

BSW-123
Community
Organization and
Communication

Block

3

BASICS OF COMMUNICATION

UNIT 1

Communication – Concepts, Types and Process

UNIT 2

Traditional and Modern Media of Communication

UNIT 3

Interpersonal, Group and Mass Communication

UNIT 4

Health Communication: Scope and Challenges

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Course Preparation Team (Original)

Unit Writer

Prof. George
Plathottam

Block Editor & Programme

Coordinator

Prof. Gracious Thomas,
SOCE, IGNOU

Course Preparation Team (Revision)

Unit Writer

1,2,3 Prof. George Plathottam
4 Dr. M. Tineshowri Devi,
Assam University, Silchar

Content Editor

Dr. Sheeba Joseph, Bhopal
School of Social Sciences,
Bhopal

Programme & Course

Coordinator

Dr. Sayantani Guin,
School of Social Work, IGNOU

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INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK 3

The third block of the course “Community Organization and Communication” is about “Basics of Communication”. This block has four units. **Unit 1** is on ‘Communication – concept, types and process’. This unit defines communication and deals with concept, types and process involved in communication. It also deals with communication models, global communication, constituents in communication and types of communication. **Unit 2** is on ‘Traditional and modern media of communication’. This unit provides knowledge about traditional and modern media of communication. It also narrates the history of communication and deliberate on folk media. **Unit 3** deals with ‘Interpersonal, groups and mass communication’. This unit provides various aspects of interpersonal, groups and mass communication, their merits and definitions. **Unit 4** is on “Health Communication: Scope and Challenges”. It has explained functions of health communication, models of health communication and scope and challenges of health communication.

This block provides you comprehensive view of the essentials of communication, concept and the process of communication which are necessary for a counsellor or communicator, be that a social worker, media specialist, community organiser, case worker or a social activist.

UNIT 1 COMMUNICATION–CONCEPT, TYPES AND PROCESS

*Prof. George Plathottam

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Term and Definitions
- 1.3 The Communication Process
- 1.4 Communication Models
- 1.5 Technological Revolution and Global Communication
- 1.6 Socio-cultural Constituents in Communication
- 1.7 Types of Communication
- 1.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.9 Suggested Readings
- 1.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit aims at understanding the term communication and some of the most important definitions. We shall study the communication process consisting of sender, receiver, channel, message and feedback. We examine the leading models of communication. Study of communication today calls for an understanding of the impact of technological revolution and the global nature of communication. Socio-cultural constituents like language, sign, symbol, feedback and noise are also presented in this section. The unit concludes with some basic notions about the types of communication. We shall elaborate these types in the subsequent units. As a result of studying this unit, the student is expected to be familiar with the following:

- The term and definitions of communication;
- The communication process and models of communication;
- Technological revolution and global communication;
- Socio-cultural constituents like language, symbol, feedback and noise; and
- Types of communication.

* Prof. George Plathottam, NEHU, Shillong

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is basic to much of human life and activity. The inter-disciplinary nature of communication calls for a study of the fundamental principles and issues in communication. Communication as we shall see shortly, is both individual and collective necessity. Human beings cannot be fully human without communication. Communication is not only a necessity, but a basic right. A fundamental human right as communication, must be upheld, because it is necessary for the proper functioning and development of human beings and the social environment in which they live. As we shall see, the ultimate objective of all communication is to establish commonness and communion.

We need to understand the basic principles of communication in order that we may grasp the way communication influences the life of individuals and society. It is also necessary to understand the way the various instruments of communication (traditional and modern) function.

1.2 TERM AND DEFINITIONS

Etymologically the word “communication” comes from the Latin word *communis*, meaning common. When we communicate we are trying to establish ‘commonness’ with someone. That is, we are trying to share information, an idea or an attitude.

The standard definition of communication reflects the everyday usage of the term. ‘To communicate’ is defined as ‘to impart, bestow, or convey, to make known, give by way of information. The New Webster’s dictionary defines communication as “the act or fact of communicating transmission, the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing or signs that which is communicated or imparted; a document or message imparting views or information.” According to the Oxford dictionary “communication is the imparting, conveying or exchanging of ideas, knowledge etc., by means of speech, writing or any attempt to define communication, has to take into consideration the idea of mutuality and commonness, an exchange, a shared environment, a social relationship among the participants and the existence of a common need, urge, aim or goal. Communication is said to take place when an area of common experience exists.

There are numerous definitions of communications but the common strand running through them all is that “communication is a social process of interaction through messages”. According to Denis McQuail, communications is a “process which increases commonality”. He describes human communication as “the sending from one person to another of meaningful messages.”

Charles Morris gives two definitions of communication – one broader than the other. Broadly, communication is “the establishment of a commonage.” In the limited sense it means, “use of signs to establish a commonage of signification.”

George Lundberg uses communication to designate interaction by signs and symbols.

Baker Brownell uses the terms “direct” and “indirect” communication. Direct communication is a function of ‘identification of people with one another.’ Indirect communication is a “process wherein something converted into symbols is carried over from one person to another.”

Theodore Newcomb defines communication as that process by which people influence each other or leave impression on others.

Shannon’s is perhaps one of the most comprehensive definitions. According to his Mathematical Theory of Communication, Communication includes “all of the procedures by which one mind may affect another...or one mechanism affects another mechanism.”

From the above definitions, we can derive certain important insights for our analysis. In the first place, the definitions either broaden or delineate the meaning of communication. In the broadest definition certain animal responses and even mechanical interactions fall into the category of communication. In the more restricted sense communication includes interaction between persons. Secondly, the definitions point to the importance and value of considering communication from the perspective of the receiver. Communication research as well as every day experience reveals that by far the emphasis is on the former. Together these factors give us what is called a “communication situation” in which the process of communication takes place.

But communication, as Ashley Montagu and Floyd Matson put it, is more than a clash of symbols, more than media and message, information and persuasion. It is not a matter of ‘isolated entities sending discrete messages’ back and forth. It is the essential human connection. Whether clear or garbled tumultuous or silent, deliberate or fatally inadvertent, communication is the gerund of meeting and the foundation of community.’ It comprises all modes of behaviour and expression which establish, project and promote ideas, principles, hypotheses, beliefs and faiths which bind human societies in their various enterprises and activities.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- 1) What is communication? What is the aim of communication?
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- 2) Give two definitions of Communication.
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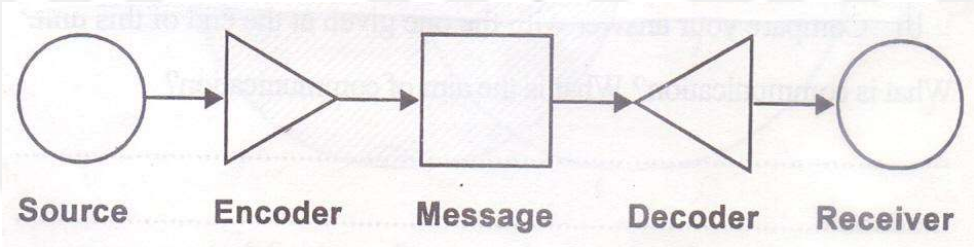
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1.3 THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Aristotle, one of the earliest to speak of a model of communication, identified these three elements. He calls them: i) speaker; ii) the speech; and iii) the audience.

A more widely accepted model of communication is that of Harold Lasswell and David Berlo. According to their model, communication requires at least four elements — **the Source, the Message, Channel, and Receiver (SMCR)**.



The Sender

The sender or source may be an individual (speaking, writing, drawing, gesturing), or a communication organisation (a newspaper, publishing house, television station, or a motion picture studio). The sender may use oral, written, graphic signs or symbols to convey the message. The communication skills, attitudes and convictions, the knowledge of the content, objectives, the socio-cultural milieu etc. of the sender have an impact on the effectiveness of communication.

Message

Messages are made of signs or symbols and codes that are signals, which represent something. Messages may be in the form of ink on paper, sound waves in the air, impulses in an electric current, a wave of the hand, a flag in the air, or any other signal capable of being interpreted meaningfully. Messages are encoded and those who receive them must decode them to interpret or understand the meaning of the message.

The message constitutes the core of the communication process. It needs to be formulated to suit the specific needs of the receiver and must be expressed in an intelligible way to have the desired objective. According to Wilbur Schramm, the message must fulfil certain conditions if it is to arouse the desired response in the receiver.

- i) The message must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the intended audience.
- ii) The message must employ signs that refer to the experiences common to source and the receiver, so as to get the 'meaning across.'
- iii) The message must arouse the needs in the receiver and suggest some ways to meet these needs.
- iv) The message must suggest a way to meet these needs which is appropriate to the context in which the receiver finds himself/herself at the time when he/ she is moved to make the desired response.

Channel

Channel refers to the means employed to transmit or receive message. It refers to the five senses: seeing, touch, hearing, smell and taste. A message is received through any of the above modes of sensory perception.

- A message may be seen through print or visual media.
- It can be heard through a sound media or voice (audio), speech, musical instruments.
- It can be seen and heard as in the case of films, television and other audio-visual media.
- Can be touched, smelt or tasted through models, exhibits, specimens and experiments.

Most often several sensory faculties are involved in the communication process.

Communication is more effective and lasting, meaning clearer when several sensory faculties are involved in receiving meaning.

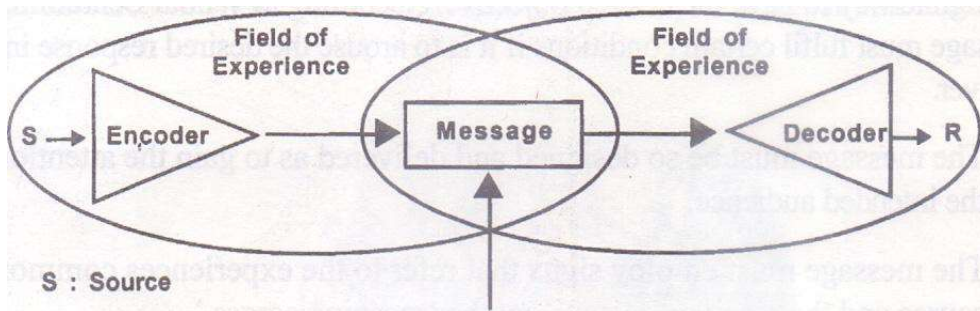
Channel also includes mechanical devices. No message can be transmitted unless they are encoded. When we communicate through language or speech, we encode the message into written or spoken words. We use signs and symbols to communicate. The deaf and mute are taught to follow the sign language. In order to communicate messages to a distance we use sound waves. In order to make them last we use writing. In order to complete the act of communication the message must be decoded.

Receiver

The receiver, also called a destination, may be an individual or a group, a crowd, or a mob, reading, listening or watching. The receiver is the object in the communication process. The sender must

constantly keep the needs, aspirations, knowledge, socio-cultural milieu and background of the receiver if the message is to have the desired objective.

The following chart illustrates the human communication process.



Wilbur Schramm speaks of the field of experience as an important factor for effective communication. The source can encode, and the destination can decode only in terms of the experience each has had. If there has been no common field of experience, communication is impossible. Schramm illustrated this with the experience of an African tribesman who sees an aeroplane for the first time. The plane may seem to him to be a bird, and the aviator a God born on wings. The film “God’s Must be Crazy” illustrates this idea. Here the experience of the source and the destination are strikingly different. This difficulty persists when we try to communicate with cultures that are much different from ours.

The ‘sender-message- channel- receiver’ model has been criticised for presenting communication as linear and definite. Communication is an endless process, and hence it is misleading to think of the communication process as starting somewhere and ending somewhere. The science of cybernetics has provided important insights into the process of communication by making available analytical tools like signs, symbols, feedback, redundancy, noise etc.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of cybernetics to the communication process has been that of feedback. Feedback not only makes communication circular but also enables modification possible at different stages in the process of communication.

Another important factor in the communication process is the significance of symbol. Symbols are the basic units of communication systems. They can be verbal, as in the spoken word, graphic as in the written word, or representational as in a flag, or banner. Language is a system of symbols used universally as the primary vehicle of communication.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Name the four elements in the communication process.

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2) Name two conditions to make message meaningful in the process of communication.
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3) Why is the SMCR model criticized?
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1.4 COMMUNICATION MODELS

In the vast field of communication studies there are numerous communication models. No one model is suitable for all purposes and all levels of analysis. We shall consider three models of communication presented by Harold Lasswell, George Gerbner and David Berlo. All the three models describe the four components of the communication process we have mentioned, namely, the source (communicator), the message, the channel, the receiver (audience) and only Berlo omits the effect or consequence component.

The Lasswell model, perhaps the most widely quoted of all models of the communication process, “Who says What in Which Channel to Whom, with What Effect,” captures the essence of the communication process in an economy of words. It is a communicator-based linear model. Communication, according to Lasswell, is one-way or two-way. His concern is the effect rather than the meaning.

Gerbner’s model is a development on previous theories based on the linear process model. It relates the message to the ‘reality’ that it is ‘about’ and thus enables us to approach questions of perception and meaning, and it sees communication process as consisting of two alternating dimensions – the perceptual or the receptive, and the communicating or means and control dimension. The merit of Gerbner’s model is in localising the meaning in the culture. Human perception is determined by the culture. Consequently, it helps to explain different reception or interpretation of the same message by different audience.

Berlo’s ‘source-message-channel-receiver model (SMCR) popularised in his landmark volume *The Process of Communication*, continues to remain a useful interpretation of the process of communication. He introduces six constituents of the communication model, namely, the communication: source, the encoder, the message, the channel, the decoder, and the communication receiver. These, he says, should not be viewed as separate things or entities or people. They are the names of behaviours that have to be performed for communication to occur.

