Media and Information Literacy

Towards Sudanese Quality Journalism

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Sudan.

Media play an increasingly important role in today's society, that is why nobody in this conference can imagine what it would be like to have no radio , television , movies, CDs or access to the internet .

Unfortunately there are a lot of isolated societies living out of media foot prints , out of our recent history . They have nothing of the technologies of our time. Besides those , a lot of nations were living in conflict- stressed states , both are really in need of strong efforts to run MIL programs to build knowledge societies , because that is the only way to create and maintain a sustainable peace as UNESCO constitution states:-

(Since wars begin in the minds of men , it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed .)

A lot of organizations added Sudan – my country – as one of conflict- stressed countries . They found that since 1955- a year before its independence- till now , racial and ethnical conflicts torn out the country (People tested the real peace through ten years 1972-1982).

In 2010 this one million square miles country divided into two counties , but non of them felt stability or peace.

A very sad story can be told about media situation in this torn country –Sudan - . The pro- war media that is owned by the government must be responsible for the longest

civil war ever in Africa , here I can say that if the Sudanese electronic media was established first and owned by the private sector or the journalists associations , things may have been different now in Sudan.

From another point of view, if the educational curricula in Sudan treated the diversity of the country in a more sensitive way ,a sustainable peace may have been the reward that people get.

The hardness that this country faces , may relate to so many mistakes , but media and information infrastructure is one of the big mistakes, the latest create contradicted roles in the society such as :-

1-Media content in Sudan is always trying to legalize and market the regime (Democratic / Military) .This pure political role marginalized culture of those who were not in power, and marginalization among other factors lead the country to the longest civil war.

2-The technological gap between Sudan and other European countries in ICT differ from one sector to an-other ,the gap became wider in the ancient centuries and narrower in the recent time , also we can declare that while the applications of printing technologies almost took hundreds of years at a time, yet the applications of digital technologies may not take more than few days .

Here I will try to go over some differences in information and communication technologies (ICT) , their effects and applications in Sudan,

The Printing Press:-

The first printing press that came to Sudan was almost 430 years after Gutenberg discovered his Galaxy. Its direct effects on Sudanese people is that , it expanded knowledge among them through the few books printed at that time .

Journalism (Newspapers)

Sudanese journalism came out 240 years after(The Daily Occurrence) Newspaper launched in 1662 . It formulated its own readers, who became later the members of the elite class of the society , and the agitators for different ideologies.

Telegraph :-

The service came to Sudan within the UK military campaign against Mahadists Regime in 1899. Although the objective at that time was military , but later telegraph became one of the most important tools that connected the far edges of a country that cover about one million square miles (before separation).

Cinema :-

Sudan produced its first short film in 1953 , about 58 years after the first film show in Paris. At a time ,

Sudanese short films played a very important role in the society , by introducing different cultures , different ways of lives to the others in a semi- continent country , or a multi-cultural continent, in 2007 people realized this role in such country , and started with a department of cinema at the (College of Communication Science).

Radio :-

21 years after the first radio station started its broadcasting in the United States Of America (WHA Station) , radio Omdurman (Sudan) came to life, its main objective at that time was to mobilize for war on the UK front . After independence nobody tried to create new objectives , new role for the radio, so it worked as a tool of propaganda . By using the cultural elements of the centre , and speaking its language, it creates a sort of a dominant culture that led the other cultures to feel they were marginalized , then war started in the minds of men .

Television :-

Television took 23 years to enter Sudan after its discovery in 1939. The crucial effects of TV on our traditional lives and then our culture is that , it destroyed most of the elements of our folk culture, (Folk dance, Folk Songs , even other elements of our style of life) .Unfortunately our new generations are going to be different .

Computers :-

The first computer imported to Sudan in 1966, almost 24 years after its invention ,the most touchable effects of computers on our life was at the businessmen level and the new generation of university's students .

The Internet :-

The technological gap between the invention of the internet and its application in Sudan almost about 26 years ,it affected the youth by creating a new culture for , new social   environment, new friends , other sport teams , other languages , but all in the virtual realty .

The New Technologies of the mobile phone:

Observers declared that the technological gap between developed countries and the least developing countries is going to become very narrow day by day. Mobile phones as a technology became an international product , it pushed everybody towards the cyber society .

