One Year Bachelor Degree Programme

Library and Information Sciences

Second Semester

INFORMATION SOCIETY AND COMMUNICATION

Guru Prasad Das School of Interdisciplinary and Vocational Studies

KRISHNAKANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Course Introduction

The course "*Information Society and Communication"* provides a comprehensive exploration of the theories, processes, and practices that underpin the creation, dissemination, and utilization of information within contemporary societies. It seeks to develop an understanding of communication as a foundational human activity and as the driving force behind intellectual, social, and technological advancement. The course situates communication within the broader context of the information society, emphasizing the interplay between information, knowledge, and societal transformation.

The curriculum begins with an examination of the fundamental concepts and components of communication, including its types, channels, and significance. Both formal and informal communication systems, as well as verbal and non-verbal modes, are studied to understand their respective roles in information exchange and institutional functioning. This foundation is further strengthened through the study of major communication modelssuch as those proposed by Harold Lasswell and Shannon and Weaver and theoretical frameworks including Rhetoric, Semiotic, and Phenomenological theories.

A critical component of the course concerns effective communication, addressing the seven essential principles of clarity, conciseness, concreteness, correctness, coherence, completeness, and courtesy. Emphasis is placed on the development of logical reasoning, persuasive communication, and mastery of digital tools such as email, messaging platforms, discussion forums, and social media applications. Particular attention is given to communication processes within libraries and information centers, recognizing these institutions as vital nodes in the circulation of knowledge.

The course also analyses societal structures and the digital divide across economic, social, educational, cultural, political, and psychological dimensions. It explores the *Right to Information* as a mechanism for promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen empowerment, especially in relation to library and information services. Students will engage with diverse sources of information generation—such as newspapers, magazines, journals, televisionto understand their roles in shaping public discourse and knowledge dissemination.

Moreover, the course addresses barriers to effective communication in society, including misinformation, disinformation, propaganda, fake news, cybercrime, and information security challenges. The dynamics of *scholarly communication* and the significance of open access initiatives, such as DOAJ and Open DOAR, are examined to foster ethical and equitable information sharing in the academic domain. In addition, the course introduces the concept of

traditional knowledge communication, contrasting it with scientific systems of knowledge production and highlighting its cultural and epistemological significance.

Then the course focuses on the transformation of information communication in the digital age, the emergence of the knowledge society, and the principles and practices of knowledge management. The concept of *media literacy* and *media convergence* further enhance understanding of the evolving media landscape and the integration of computing, communication, and content in contemporary discourse.

This course aims to equip learners with the conceptual insight and analytical skills necessary to understand, evaluate, and participate effectively in the processes of communication within the information society.

UNIT 1: COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives
1.2 Concept
1.3 Components
1.4 Types of Communication
1.5 Formal and Informal Channels
1.6 Verbal and Non-verbal
1.7 Importance of Communication
1.8 Let Us Sum Up
1.9 Further Readings
1.10 Answers To Check Your Progress
1.11 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- understand fundamental concepts, different components and types of communications.
- get insight into the overall importance of communication in personnel, academic and professional contexts.

1.2 CONCEPT

In simple words, communication is basically the process of transferring information, ideas, emotions and feelings between individuals or groups through speech, writing, symbols, or other means. Newman and Summer define communication as the interchange of facts, ideas, views, or emotions between two or more individuals. The odorson and the odorson (1969) asserted that communication is a process of transforming information, ideas, attitudes, or emotions from one individual or group to another primarily through symbols. Schramm (1971) conceptualized communication as a process of transmitting emotions, motivations, ideas and knowledge from one mind to another, wherein the receiver was regarded as a passive entity.

In the context of Library and Information Science, communication is a central part of it as it underpins all the interaction, resource allocation and service delivery within libraries.It facilitates the connection between librarians and users, exemplifies when a librarian assists a user in locating a book, addressing an inquiry, or promoting library resources and activities.It is crucial for executing actions aimed at fulfilling the information requirements of users, including acquisition, cataloguing, classification and dissemination of information to diverse library patrons. Communication in Library and Information Science involves various forms, components and channels, significantly influencing the efficacy and quality of library services.

1.3 COMPONENTS

The key components of communication are:

Source/sender: The sender initiates the communication process. The sender wants to communicate with the recipient.

Message: "What the sender wants to convey" to the recipient is the message. It could be a thought, an emotion or some data. Every message has an aim or goal. Messages in organizational settings usually have a clear goal, such as inspiring, motivating, educating, persuading, entertaining or informing.

Encoding: It is the process of converting a message into words or pictures. Written words, spoken words, gestures, or any other symbolic act, or a combination of these modes, are the symbols that the sender arranges into his message. This is known as message encoding. Body language, writing and speaking are the three encoding skills.

Transmission Channel: The channel, which is ameans of communication between two people (for example, air for spoken sounds and paper for writing), is frequently inextricably linked to the message. The channel must be suitable for the message for communication to be efficient and successful.

Receiver: The individual or group that the communication attempt is meant for is known as the recipient. The background of the recipient must be taken into consideration when crafting the message. Communication has not occurred if the message is not received by the recipient. If a communication is received but not understood by the recipient, then the purpose of the communication is still not achieved.

Decoding: The receiver understands the message and converts it into useful information through a process known as decoding. Technicallyreceiving the message as it was delivered and interpreting it the way the sender wants the recipient to understand are the two aspects of decoding.

Feedback: Without feedback, the sender cannot determine if the recipient has understood the message or received it in its entirety. Feedback should be understood as necessary. Feedback occurs when a part of the message is sent back to the sender with additional details. It controls both sending and receiving the message. The entire procedure is simple: the message is sent using the best communication medium, received by the recipient, decoded and the recipient responds. Feedback allows the sender to adapt theirperformance to the receiver's needs and response.

Noise: Any disruption that obfuscates, diminishes or perplexes the quality or clarity of the message being conveyed is considered noise. If stated otherwise, it refers to any interference between the sender and the recipient. For this reason, they typically classify any communication issue that cannot be adequately explained as “noise”.

1.4 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication can be categorized in four types. They are:

Intra-personal communication: Communication is a continual process and intrapersonal communication is an important aspect of it. Individuals engage in internal conversations with themselves. People use such self-talk to constantly steer their choices and examine what influences or affects them in daily life, resulting in more conscious decisions and better self-awareness.

Inter-personal Communication: Inter-personal communication occurs between two people who have some form of relationship. Interpersonal communication enables us to gain a deeper understanding of external world events, individuals and their environments. Interpersonal communication can take place between two peopleor small groups of people.

Group communication: When three or more people share information, ideas and feedback to reach a common goal, they are communicating as a group. This procedure can involve both verbal and nonverbal means and it usually happens in small teams or larger groups in professional, educational or social settings. Group communication lets people share responsibilities, work together to solve problems and make decisions that are in line with the group's goals. Each person has an impact on and is affected by the others.

Mass communication: A new way to talk to each other came along with the rise of printing and information technologies. The internet, television, radio, newspapers and other print media are all examples of mass communication. All of these form of mass communicationcan be quite effective at changing people's minds and getting them to do what is wanted.

1.5 FORMAL AND INFORMAL CHANNELS

Communication Channel is the path via which information flows throughout the organization. It may be formal or informal.

Formal communication networks are organized systems created by management to control the information flow inside a company. They make sure that communication occurs through official channels in all directions including downward, upward and horizontal. By defining who should communicate with whom to complete tasks, these networks help prevent confusion and make communication more timely, efficient and organized. Formal networks have several noteworthy benefits, including meeting the organization's information needs, serving as links between various units, facilitating coordination and control by providing pertinent information at the appropriate time, sorting and filtering information for higher-level executives, preventing undesired dissemination, and ensuring greater accuracy and reliability of information. They do have some drawbacks, though: the procedure can be expensive and time-consuming because of the numerous levels and copious amounts of paperwork; it can also make line supervisors' workload heavier, increase the likelihood that messages will be distorted as they go through multiple channels and create a gulf between top executives and lower-level employees, which can occasionally reduce direct communication and negatively impact relationships at work. Despite these limitations, formal communication networks are still necessary for the operation and efficacy of

organizations and continuous efforts are being made to balance structure and flexibility in order to make them more cost-effective and efficient.

