

Revision Notes
Chapter – 6
Understanding Media

- Media is the plural form of the word ‘medium’ and it describes the various ways through which we communicate in society.
- Media refers to all means of communication; everything ranging from a phone call to the evening news on TV can be called media.
- TV, radio and newspapers are a form of media. Since they reach millions of people across the world, or masses, they are called mass media.
- Media is a very effective tool that can help people be more informed and aware of the happenings all over the world. Media also helps people put across their points of view.

• **Media and Technology:**

(i) Life without media is difficult. The Cable TV and the Internet are a recent phenomena. These have been around for less than twenty years.

(ii) Both print media and electronic media have played an important role in social change.

(iii) Changing technology or machines help media to reach more people. For example, it changes the ways in which we think about our lives. It is quite difficult for us to think of our lives without television. Television has enabled us to think of ourselves as members of a larger global world.

(iv) Balanced report is essential in media which has to report independently.

(v) Media is far from being independent. This is because of the control of government over media called censoring and because big business houses control the media. They may influence the media to broadcast news their way.

• **Media and Money:**

(i) The different technologies that mass media use are expensive.

(ii) In a news studio, it is not only the newsreader who needs to be paid but also a number of other people who help put the broadcast together.

(iii) A lot of money is spent on getting the latest technology. To meet this cost, a lot of money is required.

(iv) Media thus has come to be owned by big corporate.

(v) Media uses advertising as a tool to raise revenue. One way in which the mass media earns money is by advertising different things like cars, chocolates, clothes, mobile phones, etc.

• **Media and Democracy:**

(i) Media plays a very important role in providing news and discussing events taking place in the country and the world.

(ii) New stories of media inform people about important events in the country.

(iii) if they wish to, people can take action on the basis of these news stories. Some of the ways in which they can do this is by writing letters to the concerned minister, organising a public protest, starting a signature campaign, asking the government to rethink its programme, etc.

(iv) A balanced report is one that discusses all points of view of a particular story and then leaves it to the readers to make up their minds. Writing a balanced report, however, depends on the media being independent. An independent media means that no one should control and influence its coverage of news.

(v) Reasons for media not being independent and unbiased:

- The first reason for media not being independent is the control that the government has on the media. When the government prevents either a news item, or scenes from a movie, or the lyrics of a song from being shared with the larger public, this is referred to as **censorship**.
- Secondly, the media's continual need for money and its links to advertising means that it becomes difficult for media to be reporting against people who give them advertisements.
- Thirdly, the media also tends to focus on a particular aspect of a story because they

believe this makes the story interesting.

- Also, if they want to increase public support for an issue, they often do this by focusing on one side of a story.

• **Setting Agendas:**

(i) The media also plays an important role in deciding what stories to focus on.

(ii) By focusing on particular issues, it influences and shapes our thoughts. It is said the media sets the agenda for people.

(iii) Very recently, the media reported alarming levels of pesticides in cold drinks. This report led to safety standards being set for colas.

(iv) Media plays a very important role in our lives as it tells us about working of government.

(v) There are several instances when the media fails to focus on issues that are significant in our lives. For example, drinking water is a major problem in the country. Every year, thousands of people suffer and die because they do not get safe drinking water. However, we seldom find the media discussing this issue.

(vi) We need to ask the following questions when analyzing data from the news:

- What is the information I am learning from this report?
- What information is not being provided?
- From whose point of view is the article being written?
- Whose point of view is being left out and why?