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Political Economy and the Media
Marxist approach to the nature and effects of media

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Censorship in ‘free societies’ is infinitely more sophisticated and thorough than in dictatorships, because unpopular ideas can be silenced and inconvenient facts kept dark, without any need for an official ban”

George Orwell

What are the basic aims, function and role of the media? It is here that a political economy perspective becomes relevant. The idea of ‘political economy’ is vital to examine a critical perspective of the media. This is also inherent in a ‘Marxist’ perspective. This paper examines perspectives with regard to the nature and effects of the media.

Towards this, this paper would consist of four sections. The first section would deal with an introductory note on the idea of a Marxist approach of the media. Emanating as it is from the very idea of Marxism and its approaches to the communications sector. The second section would go into various ideas to the ‘nature of the media’ wherein; there are references to the Propaganda Model as well as views that are derived from the model. The application of the Propaganda Model to the Indian context is also briefly discussed. The third section would deal with the Effects Approach to the media. A Marxist approach to media would incorporate all of the above and also ask the vital question as what drives the media to transmit the messages, news and entertainment that they do? A brief case study of the Chinese Mass Campaigns would attempt to further substantiate the role of the media.

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