

Text 4

Abstract of “An Analysis of the Absence of Voice of Vulnerable Groups in the Media”

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Author(s): Fu Xiangjing

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Abstract:

I. The Absence of Voice of Vulnerable Groups in the Media

It is undeniable that despite the large number of vulnerable groups, they have no voice in the media. As a major medium of expression in current society, mass media often reflects contests of various powers. The absence of voice of vulnerable groups in the media resembles their disadvantaged position in society. Vulnerable groups have long been at a disadvantaged position in both the aspects of social resources and rights enjoyed. Economic disadvantage led to political and cultural weakness. An absence of voice in the media resulted in a situation where vulnerable groups cannot make their voices heard. Media coverage of vulnerable groups mainly reflects the following features: a limited number and level of coverage and inflexible process of reporting.

II. A Contradiction between Media Influence and Attention to Vulnerable Groups

Media influence comes from social attention. The media can often influence social process, social development, market consumption, and the individual's social behaviour. Vulnerable groups are at the bottom of the society; their economic condition does not allow them to influence the media; and it is impossible for them to make their own voice heard via the media, resulting in the continual marginalisation of vulnerable groups.

III. Positioning of the Media

For a long time, the role of China's media has been very clear, which is to speak on behalf of the government, featuring a strong political overtone. However, with the development of the market economy, the media's market theme and its social role have become increasingly prominent and the media's market theme has already been confirmed. Under the background of a market economy, differences between the media's market theme and its role as a “speaker” on behalf of the government's interests has restricted the further deepening of media reform.

IV. Media Coverage of Vulnerable Groups: The Media's Role in Building a Harmonious Society

Unleashing the full potential of the media's role of monitoring and early warning is the main role and responsibility of the media. Vulnerable groups are large in size, and it is detrimental to social stability and harmony if they are placed in a marginalised position for a long time. The media should perform its function

as “public domain”, establish both the smooth channels of information and exchange platform, report vulnerable groups’ basic needs for survival in time, and coordinate the relationship between vulnerable groups and other social classes.

To ensure that the media truly plays a role in building a harmonious society, it is essential to fully integrate demands from each party. In order to realise effective functioning of the different roles of the media, we should apply different levels of management. This is also the only way to achieve fair and balanced media coverage.