The media creates, rather than reflects, a society’s values.

Nowadays, media plays an important role in human’s daily life. ‘Media’ ranges from TV, newspapers, radio, to its earliest form – social media. National survey in US states that teenagers spent more than 9 hours a day online, around 38% of their time. Meanwhile, a middle-aged person can spend 20% of his whole life just to watch TV. Majority of our knowledge about the world is heavily influenced by mass media. It has been criticized for years about creating social values rather than reflecting any truthful social values. Below are reasons why this argument should be taken into consideration.

North Korea is a country in which its media creates the value that the leaders want their citizens to believe. 40% of North Korean live below the poverty lines, earning around 2$-3 a month. 1/3 of children in North Korea experience malnutrition. The rate of infant death surged to 33% in the recent years. Refugees are sent to prison labor camps. However, most of North Korean people who conducted interview have strong belief that their country is among the strongest nation in the world- influenced by media that the government strictly controls; Also, they believe that other countries want to start wars because they envy their glamourous system.

Media creates social value not only in country like North Korea, but also developed nations. On social media, the very idea of beauty is created, not reflected. There is a correlation of people who starve themselves to stay skinny with the rise of the beauty standard that delivered by Hollywoods in 2000s. National survey states that 41% of US teenage girls skipped meals in 2001, compared to only 24% in 1984. The report emphasizes a trend of losing weight so that these teens can look like their idols. Those beauty standards are unattainable, heavily photoshopped and never reflected the truth.

Finally, media creates a new generation in Japan: ‘Hikikomori’ (ひきこもり). This generation gives up social interaction and stays aloof in their rooms, only uses social media for communication for at least 6 months. Japan had 700,000 individuals like this in 2010. It is considered “the 2030 problem”. These problems only arise when social media becomes popular in Japan.

Thus, we have evidence to believe that media created social values and did not reflect truthfully majority of its ‘featured’ social values.
References