We have seen how the various perspectives evolve from rather elementary definitions of the communication process to more sophisticated theories and models. We have also seen their possible impact on the communication process. The definitions, theories and models yield important conclusions for our study of communication.

The models assist us in our understanding of whether the process of communication in the society in which we live is: sender-centred (who), receiver-centred (to whom), or message-centred (what), channel/media-centred (how), goal-centred (with what effect). They also tell us that if the aim of communication is transmission of message to establish commonness, then the process must be two-way rather than one-way, circular rather than linear. Communication must also take into account factors like context, culture, symbolic systems, and field of experience.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is meant by linear model of communication?

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2) What are some of the characteristics of true communication?

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1.5 TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION AND GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

The modern age of communication is generally considered to date from the invention of printing. This was preceded by the invention of paper. Another significant stage in the history of the growth of communication was the production and application of electricity, which facilitated the development of telegraph, telephone, radio and cinema. These new technologies entered directly into the industrialised era of mass communication. From the second half of the last century onwards there has been an accelerated development of new resources, techniques and technological devices in communication, particularly for transmitting and receiving signals and messages.

Since the second half of the 20th century, the technological revolution gathered immense speed. Technology today has made communication fast, global and cheaper. Today we have many of new ways of communicating, thanks to the growth of communication technologies. Telephone which was a person to person instrument for communication has assumed new roles. Mobile telephone is changing the way people communicate. Television, as an audio-visual medium continues to gain in popularity. We have a whole list of instruments that aid quick and more global communication like satellites, magnetoscopes, video discs, teletext, home computers, Internet, telematics and so on. The digital revolution have affected communication in numerous ways. These communication facilities have virtually abolished the barriers of time and space. Distances have ceased to be an obstacle. Today information and data can be carried across the globe in an instant. Data can be stored and retrieved in a relatively easy way.

The technological revolution in communication has important consequences. Any significant change in the field of communication in the past has been followed by important transformation

of social structures. Thus the art of printing helped to hasten the collapse of the feudal systems. The development of newspapers, telegraph and telephone greatly contributed to democratising society. Through the new media developed since the turn of the last century: film (1895), radio (1897/1921) and television (1935), the frontiers between peoples and cultures were crossed in a permanent way. The information provided through these media became more and more international and intercultural. We are already witnessing the impact of the new electronic media using the silicon chip in transistor and computer and in overcoming distance by satellites.

Nevertheless, communication revolution is not to be equated with technological development. The former reflects only one aspect of the latter. Peoples, social organisations and nations have already begun to study critically the way communication and mass media operate in the world today. The French Government commissioned Norma-Minc Commission Report (1978) emphasised the qualitative leap forward taking place in the field of social application of communication technology. All technological revolution in the past, the report pointed out, have caused a profound reorganisation of the economy and society. They can be simultaneously the occasion of a crisis and the way out of it. That was the case with the invention of steam engine, railways and electricity. The informatics revolution is bound to have a greater impact than these.

Since the mid-1960s, there has been a broad movement toward more decentralised, local media. This paved the way for the countries of the developing nations of the world to call for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), first within the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and later at the General Assembly of the United Nations. NWICO demanded the establishment of a free and balanced flow of information and rejected any attempt at cultural colonialism.

Several experts in the field of communication and mass media have studied the effects of the new technology in communication. One of the important consequences of the communication revolution accentuated by the technological revolution is the invasion of mass media as a substitute for dialogue – the basis of human society and democracy. During the first decades of the last century (until 1920s, approximately) 80 per cent of human communication was accounted for by the spoken word, and only 20 per cent by other means such as the press, the telephone and the radio broadcasts. By the end of the 20th century through the telematics revolution, the opposite happened: a mere ten to fifteen percent of human communication was carried out through the spoken words, the rest through machines. This is one of the fatal consequences of development without adequate technological controls. As the years go by written communication will increasingly replace dialogue and authoritarianism will supplant democracy. This technological phenomenon coincides with the growing development of a transnational power structure : economic power, technological power, ideological power and political power.

Technology in itself, is neither good nor bad. It is neutral. It provides no answer to the whys or the what fors of life; it only answers the hows. Or as we have learnt through the language of its most powerful masters, the centres of developed industrialised power, technology only provides the 'know how'. Though the future of mass communication is filled with creative potential, it may be observed that the technological developments in communication are neither necessarily positive, nor negative. What we choose to do in response to the new technology and how we choose to interpret its use are the vital questions.

The so-called increase in communication has been mostly in terms of technology and the quantity of information. From the Gutenberg era to the electronic era, the radius of communication has widened, making it possible to reach everyone on earth. The mass media are not however designed to be instruments for the improvement of the quality of communication as it is based on transmitting messages according to a linear sender-receiver model.

1.6 SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTITUENTS IN COMMUNICATION

Socio-cultural constituents play no negligible role in communication, be it inter-personal or mass mediated. The sender and the receiver occupy the centre stage in the communication process. To use Lasswell's terminology, they are the *Who* and the *Whom* in the communication drama. Traditionally, this area of study has been called control analysis (the who) and audience analysis (the whom). These two constituents have also been variously referred to as: stimulus-response; sender-receiver; encoder-decoder; source-destination; actor-audience; communicator-communicatee.

Language

Successful communication needs other pre-requisites too. Language is a system of symbols. The symbols are arbitrary and reflect the personality of the individuals as well as the culture they represent. Language plays a vital role in the growth and transmission of culture, continuity of society and its values. It is a message system used for encoding and decoding. Linguistic communication, though not the exclusive form of communication, is fundamental to all human social interactions. Communication through the linguistic interaction is a powerful key to analyse the worldview and psychological processes of societies and individuals.

Language is a system of symbols – oral and written – used by members of a social community in a fairly standardised way to call forth meaning. Language is the strikingly distinct attribute of the human person. We can consider three important functions which language performs:

- i) Language is the primary vehicle for communication
- ii) Language reflects both personality of the individual and the culture of his/ her society. In turn it helps shape both personality and culture.
- iii) Language makes possible the growth and transmission of culture, the continuity of societies and the effective functioning and control of social groups.

Sign/Symbol

Messages are made up of signs. A sign is a signal that stands for something that has been experienced. There is an important difference between the sign and the object. The sign represents the object at a reduced level.

We constantly communicate using signs. We decode signs from our environment, interpreting these sign and encoding something as a result.

All communication, including linguistic ones, makes use of symbols. A symbol is something used deliberately to take the place of something else. This is attributed and accepted as such as a medium of communication. Words we use are symbols to which we attach signification. Communication is possible only when the communicator and the receptor are in a position to attach similar meanings to the symbols employed. The human person is not only capable of engaging in symbolic interaction with other human beings or with God, but is also capable of creating symbols. Symbols, therefore, are a fundamental unit of the communication process.

Symbols may be:

- verbal, as in spoken words;
- graphic as in the written word; or
- representational as in a flag.

What the symbol stands for is determined by the social group. The society agrees that a given symbol stands for a particular object. (e.g. the word *cat*). If the individual uses some other word as a symbol, for instance to stand for such an animal, it will in all probability, result in blocked communication.

Experts in communication sciences speak of communication channel as an effective link between source and sender. The possibility exists of evaluating the effectiveness of communication through checking the channel credibility (the expertness and trustworthiness of the channel). Channel feedback enables the receiver to respond immediately and maximally to affect the source of the message in a communication transaction. Channel involvement (participation), channel availability and permanency are other dimensions that contributes to communication effectiveness.

Feedback

Feedback is the receiver's reaction to the message. It may be favourable or unfavourable. But feedback is necessary to know if the communication has been effective or not. Feedback includes questionnaire, letters to the editor, opinion, forums, comments or even protests or solidarity. The support received in response to appeals in media for assistance for the families of people killed in tsunami or other such natural calamities can be seen as an example of how feedback affects communication. Even the applause of an audience watching a musical programme or a mob turning violent during a match, may be described as a response to particular events, hence a feedback.

Noise

Communication to be successful must be free from noise. Noise in communication theory refers to any limitation or obstacle in the process of message transmission. There are two major types of communication noise: *channel noise* and *semantic noise*.

Channel noise includes any disturbance which interferes with the fidelity of the physical transmission of the message. In mass communication channel noise includes such diverse disturbances as static on the radio, smeared ink on paper, a rolling screen on television, or too small types in print. In short all distractions between source and audience may be termed channel noise. (e.g. cross talk on telephone is a channel noise).

Semantic noise is the type of noise that occurs when a message is misunderstood even though it is received exactly as it was transmitted. This happens when the senders and receivers have no common frame of reference, or have divergent field of experience. In short, they are not in tune. Sources of semantic noise include: words or subjects too difficult to grasp; differences in denotative or connotative meaning of words between sender and receiver; cultural differences between the message-sender and the message-receiver. Audience research, redundancy and feedback are some of the devices to minimise the adverse impact of semantic noise on the communication process. Feedback is more effective in face to face communication than in communication through mass media.

Human beings live in societies and cultures that are not identical. With the growth of global communication networks through the advancement of technology, communication between persons belonging to different cultures has become widespread. This kind of interaction is called inter-cultural communication.

The scientific study of inter-cultural communication is relatively new though it has been of concern for as long as different cultures have met each other or have lived and interacted with one another. Inter-cultural communication may be described as the communicative interaction between members of different cultures. It occurs whenever a message-producer of one culture transmits a message to a message-receiver of another culture.

It is again in face to face communication that these differences can best be eliminated or reduced. Mass communication tends to overlook cultural differences. Commercialisation and control of communication by multinationals with profit motives, and governments with dictatorial tendencies often fail to take into consideration cultural differences. Culture is sometimes used by these to camouflage their selfish objectives. The most obvious example is that of commercial advertisements that create new and even artificial cultural symbols and needs. This can result in the gradual elimination of the receiver's capacity to react to the message. Communication becomes heavily source-centred and one-way. The process becomes something like a theatre show. Mass media can be used in order to effect a constant cultural penetration aimed at conditioning the masses into an uncritical acceptance of socio-cultural, political and economic values. That is why McLuhan says: "Medium is the *massage*."

Participation and freedom, not control and coercion, are the hallmarks of genuine communication. The process of communication should be initiated through a simultaneous process of making people responsible for their lives, their decisions. Socio-cultural identity, values and worldviews shape the communication context which the mass media can, if uncritically and arbitrarily used, destroy. It may, however, be observed that per se there is no conflict between socio-cultural values and symbols vis-a-vis the advancement in communication technology.

1.7 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication takes place at different levels and accordingly we can speak of different types of communication.

Intrapersonal Communication

When communication takes place within oneself, it is called intrapersonal communication. It includes individual reflection, meditation, and contemplation. Intrapersonal communication includes prayers addressed to the divine though some authors describe communication with the divine as Transpersonal Communication.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication takes place between two persons. This includes dialogue, conversation or exchange of views between two persons without using any technological devices like telephone. It is direct, intimate and consists of verbal interaction or gestures. The efficacy of interpersonal communication depends very much on the mutual relationship between the two partners in communication, their status, roles and skills.

Group Communication

Group communication takes place among a group of persons. It shares most of the qualities of the above types of communication, though in a much reduced way. The number of receivers increase, but participation, intimacy etc. can become lesser and lesser as the group becomes larger and larger. It is both a science and an art. Individual respect is key to effective group communication.

Mass Communication

When the audience is large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed, the communication used is Mass Communication. Scientific and technological advances have made it possible to make communication reach vast audience within a short time. **Mass communication** is a process in which a person, group of people, or an organization sends a message through a channel of communication to a large group of anonymous and heterogeneous people and organizations/institutions. You can think of a large group of anonymous and heterogeneous people as either the general public or a segment of the general public. Channels of communication include broadcast television, radio, social media, and print. The sender of the message is usually a professional

communicator that often represents an organization. Mass communication is an expensive process. Unlike interpersonal communication, feedback for mass communication is usually slow and indirect.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- 1) Mention two effects resulting from development of communication technology on society.

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- 2) What is NWICO? What did it demand?

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- 3) List three functions of language.

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- 4) What is semantic noise?

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- 5) Name three different kinds of communication.

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1.8 LET US SUM UP

This unit has been designed to provide a basic understanding of communication: the term, definitions, models and the types of communication. We have analysed the various factors that shape and influence the process of communication in society. We have presented a number of definitions and models of the leading scholars on the subject. We have placed them side by side with their differences as well as complementarity, so that we get a more comprehensive idea of the subject. Each of the perspectives has something useful to offer in our effort to understand communication.

1.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

Melvin L. DeFleur-Everette E. Dennis (1991), *Understanding Mass Communication*, Goyal SaaB, Delhi.

Keval J.Kumar (1981), *Mass Communication in India*, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay.

Subir Ghosh (1996), *Mass Communication Today, in the Indian context*, Profile Publishers, Calcutta.

Pradip Kumar Dey (1993), *Perspectives in Mass Communication*, Kalyani Publishers, Calcutta.

1.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Communication is the process of establishing commonness. It means 'to impart, bestow, or convey, to make known, give by way of information'. The New Webster's dictionary defines communication as "the act or fact of communicating transmission, the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing or signs that which is communicated or imparted; a document or message imparting views or information." According to the Oxford dictionary "communication is the imparting, conveying or exchanging of ideas, knowledge etc., by means of speech, writing or signs.

- 2) Denis McQuail defines communications as "the sending of meaningful messages from one person to another." Wilbur Schramm gives what he states as the classical statement of communication process as "A communicates to B through channel C to D with effect E."