Within organizations, informal communication networks develop on their own to meet informational and social demands that aren't met by official channels. These networks, which frequently circumvent formal hierarchies and frameworks, are formed by friendships, social encountersand casual chats among employees rather than being purposefully created or regulated by management. The grapevine, which is well-known for spreadingrumours and gossip, social events where individuals of various ranks can freely talk, managers interacting with staff by walking around and secretaries or administrative assistants regularly sharing information informally with others are all examples of common informal communication sources. Even if the information given may not always be correct or trustworthy, informal communication networks are useful for building relationships, filling in the gaps left by formal communication and creating a healthy work atmosphere.

1.6 VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL

Verbal communication, which includes both written and spoken forms, is a basic method of exchanging information through words. Face-to-face talks, phone calls and speeches are examples of spoken communication that frequently takeplace informally and synchronously, which means it happens in real time and provideinstant feedback. This builds rapport and trust while allowing for impromptu clarification and emotional connection. Written correspondence, such as emails, letters, or messages, on the other hand, is usually more formal and asynchronous, taking place over time and leaving a record for future use. Verbal communication offers people a variety of ways to get in touch, including writing or speaking with an instructor for academic assistance. Each method has advantages of its own, including formality, timing and the potential for review. Spoken communication ensures greater assurance of message understanding and strengthens relationships through emotional expression by enabling dynamic interaction and direct adjustment based on rapid audience reaction. Both written and spoken verbal communication is still very valuable in today's digital environment because they have unique advantages in academic, professionaland personal contexts.

1.7 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is an essential ability that significantly influences all facets of life, acting as the foundation for successful personal relationships, education and professional settings. It facilitates the unambiguous expression of thoughts, feelings and ideas, promoting understanding and empathy among individuals from diverse origins and cultures. Effective communication fosters trust, resolves disagreements and sustains robust relationships with family and friends, minimizing misunderstandings and enhancing emotional well-being. It increases learning for pupils, enables better engagement with educators and alleviates academic stress by promoting clearer discourse on challenging subjects. Effective communication is crucial for teamwork, collaboration and decision-making; it delineates responsibilities, guarantees comprehension of goals and inspires colleagues and employees, there by enhancing

productivity and workplace satisfaction. In the contemporary digital era, communication skills are crucial for maneuvering through virtual work settings, discerning information and interacting with a worldwide audience across diverse platforms. Effective communication skills facilitate productive, harmonious and meaningful lives by fostering mutual understanding, instilling confidence and enabling seamless information flow in an increasingly interconnected society.

In the discipline of Library and Information Science (LIS), communication is crucial because it has a direct impact on libraries' capacity to provide effective, user-centered services and carry out their functions as information centers. In addition to guiding patrons in the use of library resources and offering vital support across circulation, reference and digital services, effective communication enables librarians to comprehend and address the various informational needs of patrons. It creates trust, strengthens ties between employees and patrons, and positions the library as a friendly, easily accessible place to study and conduct research. Clear internal communication in library management promotes efficient coordination among library employees, makes it easier to provide updates or changes to procedures and supports decision-making and problem-solving. External communication tactics like newsletters, workshops, social media and outreach initiatives increase community knowledge of library resources, services and events, promoting broader and more efficient use of them. Additionally, librarians manage communication by creating concise messaging, modifying content for various audiences and responding to criticism in order to continuously raise service standards and user satisfaction. By providing guidance, assistance and problem-solving both in-person and online, effective communication skills aid in bridging the gap between users' demands and sophisticated technology tools in today's digital environment. In the end, communication skills are still essential for all LIS professionals since they enable libraries to improve user experiences, link people with knowledge and make a more complete contribution to education and society.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A, Fill in the Blanks

a) The process of converting a message into words, symbol or gestures is called ……..
b) Communication that takes place within oneself is called ……
c) Any inferences that distort or reduce the clarity of a message during communication is known as ……..
d) In LIS, effective communication builds …….. between librarians and users.

2 1.8 LET US SUM UP

This unit looks at communication as the act of sharing thoughts, feelings and attitudes with others through speech, writing, symbols or other means. Communication is essential in Library and Information Science, asnot only the foundation for interactions

between librarians and patrons, but also for the organization and provision of services, including acquisition, cataloguing and resource distribution. The main parts of communication are the source or sender, the message, the encoding, the transmission channel, the receiver, the decoding, the feedback` and the noise. There are many ways to communicate, such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, group and mass communication. These can be formal or informal and each has its own structure and effect on how well an organization works and how well people get along with each other. People can also communicate in both verbal (spoken and written) and nonverbal (body language, facial expressions and appearance) ways. Its significance is underscored in cultivating trust, facilitating collaboration and promoting understanding in both personal and professional spheres, particularly in libraries, where effective communication improves user experience, staff coordination, decision-making, outreach and the progression of knowledge in society.

O 1.9 FURTHER READING

- *Communication in Library and Information Centres – Management of Libraries and Information Centres and Knowledge Centres*. (2018). Inflibnet.ac.in. https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/lisp6/chapter/communication-in-library-and-information-centres/
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- Wani, I. H. (2022, August 5). *Communication: Concept, Types, Theories and Models Part I Short Notes | Library Science*. Library and Information Science Cream; Blogger. https://www.libraryinfoscience.in/2022/08/communication-concept-types-theories.html

K 1.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: a) Encoding**, b)** Intrapersonal Communication**, c)** Noise**, d)** Trust.

M 1.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short Answers type question:

a) Differentiate between formal and informal communication channels.

b) What are the differences between verbal and non-verbal communication?

c) Define interpersonal communication with an example.

B. Long Answers type question:

a) Describe the importance of communication in LIS.

b) Write a note on various components of communication with suitable examples..

*** ***** ***

UNIT 2: COMMUNICATION AND ITS NATURE

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives
2.2 Process of Communication
2.3 Communicator
2.4 Message
2.5 Audience
2.6 Component of Communication
2.7 Evolution of Communication
2.8 Nature of communication
2.9 Communication in Library and Information Centre
2.10 Let Us Sum Up
2.11 Further Readings
2.12 Answers To Check Your Progress
2.13 Model Questions

i.2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- explain the idea of communication process, various components and its evolution.
- importance of communication in the field of Library and Information Science.

2.2 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is an integral part for the success in every filed of life. Merriam Webster defines communication as a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs and behavior. Newman and Summer defined communication as the interchange of facts, ideas, views or emotions between two or more individuals. Theodorson and Theodorson (1969) asserted that communication is a process of transforming information, ideas, attitudes or emotions from one individual or group to another primarily through symbols. Schramm (1971) conceptualized communication as a process of transmitting emotions, motivations, ideas and knowledge from one mind to another, wherein the receiver was regarded as a passive entity.

The communication is not a static or linear act, but rather a process which is dynamic, engaging and cyclical. It starts with the sender, who has an idea, thought, or piece of information that needs to be sent. At this stage, one not only comes up with content, but also thinks about thepurpose, audience and what he/she wants to happen. Once the sender has a clear idea of what they want to say, they move on to the next step, which is encoding. This is where the idea is turned into a structured form that can be sent, like words, symbols, movements, or pictures. After being encrypted, the message is sent through a way of talking to each other. Speech, writing, body language or technology (like digital platforms, print media or telecommunications) can all be used

as this route. The choice of channel is very important because it has a direct effect on how clear, far and powerful the word is. The other important person in the communication process is the receiver, who gets the word after it is sent. It is up to the receiver to decode, or understand, the word sent by the sender. Decoding is not a passive process; it requires cognitive skills, knowledge of the environment, cultural understanding and the ability to use past information. If a message is not correctly translated, it does not communicate what it was meant to do. Once the recipient has thought about the message, they give feedback, which is a key sign of how well the conversation went. Feedback can come in many ways, such as direct verbal responses, written confirmations, nonverbal cues like nodding or facial expressions, or even silence, which can mean different things to different people. Feedback makes sure that communication stays going and lets the writer see what worked and what needs to be changed. Each of these things happens at a certain time and is affected by things like the surroundings, the people involved, the organization and any physical barriers that might be there. The existence of noise,which could be real (like background noise) or psychological (such as biases, stress, distractions, or preconceptions), can change or stop the flow of conversation.

In this way, the communication process can be seen as a series of steps that rely on how well both people interact with each other.

2.3 COMMUNICATOR

A person or group that sends a message to another person, group, or social system in order to inform, persuade, or influence them is termed the communicator. They start the communication process and keep it going by using skills like clear speech, active listening, appropriate body language and asking questions. To be a good communicator, one needs to be honest, clear, focused, empathic and able to use both verbal and nonverbal indicators to make sure the message is understood and to connect with the target groups.

