Gender stereotypes, body image, cultural identity and media role

Name of the Writer

Name of the University

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**Introduction**

Media has been an integral part of human society and its civilization. So much so that it has had a huge hand in shaping the very fabric of society. Media has acted as the sword arm that protects democracy and even as a watchdog that has worked to protect the public’s interest. It has further worked hard to contain the malpractice done against the interests of the public and has fought to raise awareness for it (Malin & Lubienski 2015). However, positive media has been in the past and currently, it still has detrimental effects on society. The fact is it is the major cause behind the eruption regarding issues such as gender stereotyping, making false images of the body and creating a cultural identity.

Gender stereotyping is one of the hot button issues that have plagued human society for so long. The sad part is that the media had a huge role in promoting gender stereotyping. Generally, gender stereotyping refers to ascribing or associating certain characteristics and attributes to both male and female members of the society based on their sex (Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2015). Media has continuously fanned the flames of gender stereotyping and has limited the perception of the possibilities for humans. Men are portrayed as rough and tough individuals who are active and sexually aggressive and are uninvolved in human intimacy. Whereas, women are stereotyped as objects of sex, that are thin and submissive and can be construed as dumb and incompetent. This distortion of the male and female sexuality has led to people having perverted views about themselves and completely changes the dynamics of normality.

Just like gender, media has also had an immense effect in developing the trend related to body image for several decades now. The reality is that media and body image are very closely related and the advertising done on the media severely impacts what individuals think about their own body. The media is full of images and videos that try to define what an ideal body should be for both men and women (Nerini, 2015). With regular viewing, people even started to believe that this is what their bodies should look like as this is normal. However, the reality is oh so different from what is portrayed in the media. Very few people have the genetics to pull off the body form that is evident in the media. The fact is for most people, keeping a lifestyle like could be harmful or even fatal.

Media also has had an immense influence on the cultural identity of individuals as well. Cultural identity can be described as thos set of attributes that are accredited to a certain population. These attributes or characteristics are often thought to be stagnant but in reality change over time. Since the past, media has played a great part in forming cultural identity and national cultures (Gougherty, 2016). The different forms of media such as social media, press, television and the radio have had a tremendous effect on the cultural and the national identities of the entire world. Americanization was widely popularised by using Hollywood and its films. This all has led to the cultural identity being on the defence from the constant barrages it receives from the media.

**Conclusion**

All in all the media has readily radicalized and changed the way that normal human beings view and accept certain things in their daily lives. Such as the fact that it has been used heavily to promote gender stereotyping and also has led people to both mental and physical health concerns regarding their body. Furthermore, it has even put the cultural identity of a multitude of nations, ethnicities and cultures on the defence. On the other hand, it has been used heavily in the promotion of certain cultures all around the world. However, there is still hope that this arduous journey would end and media could be used for the benefit of the people.

References

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