Check Your Progress II

- 1) The four elements in communication are: Sender, Message, Channel, Receiver (SMCR).
- 2)
 - i) The message must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the intended audience.
 - ii) The message must employ signs that refer to the experiences common to source and the receiver, so as to get the 'meaning across.'
- 3) The 'sender-message-channel-receiver' model has been criticised for presenting communication as linear and definite. Communication is an endless process, and hence it is misleading to think of the communication process as starting somewhere and ending somewhere.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) The linear model of communication presents communication as in the SMCR model. It assumes communication as in a 'line', beginning somewhere and ending somewhere. It does not stress the role of feedback.
- 2) True communication must be two-way rather than one-way, circular rather than linear. It must also take into account factors like context, culture, symbolic systems, and field of experience.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) Development of communication technology led to the collapse of feudalism and democratization of society.
- 2) The New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) is the result of a broad movement towards more decentralized, local media by the developing nations of the world. It began within the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and later at the General Assembly of the United Nations. NWICO demanded the establishment of a free and balanced flow of information and rejected any attempt at cultural colonialism.

The three important functions of language are:

- i) Language serves as the primary vehicle for communication
- ii) Language reflects both personality of the individual and the culture of his/her society. In turn it helps shape both personality and culture.
- iii) Language makes possible the growth and transmission of culture, the continuity of societies and the effective functioning and control of social groups.
- iv) Semantic noise is the type of noise that occurs when misunderstood even though it is received exactly as it was transmitted. This happens when the senders and receivers have no common frame of reference, or have divergent field of experience. These include: words or subjects too difficult to grasp; differences in denotative or connotative meaning of words between sender and receiver; cultural differences between the message-sender and the message-receiver.

- v) The different kinds of communication are: Intrapersonal communication, Interpersonal Communication, Group Communication and Mass Communication.



UNIT 2 TRADITIONAL AND MODERN MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION

* Prof. George Plathottam

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Traditional Means of Communication
- 2.3 Folk Media
- 2.4 History of Communication
- 2.5 Choice of Medium
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Suggested Readings
- 2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit introduces the students to a basic understanding of the various methods and processes of traditional and modern means of communication. The traditional media and folk media are studied from the context of the rich and varied tradition of India. In the second section of the unit we examine the development of communication from writing to the modern means of communication. After studying this unit the student is expected to learn the following:

- Traditional media of communication;
- Factors that shape and influence the traditional media;
- Folk media and its impact on the masses;
- Some of the leading traditional communication media of India;
- Modern communication media and their development; and
- Comparative merits and demerits of various modern communication media.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we study the traditional and modern means of communication. Communication is a dynamic process that has shaped the growth and development of human history over centuries. It

* Prof. George Plathottam, NEHU, Shillong

continues to evolve and develop into newer forms with the growth of scientific and technological changes. The last few decades have witnessed revolutionary changes in communication. As a result today we have many new forms of media. Traditional media themselves keep changing and adapting themselves according to the changing needs of society and the requirements of those who use a particular medium to communicate values and worldviews.

2.2 TRADITIONAL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

The term traditional means of communication refers to methods used in a specific culture for communication of ideas and dissemination of information. Sometimes traditional media are closely linked with folk media, alternative media or folklore. We shall examine some of the important characteristics of traditional means of communication. Prior to that we need to understand the relationship between communication and culture.

Communication and Culture

There is a close link between communication and culture. According to some social anthropologists, classifications of cultural facts include: speech, art, mythology, knowledge, religious practices, family, social systems and government. As we can see most of these groupings have a direct communication dimension. This relationship underlines the importance of communication in any given culture. Communication is necessary for the preservation, maintenance and development of culture. One of the primary functions served by every cultural form is to convey meaning to the participants of the given culture. Anthropologists agree that without communication there can be no culture. A number of people cannot function as a group if they do not have certain common means of communication. A culture is therefore, essentially a human communication system.

2.3 FOLK MEDIA

Folk media means media of the people. The word folklore and folk media come from the German root word '*volks*' (pronounced *folks*) which means 'people'. Though folklore has close link with folk media, the two are quite distinct from each other. The term folklore was coined by William Thomas in 1845. Folklore includes such formats as myths, legends, folk-tales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, costumes, dances, dance dramas, songs, folk medicine and writing on the walls.

Folk media refer to 'various means of communications available to the rural and tribal people'. It is variously termed 'traditional media', 'indigenous communication system', 'alternative media', 'group media', 'low cost media' etc.

We may mention the following as the chief characteristics of folk media:

- i) Participation by all the people of a cultural group or area.
- ii) Inexpensive and need only material available locally.

- iii) They are based on the average skill of the group. Skill is acquired without much formal training.
- iv) As they are participatory, there is no qualitative or quantitative criterion for participation.
- v) They depend on people for dissemination, and so largely controlled by the people themselves.
- vi) They are non-commercial. As money is not involved, no copyright system is followed.
- vii) They are largely anonymous.
- viii) They are adapted and recreated to suit the particular occasion, audience.

Folk media have tremendous influence on society. They are powerful vehicles for social change. Even in places where the modern media of communications have made remarkable inroads, the traditional folk media continue to remain valid as a powerful medium capable of influencing attitudes, in leading people to action and effect change. Traditional media can be more powerful to dispel superstitions and help instill scientific temper. The traditional media are popular with the masses and they enjoy great credibility. Hence, they have remarkable power of persuasion.

There is a gross misunderstanding about the relation between mass media and folk media. Folk media constitutes an interpersonal structure, which is quite different from that of the mass media. Folk media belong to the masses while the mass media are owned and controlled by a few individuals. In folk media the form and content, the theme and communicator and the audience form a cohesive unit.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.
 b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- 1) What is the relationship between Communication and Culture?

- 2) What are Folk media? Mention some of their characteristics.

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Folk Media in India

There are, according to scholars, about 6000 folk media and traditional art forms in India. They help to preserve and transmit the tradition and culture of our country. Besides providing entertainment, they impart moral instruction. The traditional media enjoy good rapport with the audience. The audiences are homogenous in terms of culture, language or dialect. Traditional media are low cost and use language or dialect that is easily understood by the people. Folk media have high degree of flexibility. They can be adapted to suit varying needs and occasions. All these characteristics make folk media effective as media of communication.

Unlike the classical arts, folk forms were not dependent on royal patronage. Folk media did not originate in the Brahmanic or Vedic stream of Indian culture. Instead, they belonged to the primitive Indian culture and remained always as an alternative media, expressing the life of the common folks.

Throughout the tumultuous political history of India, the folk art forms underwent remarkable changes. But their power as media of the people to preserve time-tested values, to stir up emotions and sentiments of a religious, social and political nature continued unabated. In fact, some of the leaders of the freedom struggle like Tilak, Gandhi, used the traditional media with great effect to mobilise popular support for the cause of freedom.

The folk or traditional media in India vary in form and content from place to place. However, these media have several common elements. One chief characteristic is that they are highly flexible. They combine song and dance, acting, body movements and gestures, puppetry, costume etc. The means of communication and the behaviour pattern will vary from culture to culture.

We may divide traditional means of communication into three categories:

- i) Means used
- ii) Persons involved
- iii) Social structures

Under means used we may list the following methods:

- Story telling
- Songs

- Gestures
- Drama
- Mime
- Puppetry
- Drums for signalling, giving message, for talking
- Dance
- Rituals, cults, myth.

The persons involved in communication have distinct roles in the communication process.

They include:

- opinion of leaders in different disciplines
- speaker
- storyteller/narrator
- crier/announcer
- headman/leader
- poet
- minstrel/bards.

The social structure for traditional communication includes the place, context or environment that provide the appropriate setting for the community or group to communicate. These include:

- the market place
- streets and street corners
- wells or bathing places
- forums or assemblies
- religious institutions
- voluntary groups or cooperatives
- ritual gatherings: marriage, funeral, planting, harvesting
- celebration, festivities, fairs.

The oral cultures have many ritual and symbolic forms of communication. Oral communication is a very powerful form used to transmit ideas and values among the tribal communities. An African researcher in traditional media calls them “Oramedia”.

Under the banner of traditional media of communication we can list several folk media. They usually have the following characteristics:

- simple in form with no technical equipment
- free/available without material cost
- relates to public issues
- traditional and origin is not known
- the difference between producers (performers) and users is little
- communicates directly to one or more of the senses
- participatory, dialogic and interactive
- the participants and listeners are a group or unit.

Traditional media used by various cultures serve the following functions:

- impart social/community values
- provide teaching and initiation
- transmit traditional values
- preserve religious bond
- provide legal code, norms of conduct
- transmit stories, parables, proverbs
- mobilise people for common action: defence, agricultural activities
- preserve social bond and cohesiveness.

Folk art grew from below. It is a spontaneous expression of the people, shaped by themselves, participated by themselves, to suit their own needs. Some anthropologists distinguish folk art of the common people from the 'high culture' of the aristocracy.

Silbert Seldes outlines the characteristics of folk culture as:

- Folk art and popular art are easy to understand
- They are romantic, patriotic, conventionally moral
- They are held in deep affection by those who are suspicious of the great arts
- Popular artists can be serious or trivial, they can be persons of genius or persons of talent
- They can be universal or parochial
- They have the power to communicate with everyone.

Traditional folk media are transmitted by personal and simple contacts within the framework of communities. The people involved in the process are small, since the personal, face-to-face element is essential to it. Among the traditional media of communication, we may include language, music and art.

In India some of the popular forms of traditional media or folk cultural communication media are:

Storytelling, Tamasha, Katha, Bhavai, Jatra, Kirtana, Pahad, Tarja, Kavigaan, Nautanki, Kathakata, Burakatha, Gazal, Kawaki, Mushaira.

Storytelling is probably the most universal among the various kinds of folk media. Many rural societies in India have a rich tradition of storytelling. The storyteller uses histrionic gestures and rhythmic language to tell the story. The audience responds with laughter and body movements. The narration of the story sometimes goes on late into the night. The storytellers use costumes, musical instruments. They often caricature the character they are describing. The stories are woven around familiar stories from the religious traditions or local fables. The people normally gather in the village squares or courtyards.

Tamasha is a lively form of folk theatre in Maharashtra. It is some 400 years old and dates back to the time of the Peshwas. A jester named *Songadya* acts as a master of ceremonies. He makes witty remarks. Tamasha uses both male and female artists. Tamasha has been traditionally used as a medium of entertainment and communicating religious stories. Its contemporary use include creating social and political change through generating public opinion. The government uses this form today to popularise issues like family planning.

Nautanki is a north Indian folk drama form performed in an open theatre. This folk form gets its name from Rani Nautanki whose young lover disguised himself to get entry into her chamber. This form too has a narrator called *Sutradhar*. Musical instruments like the kettledrum (*makkara*) and *dholak* are used. The dialogues are sung to popular folk melodies.

Jatra literally meaning 'journey', is a popular folk theatre of Bengal and Orissa. The name of this form is derived probably from the habit of the performers who wander from place to place to perform. Most stories are related to Krishna and Radha. Jatra helped to popularise the Bhakti cult among the masses. Later it was used to popularise the Shakti cult. During the freedom struggle Jatra was used for popularising the movement. The form consists of choral singing (*juri*), acting and rhetorical flourishes.

Bhavai is the leading folk theatre form in Gujarat. A jester or clown called *Ranglo* enters into dialogue with the *Naik* or *Sutradahar*. Their bantering, satire and gestures of *Ranglo* provide laughter to the audience. He connects the past with the present and pokes fun at the political and social evils of the day. *Bhavai* uses a mixture of dialogue, mime, fantasy, acrobatics, magic tricks, dance and song. Various classical and popular music forms make this folk art a lively medium.

Keertana: This folk art form is also called Harikatha or Harikeertan. It is a kind of concentrated drama, a monodrama in which a gifted actor portrays a series of characters and moods. It is

believed to have spread from Maharashtra to Karnataka and Tamil Nadu about 150 years ago. Associated with the Bhakti movement, it was used by Kabir and Tukaram to preach religious faith and to bring about social and political reform. A different form of Keertana is used in Gujarat.

Ballad Forms: There are several distinct ballad forms in vogue in India to narrate stories. To name a few: *Alha* (Uttar Pradesh), *Burra Katha* (Andhra Pradesh), *Jugani* and *Vaar* (Punjab), *Powada* (Maharashtra), *Villupattu* (Tamil Nadu), *Villadicham Pattu* (Kerala).

Folk Music is another powerful traditional media of the people. According to scholars there are some 300 folk musical styles in India. The more popular among them are: *Baul* and *Bhatiali* (West Bengal), *Doha* and *Garba* (Gujarat), *Chaiti* and *Kajari* (Uttar Pradesh), *Kolkali Pattu* (Kerala), *Bihu* (Assam), *Mand* and *Panihari* (Rajasthan), *Rouf* and *Chakri* (Kashmir), *Sua* and *Dadaria* (Madhya Pradesh), *Mando* and *Dhalo*, (Goa) *Boli* (Eastern Punjab) and *Layani* (Maharashtra).

Folk Sayings and Riddles: The rural folks of India appreciate these forms of communication regardless of their economic condition or educational status. These forms are rooted in the culture and tradition of the community that uses it. These media entertain as well as educate, and preserve social cohesion and harmony. They transmit religious and social values and cement a strong bond among the members of the community.