2.4 MESSAGE

One of the most important parts of communication is the Message, since it transfers the idea, thinking or information from the sender to the receiver. One can say something with words, gestures, pictures, sounds or even silence. The overall quality of communication depends on how well the message is put together and how well the person getting it understands it. A good message must be clear, concise, full and significant without extra irrelevant details or confusion. It might be professional, like official emails, reports, or notices or informal, like personal talks or casual interactions. When it comes to libraries, messages can be instructions for users, circulars, digital notifications, or answers to queries from librarians. But in the process of communication, things like noise, cultural differences or misunderstandings may make a message less effective.

2.5 AUDIENCE

The audience in the communication process is an individual or group of people who gets the message, understands it, and responds to it. It is a major part of how well

communication works. If the receiver doesn't understand the message, it doesn't matter how well it was framed. People often call the audience the "decoder" or "receiver" because they give meaning to the words, symbols or gestures that the communicator sends. Audiences may range from small, as in face-to-face interpersonal communication, to large, as in mass communication through television, the internet, and print media such as newspapers.In libraries and other academic and professional settings, the audience may include users, students, faculty or researchers,each of whom may require a distinct communication approach tailored to their needs. To make sure the message is clear, the person sending it must always think about the audience's background, culture, language, education level and expectations. Distraction, bias or not paying attention can all make it difficult for the audience to grasp the intended meaning of the message.Any communication is complete only when it motivates an action, whether mental or physical. Communication must achieve the desired result; however, people respond differently to messages.When individuals understand facts and how they relate to their needs or issues, they act. Communication should foster understanding, not simply information. Another factor is acceptance/rejection. An audience may embrace a clear, convincing message or reject it if it fails to connect.

Remembering vs. forgetting

Sending the proper message at the right moment is crucial since people may forget it if they can't act promptly. Unlike physical action, audience response requires mental understanding and acceptance of the message before physical actionFinally, the response can be accurate or inaccurate, so the receiver may need to reconstruct the meaning. Communication should inspire proper behavior that matches the goal but obstacles or “noise” may cause an unwanted response.

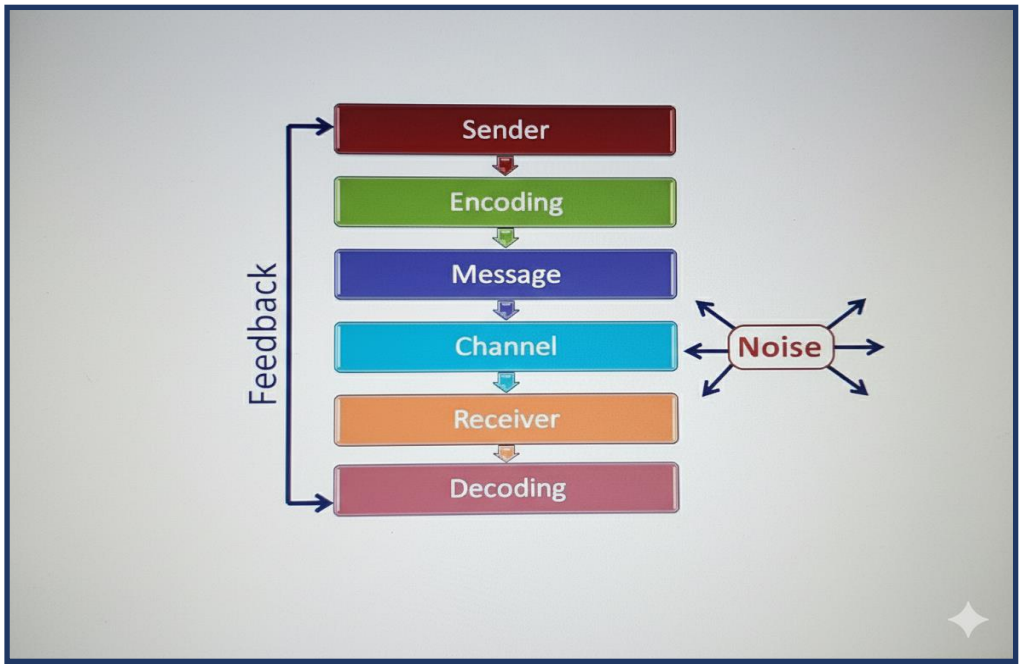
2.6 COMPONENT OF COMMUNICATION

The process of Communication has the following major components:

- Sender/ communicator
- Message
- Encoding
- Channel/Media
- Decoding
- Receiver
- Feedback
- Noise

Communication is a systematic process where different elements work together to share information effectively. It begins with the **Sender or Communicator**, the person or group who has an idea, thought or information to share. The sender creates the **Message**, which is the actual content such as facts, ideas, emotions or instructions that needs to be communicated. To make the message understandable, the sender uses **Encoding**, which means converting ideas into words, symbols or gestures. Once encoded, the message is transmitted through a **Channel or Medium**, such as speech, writing, posters, emails or digital platforms. After the message reaches its destination,

the **Receiver** plays the crucial role of **Decoding**, where the symbols or words are interpreted to get the meaning intended by the sender. The receiver may be an individual or a group and the effectiveness of communication depends on how well they understand the message. The process is completed when the receiver gives a **Feedback**, which is the response showing whether the message has been understood correctly. Feedback may be verbal, non-verbal or written and it makes communication a two-way process. However, during this entire process, **Noise** can interfere. Noise refers to any barrier be it physical, psychological or semantic that distorts or blocks the message. For example, background sounds, poor internet or the use of complex language can create confusion. Thus, communication becomes successful only when the sender encodes a clear message, the receiver decodes it accurately, feedback is given and noise is minimized.



2.7 EVOLUTION OF COMMUNICATION

The evolution of communication is an interesting story about how people changed the way they talked to each other to fit changing social and cultural demands. Before formal languages existed, people used sounds like whistles, horns and drums, as well as gestures and facial expressions, to communicate. Cave paintings from about 30,000 BC like those in Chauvet Cave in France, were a way to preserve calendars, hunting methods and symbolic rites. This way of relaying stories with pictures eventually turned into petroglyphs (10,000–12,000 BC), which were carved into rocks to show events in order. By about 9000 BC, pictograms appeared as graphical symbols that stood for ideas or things. This was the start of early writing systems. Later, ideograms came along. They were abstract symbols that stood for things like feelings and universal ideas so, people from different cultures could understand them. These kinds of symbolic communication led to the first writing systems, such cuneiform in Mesopotamia and hieroglyphics in Egypt. These systems let people keep records of history, trade and pass on knowledge from one generation to the next. Indigenous groups often employed smoke signals and drum beats to send messages over large

distances, showing how creative and flexible old ways of communicating were. As civilizations progressed, communication methods changed dramatically to keep up with new technologies. Johannes Gutenberg's creation of the printing press in the 15th century was a turning point. It enabled the mass production of books and newspapers, making information cheaper to copy and easier to distribute, so knowledge became accessible to a much wider public. The telegraph was made in the 18th century. It changed long-distance communication by sending coded electrical impulses. The telephone, photography and wireless telegraphy were all invented in the 19th century. Telegraph lines connected continents, making the world a smaller, more connected place. The 20th century saw major new technologies: radio and TV changed how people talked to each other; satellites made it possible to send messages throughout the world; and the internet, which started as ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), became widely available in the 1990s. Later, mobile phones and smartphones made communication more personal, while fiber optics made it possible to connect to the internet quickly all over the world. Artificial intelligence, wireless communication and the Internet of Things (IoT) are all part of the evolution that is still going on today. These technologies have made the world hyper connected, allowing information to flow immediately across boundaries. So, the way communication has changed throughout time, from rudimentary cave drawings to digital networks, shows how people have always tried to get around barriers of distance, time and language.

2.8 NATURE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is always happening, two-way, vocal and non-verbal, changing, necessary and necessary for both parties to comprehend each other. In companies, it is the most important part of all management tasks, making sure that everything runs well and that everyone is successful.

