kruskal-Wallis Test
   ** α = ≤.01

Occupation and Life Change:-

Table 5 – Profile of Occupation

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
Occupation	Orientation of Daily Routine towards Global Context (DRG)	4.43	.592	8.556*	.036
	Motivation for the Technological Usage (MTU)	4.18	1.090	2.037	.729
	Increase of Life Experience and Expectations (ILEE)	4.13	1.088	50.718**	.000

Source: Survey data, 2015 / 2016; Kruskal-Wallis Test
   ** α = ≤.01, * α = ≤.05

Monthly Income and Life Change:-

Table 6 – Profile of Monthly Income

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
Monthly Income	Orientation of Daily Routine towards Global Context (DRG)	4.43	.592	14.152**	.001
	Motivation for the Technological Usage (MTU)	4.18	1.090	4.166	244
	Increase of Life Experience and Expectations (ILEE)	4.13	1.088	17.795**	.000

Source: Survey data, 2015 / 2016; Kruskal-Wallis Test
   ** α = ≤.01

According to the anthropological approach, the rural masses have been acculturated their daily routine towards the global context (95.9%) by the media. This includes not only the customs and traditions of the rural individuals, but the language, the use of the material artifacts, and the entire body of the legends, myths, beliefs and all the other behavioral patterns which have already led to formulate a hybrid man.

The programs of the global central media have reached the masses of the periphery countries and have been encouraging the individuals to socialize into the inborn drivers which include violence and sexual gratification (Id consciousness – pleasure seeking part of the psyche). The media have got closed to the rural masses and have let them seek gratification in manners which are unacceptable to the society and culture.

The outcome of this research stresses that the media focuses on two more issues.

- Individuals acquire the knowledge they need to become a member of the global society and its particular groups.
- Provides individuals with the broader understanding of the global culture and their patterns of behavior.

They are sometimes living consciously with the central social experiences though they physically exist in the rural areas. These lessons might have taken them already into the complex situations consciously and unconsciously. What it means is that the rural individuals have integrated themselves into the organic solidarity. They are predisposed by the media into the new situations with the new conception of self.

The inferential and descriptive data in the sample further consolidate the media consistency with the orientation of the rural individual's daily routine towards the global context (DRG). According to the tables from 2 to 6 in the above, media consistency is highly significant except gender and civil status [DRG: - age: P = 0.00; education: P = 0.001; monthly income: P = 0.001; occupation: P = 0.036]. 29 – 38 is the age group large influenced by the media in the population (22.8%). According to the educational social category, the grade 6 – 12 people are the majority (43.8%) those who are influenced towards the global context in the sample. The lowest category among the population is the degree holders in Sri Lanka (8.8%).

The research data clarified that the media influence on the largest group and the lowest group that highlighted in the same category of the monthly income of the rural masses towards the global context (DRG) is respectively over the 11000.00 RS (33.5%) and the 2000.00 – 5000.00 RS group (13.4%). The commercial group is the largest influenced group among the occupational category (29.9%).

The various channels of the programs of the post modern media and new media are highly influential on the commercial category (24.5%) towards the increase of the life experience and the expectations than the other government, private, agriculture and not employing groups among the rural population in Sri Lanka. They are exposed to the many channels over the media and certainly their commercial development depends on the daily information that they receive.

It is obvious that the order of the life pattern of individuals regulated by the conventions of the rural social structure directly and indirectly has been changing into the global experience and expectations (ILEE).

6. Conclusion and Discussion of the Hybridization of the Masses:

Contemporary programs of the post modern media have become an integral part of the life of the masses and have constructed a hypereality world through the symbolic resources. Accordingly, Sri Lanka the postmodern contents of the media impact on all the social institutions and their relations are higher than in the past. Society, culture and the pattern of thinking have become mediatized and created a media-twisted society.

Media influence on females towards the global context is higher than the male (Female: 48%; male; 47.9%). According to the case studies, exposure to media, depicting ultra-thin actresses and models significantly annotate females concerned about their bodies, including how dissatisfied they felt and their probability of engaging in unhealthy consuming behaviors, such as excessive dieting. The body conscious young females and the upper class school girls in the rural areas have been dissatisfied with the major risk factors of low self-esteem, depression, obesity, eating disorders, etc. At the same time women's displeasure with there is immaterial bodies because it is common to the other female's body features. The racy pictures and the ultra-thin actresses and objectives of the programs of the media encourage the rural females to see them as social issues.

The descriptive analysis clarify that the highest influence category of the age group towards the increase of life experience and expectations (ILEE) is 29 – 38 by the media in Sri Lanka. It remarks as 17.6% out of the total number of 74.8%. The lowest media influence group is over 59 that highlighted as 6.8% out in the same population. The group grade 6– 12 of the educational cohort of the rural masses in Sri Lanka has been increasing the life experience and the expectations (35.0%) more than the other groups as the result of the heavy media influence. At the same time the degree holders are remarked as the lowest influenced group in the population (8.0%).

The society of Sri Lanka has been transformed from a state of scarcity of information to a state of an abundance of information by the media. The post modern aspects of them have changed all the mutual relationships and all the inner workings of the social entities. The above results show that the mediatization has been speeding up the patters of the globalization. Through these the contemporary media has been accelerating the moulding of the image of the west, mainly the American culture in the Sri Lankan premises. This media imperialism and the western cultural imperialism contribute to the development of the homogenization of culture. These hybridizations of the masses encourage more the deterritorialization of the cultural contexts of Sri Lanka.

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