Puppetry: Puppetry is essentially a folk art used since several centuries to relate myth and legend. The medium has undergone change and is being used in many present day situations to impart education, entertainment and even therapy. Puppetry is the art of animating figures representing human or animal motifs. Puppetry did not originate as a source of entertainment, but as a cult observance. It has continued as an enduring art though it has undergone changes in the preparation and presentation. There are four different kinds of puppetry common in India. They are:

- i) **Sutradharika:** Puppets manipulated with long strings. The costumes vary according to the local culture. This kind of puppetry is common in the states of Rajasthan, Orissa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- ii) **Rod Puppets:** These are dressed in the Jatra style. They are larger in size and are fixed on bamboo sticks tied to the puppeteer's waist. This form is common in West Bengal.
- iii) **Shadow Puppets:** They are flat figures made from tanned hide and painted with vegetable dyes. They are illuminated from behind so that their shadow may fall on a transparent cotton screen. This form is common in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Orissa.
- iv) **Hand Puppets:** Also called Glove Puppets use the hand of the puppeteer for movement and vitality. This form is popular in Orissa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Mention some of the functions of folkmedia.

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2) Name five popular forms of traditional media in India.

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3) What is Puppetry? What are the different kinds of Puppetry common in India?

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2.4 HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION

Communication skills were in existence probably from the very dawn of human civilisation as it would be impossible to think of life without some form of exchange of ideas and experiences. The earliest form of communication may have been the voice, used to communicate, to shout, to pass

on information and experience across considerable distance. Much of the information at that time was transmitted through use of oral skills. Stories and songs were passed on to successive generations orally. Writing may have begun to evolve when oral communication became insufficient for political governance and control of large numbers of people spread at distant vast geographical areas.

Early Developments

The earliest record of written communication that we have dates back to the cave paintings in Lascaux and Altamira in southern Europe. It is believed that some 35,000 years ago unknown artists painted dramatic murals of bison, reindeer, wild horses and even extinct animals and the men who hunted them. The paintings depict activities related to hunting. Such symbolic depictions probably helped to recall more effectively the stories they wanted to remember and to hand down to the successive generations. Such symbolic representations aided memory and helped easy recall. In the course of time these symbolic representations came to be standardised.

Many such representations on surfaces – pottery, baskets, sticks, cloth, walls, animal skins, bark, stone and even leaves, have come down to us. These contain a rich variety of signs and symbols with drawings and decorative motifs. The primitive people used a variety of means such as tattoos, scars, jewellery, crowns, clothing, to signify rank, status, power, martial status, achievement, occupation and family membership.

Writing

The transition from oral to literature culture must have taken a long period of time. According to some anthropologists, our ancestors began to use rudiments of language to communicate some 300,000 years ago. But it was only in about 4000 BC that some sort of uniformity in representation of ideas came into vogue. Ideas came to be expressed through graphic symbols. Since pictures were used to express thoughts, such pictures are called *pictographic* writing. Since objects drawn refer to ideas, such characters are also called *ideograms*, and the writing, *ideographic*.

The earliest ideographic systems known to us belong to Egyptian, Chinese, the Mayas. One of the difficulties with ideographic writings was the need to know hundreds or thousands of ideograms representing various words. A simpler system was thus developed, to link the graphic symbol not to ideas but to *sounds*. Thus came into vogue *phonograms*. Phonograms are graphic symbols linked to specific sounds by convention or rule among those who speak a particular language. The alphabets are examples of phonograms.

Our phonetic system of writing is believed to have originated in the ancient Sumerian cuneiform writings. The Sumerians hit upon the idea of letting a particular character stand for a sound. The idea was further improved and simplified in the course of time. Further activity in the development of writing can be traced to Egyptian and Greek civilisations. The common media used for writing were stones, *papyrus*, a reed that grew on the banks of Nile. Papyrus was an advanced medium for writing as it could be flattened, stitched together and rolled into scrolls. Another popular material

for writing was the *parchment* (tanned sheepskin) and *vellum*, prepared from the skin of a young calf. The latter two survived longer than papyrus.

The Romans refined the art of writing by improving the alphabets and introducing more durable materials for writing. The majuscule letters, used extensively in Roman monuments, are the capital letters. Their smaller minuscule letterforms, refined under the influence of Charlemagne in the eight century as Carolingian scripts, became the lower case of the present day. The alphabets used in English are derived from these and thus called the Roman script.

When Rome came under a series of invasions, the monks in the monasteries preserved the language and texts by strenuously copying them by hand. Thus we have the word *manuscript* meaning that which is written by hand or '*manu scripti*'. The monasteries became privileged places where libraries developed and manuscripts and books were preserved.

Printing

The invention of printing was preceded by the manufacturing of paper. Paper is believed to have been first invented by Chinese minister Tsai Lum in 105 B.C. The Arabs had paper in 751, but it was brought to Europe via Spain through the Moors in around 1100. The use of paper became so widespread that within a century, paper was being produced in many parts of Europe.

Printing was first invented in China in 846 B.C. The Chinese used wooden plates for printing. A method of printing for decoration and ornaments existed in India already in 200 BC. But it was Johannes Gutenberg, a German goldsmith in Mainz who first invented modern printing using movable types around 1450. The first book printed by him was a portion of the Bible. This book came to be called the *Gutenberg Bible*.

By the end of 1400s, printing spread to various parts of the world. William Caxton, who learnt printing in Germany, set up the first printing press in England in 1476. The first printing press in the Americas was set up in Mexico City in 1539 by Juan Pablo. The first printing press in India was set up at Goa in 1556 by Portuguese Jesuits. The earliest printing presses were set up by Christian missionaries. Printing spread throughout India during the 250 years that followed the introduction of the first press in Goa. Besides the Portuguese, the British, Spanish and Danish helped disseminate the technology of printing.

The advent of printing in India helped the growth of several Indian languages. Languages came to be written with their respective scripts. Grammars and vocabularies developed. Many of the earliest printed books were translations.

Gutenberg's invention brought about a veritable change in the world. As Printing spread throughout the world, languages grew and developed, schools and educational activities received a major thrust. Development in science, philosophy and religion became available to the masses. In short, printing helped preservation and dissemination of knowledge. The development and acceleration of the printing techniques, availability of paper and a growing readership helped the growth of the press.

Books and Newspapers

Today it is impossible to think of life without books. Printing of books and their spread gave an impetus to the growth and preservation of knowledge. Printing of books facilitated the spread of ideas, helped to break down social barriers. It paved the way to create new social relationships, and helped to unleash revolutions, promoted scientific developments and discoveries. Today though many of the functions of books are being carried out through other media, book production continues to flourish as an industry. The book is unlikely to disappear from the world as long as human civilisation exists.

The newspaper was the oldest mass medium. It was the first and the fastest form of communication to reach a mass audience. The first newspaper was printed in Germany in 1609. Within a decade newspapers began to appear from Belgium, the Netherlands and Great Britain. Newspapers continued to remain the fastest mass medium until radio and television appeared on the scene. In terms of speed radio and television have overtaken the newspapers, but the newspapers continue to serve readers with more in-depth analysis of news and features.

The first newspaper in India was started by James Augustus Hickey in 1780. It was called the *Bengal Gazette*. Hickey was arrested and imprisoned and later deported back to England for fearlessly championing the freedom of the press and exposing the corrupt practices of the colonisers. Within six years after Hickey's paper was shut down, several other papers made their appearance from Madras (Madras Courier) and Bombay (The Bombay Herald). The pioneers of Indian language journalism were the missionaries in Serampore. *Samachar Darpan* was the first Indian language periodical. Since then both the English language and vernacular press have grown steadily. The press in India played an important role in the freedom struggle. Some of the leaders of the freedom movement like Tilak, Gandhi etc., were also editors and writers. The press in India has enjoyed considerable freedom (except for brief period during the internal emergency) and has been a powerful instrument in shaping the democratic polity of the country.

Cinema

The history of cinema, or motion picture, as we know today is little over a century old. Motion picture is a series of still pictures projected on screen rapidly to create an impression of movement in the viewer. In fact, the word 'cinema' comes from the Greek word '*kinema*' which means movement. There are three phases in the development of cinema:

- i) recording of images
- ii) arrival of sound
- iii) addition of colour

Several developments preceded the invention of cinema as we know today. First attempts including the invention of photography date back into the middle of the 19th century. George Eastman in 1884 as well as Edison and Dickson were some of the pioneers whose work helped the invention of cinema. It was the Lumiere brothers in Lyon, France, who produced the first film in 1895. The Lumiere brothers used 35-mm film material. The films were silent and were accompanied by musical instruments or oral communications by individual houses. Movies

became 'talkies' with the invention of movies with the synchronised sound. Films had sound tracks by the 1920s.

Many of the early films lasted only a minute or two. Later films of longer duration and with themes and stories that interest people were produced, and films moved out from coffee-houses and saloons to full-fledged theatres. Film industry began to thrive and become a big business.

Cinema came to India in 1896 with an exhibition of the Lumiere Brothers in Bombay. H.S. Bhatvadekar who watched the exhibition, produced the first Indian newsreel, *Return of Wrangler Paranjpe*. Dadasaheb Phalke, a Bombay printer, produced his first film *Rajah Harischandra* in 1913. Phalke went on to produce some 100 other films.

Cinema as a medium of mass communication enjoys great appeal in India. India is among one of the biggest film producing countries in the world. Films have been primarily an entertainment medium in India, but has taken on the role of providing to the masses education and social change. The documentaries also provide information on various national issues. Film is a powerful medium by virtue of its ability to combine elements like sight, sound, motion, drama. It can create impact and effect change. The film medium in India cut across cultural barriers as visuals have universal appeal.

Broadcasting and Radio

Broadcasting refers to the way of transmission of sound and image over larger distances. The telegraph and telephone were important inventions that facilitated later developments in communication technology. Samuel Morse, who invented the telegraph, transmitted coded message using electricity in 1835. A German scientist Heinrich Hertz demonstrated the existence of radio waves. In 1897 Guglielmo Marconi at the age of 22, sent the first wireless message over great distances. Radio was born. It became possible to send messages across large distances.

Within two decades, radio passed out of the experimental stage to emerge as a popular medium of mass communication. Radio became a powerful medium of entertainment and information. It helped to disseminate ideas, played an important role during the wars, and enabled colonial powers to keep in contact with the ships in the sea. Political leaders used radio for broadcast to the nations.

Television

Soon after World War II, radio was surpassed by another, more powerful medium, the television. Experiments in television broadcasting began in the early 1920s. A series of inventions including the picture tube, the electric camera and the TV home receivers followed the next decade. NBC and BBC set up their own television stations in New York and London respectively. The World War II adversely affected the growth of television. By the 60s colour television came into vogue.

Since 1962, with the launching of the first communication satellite, *Early Bird*, the era of satellite communication began. Satellites have made it possible to uplink signals from the ground station to the satellite in space and to downlink signals on the earth again. Uplinking is a process by which

signals from ground stations are beamed to geo-stationary communications satellites. By downlinking these signals can be captured by the home television through cables or dish antennae.

The limitations of broadcast television gave rise to the invention of cable television. Cable TV was a process of distributing the programmes received from the station by wire rather than through air. It is a system through which a master or dish antenna receives electronic signals and distributes them to several homes via cable. Satellite communication has today transformed the world into 'a global village'. Today we have numerous national and regional channels with a wide variety of programmes. Direct to Home (DTH) television, multi-media and home theatres, DVD and VCD etc. have brought about revolutionary changes in the way people use media.

Television in India began in 1959. However, production of TV sets began in India only in the 70s. In 1976, Radio and Television, which operated under one unit, was bifurcated and Doordarshan was formed. In 1967 television was used in India as a mass medium for education through the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) programme.

Television in India has served as a catalyst for change, for promotion of national integration, to stimulate scientific temper among the people, promotion of population control and family welfare, to stimulate agriculture, rural development, environment, promotion of sports and games, promote welfare of the cause of women and children, to inculcate a spirit of nationalism and appreciation for the artistic and cultural heritage of the country.

Uncontrolled use of television poses many dangers as well. Most television programmes in developing countries are imported from the West, especially the United States of America. In the 1970s an estimated 150,000 hours of television programmes was exported annually from the U.S. According to a 1983 study of 69 countries it was found that they imported one third or more of their programmes from other countries. In Africa about 40 to 60 per cent of the TV programmes are imported. This tendency is wrought with serious consequence on culture, worldview and value system. TV has been the major agent for globalisation of culture to the detriment of promoting indigenous cultures.

Television is also an addictive medium that can become the opiate of the people. Educators maintain that television viewing has interfered with the education process. TV has affected many other social activities, such as leisure and recreation, games, music, entertainment, religion etc. The correlation between television programmes portraying violence and real violence in society is being studied by social scientists and communication experts.

Internet

With the aid of telephone and modem two computers situated at a distance can be linked and data can be transferred quickly. Such data transfer system is called Electronic mail (E-mail) and is the basis for Internet. Internet is a global system by which one computer can be connected to another computer for data transfer. The system has been perfected to achieve world connectivity through linking computers via modem. This has facilitated quick transfer of information from one computer terminal to another at a distance. Further advance in the field led to the creation of Web

sites. The web site is a collection of data – text, pictures, sound etc. that can be accessed through the Internet. Today large quantities of information and data are available on various web sites. With a few strokes on the computer keyboard, one can easily access them. Internet access in India was first introduced in 1995 by Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL). Broad Band connectivity, mushrooming of cybercafes etc. are making Internet a very popular medium of communication.

Further Advances in the Field of Communications

Among the several media of communication the one which had far reaching impact on the present day communication revolution is the telephone. Telephone which was only been a medium for the transmission of sound from across distance has now emerged as a major instrument of communication that connects computers or fax machines.

Another major revolution, which is taking place in the field of communication, is with the help of cellular phones. Many advanced research and experiments are currently on to develop sophisticated cellular phones which will improve the communication process.

The advent of digital technology, scanning and digital transmission of pictures have radically changed even the newspaper industry.

