

Contemporary Issues in

ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION

Editor

Mohd Yusof Hussain



IIUM Press

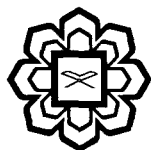
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1

Changing Issues in Mass Communication

MOHD YUSOF HUSSAIN

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “issue” as “important topic for discussion; and matter being debated and discussed” The issue can be in any areas – religion, politics, economics, social, cultural and communication.

When a topic has reached the status of a national issue it will be discussed and debated by intellectuals, opinion-leaders and the mass media. In Muslim societies, issues of importance to the *ummah* have been discussed and debated since the early days of Islam.

This chapter discusses the changing issues in communication in the Muslim world from the 1930s to 2000. Two types of communication issues will be discussed. They are issues discussed by the mass media and those discussed by communication scholars in university classrooms, communication journals and conferences.

Issues Highlighted by the Mass Media

Since the 1930s, newspapers in Muslim countries have been highlighting and discussing communication issues regarded as important by Muslims, particularly the intellectuals.

In Egypt the newspaper *Al-Manar* published by Muhammad Rashid Rida (d.1935) highlighted the issue of modernisation. Muhammad Rashid Rida was the disciple of Muhammad Abduh. Muhammad Rashid Rida publicised and promoted the modernist view of Muhammad Abduh who called for the liberation of Muslims from the mentality of *taqlid* (blind following of an authority). The paper argues that belief in Allah is a rational act and there is a need for a rational understanding of revelation. The paper declared that any reluctance to exercise rationality on social issues or unwillingness to experiment with new ideas or refusals to benefit from the fruits of science will lead to cultural and intellectual stagnation.