- **Consistency:**
  Communication must remain clear, steady and uniform over time and across channels. Consistency ensures that the receiver interprets the message in the intended way, avoiding ambiguity or contradictions. For example, in an organization, if management gives frequent but conflicting instructions, employees may become confused and lose trust. Consistent communication builds credibility and strengthens relationships in both personal and professional contexts.
- **Exchange of Ideas:**
  Communication is essentially an exchange of thoughts, facts, emotions and views among two or more individuals. This back-and-forth is what makes communication two-way instead of one-way. For example, a classroom discussion is useful when both the teacher and the students express their thoughts, not when only one person talks. So, communication brings people together and gives them a common understanding.
- **Two-Way Process:**
  Communication is complete only when the receiver provides feedback to the sender. It is not merely about transmitting information but about ensuring that the message has been understood. Feedback can be verbal (spoken responses) or non-verbal (nodding, gestures). This two-way nature reduces

misunderstandings and makes communication participatory, collaborative and effective.

- **Verbal and Non-Verbal:**
  Communication takes place through language (spoken or written words) and through non-verbal means like gestures, tone, facial expressions, posture and visuals. Non-verbal communication often conveys emotions and attitudes more powerfully than words. For example, a smile may reinforce a kind word, while a harsh tone can contradict polite language. Together, verbal and non-verbal communication create a complete message.
- **Dynamic and Continuous Cycle:**
  Communication is not a one-time thing; it happens all the time. Messages are always being delivered, received, understood and changed based on the situation and the feedback. For instance, in a meeting, the conversation changes as people reply to one another. This ongoing process lets communication change to fit new requirements and conditions, which makes it strong and adaptable.
- **Unavoidable or Pervasive:**
  One cannot escape communication since everything one do, say, or don't say sends a message. Even if someone doesn't say anything, their silence can signify disagreement, uncertainty or agreement. It is everywhere in life such as: family, job, school and society; so it is a universal human activity.
- **Mutual Understanding**:
  The main goal of communication is not merely to communicate information but to build a common understanding. Communication fails if the sender and receiver don't understand the message in the same manner. For example, a manager instructing employees about safety rules succeeds only when employees understand and follow those rules. So, understanding each other is the most important part of good communication.
- **Objective-Driven:**
  Every communication has a purpose. It may aim to inform (such as a news broadcast), persuade (such as an advertisement), motivate (such as a speech), or build relationships (such as casual conversation). Understanding the objective helps in choosing the right medium, language and style of communication. Without clear objectives, communication becomes vague and ineffective.
- **Foundation of Managerial Functions:**
  Communication is always happening, two-way, vocal and non-verbal, changing, necessary and necessary for both parties to comprehend each other. In companies, it is the most important part of all management tasks, making sure that everything runs well and that everyone is successful.

2.9 COMMUNICATION IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTRE

Communication in libraries is an important part of library services because it helps Librarians interact with people, figure out what they need and give them the right help. Interpersonal communication, especially face-to-face conversations, is one of the most

important types of communication because it lets users directly tell Librarians what they need and librarians can reply right away. Good, honest and open communication creates trust and makes the library look better. On the other hand, bad or inflexible communication can make people unhappy and give the library a bad reputation. Librarians work with people from all walks of life, so they need to be able to communicate well in order to tailor services to each user and be professional. Libraries need to be able to communicate well in both verbal and nonverbal ways, like tone, clarity, gestures and active listening. This makes for better user experiences. It goes beyond only talking to users; it also includes dealing with management, vendors, coworkers and society as a whole. So, communication is both about serving people and developing the library's image. Good communication makes the library seem friendly, useful and ready to meet modern needs. Also, librarians need to be able to communicate well in order to deal with problems like heavy workloads, user complaints and changes in technology. This means being able to show empathy, be open, be polite, be helpful and be flexible.

To make communication better, librarians should get frequent training in public speaking, presenting and interpersonal skills. This training should be sponsored by programs from the government and institutions. This kind of skill-building makes sure that libraries stay active in service organizations instead than just places to store books. Research in librarianship indicates that efficient communication significantly influences user happiness and service quality, hence augmenting the professional identity of librarians. So, communication in libraries is not only a way to get things done; it is the basis of user-centered library management, which affects the library and information center's reputation, efficiency and worth to society.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A. Fill in the Blanks

i. Communication is defined as the process of exchanging ……. between individuals through a common system of symbols, sign or behavior.

ii. Communication is a ……. process because it keeps changing and adapting based on feedback.

iii. Effective communication in libraries improves …….. satisfaction.

iv. Any disturbance or barrier distorting the flow of communication is termed as …….

v. The conversion of ideas into words, symbols or gestures is termed as ……..

2 2.10 LET US SUM UP

Communication is going on and changing process in which a sender and a receiver share thoughts, feelings and information through both verbal and non-verbal means. The most important parts are the communicator, the message, the encoding, the channel, the decoding, the receiver, the feedback and the noise. The process is

finished only when both sides understand each other, which means that communication is both a two-way and a goal-oriented activity. Over time, communication has changed from cave paintings and symbolic signals to modern digital technologies. This shows how people are always trying to break down barriers of time, space and language.

The nature of communication makes it clear that it is always there, never goes away and is important for making sure that things are clear, working together and being credible. It is essential for management to make choices and interact with others. Communication is very important at libraries and information centers since it helps users find resources, answer their questions and improve the institution's reputation. Interpersonal communication, especially talking to people in person, is very important for understanding the needs of different users and providing services that are right for them. For Librarians to communicate well, they need to show empathy, openness, civility and adaptability while simultaneously dealing with problems like a heavy workload and changes in technology.

So, communication at libraries is not only about passing on information; it's also about providing great service, building relationships and establishing a professional identity. Regular training in how to talk to people and how to talk to the public helps librarians improve their skills. This keeps libraries dynamic, user-centered and an important place in the society.

K 2.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: i. Information, ii. Dynamic, iii. User

iv Noise, v. Encoding.

O 2.12 FURTHER READING

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M 2.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short questions

Q 1: Define Communication.

Q 2: Explain nonverbal communication with an example

Q 3: What are the various components of the communication process?

B. Long question

Q 1: Discuss the evolution of communication process

Q 2: Discuss the importance of effective communication in Libraries

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UNIT 3: COMMUNICATION MODELS AND THEORIES

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives
3.2 Introduction
3.3 Meaning of Model and Theory
3.4 Communication Models
    3.4.1 Types
    3.4.2 Models
3.5 Communication Theories
    3.5.1 Rhetoric Theory
    3.5.2 Semiotic Theory
    3.5.3 Phenomenological Theory
3.6 Let Us Sum Up
3.7 Further Readings
3.8 Answers To Check Your Progress
3.9 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- explain the meaning and purpose of communication models and theories.
- describe different model with their uses and limitations.
- explain rhetorical theory, semiotic theory, and phenomenological theory as traditions of communication theory.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

Communication is a complex human process and models help us understand it by offering simplified representations of how messages move from one point to another. Models highlight selected elements such as sender, message, channel, receiver and feedback, so that the communication process can be described and studied systematically. Theories, in contrast, are analytical frameworks that explain why communication works in particular ways and how meaning, influence and understanding are produced in real situations. This unit introduces key communication models, including linear, interactive and transactional models, along with two influential named models, Lasswell's and Shannon and Weaver's. It also explains three important communication theory traditions, rhetoric, semiotic and phenomenological, which help students interpret communication as persuasion, sign processes and lived experience.

3.3 MEANING OF MODEL AND THEORY

A theory provides an abstract understanding of a process by offering a general explanation of how and why events occur. Hoover (1984) describes theory as "a set of inter-related propositions that suggest why events occur in the manner that they do".

Foss, Foss and Griffin (1999) explain theory as “a way of framing an experience or event; an effort to understand and account for something and the way it functions in the world”. Littlejohn (2002, p. 25) notes that “theories are not just things to be read and learned” because they remain “constantly evolving works”. In everyday life, people also develop personal theories, meaning informal ideas about how the world works, which guide how they interpret situations and decide how to act. In communication studies, the term communication theory may refer to one theory or to a group of related theories that explain communication from different perspectives.

The word “model” has roots in the French term *modèle*, the Italian *modello* and the Latin *modus*, meaning a measure or standard. A model is a representation of something real and complex, presented in a simplified form so that its key features can be examined more clearly. More specifically, a model is a schematic description of a system, theory, or phenomenon that outlines its known or inferred properties and supports further study of its characteristics. Communication models, therefore, aim to represent the structure and essential components of the communication process, such as who communicates, what is communicated, through which channels and how messages are received and interpreted.

3.4 COMMUNICATION MODELS

A communication model is a systematic and abstract representation of a communication process, designed to highlight key elements and relationships. Models are useful because they make it easier to examine communication events, compare situations and identify where and why communication may fail. In distance learning and media studies, models are often used to provide a common language for describing communication, such as identifying who the sender is, what the message contains, which channel is used, what kinds of noise interfere and how feedback changes outcomes.