As the information technology is resulting in new ways to speed up the process of communication, we are also becoming more conscious of the inter-relatedness of various forms of media. For instance, now it is difficult to speak of the distinction between print and electronic media as two separate entities as printing itself is very much depend on many of the electronic inventions. Telephone, television, satellites and computers and other technological inventions have been perfected in a new relationship to provide us the “information superhighway” which has revolutionised communication.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- 1) Who invented modern printing? Mention how printing helped in the development of communication.

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- 2) List some of the merits of television in the Indian context. Mention two ill effects of television.

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3) What is internet? How does it help communication?

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2.5 CHOICE OF MEDIUM

The various communication media, traditional as well as modern, have distinct features, advantages and disadvantages. Their effectiveness depends on several factors. Their comparative merits and demerits tell us of their complimentary.

The choice of a particular medium for communicating a particular message for specific audience should be done carefully and after taking into consideration factors like the message, availability of the medium, and the characteristics of the audience or the receivers. Participation and feedback are essential to make communication effective.

In communicating certain messages, ideas, social themes, one should not arbitrarily chose any medium at random. The choice of the medium must be done carefully and in consonance with the purpose, goals and objectives, the characteristics of the audience, their background, literacy level, economic or social status, age, education, familiarity with the medium etc. The following list presents some of the possible advantages and disadvantages of various media. As we have already dealt with the traditional media at length, we have not included them in this section.

Medium	Advantages
Print Media	Inexpensive material, paper, ink Simple and rapid production process One person can complete quickly Many ways to approach the subject. A wide range of illustrative possibilities. Controlled distribution. Long life – always available for reference
Magazines	Select, targeted, frequently affluent audience Imaginative use of colour and visuals Prestigious, slick, more likely to be preserved Passed along from one to another, so more people read

Newspapers Geographically focused
 Relatively low cost and reach all income groups
 Short deadline, more current (dailies, weeklies)
 Contents are discussed and shared
 Enjoy credibility and mass appeal

Pamphlets and Brochures Can be directed to selected audience
 Messages can be communicated in detail
 Available for future reference
 Many possible formats and colours
 Attractive presentation and careful distribution

Direct Mail Highly selective of audience
 Messages can be personalized
 Easy to provide means for reader action
 No direct competition with other advertisers

Medium **Disadvantages**

Print Static, linear
 Can be familiar medium with negative associations
 Impersonal format, hard to enliven
 Difficult and expensive to distribute
 May be discarded after use

Magazines Deadlines may be far in advance and so not timely
 Market may not be local
 Distribution costs and difficulties

Newspapers Short message life
 High cost for timely coverage
 Message often sensationalised

Pamphlets and Brochures Production deadlines are long and printing late
 Printing and production are expensive
 Difficult to measure effectiveness

Direct Mail Unpopular as junk mails abound
 Difficult to maintain latest mailing list
 Expensive and time consuming
 Postage is expensive
 Difficult to measure results

Medium **Advantages**

Broadcast High quality production
 Always large audience
 Enjoys credibility and is impressive
 Has rich visual potential
 Has intimate access to people, their homes

Videotape

- Creative, artistic and has communication potential
- Easy to learn and use
- Novel, exciting medium
- Inexpensive compared to broadcast
- Production involves people in groups or teams
- Equipment is portable
- Tape is reusable, inexpensive
- Allows instant playback

Radio

- Inexpensive
- Possible to have creative use of music and effects
- Low cost, accessible, portable
- More popularly used as a rural medium than TV
- Can be used by groups and individuals
- Selectivity of audience possible
- Easy to adapt, edit, alter copy, update
- Has great creative access to imagination

Film

- Large audience potential
- Powerful creative art form
- Playback equipment relatively inexpensive and available
- Involves many people in production process
- Has both audio and visual advantages.

Slide/Audio Tape

- Inexpensive to produce
- Can be used with large or small group
- Can be easily revised, edited, adapted
- Equipment available easily
- Familiar medium: anyone can use anywhere
- Involves many people
- Communicates to a specific audience
- Effective to entertain and convey ideas, messages
- Can be used with commentary, narration and adaptable
- Effective for use in classroom, lectures, rural settings.

Medium

Broadcast

TV

Disadvantages

- Indiscriminate audience
- Excessive time consumption and expensive
- Purchasing air time is expensive, difficult to get access
- Public service facilities declining
- More commercialized
- Future referral to the message is difficult
- Messages limited by short segments
- Commercial interruptions and context affect programme

Videotape

Still somewhat expensive,
Playback limited to smaller groups
Broadcast quality calls for further investment
Lack of compatible hardware, format, equipment
Electronic technology unavailable to many in rural areas

Radio

Needs quiet surroundings
Lacks visual message
Hard to reach all due to irregular listening habits
Radio is listened as background so may be listened only marginally, without due attention
Message limited by short segments
Difficult to refer back to the message
Audience is too vague, broad and unspecified

Film

Expensive to produce and duplicate
Long time for the production process
Formal, final quality with less involvement of feedback
Hard to edit or change
Short life, fragile format
Audience unspecified and broad.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Mention at least one advantage each of the following media: Print, Film, and Direct Mail.

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2) Give at least one disadvantage of the following media: Radio, Pamphlets/ Brochures, and Magazines

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2.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have studied the various traditional media of communication and their impact on society, especially on the rural masses in the context of India. As we have seen there are innumerable folk media which are used in the various states of the country to convey meanings, to tell stories, to disseminate information related to social conduct, religious values and cultural traditions. We have also studied the way communication has evolved over the centuries to the present day. We live in a media world or ‘global village’ where information is available at our fingertips, thanks to the advancement in technology. When we see the tremendous progress that science and technology have facilitated in the field of communication in the course of a century, it is difficult to predict the future in terms of what is in store for us in this field in the years to come. What has remained unchanged, however, is the innate human need for communication. This need has helped in evolving newer media of communication. The process is bound to go on as the history of humankind progresses.

We have examined the comparative advantages and disadvantages of various modern means of communication. There is no one perfect medium for effective communication which combines all the positive elements of communication. What we need to bear in mind is the complementarity of the various media: traditional as well as modern.

2.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

Subir, Ghosh (1996), *Mass Communication Today in the Indian Context*, Profile Publishers: Calcutta.

Pradip, Kumar Dey (1993), *Perspectives in Mass Communication*, Kalyani Publishers: New Delhi.

Keval, J. Kumar (1981), *Mass Communication in India*, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay.

Desmond, A.D’Abreo (1994), *The Mass Media and You*, Better Yourself Books, Bombay.

Melvin, L. DeFluer/ Everette, Dennis (1991), *Understanding Mass Communication*, Goylsaab Publishers: Delhi.

2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Culture refers to a way of life. Cultural facts include: speech, art, mythology, knowledge, religious practices, family, social systems and government. Communication is the mode of transferring cultural fact. Hence it has a direct communication dimension. Communication is necessary for the preservation, maintenance and development of culture.
- 2) Folk media refer to 'various means of communications available to the rural and tribal people'. It is variously termed 'traditional media', 'indigenous communication system', 'alternative media', 'group media', 'low cost media' etc. its characteristics include:
 - i) Participation by all the people of a cultural group or area
 - ii) Inexpensive and need only material available locally
 - iii) They are based on the average skill of the group. Skill is acquired without elaborate formal training.
 - iv) As they are participatory, there is no qualitative or quantitative criterion for participation.
 - v) They depend on people for dissemination, and so largely controlled by the people themselves.
 - vi) They are non-commercial. As money is not involved no copyright system is followed.
 - vii) They are largely anonymous.
 - Viii) They are adapted and recreated to suit the particular occasion, audience.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Folk media used by various cultures serve several functions such as:
 - imparting social/community value
 - providing teaching and initiation
 - transmitting traditional values
 - preserving religious bond
 - providing legal code, norms of conduct
 - transmitting stories, parables, proverbs
 - mobilizing people for common action: defense, agricultural activities
 - preserving social bond and cohesiveness.
- 2) Tamasha, Katha, Jatra, Nautanki, Kawaki.

- 3) Puppetry is a folk art used to relate myth and legend. Puppetry originated as a cult observance. There are four different kinds of puppetry common in India. They are Sutradharika, Rod Puppets, Shadow Puppets and Hand Puppets.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) Johannes Gutenberg was the first to invent printing using movable types. His invention changed the world. As a result of printing, languages grew and developed, schools and educational activities received a major thrust. Development in science, philosophy and religion became available to the masses. In short, printing helped preservation and dissemination of knowledge.
- 2) Television in India has helped to promote national integration, to stimulate scientific temper among the people, promotion of population control and family welfare, to stimulate agriculture, rural development, environment, promotion of sports and games, promote welfare of the cause of women and children, to inculcate a spirit of nationalism and appreciation for the artistic and cultural heritage of the country. Television can be addictive and can affect education and other activities. It can adversely affect the culture, worldview and value system of people.
- 3) Internet is a global system by which one computer can be connected to another computer for data transfer using telephone and modem. Internet has facilitated quick transfer of information from one computer terminal to another at a distance.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) Print media: Print material has long life.
Direct Mail: Message can be personalized.
Film: powerful, creative art form.
- 2) Radio: Lacks visual message
Pamphlets/Brochures: Difficult to measure effectiveness
Magazines: Deadlines may be far in advance and so not timely.

UNIT 3 INTERPERSONAL, GROUP AND MASS COMMUNICATION

* Prof. George Plathottam

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Interpersonal Communication
- 3.3 Group Communication
- 3.4 Mass Communication
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Suggested Readings
- 3.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we aim at understanding communication from the three perspectives of interpersonal, group and mass communication levels.

The unit presents various skills required to communicate at interpersonal level such as speech, listening, use of language etc. In group communication, we aim at enabling the students to be familiar with the group process, conducting group meetings and leadership qualities for effective group communication. In the final section on mass communication, we study the elements of mass communication, the constituent factors: SMCR, and the functions of mass communication in the life of individuals and society. The aim of the entire unit is to help students develop practical skills in using group media effectively as well as to critically analyse the way mass communication media affect society.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is broadly divided into three categories: Interpersonal, Group and Mass Communication. In this section, we shall briefly try to understand what each of these types of communication mean and how we can use them effectively.

3.2 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

What is of Interpersonal Communication?

* Prof. George Plathottam, NEHU, Shillong

Interpersonal communication is communication between two persons or between one person and a group. When communication takes place between two persons it is called Dyadic communication. Interpersonal communication is direct and not mediated by media technology. Interpersonal communication is needed for the maintenance and development of personal relationships as well as social systems. It is difficult to think of any social group functioning as a unit or group without interpersonal communication. A community or group is not merely an assortment of individuals, but a cohesive unit. It gets a sense of unity and identity as a result of communication. Relationships are created and maintained by interpersonal communication.

Basic Elements in Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication may be verbal or non-verbal. In this process, both the sender and receiver are aware of the process of interaction by which messages are sent and received. We may identify two kinds of interpersonal communication —transaction and interaction. By transaction we mean *private talk* between friends, family members, lovers etc. This kind of communication is more informal and do not need to conform to public or social rules. In interaction, on the other hand, people relate to each other within the framework of certain established norms and rules of behaviour. These include social etiquette, religious or social norms that govern conduct, speech etc. Most relationships begin with interaction and move on to the level of transaction.

In interpersonal communication the process of sending and receiving takes places almost simultaneously, so much so it is not always easy to say when a person is sending or when one is receiving a message. For instance, the one who is talking to another individual or a group besides sending messages, searches for the reaction of his audience. He adjusts the message according to the feedback he is getting from his listeners. If the listener is seen to be bored or disinterested, the speaker may skip some portions of what he wants to say, or change topics or stop speaking altogether.

The one who communicates must constantly adjust his or her message according to the reactions of the listeners—attention, ability to grasp, approval. He or she must constantly monitor the facial expressions, gestures, sounds etc. of his audience. In interpersonal communication, there is constant interaction and both the parties speak or communicate. The interpersonal communication process is flexible. For instance, a grandmother who tells tales or sings lullabies to put a child to sleep. The grandmother stops the story or the song even before it is completed, if she sees the child has already fallen asleep.

We receive most of the information about ourselves and other people through interpersonal communication. The amount of information we receive and its value will depend on the degree of our willingness to enter into communication with others and our willingness to share information with them. Interpersonal communication involves choices. It calls for making decisions. We can communicate or chose to ignore persons or groups we encounter.

For instance, in travelling in a railway compartment, we may be in the midst of strangers. We may travel a long distance without any communication, or we may strike up a conversation, and then begin to build relationships by means of interpersonal communication. Many of our acquaintances

and friends are the result of efforts we have made or willingness we have shown in order to enter into interpersonal communication.

Interpersonal communication calls for skills in order to interact effectively with others. Knowledge of social norms and behaviour and etiquette, ability and willingness to listen, concern and respect for one another, willingness to share about oneself etc. are also important components which make for successful interpersonal communication.

Barriers to Interpersonal Communication

There can be several barriers that block interpersonal communication. These include social or cultural prejudices, superiority- inferiority complexes that affect people because of religious affiliation, cultural notions about oneself, economic status, ethnic identity. In India the caste system and caste hierarchy can prevent effective interpersonal communication between people belonging to different caste categories. Even though such barriers block effective communication, interpersonal communication can be used as an effective means to overcome social differences.

Cultural biases constitute another barrier in interpersonal communication.

The idea of racial superiority promoted by Hitler led to the killing of millions of Jews.

Social barriers include prejudices against women, discrimination against the socially marginalized, the economically disadvantaged etc.

Barriers in communication include also communication gap due to differences of age, mentality, and attitudes; lack of communication between married partners, members of a family etc. These can lead to boredom, frustration, loneliness, dejection and other personality complexes. Failure to interact effectively at the interpersonal level leads a person to be withdrawn, cut off from society. More aggressive forms of such maladjustment can even lead to violent behaviour, suicide etc.