 In Sudan users used this technology as a social class indicator.

New Computer Software

This technology indicates the fast diminishing technological gap, and this lead us all to become clients for the multi- national companies(MNCs).

This point put a great deal of responsibility on these MNCs. To help their clients in Third World, we suggest for them some items in media development to support :-

- Capacity- Building Initiatives .

- To support media schools with technological equipment .

- To finance researches, seminars and workshops dealing with issues related to improve media .

-To ease student exchange programs between media schools around the world.

In cooperation to further the responsibility of MNCs efforts in helping clients in the Third World .

We in Sudan believe that any reformations in media should start with journalism , that is why we participated in a UNESCO forum on the book titled " Model Curricula for Journalism : Setting Standards for Quality Journalism " The Sudanese National commission organized a forum aiming at investigating the content of the book in an effort to strike a balance between the proposed curricula relating to Diploma , Bachelor and Master degrees and the specific needs of Sudan . In cooperation with the ICT committee, staff of journalism and media schools and colleges were invited to participate in the forum . Invitations were also extended to journalists and professionals who belong to the government institutions

as well as the independent chief editors of newspaper in the country. The national Commission dispatched the book to the majority of invitee and informed all of them that the book was available on the forum was organized on April 15,2012 at Shariqa Hall in the University of Khartoum.

A comprehensive paper about the book was introduced by a university professor, reflecting a historical background of the book, passing through all the stages of its preparations by consultants and experts in the field who were entrusted by the UNESCO to prepare a general framework for a quality curricula that will suit the as far as possible   the needs of the world communities. According to him, those experts represented a wide international spectrum. He, then, emphasized that the aim of UNESCO was to put in effect the type of curriculum that will modernize the field of journalism in all its aspects, taking into account social, economic, political and cultural contexts of the developing countries and highlighting connections between journalism, development and the democratic process which should enhance freedom of expression and universal access to knowledge and information.

   On the basis of this paper most of the participants seemed to have deeply read through the book . All interveners started responses by appreciating the great

task undertaken by UNESCO and appreciated its concern about the persistent issued of the world at large and the developing countries in particular.

Deliberations reflected scholarly discussions and objective critiques of the curricula set forth in the book . At the end of the final session the participants endorsed the following recommendations:

1/ Determination of an acceptance ceiling for the new entrants who apply for enrolment in the school or colleges of information, media and communication. The selection priority should either be a second or third choice.

2/ Demanding from the Ministry of Higher Education to establish , as part of the various HE specializes committees a new one in the field of information, communication and media, and cease to establish new colleges and render more support and efforts to the ones in existence.

3/Infusing Arts and Science in the existing curricula of the divisions of journalism in the Sudanese universities.

4/ Giving due consideration to photography techniques as part of journalism curriculum.

5/Giving more attention to on- the-job training of journalists and requesting UNESCO to support journalists and staff external mission with the aim of raising the professional standards of the graduates and journalists .

6/Limiting the process of journalism practicing to the specialized professionals and availing writing techniques to the benefit of non- specialized journalists .

7/Following up and employing new technologies in support of journalism divisions in Sudanese universities deemed necessary for staff training and upgrading of the infrastructure.

8/ Reviewing the current curricula of the Sudanese universities and working towards a unifying a content that will concentrate the practical side and rely upon the current educational structure of Sudan.

Appendix

A table shows the technological gap in the field of ICT between the West and one Third World country (The Republic of Sudan) , and the social effects of the applications.

ICT	Date of Discovery	Application Date in Sudan	ICT Technological Gap	Effects
The Printing Press	1450	1880	430 Years	Expands Knowledge.
News Papers	1662	1902	240Years	Formed Elite Class.
Telegraph	1888	1899	0 11 Years	Connected the far edges of Sudan.
Cinema	1895	1953	058 Years	People moved from imagination to real things.
Radio	1919 (WHA)	1940	021 Years	Marginalized Some People .ethnical war started.
TV.	1939	1962	O23 Years	Entertainment entered homes.
Computers	1942	1966	024 Years	New smart businessmen .
The internet	1969	1995	026 Years	A world of virtual societies.
The last models of mobile telephones	2012	2012	Few months	A new way to show your class
Computer new software	2012	2012	At the same month	Now everybody became part of the MNCs customers