3.4.1 TYPES

Three models of communication are

LINEAR MODEL

The linear model presents communication as a one-way movement from sender to receiver, usually described through steps such as encoding, transmission through a channel and decoding at the destination. In linear thinking, communication is treated as having a clear beginning and end, which fits situations where the sender primarily transmits and the receiver primarily receives. This approach is helpful for analysing announcements, public notices, or mass messages where immediate response is not central, although modern media often complicates this by allowing audience interaction. A key limitation of linear views is that they underplay feedback and treat the receiver as relatively passive, even though in practice, audiences interpret messages actively.

In the Indian context, linear communication can be seen in government advisories printed in newspapers, one-way radio bulletins or wall posters during public health

campaigns. Such messages aim for clarity and reach, but their effectiveness depends on whether receivers decode them as intended, which may vary by language, literacy and local context. This highlights why even linear communication requires attention to audience characteristics and possible barriers such as semantic misunderstandings and environmental distractions.

INTERACTIVE MODEL

The interactive model improves on the linear model by introducing feedback from receiver to sender, making communication a two-way process. In this model, communicators take turns as sender and receiver and responses can be verbal or non-verbal, immediate or delayed. The interactive model also emphasizes the importance of shared fields of experience, meaning that communication becomes more effective when participants have a common language, background knowledge or cultural reference points.

Interactive communication is common in classroom settings, interviews and many journalistic formats where a message is followed by audience reaction or questioning. For example, a radio phone-in programme or a moderated online discussion may involve structured back-and-forth where participants respond after receiving a message. However, a limitation is that it can still treat sending and receiving as sequential rather than simultaneous, even though real-life interactions often involve overlapping cues and instant adjustments.

TRANSACTIONAL MODEL

The transactional model treats communication as a dynamic and continuous process in which people simultaneously send and receive messages. It views communication elements as interdependent, meaning the roles of sender and receiver cannot be fully separated and meaning is shaped in real time through interaction. The transactional view also gives greater importance to context, including personal systems such as beliefs and attitudes and shared systems such as culture, institutions and social settings.

Transactional communication is particularly useful for analysing interpersonal communication, group discussions, newsroom teamwork and conflict situations where multiple cues operate at once. In such settings, even silence, facial expression or tone can function as messages that shape how the conversation proceeds. This model also helps explain why misunderstandings persist even when words seem clear, because interpretation is influenced by prior experiences and the environment in which communication occurs.

3.4.2 MODELS

i) ARISTOTLE'S MODEL (300 B.C.)

Aristotle developed a communication model mainly for public speaking and persuasion. It focuses on three core elements, speaker, speech and audience and assumes the sender is active while the audience is largely passive. A practical implication is that the speaker must analyse the audience and shape the speech accordingly, which is why this model is often linked with speeches, lectures and courtroom-style arguments.

ii) HAROLD LASSWELL'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Harold D. Lasswell, an American political scientist and communication theorist, authored *The Structure and Function of Communication in Society* (1948). In formulating his model, Lasswell drew on the classical rhetorical tradition but made the channel or medium a clear part of communication analysis. Unlike Aristotle, whose observations focused mainly on orators and face-to-face public speaking, Lasswell examined how messages circulate through mass media and influence audiences. On this basis, he proposed that an act of communication can be described by answering a set of guiding questions, beginning with the communicator and ending with the effect of the message.

Harold Lasswell described communication through a well-known set of guiding questions: who says what, in which channel, to whom and with what effect. This model is valuable because it encourages systematic analysis of the communicator, message content, medium, audience and outcomes. Lasswell says communication has three functions

- surveillance of the environment,
- correlation of parts of society,
- cultural transmission between generations.

In practical media analysis, Lasswell's model helps students examine a news report by identifying the communicator, the framing of content, the platform used, the intended audience and measurable effects such as attitude change or behavioural response. The model is often criticised because it does not explicitly include feedback and does not highlight noise or distortions that affect interpretation. Even so, it remains a strong starting point for analysing persuasive communication, political messaging and public communication campaigns.

iii) SHANNON AND WEAVER MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

One of the earliest and most influential communication models was developed by Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver at Bell Laboratories and presented in 1949. The features of this model are:

- A linear process.
- A simple model (Technical)
- Content/message is easy to identify but hard to solve (Semantic)
- Source is dominant factor/decision maker (Impact/Effectiveness)
- Noise, a disturbing factor (Impact/Effectiveness)

Critics opine that Shannon's model isn't really a model of communication. It is, instead, a model of the flow of information through a medium and an incomplete model that is far more applicable to the telephone or telegraph systems, than to other media. It suggests, for instance, a "push" model in which sources of information can inflict it on destinations. However, in the real world of media, destinations are self-selecting

"consumers" of information with the ability to select /turn off messages based on their interest, focus on one message in preference to others in message-rich environments. Shannon's model depicts transmission from a transmitter to a receiver as the primary activity of a medium. In the real world of media, messages are frequently stored for elongated periods of time and/or modified in some way before they are accessed by the "destination". The model suggests that communication within a medium is frequently direct and unidirectional, but in the real world of media, communication is seldom unidirectional and is often indirect.

iv) THEODORE M NEWCOMB'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION (1953)

Theodore Newcomb of the University of Michigan published, in 1953, "*An Approach to the Study of Communicative Acts*" which, later became known as Newcomb's model. The model of communication adopts a different approach to the communication process. The main purpose of this theory is to introduce the role of communication in a social relationship (society) and to maintain social equilibrium within the social system. *The message* is not shown as a separate entity in his diagram, but is implied by the use of directional arrows. He concentrates on the social purpose of communication, showing all communication as a means of sustaining relationships between people. Sometimes it's called an "ABX" model of communication, as it works in a triangular format or A-B-X system.

v) WILBUR SCHRAMM & OSGOOD MODEL OF COMMUNICATION (1954)

In an effort to rectify the earlier linear models of communication, Wilbur Schramm and Charles Osgood developed a Circular Model to show how communication works between two or a few persons (1954). It can happen within oneself (Intra -personal) or between two people (Inter- personal); each person acts as both sender and receiver. Wilbur Schramm stated that the communications process does not start and end somewhere, but is endless. Therefore, the Circular model is devoted to two actors who reciprocate in identical functions throughout: encoding, decoding and interpreting. Additionally, the model offers some explanation of semantic noise and interpersonal communication and how these might affect the communication process. The model (Figure 8) presented by Osgood and Schramm shows not only the transmission and hearing of a message, but also offers explanations on how it can be perceived and understood. The process of understanding what has been said can vary widely from person to person as there will always be a degree of semantic noise, such as cultural differences, background, socioeconomics, education and values.

The merits of the model are that: it is dynamic, includes redundancy, the same person is both sender and receiver, feedback is an integral part of the process and so assumes communication to be circular in nature. The limitation is that it does not talk about semantic noise.

vi) GERBNER'S MODEL (1956)

George Gerbner was a professor at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, and a pioneer in communication research. In 1956, he proposed a general-purpose model that highlights the dynamic nature of communication and the factors that affect the reliability of messages.

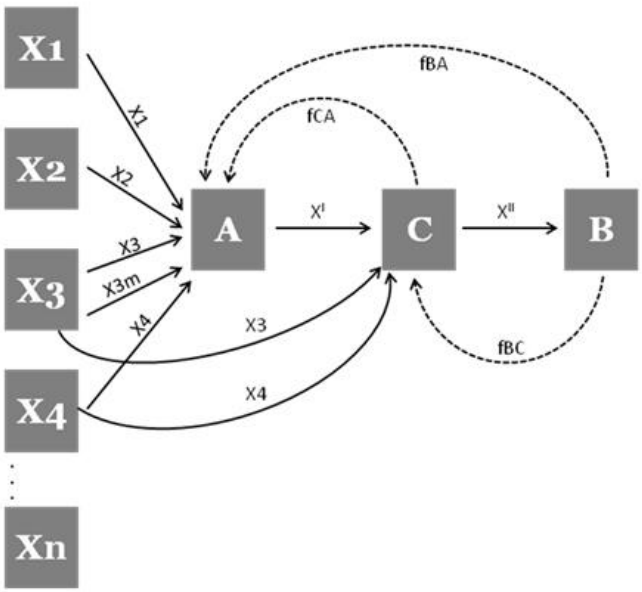
It explains that communication is not just sending a fixed message from a sender to a receiver, but a process in which **reality is first perceived and then described**. It starts with an event (E) in the real world, but a person or even a machine (M) can notice only part of it, so what is perceived (E1) is not exactly the same as the full event.