Success in interpersonal communication would mean overcoming these and other barriers. It involves both partners in the process.

Inability to communicate effectively on the interpersonal level is the root cause of many social and family disorders.

Effective interpersonal relationship can build a family and community, build up social cohesion. Effective social communication equips individuals and groups with what David Riseman refers to as “internal radar”: which enables one to adopt and adjoin oneself to fit into society.

Merits of Interpersonal Communication

One of the benefits of interpersonal communication is that it establishes and sustains our social moorings. When people communicate with each other effectively, they find others with whom they can associate. They develop identities, such as friends, lovers, colleagues, bosses, neighbours, family members.

- Interpersonal communication helps people fit into society and receive acceptance, thus get rid off loneliness and boredom.
- It assists in accomplishing one's goals with others. Interpersonal communication may serve as the ground for cooperation and collaboration in achieving what we want our goals.
- It helps people to identify and follow rules of social interaction.

Our society is governed by rules. Violation of rules or our inability to follow social norms may lead to rejection and isolation.

Interpersonal communication calls for skills. Skills can be acquired or learned. The ability to acquire skills and to become proficient in their use depends on several factors such as:

- Drives and needs, rewards and reinforcement,
- Perceptive and cognitive faculties, aptitudes, attitudes and environment,
- Personality of the individual: Psychological, Biological factors,
- Sociological factors,
- Learning abilities of the individual motivation and willingness to learn.

Interpersonal Communication Skills

Speech, Language

Though the origin of human speech remains obscure, with reasonable certainty we can assume that human beings were born with an instinct of speech. Vocal communication has been a significant step in the history of human civilization. The development of language, through its primitive form and over several centuries, contributed substantially to enhance the process of interpersonal communication.

In order to use communication effectively, one needs to have effective speaking skills. Oratory or rhetoric, mastery of language and effective use of vocabulary, which form important elements in communication, can be acquired by learning and perfected by practice.

Body Language: In some cultures people use their hands and face a lot to convey messages. The body language or gestures are important in order to keep the attention of the receiver. A magician or puppeteer or a clown in a circus shows how body language is an important component in effective interpersonal communication.

Identification with people, empathy and understanding: Interpersonal communication can become a very creative form of reaching out to others by bringing comfort to people, alleviating their sorrow or sufferings, helping them to overcome loneliness and boredom. The counsellors, religious leaders, relief workers and sometimes media persons who visit people in adverse circumstances as in an accident or natural disaster do this.

Listening

Interpersonal communication involves two or more individuals and it provides a congenial atmosphere for communication. It should be two way, interactive, and mutual. Listening is an essential element of such communication. Though listening is an important element in communication, this skill is often neglected in training programmes in communication skills.

Listening skills can be developed by means of training.

Listening is more than just hearing the words of the speaker, but trying to grasp the meaning. Meanings are constructed by the listener, and this calls for paying attention to factors like: gestures, facial expression, silences or pauses, voice modulation etc.

Listening can improve the performance of families, industry, business etc. In a company where the supervisors and managers are poor listeners, there can be many problems. Effective listening can reduce tension, conflict, and improve the morale and motivation of the staff.

Interpersonal Communication is Participatory

Interpersonal communication is participatory. The chances of communication breakdown are much less as the communication partners are face to face and the words and symbols are picked up and interpreted in the presence of each other. The feedback is instantaneous as expressed in the form of body language or verbal assent or dissent.

Subir Ghosh narrates how in the days before microphones came into use, Gandhiji addressed vast multitudes in open spaces where the people in the front conveyed his words to those sitting or standing behind them. Gandhiji chose his words and timed them so as to help this process. It was extremely effective because it involved receivers of the message in the act of communication.

In spite of the rapid progress in the information and communication technology (ICT), the most powerful and persuasive, the most effective means of communication continues to be the one in which an individual speaking to another. Recent developments in teleconferencing and electronic chat or widespread use of mobile and cellular phones are only limited expressions of the warm, intimate, personal communication.

Interpersonal communication can also be used to build cooperation and resolve conflicts. Many of the social conflicts today can be traced back to poor knowledge of others – be they members of a family, religious group, political party or other social organisation. Conflict resolution and promotion of peace can be made effective through interpersonal communication. In international relations and global efforts to resolve conflicts between nations, the process of interpersonal communication is being used effectively today. Persons representing the governments or the countries or other organisations, need good communication skills in bringing about the desired results.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is interpersonal communication?

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2) Mention some of the merits of interpersonal communication.

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3) What are the barriers to interpersonal communication?

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4) How is listening important in interpersonal communication?

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3.3 GROUP COMMUNICATION

What is Group?

A group is a form of social organisation composed of a number of individuals identifiable by their physical proximity within recognizable 'boundaries'. An individual may belong to more than one group simultaneously. Since the large majority of us do not live alone, we consequently live in groups – all kinds of groups. (Robert Bierstedt). We have friends, acquaintances, we live in a particular place, and we have a distinct address. We have biological differences like being male or female, young or old. Our educational background, profession, economic status, religious affiliation etc. distinguish us and make us belong to one or more groups at the same time.

According to Baker, a group is a number of people who have a common goal, interact with one another to attain the goal, recognize one another's existence, and see themselves as part of the group.

Kinds of Groups

Groups are divided into *Primary* and *Secondary* Groups. According to Charles Horton Cooley, primary groups are those which are composed of individuals with intimate, personal relations and who interact face to face, figuratively and not literally. It is the degree of intimacy or social distance rather than physical distance that determines the primary group. The family is considered a primary group. Other examples of primary group are: play groups, kinship groups, labour groups, clan etc.

Secondary groups are all those in which individuals have formal, impersonal and status relations. All other groups, which are not primary, are considered secondary. In secondary groups, emotional affinity and personal involvement are less. They have goal oriented relationship rather than person related relationships. Political parties, associations, labour unions, religious groups etc. are considered secondary group.

Every individual is a member of primary as well as secondary group at one and same time.

Groups may be:

Statistical: According to demographic arrangements.

Societal: Composed of people who have a common consciousness of kind who are aware of the similarity or identity of the traits or characteristics that they all possess.

Social: Those in which people are actually associated with one another and have social relations with one another.

Associational groups: Members of various associations organised into groups having a formal structure. People who are conscious of common interests, who have joined together in order to pursue those interests.

Group communication is interpersonal communication by *genre*, but differs from it in form. In group communication the partners interact face to face. The persons in the group may belong to

homogenous or heterogeneous group depending on their social context. Group communication can take place at formal and informal levels.

Characteristics of Group in Relation to Individual

There are several factors that characterize an individual's relation to the group. These include:

- 1) **Membership:** One of the ways of belonging to a group is through membership. Membership may have different implications: duties, privileges, benefits etc.
- 2) **Dependence:** Membership in a group may make a person dependent on the group for many of his needs. Members of a labour union depend on the group to improve their economic condition. Members of a political party may have thoughts of attaining power.
- 3) **Acceptance, attraction:** Individuals join groups to get a sense of acceptance. They are attracted to a particular group because they feel attracted to it due to the manner in which the members behave and interact with one another: sense of belonging, acceptance, job satisfaction, sense of fulfillment etc.
- 4) **Volition:** A member may belong to a group on a voluntary basis (as in the case of sports' clubs etc.) or may be innate (by birth) as in the case of citizenship, caste, religion etc. Even if they are imposed, one can exercise certain amount of freedom to break out of the group.
- 5) **Pressure of groups on individuals:** The groups apply pressure on individuals to belong to and to conform to certain standards of the group. Though they may impose certain restrictions on the individual's way of behaviour, he or she can also expect certain benefits. Thus the group and the individual mutually benefit from such conformity.
- 6) **Change and flexibility:** No group is rigid and static. All human groups undergo change. There is flexibility in the manner in which the group functions. Change and flexibility, however, are not arbitrarily imposed, but are evolved as a result of communication.
- 7) **Leadership:** The way the group exists and functions will very much depend on the kind of leadership it has.

The Role and Function of Leader in Group Communication

Leadership is explained a process by which activities of the group are coordinated, members are motivated and certain tasks are accomplished. The leader may exercise power or position to enforce these or persuade the compliance from the members. The role of a leader is pivotal in the functioning of a group, setting up goals, attaining them, improving the quality of communication and interaction among the members, building cohesiveness of the group.

The leader leads the group in *task oriented roles* which include:

— Initiation of discussion

- Giving and receiving information
- Elaboration and clarification
- Orientation and summarization
- Tests of consensus

A leader also exercises *maintenance roles* such as:

- harmonizing
- compromising
- supporting and encouraging
- gate keeping
- standard setting and testing

Characteristics of a Leader

A leader is described as “one who knows the way, shows the way and goes the way.”

Leaders should also have:

- A good grasp of the problem; they should be well informed and be able to analyze issues; have capacity for problem solving.
- **Familiarity:** They are familiar with the group, its members, background.
- **Openness:** Leaders should be able to encourage and support; they must be free from prejudice, and be open to ideas and opinions of others.
- **Communication skills:** They should possess good command of the language, ability to articulate ideas in writing and in speech, have public speaking skills, capacity to listen etc.
- **Team spirit:** An effective leader is basically a team-person with the capacity to get the whole group or at least a majority to move in certain direction in order to attain the goals set before it.
- Other attributes for leaders include, intelligence, energy, endurance, social status, wealth, innovativeness, creativity.

Styles of Leadership

Democratic: Democratic leaders follow the norms of participatory guidance and work towards consensus and shared goals. They avoid use of force or power. They promote communication among members, encourage freedom of expression, creativity and initiative.

Authoritarian: Authoritarian leaders have strong goals and they guide the group members to get to the goal disregarding the individual views. They may have efficiency but conflicts are likely to arise in such leadership.

Laissez-faire: Do not direct the group effectively, but often function as observers and recorders. Laissez-faire leaders make themselves available for advice and consultation, serve as a reference point, and will not interfere in the working of the group. This kind of leadership is useful when all the members are committed, creative and mature to work towards the goal.

Communication and Groups

Group communication situations are quite common in day to day life. The home, the school, the temple or church, the work place, the playground, the community centre, the club and the street gang are all situations where group communications take place.

The degree of formality governing the 'jurisdiction' of the participants in group communication activity differs according to the context. The degree of formality increases in proportion to the formality of the organisation. Thus, the context of communication in a family will be different from that of a professional group like that of lawyers, chartered accountants, captains of industry etc.

Besides the context, group communication is influenced by several heterogeneous factors like age, sex, education, economic, social, linguistic, religious, national, regional, racial differences.

The careful balance of interaction in dyad no longer exists in group communication. Participation in this communication includes more than two persons. There may be special functions and roles assigned to individuals in the group which creates unequal potential for receiving and transmitting information. In a group one person may be the source of information, others receivers or distributors of the information.

The extent of participation of individuals decreases in proportion to the increase in the number of individuals in the group. In other words, the larger the group, the less personal and direct is the exchange. The level of mutual understanding becomes lesser as the size of the group becomes larger.

According to Baker, the best size in terms total interaction and greatest efficiency is somewhere between five and seven members. Each person influences and is influenced in turn by the communication. Small groups tend to be more informal, less structured and more participatory. If the group is too large, there can be monopoly by one or two individuals. Participation may be replaced by domination and control. The degree of directness, spontaneity and intimacy may be lost. These affect the free and frank sharing of ideas and exchange of views.

Some of our best and most enjoyable time is spent in communicating with groups: family groups, social group, learning groups, and work groups. In order to get the best results from a group, the goals must be clear, and all must be willing to achieve the goals. The aim of a social group may

be to have some good time together while that of a working group may be to accomplish some result oriented tasks.

Participation and sharing of information is central to the functioning of a group. Communication in its root meaning refers to 'commonness' and the group which succeeds best is the group that has greatest degree of commonness.

Communication in an Informal Group

Communication in an informal group may be marked by the following:

- 1) It attempts to achieve cohesion among members
- 2) Emergence of group norms. According to Denis McQuail, the more people are in communication with each other in group situations, the more likely are shared norms to develop.
- 3) Pressure from the group to conform to the norms and standards the group sets for itself.
- 4) Physical constraint on diversity and frequencies of communication which varies in relation to the size of the group (the larger the group, the greater the physical constraint).
- 5) Internal differences according to status and mutual regard which can give rise to cliques and coteries which may throw up leadership.

Group Discussion and Communication

Group meetings and discussions have become part and parcel of seminars and conferences. They are used to increase participation by which everyone is involved in the process of evolving ideas and plans, planning activities or problem solving. When a group discussion is conducted effectively, a variety of points of view emerge. In general people prefer the democratic and participatory process of decision making and governance. People tend to accept more easily a decision taken by a committee or a group rather than one individual. Individuals accept more easily decisions arrived at through a process in which they have participated.

The process may be time consuming and expensive. The process of arriving at a decision may necessitate several sessions, much time as well as cost.

A discussion may be conducted in various ways depending on the purpose and the participants.

Committee

A committee may be a small group appointed for a purpose and is expected to study a problem, collect facts, make decisions, report to the general assembly, propose recommendations, effect changes etc. as the mandate given to it may indicate. A committee may be appointed for a short period of time to investigate or study a particular problem. (the government sets up committees to study corruption charges, crime, accidents etc.) Committees appointed or elected to govern or oversee the functioning of organisations may be given stipulated period of time, one year or more. (managing committee of a school, the parliamentary committee for revision of salaries, the

constitutional review committee etc.) A committee is normally headed by a chairperson or a president.

Conference

A conference is a much larger group than a committee. Hence it is also more formal. A conference may affect a wide variety of people and cover issues of importance to the participants. A conference may last longer than a meeting. It may have experts to present papers, guide discussions and propose suggestions. If the number of participants are too large to have proper interaction, sessions or discussions may be held in smaller groups.

