

NEW IOS BOOK

Media in Our Globalizing World

[Editor's Note: The Institute of Objective Studies is releasing one of its seminal works on media on December 9, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. at Constitution Club of India at a public function to be attended by luminaries from different fields. The following seeks to introduce the book.]

"The volume on *Media in Our Globalizing World* marks a beginning of presenting the proceedings of the IOS Silver Jubilee Conferences in the form of publications. Through March 2011 to April 2012, we covered a wide spectrum of subjects under our overarching theme of 'Knowledge, Development and Peace'. We firmly believe that issues of leadership, governance and planning, peace and gender equality, education and capacity-building, and justice have to be discussed in open fora between academicians, experts and practitioners, on the one hand, and policy-makers, civil society activists, religious leaders and public servants, on the other," said Dr Mohd Manzoor Alam, Chairman – Institute of Objective Studies, in the Prologue to the publication.

As you read through this volume, dedicated to the media, the diversity of perspectives will be apparent. We want, not just the reader, but an entire new generation of global citizens to be acutely conscious of this diversity and plurality of thoughts and ideas. They must develop their ability to understand and question the world around them. Questioning forms the bedrock of inquiry: and, in the 21st century, we need to question the twin pillars of 'capitalism' and 'democracy'.

Why has the globalizing world accepted these two pillars as 'unquestionable'?

Focusing on the media: The media, there is no doubt, has become a part and parcel of our lives. As a subject to be studied, it has become oceanic in its depth and width. In universities, think-tanks, media schools and even business schools, media studies are gaining in prominence. Libraries and bookshops are filled with books on media and media management. The number of newspapers, magazines and journals are also increasing in number, at the same time. For many, this bewildering array of media material can be disorienting. To paraphrase the old saying of 'missing the woods for the trees', we can say that in today's media world, we are so often focussed on a few trees that an entire forest goes out of focus.

The media today - in the form of print and electronic media, social media and through the Internet - is all pervasive. It is all around us, we cannot afford to ignore it. Nor can we let any aspect be 'out of focus'. We have witnessed major trends in how the media is being used and, often, abused by elite institutions. This is prevalent in the corporate world, sports and entertainment and the world of politics. Innumerable instances of its misuse are being recorded in both the developing and developed world. It seems the rot has spread wide and large. Through several sections in this volume, these disturbing and ominous trends are being explored and discussed. Media has emerged as a tool for domination. And wherever there are dominating forces, there are an equal number of forces which challenge it and

vow to fight its right to dominate and propagate monopolistic ideas. In many ways, the global media is also becoming a battleground.

These are subjects of research, now and in the future:

- How nations and media houses indulge in propaganda and disseminate news often devoid of truth and objectivity;
- When prejudice and bias becomes deep-rooted in society with the media playing a significant role;
- In the developing world, why is the media ignoring issues affecting the lives of the under-privileged and the voiceless;
- How Islam as a religion is being targeted, and minorities are being stereotyped by different sections of the media;
- What is the continuing impact of globalization on the media, especially in developing countries.

This IOS volume charts out the Indian growth story and highlights the challenges which the media faces in the globalizing environs, where, we are convinced, the need for humane values and ethics is as paramount as high finance or state-of-the-art communication technologies.

Through the IOS 25th Year Silver Jubilee Conferences, we raised vital issues regarding the media. Here are some key issues and questions:

- How and why is the media working against societal morals and values?
- How is the media able to 'hide' behind freedom of express laws while often violating societal norms?
- What is the degree of objectivity that the media can demonstrate in this age of globalization?
- Are there alternate ways and means of developing media houses not dependent on advertisers' money?
- How can the Internet be utilized to develop a credible and alternate media?
- How can the voiceless minorities make themselves 'heard' in this time and age?

These questions are quite a handful and the answers or solutions are neither easily forthcoming nor simple to implement. Yet, we do hope, that independent mediapersons, think-tanks and civil society activists will join hands together and create a macro-environment where the media represents all sections of our society. We can then be working together for the creation of a humane society.

Subjects that are of prime, and often timeless, importance are:

- **Power** and the **power of the State** to influence and manipulate the media in the age of democracy
- **Censorship**, the **right to dissent** and the **eradication of public memory**
- **Domination** of the United States of America in global politics and media: The **Iraq war** and its implications on the media, public memory and opinions

- **Corruption** in high places, smear campaigns and their fall-out in the media and civil society
- **Investigative journalism** and the quest for truth, objectivity and fairness in globalizing times.