After perceiving the event, M creates a message about it and shapes it into a signal or statement (often written as SE, meaning form and content of the message). When this message reaches another person (M2), they again interpret it through their own perspective and the meaning may change further as it is passed on. In simple terms, Gerbner's model shows that communication is influenced by perception, selection and context, so what people communicate is often a constructed version of reality rather than the complete reality itself.

vii) WESTLEY AND MACLEAN MODEL (1957)

- Westley and MacLean proposed this model in 1957 and argued that communication begins when a person receives messages from the surroundings. The model is often used to explain mass communication because it includes multiple messages from the environment and the role of a gatekeeper.
- **X1, X2, X3 … Xn** represent different events or items of information, such as news items and articles.
- **A** is the client or source (for example, an organisation or person who provides information or wants something communicated).
- **C** is the gatekeeper (for example, a newspaper organisation or editor) who selects and shapes what will be communicated.

Westley and MacLean's Model of Communication



- **B** is the audience or reader who receives the message selected by the gatekeeper.

- The model includes feedback loops:
- **fBC** is feedback from the reader/audience (B) to the gatekeeper (C).
- **fCA** is feedback from the gatekeeper (C) to the client/source (A).
- **fBA** is feedback from the reader/audience (B) to the client/source (A)
- It accounts for **feedback**, **interpersonal** and **mass communication**.
- It is described as **predictive** and **very descriptive**.
- It accounts for **non-binary interactions**, meaning it can still work when communication involves more than two sources.
- The model is **two-dimensional** and cannot account for multi-dimensional communication situations that involve broader context and a wide range of messages.

viii) BERLO'S SMCR MODEL (1960)

- Berlo's model explains communication through four main elements: Source, Message, Channel, Receiver (SMCR).
- The model assumes that communication begins when the source has ideas, needs, intentions, information and a purpose to communicate, which are expressed as a message.
- The source encodes ideas into a meaningful message, sends it through a channel and the receiver decodes it to understand the meaning.
- Sourceand receiver are influenced by: communication skills, attitudes, knowledge and social and cultural systems.
- Channel is influenced by the five senses: seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting.
- Message is influenced by: structure, elements, content, code and treatment.
- The model is considered an improvement over earlier models because it links communication to behavioural aspects and highlights encoding and decoding difficulties.
- The model's strengths include: it can cover oral, written, and electronic message sources; it treats the message as central; it recognises receivers as key targets; and it explains encoding and decoding as major communication problems.
- The source notes weaknesses such as: it can overemphasise message manipulation and technical accuracy and it may imply human communication works like machine communication, even though misunderstandings can occur due to attitudes, beliefs and values.

ix) DANCE'S HELICAL MODEL (1967)

- Frank Dance proposed the Helical Model of communication in 1967.

- A helix is a three-dimensional spiral (like a smooth curve that moves upward), so the model is non-linear.
    - Communication starts slowly at a small point, where communicators share only a small amount of information with only a few people.
    - As time passes, communication develops and expands, moving upward in a back-and-forth circular motion and forming bigger circles.
    - The model highlights the role of time—communication grows with experience and does not remain the same.
    - The file notes that this model became the subject of several experimental research studies , but it may also face the problem of over-simplification.

x) BARNLUND'S TRANSACTIONAL MODEL (1970)

- Barnlund's model is a transactional model of communication, meaning communication is seen as an ongoing process where people are connected through interaction.
- The basic premise is that individuals are simultaneously sending and receiving messages, so each person is both a speaker and a listener at the same time.
- It treats communication as a transaction, not as a one-way transfer from sender to receiver.
- The model emphasizes that communication happens within shared systems (for example, common culture or common setting) and personal systems (such as family, religion, friends).
- It also explains that responses depend on factors like a person's background, prior experiences, attitudes, cultural beliefs and self-esteem.
- The model highlights that communication is dynamic and changes over time and that the elements of communication are interdependent.

xi) DEVITO'S INTERACTIVE MODEL (2003)

- DeVito's interactive model is derived from the information-processing models of the 1960s.Its elements includefeedback, medium/channel and noise.
- The model presents communication as an interactive process between sender and receiver rather than a one-way flow.
- It includes eight components: Sender, Receiver, Message, Channel, Coder (Encoder) and Decoder, Context, Feedback and Noise
- Encoding/decoding explains how a message is put into symbols (words/signs) and then interpreted by the receiver.
- Context refers to the situation/background in which communication takes place and affects meaning.

- Feedback is the receiver's response that returns to the sender and helps adjust communication.

- Noise means any interference or disturbance that can disrupt the message and understanding.

xii) DAVIS FOULGER'S ECOLOGICAL MODEL (2004)

Davis Foulger introduced his ecological model in 2002 and restructured it in 2004.

- The model is described as an elaboration of Lasswell's classic outline of communication.
- It presents communication through relationships among people, messages, language, and media and the communication they enable
- The model explains that communication happens between people as creators and consumers of messages.
- Communication between people is mediated by three constructs, where language is used to build messages within media.
- It shows that messages are created and consumed and that people both produce and interpret messages using language.
- Languages and media are shown as both learned and created.
- The model asserts that communication occurs at the intersection of four fundamental constructs:
- People (creators and consumers)
- Messages (what is created and consumed).
- Language (used to create and interpret messages).
- Media (the environment or system within which messages are produced and consumed).

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Aristotle's communication model is primarily a ……. model focusing on public speaking from speaker to audience.
Q 2: Lasswell's famous formula, "Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect," represents a ……. model of communication.
Q 3: The Shannon–Weaver model is sometimes called the ……. model because it emphasizes technical transmission and noise in a linear process.
Q 4: State Lasswell's key questions for describing an act of communication.
Q 5: Schramm–Osgood's circular model adds the key concept of ……., showing that each participant alternates roles as sender and receiver.

3.5 COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Communication theories provide conceptual frameworks that explain how communication produces meaning, shapes relationships, and influences behaviour. Unlike models, which often map steps or components, theories propose broader explanations about why communication functions in particular ways and what counts as effective communication in different contexts. One influential way to organise communication theory is to view it as a field containing multiple traditions, including rhetorical, semiotic and phenomenological traditions. These traditions are useful because they encourage students to examine communication from different angles rather than assuming one single explanation fits all situations.

3.5.1 Rhetoric Theory

Rhetorical theory is often traced to ancient Sicily, where the removal of a dictator led to legal disputes over land ownership. In that setting, people had to argue their own cases in court rather than rely on lawyers, which created a need to learn persuasive speaking. Corax is commonly credited with an early formal statement of rhetorical theory through his treatise *The Art of Rhetoric*, written to guide litigants in these disputes. A central idea in this early approach was probability: when definite facts are unavailable, a speaker should build a believable case by linking claims to what seems generally likely.

In contemporary communication studies, rhetorical theory is not restricted to courtroom speech or classical public speaking. It examines symbol use in many settings, including everyday interpersonal interaction, public discourse, social movements and mediated communication, and it also considers visual and non-verbal forms such as design, architecture, dress and performance. Many rhetorical theorists treat persuasion as a basic feature of human communication because messages can influence others even when influence is not the speaker’s explicit aim. At the same time, the tradition includes ongoing debates about how persuasion works in new contexts and whether persuasion is always appropriate, which has encouraged interest in alternative approaches such as invitational rhetoric. Overall, rhetorical theory remains closely connected to questions of how communication contributes to social change.

3.5.2 Semiotic Theory

Semiotic theory is concerned with how signs create meaning in communication. The term “semiotics” entered English through John Locke (1690), who used it to refer to a “doctrine of signs”, linked to the broader idea of semiosis or the action of signs. In Locke’s time, a related term, “semeiotics” already existed for the medical study of symptoms, that is, natural signs.

Although interest in sign systems can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, modern semiotic study extends across many areas such as literature, social structures, visual arts, ritual, myth, pedagogy and gesture. Semiotics is, therefore, interdisciplinary and is used in fields ranging from anthropology and philosophy to art history and media studies. In simple terms, it examines how people interpret phenomena, organise

meaning in their minds and share that meaning through language and other sign systems, including non-verbal signals that may operate at unconscious or subliminal levels.