Group Meetings

One can master the basic skills and techniques for organising a meeting and conducting a group discussion. Those who are inexperienced should begin with small groups.

The Composition of the Group

The composition of the group and the ability of individuals in the group are the most important factors that determine the quality of communication in the group. The members should have some kind of common objectives, homogeneity in terms of the issues discussed. However, the group should have a good representation of the various sections of society or audience which is concerned with the issue. The group should also be briefed ahead of time about the agenda of the meeting, the objectives and the goals to be achieved.

Chairperson of the Meeting

The chairperson of the meeting or the group leader has certain responsibilities towards the group. He or she should have a good and clam temperament and skills and knowledge to conduct a meeting well. We list below some of the qualities that he or she should have:

- Encourage discussion and ensure everyone is invited to share his/her views and opinions.
- When a member wish to disagree, it should be done without offense.
- Create an atmosphere where each one can express himself/herself freely, audibly, concisely.
- The chairperson must make sure that everyone pays attention and that order and decorum is maintained while someone is speaking.
- Ensure brevity and conciseness.
- Time management is a skill the group leader ought to master. The sessions should not be unduly long. If the issues being discussed require more time, a break could be taken. If required, another meeting could be fixed. It is better to get a consensus of the group members for taking such decisions.

The leader of the group or chair person should, in other words:

- Promote informality in the group.
- Display calm and patience even when things may go out of control.
- Invite members to listen to the views of others.
- Restrain from commenting on what each one has said or add one's views too frequently.
- Avoid taking sides or indicating in any way that you are partial.
- Praise and comment everyone, especially the timid, the less forthcoming persons.
 - It is the duty of the leader to see that the group do not deviate from the main topic. However, some warming up exercises or informal interaction may be allowed, especially at the beginning, in order to help build better intimacy and a climate of sharing.
 - The leader or someone else should write down the minutes of the proceedings especially the important ideas discussed.
- Before the meeting is wound up, it is good to summarize the main points discussed, and the chairperson could briefly address the group.

If the meetings are a routine event, it is customary to start the meeting with the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting and approving it. If there are communications to be made, it could be done at the beginning of the session or at the end.

Physical Arrangements

The physical setting for the meeting is important to ensure effective participation. The setting may vary according to the number of participants and the nature of the meeting. In a large conference or meeting the members may be seated as in an auditorium. Even if each member is given a mike to speak, such meetings tend to become formal and the statements each one makes become isolated. Though the setting may be useful for a formal session, it is less suited to an informal discussion. There is little face to face communication or eye contact.

Hence, in order to have effective participation, the seating should be circular rather than linear. When the members sit in a circle, it enables them to have better eye contact and follow the body language and can listen to the views more effectively. Round tables, movable chairs arranged in a circular way with the possibility of movement is the best. The room should have good ventilation, lighting etc.

Visual Aids

A group meeting can be made more alive with the help of visual aids like writing boards, overhead projects or slide projectors, LCD projectors, charts, maps, diagrams, figures etc. if they can contribute to better discussion.

Concluding a Meeting

The leader of the meeting should be able to summarize the major points of discussion, conclusions arrived at, if any. He or she should thank the group members for their presence and active participation.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is a group according to Baker?

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2) What are the kinds of leadership? Which one would you prefer?

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3) Suggest three requirements to conduct a group meeting successfully.

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3.4 MASS COMMUNICATION

Definition

Mass communication may be defined as the spreading of a message to an extended mass audience through rapid means of reproduction and distribution at a relatively inexpensive way to the consumers.

In mass communication the message is transported from its original source to a large and widespread audience or receivers by means of such intermediary channels such as newspapers and books, radio, television, cinema, Internet etc.

Mass communication according to Emery means “delivering information, ideas and attitudes to a sizeable and diversified audience through the use of media developed for that purpose.”

Elements of Mass Communication

Mass communication has the following elements:

- relatively large audience (masses)
- fairly undifferentiated audience composition
- same form of message reproduction
- rapid distribution and delivery
- low unit cost to the recipients/customers
- uses technology: print, electricity, electronics, satellites
- Is transmitted or distributed across geographically distant areas and dispersed audience.

Mass communication lacks many of the advantages of interpersonal and group communications like individual attention, face to face interaction, eye contact, instant feedback etc. Mass communication, by its nature, is impersonal.

SMCR

We have discussed in the previous units about the four important constituents of communication, namely: Source, Message, Channel, and Receiver (SMCR).

In mass communication these elements assume important roles and functions.

The Source may be an individual like the nationwide address of the President, or an institution or a media organisation like a newspaper firm or a television station.

The message is determined by the kind of media used for transmission or distribution. A newspaper report of an event is quite different from the same event presented on television or radio. Though in essence the message remains the same, each medium of mass communication has its own specifications.

The Channel assumes great importance in mass communication. Though channels are instruments of mass communication, often they are mistakenly considered to be the phenomenon of communication itself. The modern media like newspapers, radio, television, etc. which constitute the channel multiply the message and make it reach a vast audience at an enormous speed. The ability of mass media to overcome the limitations of time and space made Marshall McLuhan describe the world today as the “Global Village.”

Channel is broadly divided into: Print media and Electronic media. However, with the application of electronics to printing, and the rapid distribution of news, using satellites and internet have narrowed down the distinction between print and electronic media.

Receiver is the mass audience with certain common characteristics such as common interest and needs, but unknown or impersonal with little interaction among themselves. The great advantage of mass media is their ability to reach vast number of receivers with the message within a short time. Their great disadvantage is the inability to know the effects of the same communication and to check the response or to collect feedback.

Functions of Mass Communication

Mass communication media are interlaced with the very fabric of our lives that it is not easy to identify the functions they have for each person. In order to understand how media functions in society, we must observe carefully how and why people read newspapers, watch television, listen to radio or go to the movies. Though we may be able to collate various common functions among the audience, we will also discover how people use media for a variety of functions. This is called the “Functions Approach.”

In analyzing the functions of mass communication, our study should not be limited to what people do with media, but what media do to the people: how they affect opinions and attitudes, culture, habits etc. This is called the “Effect Approach”. Social scientists are concerned with both the processes

One of the first scholars to call attention to the social functions of communication was Harold Lasswell. He first considered these functions in terms of categories found in any society. He identified three type functions common to any society.

1) Surveillance of the Environment

Media serve as watchman. Some use the word ‘informer’. Mass media serve as the ears, eyes and voice of the audience. We accept their reports and use them as a basis for shaping our thoughts, attitudes and actions. For instance, the advertisements make known to us the new products. They help the customer to make purchasing decisions.

At an individual level, the surveillance of the environment function of media increase personal esteem, provide base for social interaction, provide knowledge and information, confers social status and prestige.

2) Correlation

The second function mass communication serves for the society according to Lasswell, is correlating the response of the whole society to the environment – that is developing public opinion. Communication helps to create consensus in a society on key issues. An informed or enlightened opinion is essential for a healthy democracy.

3) **Transmission of Social Inheritance**

Today media have assumed the functions of transmitting social inheritance, which was done by parents, teachers and other elders. Media today provide main frames of reference to society. Urbanization, relative anonymity, social uprootings, and the shift from traditional social organisations like joint family, clan have increased the role of media as transmitters of knowledge and values. Mass media have today become essential to carry out functions of socialization and transmission of social heritage.

4) **Dysfunctions Associated with Mass Communication**

Lasswell recognized that mass communication can be dysfunctional or harmful as well as functional for a society. A ruling class or governments that fears public opinion or is autocratic can withhold information and even mislead the people through misinformation, false propaganda. Dysfunction may also be due to inability to use the mass communication media skillfully or to process information effectively.

People use media for a variety of purposes. We list some of the functions served by mass communication media:

- to persuade people to act in certain ways
- to satisfy the need for information
- to get entertainment
- for escape (cinema as canned dreams)
- release of tension and boredom (*Catharsis* of Aristotle)
- security and reassurance
- companionship
- social interaction, status
- social change and transformation
- to understand how the political system and the govt. work
- to maintain stability
- to maintain status quo
- to enforce social norms
- to service political system

- to service economic system
- to facilitate social cohesion
- to interpret society to itself.

Mass media serve many functions for our society. In a sense they are like the contemporary manifestations of the family or the tribe. Mass communication has forged new relationships and new identities for individuals as well as society. Media, in good part, determine today, who and what is important. No social system today can ignore mass communication media, which have powerful sway over society, especially the urban society. The functions of media extend to every segment of society: politics and government, economic activity, business and industry. Advertisements stimulate desires, create new needs as well as standardize goods and services. The entertainment media reinterpret the values and norms of society.

Mass media have entered human life in such a way that today it is nearly impossible to think of life without them. However, it may be noted that the functions of media exist not primarily because of what the media are or do, but rather because of the way we and the our society use them.

3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have studied the three different kinds of communication: namely, Interpersonal, Group and Mass Communication. Though we live a highly sophisticated mass mediated world where the speed of communication has increased in a mind-boggling way, the basic principles of human interaction continue to be more or less unchanged. Though the mass media give the impression of being the most dominant communicator, experience tells that most of our day to day communication takes place when we interact with one another at a personal level. Hence, we can trace the roots of mass communication and group communication to the interpersonal communication. As we are exposed to the inescapable reality of the information age, we need to view the three types of communication we have described as complimentary and not as something opposed to each other. We also need to be constantly alert and sensitive in order to ensure that the functions we want media to carry out for us and the way they influence us are to our well - being. It is for us to decide whether we should be the masters or slaves of the mass communication media.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) List three elements of Mass Communication.

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2) List five functions of mass communication.

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3) What is the difference between “Media Functions” and “Media Effects?”

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4) Who coined the expression “Global Village”? What does it mean?

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3.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Interpersonal communication is communication between two persons or between one person and a group. When communication is between two persons it is called *Dyadic* communication. Interpersonal communication is direct and not mediated by media technology.
- 2) Interpersonal communication helps develop identities, such as friends, lovers, colleagues, bosses, neighbours, family members. It helps people fit into society and receive acceptance, thus get rid of loneliness and boredom. It assists in accomplishing one's goals with others. Interpersonal communication may serve as the ground for cooperation and collaboration in achieving what we want, our goals. It helps people to identify and follow rules of social interaction.
- 3) Barriers that block interpersonal communication include social or cultural prejudices, superiority-inferiority complexes that affect people because of religious affiliation, cultural notions about oneself, economic status, ethnic identity. In India the caste system and caste hierarchy can prevent effective interpersonal communication between people belonging to different caste categories. Barriers also include gap due to differences of age, mentality, and attitudes; lack of communication between married partners, members of a family etc.
- 4) Listening is an important element in communication. Listening is more than just hearing the words of the speaker, but trying to grasp the meaning. Meanings are constructed by the listener, and this calls for paying attention to factors like: gestures, facial expression, silences or, pauses, voice modulation etc. Effective listening can reduce tension, conflict, and improve the morale and motivation of the staff.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) According to Baker, a Group is a number of people who have a common goal, interact with one another to attain the goal, recognize one another's existence, and see themselves as part of the group.
- 2) The chief styles of leadership are Democratic, Authoritarian and Laissez-faire. Since democratic style of leadership follow the norms of participatory guidance and work towards consensus and shared goals, it is the most preferred one.
- 3) The three important requirements for a successful group meeting are:
 - i) a competent leader to chair the meeting
 - ii) good physical setting, preferably in a circular style of sitting
 - iii) use of audio-visual aids.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) Mass communication has the following elements: Large audience (mass), uses technology - print, electricity, electronics, satellites, rapid distribution and delivery.
- 2) We use media for a variety of purposes. Five functions served by mass communication media are:
 - to persuade people to act in certain ways
 - to satisfy the need for information
 - to get entertainment
 - social interaction, status
 - to understand how the political system and the govt. work.
- 3) By 'media functions' we mean the various needs that media fulfills in relation to the audience, such as need for entertainment, escape, social interaction etc. By 'media effects' we mean the process by which media affect us. It refers to what the media are doing to us. For a proper understanding of the influence of media on society, we need to take into consideration both the functions and the effects.
- 4) The expression 'Global village' is coined by one of the leading scholars in social communication, Marshall McLuhan. The expression describes the fact that by means of the modern technology of communication, it is possible to consider the world like a village. We are able to communicate with people in any part of the world almost instantaneously. The world has become like village.

Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 What is Health Communication?
- 4.3 Functions of Health Communication
- 4.4 Models of Health Communication
- 4.5 Scope of Health Communication
- 4.6 Challenges of Health Communication
- 4.7 Lets Us Sum Up
- 4.8 Suggested Readings
- 4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain health communication and its function;
- Describe different models of health communication;
- Explain scope of health communication; and
- Understand the challenges and addressing the concern of health communication.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

International Communication Association officially recognized health communication in 1975; in 1997, the American Public Health Association categorised health communication as a discipline of Public Health Education and Health Promotion. Communication is essential to successful public health practice at every level: intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, and societal.

* Dr. M. Tineshowri Devi, Assam University, Silchar

There must be careful deliberation concerning the appropriate channel for messages to best reach the target audience, ranging from face-to-face interactions to television, Internet, and other forms of mass media. Thus, communication is more than mere exchange of information.

4.2 WHAT IS HEALTH COMMUNICATION?

Health communication is the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence people to make choices about their health. Messages are spread through different channels such as mass media, print materials, social media, and face-to-face conversations.

According to Healthy People 2010 guidelines, health communication encompasses the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community decisions that enhance health. It links the domains of communication and health. Health communication encompasses the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) with regard to health and healthcare.

