

Name of the Scholar – Pallav Kumar

Name of Supervisor – Dr. Anwar Alam

Name of Co-supervisor – None

Department – Centre for West Asian Studies

Title of the Thesis - **The New Media Technology in the Arab world and its Impact on Society: an Analytical Study**

ABSTRACT

The thesis started with an argument that during the last two decades the Arab countries have witnessed a profound change in media technology which has resulted in radical changes in the Arab world. Unlike the print media and technologically poor broadcast media, such as radio and terrestrial television, new media has a great and different quality. Some characteristics of this technology are speed, variety and flow of information without any geographical and physical limitation. The other important characteristics of new media are its interactive ness which has changed the way of communication. And it is not surprising that the obvious effects of these are changes in knowledge, attitude, or behaviour that result from exposure to the various sources of communication. The changes are both quantitative and qualitative.

Following hypotheses were formulated to direct the research-

1. Al-jazeera has played a crucial role in creating a new environment for new media technology in the Arab world.
2. The role of new media technology is being enhanced day by day in creating and shaping the public opinion in Arab world.
3. The new media technology is playing a decisive role in opening up of the closed Arab society.
4. New media technology has opened the gate for emergence of civil society through redefined importance of public opinion.

Major Findings of the research

1. New media technology has changed the social and political configuration in Arab society.

2. It has led the society towards democratic changes where people can talk and walk freely.
3. It has created a modern kind of civil society and public sphere in Arab world.
4. Al-Jazeera has played an important role in reshaping and remaking of society and nation. Due to his role in overall development of region, it is acted as more like a political party rather than a media institution. During the current political crisis (winter 2010/2011) in Arab World the Arabic satellite TV channel Al-Jazeera has set the benchmark of media's ideal role, where Al-Jazeera played a role of the standout voice of aggressive, independent and mass centric journalism in the Arab world, in channeling popular discontent against the authoritative regime throughout the region.
5. Internet and its different tools empowering the people of Arab so that they can change their own fate without any outside interference, as it was always the case for the Arabs.
6. New technology armed the people but not with the arms but with the power of demonstration and with the power of shouting. As one of the Al-Jazeera presenter Ahmad Mansour advocated this power of shouting.
7. The present uprising in Arab world validated this research that new media is changing the basic characteristics of society. However it was not precedent.

What we see that new media technology has gave the new modus operandi to protesters. Satellite TV, mobile, social media, and more specifically Internet, blogs, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter have proven to be more cost effective weapons for change. It has become apparent that peaceful uprising is more dangerous to their grasp on the country than armed uprisings. With armed uprisings, powerful dictators are able to deploy their forces and respond appropriately. Violence against the government will almost always justify violence against armed protestors. Peaceful revolutions, like we have seen in Lebanon with the Cedar Revolution, Tunisia with the Jasmine Revolution and more recently in Egypt have proven more difficult to handle. Cutting off the flow of Internet would be paralyzing for any country today. Not only is such a task technically difficult, but more importantly, on a political level, it demonstrates the regime's desperation and its imminent toppling.