3.5.3 Phenomenological Theory

Phenomenological theory stresses that people actively construct their own reality through perception and interpretation. Each person's perspective is shaped by learned expectations and these expectations form personal constructs that guide how individuals anticipate events and behave in everyday life.

Within this tradition, Carl Rogers' self-theory highlights self-actualization as an inherent tendency toward growth and explains behaviour through the relationship between the actual self and the ideal self. When these self-concepts do not match, or when ideals conflict with lived reality, difficulties can arise in adjustment and communication. Abraham Maslow also treated self-actualization as a human need and linked it to a hierarchy in which basic needs must be reasonably satisfied before higher needs become central.

Overall, phenomenological theories present an optimistic view of human potential, giving importance to subjective experience and meaning. At the same time, critics argue that this approach may understate biological and situational influences and that some concepts are difficult to test empirically, making the tradition stronger for description than for prediction.

2 3.6 LET US SUM UP

Communication models and theories are essential tools for studying communication. Models act as simplified representations of the communication process and help in identifying core elements making it possible to examine the strengths and limitations of communication in real settings.

Major approaches to communication are often explained through the progression of models, moving from linear transmission to interactive feedback-based communication and finally to transactional communication. Two influential models are commonly used to strengthen analysis. Lasswell's framework for analysing communicator, message, medium, audience and effects, and Shannon and Weaver's model that foregrounds technical transmission and the role of noise.

Rhetorical theory examines communication as persuasion and strategic message design. Semiotic theory explains communication as signification, where signs and symbols create meaning. Phenomenological theory focuses on lived experience and interpretation, emphasizing how meaning emerges through human perception and interaction. Together, these perspectives build analytical skills for understanding media communication and everyday communication more clearly.

O 3.7 FURTHER READING

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K 3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: Linear
Answer to Q 2: Linear
Answer to Q 3: Mathematical
Answer to Q 4: Lasswell's model asks: who says what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effect.
Answer to Q 5:.feedback

M 3.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short questions

Q 1: Define a communication model and theory.
Q 2: Write a note on the linear model of communication and its limitations.
Q 3: What is Devito's Interactive Model?
Q 4: Write a note on Rhetoric Theory.

B. Long questions

Q 1: Explain the interactive model of communication and discuss the role of the field of experience.
Q 2: Describe the Shannon and Weaver model.
Q 3: Discuss the key ideas of semiotic theory.
Q 4: Discuss rhetorical semiotic, and phenomenological traditions of communication theory.

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UNIT 4: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives
4.2 Introduction
4.3 Effective Communication
4.4 The 7c's of Effective Communication
4.5 Logical Argument
4.6 Persuasion Techniques
4.7 Tools of Communication
4.8 Let Us Sum Up
4.9 Further Readings
4.10 Answers To Check Your Progress
4.11 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- define effective communication and describe the basic process.
- explain the importance of effective communication.
- identify and apply the 7C's of effective communication in both oral and written messages.
- describe persuasion techniques based on ethos, pathos and logos and use them ethically in communication..

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is at the heart of successful study, work and service in today's world. We will learn how to share information, ideas and feelings so clearly that others understand them exactly as intended and can respond appropriately. It shows why effective communication is vital in professional, academic and library environments for good service delivery, smooth teamwork and clear user guidance. The unit introduces the 7C's as practical guidelines for framing messages and it explains how logical argument and persuasion techniques help us present our ideas with reasons, evidence and credibility.

4.3 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, or feelings in a way that the message received and understood by the recipient is the same as the message intended by the sender. It is a two-way cycle that involves:

- **Sending** a clear message (encoding).
- **Receiving** and successfully interpreting the message (decoding).
- **Feedback** or response that confirms the message was understood correctly and allows for clarification if needed.

Effective communication achieves its specific purpose while leaving both parties satisfied with the interaction. It relies on clarity, active listening and mutual understanding.

Importance in Professional, Academic and Library

i. Service Delivery

- **User Satisfaction:** Clear communication ensures users find the resources they need quickly, reducing frustration.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Active listening and empathy help resolve user complaints or misunderstandings calmly and efficiently.
- **Efficiency:** Accurate information exchange prevents errors (e.g., incorrect book reservations or research guidance), saving time for both staff and users.

ii. Teamwork (Professional and Academic)

- **Collaboration:** Open and transparent communication builds trust, allowing teams to work together smoothly towards shared goals.
- **Productivity:** Clear instructions and feedback prevent wasted effort and rework caused by misunderstandings.
- **Engagement:** When team members feel heard and valued through effective communication, morale and commitment increase.

iii. User Guidance

- **Clarity of Instruction:** In academic settings, communicating complex ideas simply and concisely helps students or library users grasp new concepts effectively.
- **Supportive Environment:** Empathetic communication creates a welcoming atmosphere where users feel comfortable seeking help and guidance.
- **Digital Literacy:** As communication shifts online, effective use of digital tools (email, chat) ensures users receive timely and accurate support remotely.

4.4 THE 7C'S OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The 7C's of communication are used as a checklist to make sure that messages in meetings, reports, emails, presentations and conversations are well framed and clear. These 7C's are applicable to both written and oral communication. When the 7C's are followed, the chance that the receiver understands the message as intended becomes higher.

i. **CLARITY**

Clarity means focusing on one specific message or goal at a time instead of trying to achieve too much at once. A clear message is easy to understand because the sender uses exact, concrete and appropriate words. Clarity improves when thoughts

and ideas are well organized, which strengthens the message's meaning and makes it easier for the receiver to understand.

Features of clarity

- It makes understanding the concept easy.
- It makes use of exact, concrete and appropriate words.
- The meaning of the message is enhanced due to the clarity of thoughts and ideas
- **Example**
  Bad example: "Hi Ravi, I wanted to write you a quick note about David, who is working in your department. He's a great asset. I would like to talk to you more about him whenever you have time."
  This message is unclear because it does not identify which David, explain what David is doing, or state the purpose of the email.
- **Good example:** "Hi Ravi, I wanted to write you a quick note about David Kedar, who's working in your department. In recent weeks, he's helped the research cell. We've got a new research project which needs to be planned urgently. I'd appreciate speaking with you about this. When is it best to call you to discuss this further?"
  This is clearer because the reader gets specific details and a clear purpose.

ii. **CONCISE**

Concise means communicating what you want to convey in the least possible words. While being concise, one should not forget the other C's of communication. Concise writing is important because it reduces unnecessary words and makes the message easier to read or listen to.

Features of concise communication

A concise message has these features:

- It is cost-saving and time-saving.
- It is comprehensible and more appealing to the audience.
- It is non-repetitive in nature.
- It highlights the main message by avoiding excessive and needless words.
- It avoids verbosity and verbatim.
- It provides the essential message in limited words.

Example

Bad example: "I mean to say that I was not feeling well, basically, I mean, I had a bad throat and cough. Literally, I could not get up and you see that's the reason I couldn't attend yesterday's meeting."

This is not concise because it uses filler words and repeats meaning.

Good example: "I couldn't attend yesterday's meeting due to my ill health and a bad throat."

i. **CONCRETE**

Concrete communication means being clear and particular, not fuzzy and general. Concreteness strengthens confidence because the receiver gets a specific meaning. A concrete message also reduces misunderstanding because it is supported by clear details.

Features of concrete communication

- It makes use of clear words.
- Concrete messages are not misunderstood and misinterpreted.
- It is supported with clear and specific facts and figures.
- **Example**
  Bad example: "The Reference booklet will save your time every day."

This message is not concrete because it lacks vivid detail and does not tell why it will help.

Good example: "How much time do you spend every day searching for your reference material? No more. Just take a complete Reference booklet and everything is handy and easy to access. It is offering knowledge at your doorsteps." This is more concrete because it creates clear images and a specific meaning for the audience.

iv. **CORRECT**

Correctness in communication means there are no grammatical and semantic errors. Correct communication also requires precision of facts and figures and the use of appropriate language. A correct message has a better impact and can boost confidence.

Features of correct communication

- The message is correct, exact and well-timed.
- It checks the exactness and precision of figures and facts used in the message.
- It uses appropriate and correct language.
- It boosts confidence when communication is correct.
- Correct messages have a better impact on the audience or readers.

Poor Example:

Our library service provides quick access to all kind of books and journals. Readers can borrow them any times they wants.

Good Example:

Our library service provides quick access to all kinds of books and journals. Readers can borrow them anytime they want.