There is interface between communication and health which is increasingly recognized as a necessary element for improving both personal and public health. Health communication is often used synonymously with health education which can contribute to all aspects of disease prevention and health promotion. The most obvious application of health communication has been in these areas of health promotion and disease prevention. There has been improvement of interpersonal and group interactions in hospitals and other clinical situations such as between provider and patient, provider and provider and among members of a healthcare team, through the training of health professionals and patients in effective communication skills. Thus, health messages through public education campaigns can help in changing the social climate in order to encourage healthy behaviours, create awareness, change attitudes, and motivate individuals to adopt recommended behaviours.

Health communication has become an accepted tool for promoting public health. Health communication principles are often used today for various disease prevention and control strategies including advocacy for health issues, marketing health plans and products, educating patients about medical care or treatment choices, and educating consumers about healthcare quality issues (US Office of Disease Prevention and Promotion, 2004). At the sametime, the availability of new technologies and computer-based media is expanding access to health information, and effective use of these new tools.

4.3 FUNCTIONS OF HEALTH COMMUNICATION

1) Information

The main function of health communication is to provide scientific knowledge or information to people about health problems and how to maintain and promote health. Thus information

should be easily accessible to the people so that we can remove or eliminate social and psychological barriers of ignorance, prejudice and misconceptions people may have about health matters; increase awareness of the people to the point that they are able to perceive their health needs; and influence people to the extent that unfelt needs become felt needs, and felt needs become demands (Park, 2015). It will help in refuting myths and misconceptions.

2) Education

Education plays a very important role in prevention oriented approach to health and disease problems; and the basis of all education is communication. Health education can bring about changes in life styles and risk factors of disease. It can help to increase knowledge and to reinforce desired behaviour patterns. It can also increase knowledge and awareness of a health issue, problem, or solution which influence perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and social norms.

The Alma-Ata Declaration, 1978, has given the concept of health education. According to this declaration, health education is

- Promotion of healthy lifestyles,
 - Modification of social environment in which the individual lives,
- Community involvement
- Promotion of individual and community self-reliance.

The main aims and objectives of health education are stated below:

- a) To encourage people to adopt and sustain health promoting lifestyles and practices;
- b) To promote the proper use of health services available to them;
- c) To arouse interest, provide new knowledge, improve skills and change attitudes in making rational decisions to solve their own problems and
- d) To stimulate individual and community self-reliance and participation to achieve health development through individual and community involvement at every step from identifying problems to solving them.

It is clear that education is necessary but education alone is not sufficient, thus health care providers need to play important roles, they are:

- Provide opportunities for people to learn how to identify and analyze health and health related problems, and how to set their own targets and priorities;
- Make health and health related information easily accessible to the community;

- To indicate to the people alternative solutions for solving the health and health-related problems they have identified; and
- People must have access to proven preventive measures (Park, 2015).

3) **Motivation**

One of the goals of health communication is to motivate individuals so that they can apply the health information into personal behaviour and lifestyle which will bring the benefit of behavior change for their own health. Motivation includes the stages of interest, evaluation, decision making, etc. For proper success of programme implementation at individuals and society at large, motivation assist in passing from the stake of awareness and interest to the final stage of decision making and adoption of the new ideas.

4) **Persuasion**

Persuasion is a conscious attempt by one individual to change or influence the general benefits, understanding, values and behaviour of another individual or group of individuals in some desired way (Park, 2015). It can change life style as it is employed deliberately to manipulate feelings, attitudes and beliefs. It is also a kind of force that reinforces knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour.

5) **Counselling**

Counselling relies heavily on communication and relationship skills. Counselling is the service offered to the individual who is undergoing a problem and needs professional help to overcome it. Therefore, counselling is a process that can help people understand better and deal with their problems and communicate better with those with whom they are emotionally involved. It can improve and reinforce motivation to change behaviour and helps to reduce or solve problems. Thus, counselling needs an expert as a counsellor to extend assistance to a needy person. Therefore, a counsellor should be able to communicate information properly; to gain the trust of the people; to listen sympathetically to people who are in distressed; to understand other person's feelings and to respond to them in such a way that the other person can feel free to express his/ her feelings and to help people reduce or resolve their problems.

6) **Health Development and Organization**

Communication can play a powerful role in health development by helping to diffuse knowledge in respect of the goals of development and preparing the people for the roles expected of them. Further communication is an important dimension of health organization. It is a means of intra and intersectoral coordination. There are vertical communications which can be downward or upward that include top administrator to the beneficiaries; and horizontal or cross communications which takes place usually between equals at any level.

4.4 MODELS OF HEALTH COMMUNICATION

Health communication can take place through different models. They are:

1) **Medical Model**

The medical model is primarily relied on the recognition and treatment of disease and technological advances to facilitate the process. The emphasis is on dissemination of health information based on scientific facts but the medical model did not bridge the gap between knowledge and behaviour as there is little or no intervention on social, cultural and psychological factors.

2) **Motivational Model**

Motivation acts as the main force to translate health information into desired health action. But it needs a long procedure to convince an individual, group and society at large. Motivation includes the stages of interest, evaluation and decision-making. Initially individual has to go through awareness or getting information about the subject. If he is interested he will seek more detailed information about the subject, then he will evaluate the various aspects of the information received and later decision making will be done based on the evaluation whether he accepts or rejects the information. Sometimes the mentioned stages are not necessarily rigid; there may be skipping of stages depending on the adoption process of individuals, groups and society. Thus, effective communication strategy should be evolved to help the individual in passing from one stage to another.

3) **Social intervention Model**

The motivation model ignored the fact that in a number of situations, it is not the individual who needs to be changed but the social environment which shapes the behaviour of individual and the community. Thus, there is an importance of group or social support in helping reaching the decisions and taking action. Therefore, an effective health communication is based on precise knowledge of human ecology and understanding of the interaction between the cultural, biological, physical and social environmental factors.

Check Your Progress I

- Note:** a) Use space given below for your answer.
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What do you understand by Health Communication?

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4.5 SCOPE OF HEALTH COMMUNICATION

The Individual

The individual is the most fundamental target for health-related change, since it is individual behaviours that affect health status. Communication can affect the individual’s awareness, knowledge, attitudes, self-efficacy, and skills for behaviour change. Activity at all other levels ultimately aims to affect and support individual change.

The Social Network

An individual’s relationships and the groups to which an individual belongs can have a significant impact on his or her health. Health communication programs can work to shape the information a group receives and may attempt to change communication patterns or content. Opinion leaders within a network are often a point of entry for health programs.

The Organization

Organizations include formal groups with a defined structure, such as associations, clubs, and civic groups; worksites; schools; primary healthcare settings; and retailers. Organizations can carry health messages to their membership, provide support for individual efforts, and make policy changes that enable individual change.

The Community

The collective well-being of communities can be fostered by creating structures and policies that support healthy lifestyles and by reducing or eliminating hazards in social and physical environments. Community-level initiatives are planned and led by organizations and institutions that can influence health such as schools, worksites, healthcare settings, community groups, and government agencies.

The Society

Society as a whole has many influences on individual behavior, including norms and values, attitudes and opinions, laws and policies, and the physical, economic, cultural, and information environments. Clearly, the more levels a communication program can influence, the greater the likelihood of creating and sustaining the desired change.

Health communication alone, however, cannot change systemic problems related to health, such as poverty, environmental degradation, or lack of access to health care, but comprehensive health

communication programs should include a systematic exploration of all the factors that contribute to health and the strategies that could be used to influence these factors.

4.6 CHALLENGES OF HEALTH COMMUNICATION

Health communication faces many challenges. While problems can be attributed to many factors, some of the most challenging issues are discussed below:

- 1) One of the most pertinent challenges health communication faces is the general gap that has formed between the population's health literacy and the use of health communication. There are instances that professionals' use of unexplained medical jargon, ill-formed messages, that lead to create a general educational gap. It is also seen that even the mass have difficulty understanding written health materials, understanding health care and policies, and generally do not comprehend medical jargon. Such shortcomings of health communication may lead to increased hospitalizations, the inability to respond to and manage a disease or medical condition, and a generally declining health status.
- 2) Mass communication is used to promote beneficial changes in behaviour among members of populations. A major criticism of the use of mass media as a method of health communication is large amounts of information that may be misleading, inaccurate, or inappropriate, which may put consumers at unnecessary risk. This issue may generate unwarranted panic amongst those customers. One is related to the risks associated with consumers' use of poor quality health information to make decisions. These concerns are driving many people to distrust health services which have caused an immediate public health concern.
- 3) A one-dimensional approach to health promotion, or other single-component communication activities, has been shown to be insufficient to achieve program goals. Thus for making a successful health promotion programme, multidimensional interventions such as community-based programs, policy changes, and improvements in services and the health delivery system has to be planned to reach diverse audiences. An important factor in the design of multidimensional programs is to allot sufficient time for planning, implementation, and evaluation to support the elements of the program. Public-private partnerships and collaborations can leverage resources to strengthen the impact of multidimensional efforts.
- 4) Communication occurs in a variety of contexts (for example, school, home, and work); through a variety of channels (for example, interpersonal, small group, organizational, community, and mass media) with a variety of messages; and for a variety of reasons. In such an environment, people do not pay attention to all communications they receive but selectively attend to and purposefully seek out information (Freimuth *et al.*, 1989). One of the main challenges in the design of effective health communication programs is to identify the optimal contexts, channels, content, and reasons that will motivate people to pay attention to and use health information.
- 5) The environment for communicating about health has changed significantly. The dramatic increases in the number of communication channels and the number of health issues vying

for public attention as well as consumer demands for more and better quality health information, and the increased sophistication of marketing and sales techniques over the Internet. People have more opportunities to select information based on their personal interests and preferences.

- 6) Limitations of printed materials in different languages lead to affect the health communication. Direct translation of health information or health promotion materials should be avoided. For different social- cultural, ethnic populations who have different languages and sources of information, it is required to adopt audience-centered perspective for effective health promotion and communication. In these cases, public education campaigns must be conceptualized and developed by individuals with specific knowledge of the cultural characteristics, media habits, and language preferences of intended audiences. Television and radio serving specific ethnic populations can be effective means to deliver health messages when care is taken to account for the language, culture, and socioeconomic situations of intended audiences. Thus, an audience-centered perspective also reflects the realities of people's everyday lives and their current practices, attitudes and beliefs, and lifestyles. Some specific audience characteristics that are relevant include gender, age, education and income levels, ethnicity, sexual orientation, cultural beliefs and values, primary language(s), and physical and mental functioning.
- 7) Generalising the programme policy and generalising the health information to the mass will limit the audience from health communications. It is therefore required to target specific segments of a population and tailoring messages for individual use to make health promotion activities relevant to audiences. Examples adolescents at increased risk of smoking, etc.
- 8) The other challenge is related to the protection of privacy and confidentiality of personal health information. It is so happened that the personal privacy and the confidentiality of health information of consumers are magnified when information is collected, stored, and made available online. In the near future, personal health information will be collected during both clinical and nonclinical encounters in disparate settings, such as schools, mobile clinics, public places, and homes, and will be made available, so it is required to have policies and procedures to protect privacy and to ensure confidentiality.
- 9) Even with access to information and services, however, disparities may still exist because of many factors such as illiteracy, lack health literacy, levels of knowledge and understanding, customs, beliefs, religion, attitudes and social class differences. Health literacy is increasingly vital to help people navigate a complex health system and better manage their own health. Differences in the ability to read and understand materials related to personal health as well as navigate the health system appear to contribute to health disparities. Well-designed health communication activities can help individuals better understand their own and their communities' needs so that they can take appropriate actions to maximize health.
- 10) Health communication alone, however, cannot change systemic problems related to health, such as poverty, environmental degradation, or lack of access to health care, but comprehensive health communication programs should include a systematic exploration of all the factors that contribute to health and the strategies that could be used to influence these factors. Well-designed health communication activities help individuals better

understand their own and their communities needs so that they can take appropriate actions to maximize health.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- 1) What are some of the challenges of communication?

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4.7 LET US SUM UP

Health communication is rarely used as an independent strategy in community health because knowledge is not enough to improve the health of a community. Instead, health communication is an integral part of all health promotion strategies. You have also understood the different functions and models of health communication. You also have got an insight of barriers and challenges of health communication where campaign messages needed to reach and influence target audiences. You need to develop strategies from the audience perspective for effective strategic health communication interventions.

4.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Health communication is the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence people to make choices about their health. Messages are spread through different channels such as mass media, print materials, social media, and face-to-face conversations. Health communication encompasses the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) with regard to health and healthcare.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) The challenges of health communication are the following:
 - a. The general population has difficulty in understanding the medical jargons used by medical professionals, health care and policies. Such short fallings of health communication may lead to the inability to respond to a medical condition, and a generally declining health status.
 - b. Large amounts of information used by mass media as a method of health communication may be misleading, inaccurate, or inappropriate, which may put consumers at unnecessary risk.
 - c. A one-dimensional approach to health promotion, or other single-component communication activities, has proved to be insufficient to achieve program goals.
 - d. One of the main challenges in the design of effective health communication programs is to identify the optimal contexts, channels, content, and reasons that will motivate people to pay attention to and use health information.
 - e. Limitations of printed materials in different languages lead to affect the health communication.

- f. Generalization of the health policy and related health information limit the audience from health communications.
- g. The other challenge is related to the protection of privacy and confidentiality of personal health information.
- h. Factors such as illiteracy, inadequate health literacy, levels of knowledge and understanding, customs, beliefs, religion, attitudes and social class differences contribute to health disparities.
- i. Health communication is not comprehensive enough to include a systematic exploration of all the factors that contribute to health and the strategies that could be used to influence these factors.