Work in Progress: In many ways, this publication is a ‘work in progress’ as it takes us through the works, thoughts and ideas of Noam Chomsky, Eduardo Galeano, E J Hobsbawm, Jeffrey Sachs, M Umer Chapra, Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, Ali Mazrui, Joseph Stiglitz, Thomas Friedman, Jagdish Bhagwati, Amartya Sen, Anthony Giddens, Dilnawaz Siddiqui, Vandana Shiva, Arundhati Roy, Robert Frisk and John Pilger, to name just a few pioneering thinkers and activists who have been consistently questioning, challenging and pushing the envelope of existing thought and making a compelling case for social-political action that is value-based and humanistic in its approach. The publication can never quite capture the reality of the media in its entirety, which in every way, every day is changing faster than ever before. It can however create a body of thought, a suggestive anthology of perspectives from different parts of the world, which are focused on generating awareness about why the globalizing world is embroiled in uncertainties and insecurities; and how these, in turn, are affecting our lives, the trajectory of our thinking and our relationship with the media.

There cannot be any ‘final word’ on the developments in the world of media, but, yes, there can be a body of thought-provoking works which challenge, question and probe the media and how it is shaping, growing and affecting lives of those who ‘consume’ it. It is also akin to holding up the mirror to the media; a task which the media claims to be holding itself to society.

The editors therefore realize their responsibility in sharing with the readers, right at the start, what the volume on the media is NOT attempting to do.

- It is NOT attempting to be encyclopaedic in its breadth or width. The globe today is far too vast, complex and diverse to be presented by one single agency which can do justice to all its facets and features.
- It is also NOT attempting to be an ‘academic’ tome. While the editorial team salutes the pioneering work done by academicians on the media, it feels that, like academicians in traditional disciplines, they are often addressing their work for the benefit of their peers and students. Academia today does adopt an ‘ivory tower’ approach which often works to its own advantage, and, sometimes, to its disadvantage.
- It is also NOT attempting to be a ‘philosophically’ profound work. While agreeing that the structuralist, postmodern philosophers, writers and social commentators have done yeoman work in ploughing those fields and making the media a part of cultural studies which have been analyzed and presented in attractively new and mesmerizing lexicon. This volume, while occasionally dipping its toes into those waters, does not aspire to swim those oceans or ‘speak’ that language.
- It is also NOT staking claim to a high degree of ‘originality’ or a body of research over which it can claim to have proprietorship. But the IOS and its team of editors, as

professional writers, have taken pains to acknowledge every source and reference, while respecting the intellectual property rights as governed by common laws today. IOS believes in sharing knowledge and, therefore, empowering readers through this domain of knowledge which includes the media today.

This squarely brings us before the mirror to state what the volume IS about:

- It IS about perspective, and perspectives in the plural. Our world, the fast-changing globalized world, is getting increasingly divided on the lines of ideology and knowledge. If we are committed to working towards a common future, a shared and sustainable future, there will have to be an atmosphere of understanding and respecting the diversity of perspectives in our world.
- It IS about a 'spectrum of subjects' which has dominated, and continues to dominate, the world of media. Subjects and issues may have been transformed beyond recognition, for example, censorship of the media has given way to 'manipulation of the media' and by the media. The core of the subject still remains the same.
- It IS about the rise of Asia, in general, and India, in particular, as economic powerhouses. The tectonic shift of global power to the Asian continent is being recognized and acknowledged by the developed world. Russia, China and India are grabbing the global attention not just because they are huge markets but because their economic might and geo-political strategies are challenging the status quo.
- At the same time, nowhere in the world has there been such a spectacular and phenomenal rise of the media - print, electronic and digital - as has been registered in India over the last two decades.
- It IS about human rights, and minority rights, and its portrayal in the media. These rights, enshrined in the UN Universal Declarations and adopted by several democratically-ruled countries, are often ignored, abused or neglected by the media for a variety of reasons.

This publication, to sum up, is ambitious in its scope but is also very down-to-earth in its approach and is not attempting to do the 'un-doable'. Or the impossible. Being the handiwork of independent journalists and mediapersons, with a reasonably sound grasp of social sciences, the publication is an apt reflection of their abilities to understand, report and to document the major changes and transformations happening in the global media. More than ever today, they are also questioning these changes and framing their questions in ideological perspectives, making them more relevant to a wider audience. It is hoped that this publication would be of immense help to researchers, students of the media; subjects, ideas and concepts in these pages would resonate with these young minds as they become comfortable with new technologies and new media opportunities.

The global problems, and its solutions, are highlighted and underscored by these thought-leaders from the Western world, (whose orientation quite obviously is Western), even though they are thinking and speaking about the entire world.