The good example follows the principle of correctness because spelling, punctuation, and grammar are accurate; the subject -verb agreement is proper ("service provides," "Readers can borrow") and the sentences read smoothly and professionally.

v. **COHERENT**

Coherence means the message should be logical and properly linked so the receiver can follow it without confusion. Coherence supports understanding because ideas are not scattered and do not contradict each other. When coherence is missing, the receiver may get the information but still fail to understand the relationship between ideas.

Features of coherence

- The message supports correct interpretation because it reduces confusion and misunderstanding.
- It helps the receiver understand the message in the intended way because ideas follow a logical flow.

Example
A coherent message links purpose, details and action in one flow, as shown in the clear email example to Ravi, where identification, context, urgency and the request are logically connected.

Poor Example:

Our library offers online services. The weather is very hot in summer. You can also attend workshops sometimes.

Good Example:

Our library offers a range of online services. You can search the catalogue from home, renew your books online and attend virtual workshops on research skills.

The correct example is coherent because all the sentences relate to one main idea (online services) and each sentence adds a logically connected detail, instead of jumping to an unrelated topic.

vi. **COMPLETE**
Completeness means the communication must be complete with all figures and facts required by the receiver and it should convey the actual message. The sender must consider the receiver's mindset and convey the message accordingly. Complete communication reduces the need for follow-up messages and improves effectiveness.

Features of complete communication
The attached file lists the following features.

- Complete communication serves the purpose of the message.
- It develops the personality of the sender.
- It is cost -saving because the crucial message is sent in one go and extra messages are avoided.
- Overall, it is complete.

Example
Bad example: "Hi everyone, I just wanted to send you all a reminder about the meeting we are having tomorrow. Regards, Suman."

This message is incomplete because it does not mention purpose, time, or place.

Good example: "Hi everyone, I just wanted to remind you about the meeting on the educational project, which is scheduled tomorrow. It will be at 11:00 a.m. in the conference room. Please revert if you cannot attend. Regards, Suman."

vii. **COURTEOUS**
Courtesy means the message should respect the receiver and also show the

sender's proper expression. The sender should be sincerely polite, enthusiastic, judicious and reflective. Courteous communication helps avoid conflict and supports a positive work climate.

Features of courteous communication

- It considers both viewpoints and feelings of the receiver
- It is not partial.
- It is positive and focused on the audience.
- It uses words that show respect for the receiver.

Example
Bad example: "Dear Colleague, I want to bring to your notice that I do not appreciate the way you conduct meetings. There is hardly scope to others to express their viewpoints." This is not courteous and may create conflict and negative feelings.

Good example: "Dear Colleague, I would really appreciate the way you conduct meetings bringing up new and vibrant ideas. But a small request that next time when you conduct meetings please give little extra to others so that we too can add up to your expertise."

4.5 LOGICAL ARGUMENT

The University of Pittsburgh's Department of Communication defines an argument as "a claim backed by reasons that are supported by evidence." A logical argument in communication is an audience-oriented way of presenting a claim (conclusion) and supporting it with reasons (premises) so that the conclusion follows from, or is made more believable by, the reasons given. In practice, one makes the main point clear, provide supporting reasons and evidence and connect them logically so the listener can see why the conclusion should be accepted.

A logical argument generally has these parts:

- **Conclusion or claim:** The main point you want the audience to accept.
- **Premises or reasons:** Statements that support the claim and answer "Why do you say that?"
- **Inference:** The reasoning step that explains how the premises support the conclusion.

Logical arguments can be evaluated by checking whether the premises are relevant and whether they support the conclusion without reasoning errors.

There are five highly relevant characteristics of an argument:

1. Argumentation is a social process.
2. Argumentation aims to gain adherence from an audience.
3. Argument involves critical thinking.
4. Argument is a discovery.
5. Argumentation is a collaborative activity.

Logical argument is used as a practical tool to make communication, decision-making and problem-solving more effective and rational. It is mainly used for:

- **Persuasion and gaining adherence:** To convince an audience to accept a claim like a policy, idea or decision as it is supported by clear reasons and credible evidence, not just emotion or authority.
- **Critical thinking and evaluation:** To examine claims, detect fallacies, weigh alternatives and judge which position is stronger or more reasonable.
- **Discovery and learning:** To explore new ideas, test assumptions and refine or change one's position through reasoned debate and dialogue.
- **Collaborative problem-solving:** To help groups reach better decisions by sharing reasons and evidence, comparing options and moving toward solutions that others can justify and support.
- **Clarifying complex issues:** To organize information (premises, evidence, conclusion) so that complicated topics become understandable and logically ordered.

The logical argument is used whenever one needs peoplenot only to understand a position but to see why accepting it is reasonable and justified.

4.6 PERSUASION TECHNIQUES

The American Management Association (AMA) defines persuasion techniques through the lens of Aristotle's three pillars:

- **Ethos (Credibility):** "Ethos is the part of persuasion that deals with the character, expertise, or ethics of the speaker."
- **Pathos (Emotion):** "Pathos is the emotional link between the presenter and the audience."
- **Logos (Logic):** "Logos is the logical reasoning behind the speaker's arguments."

Persuasion Techniques in Communication

Persuasion techniques are methods used to influence attitudes or actions by making a message more acceptable and compelling to an audience. A common way to understand persuasion is through ethos, pathos and logos:

a. Ethos – Credibility

Ethos means using one's character and trustworthiness to persuade. The ethos is used when one:

- Shows their knowledge and experience (qualifications, examples from practice).
- Behave honestly and fairly, keeping promises and admitting limits.
- Use respectful language and a professional tone.

Use:

- In class or presentations, mention sources, experience or position.
- In the workplace, build a reputation for reliability so people trust your suggestions.

Example:

"A doctor with 15 years of experience in public health recommends this vaccination program based on WHO guidelines."

b. Pathos – Emotion

Pathos means appealing to the audience's feelings and values. The use of pathos is done when one:

- Use stories, examples or images that create empathy or concern.
- Choose words and tone that match the audience's hopes, fears or values (safety, family, future, fairness).
- Show that they genuinely care about their situation.

Use:

- In campaigns (health, environment, social issues) to motivate action.
- In teams, to encourage support, unity or understanding during change.

Example:
"Imagine a student who wants to study but cannot find the right book in time; with a better library system, that student gets a fair chance to succeed."

c. Logos – Logic

Logos means using clear reasoning, facts, and evidence. The use of logos is done when one:

- Present a clear claim and support it with data, examples or comparisons.
- Organize points in a logical order.
- Avoid contradictions and obvious errors in reasoning.

Use:

- In reports, proposals and academic writing to justify recommendations.
- In meetings to compare options and choose the best one based on evidence.

Example:
"If we extend library hours by two hours daily, we can serve about 120 more students per day, which improves resource usage and student satisfaction."

In communication, effective persuasion usually combines logical structure (clear claim and reasons) with audience adaptation and credibility, because audiences accept arguments more readily when they find the reasons compelling and the speaker trustworthy.

How to use all three together

In real communication, effective persuasion usually mixes all three:

- Start with **ethos**: briefly show why oneis a reliable person to speak on this topic.
- Use **logos**: clearly present ones main point with reasons, facts, and examples.
- Support with **pathos**: connect the issue to the audience's needs and feelings.

Using these techniques carefully and ethically helps one not only to be heard, but to help others see why the idea is reasonable and worth accepting.

4.7 TOOLS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication tools refer to the mediums or devices used to transmit information to a receiver within an organization. Selecting the right tool is crucial for effective communication, as an inappropriate choice can diminish the message's impact. If the

wrong tool is used, the message may lose its value, be delayed, or create confusion. For example, giving a very serious or sensitive message through a casual text message may not be appropriate.

The choice of tool should be based on the audience's quality and quantity. **"**Quality of audience**"** refers to the receiver's knowledge and intellectual capacity. For example, if the audience is highly educated or technical, one may use detailed reports, emails or presentations.

While ***"quantity"*** refers to the number of recipients, for a few people, you can use meetings, phone calls or small group discussions; for a large audience loudspeaker, email or notice can be used.

Organizations have a variety of communication tools available, the suitability of which depends on whether the communication is oral or written.

- **Oral tools:** face-to-face talks, meetings, phone calls, video calls, presentations, group discussions.
- **Written tools:** letters, emails, circulars, notices, reports, memos, manuals, SMS and messages on apps.

E-mail

E-mail refers to message sent over computer and includes everything from casual notes to friends to multimedia presentations sent across the world. Through email, message can be sent to a person without making direct contact or knowing where that person is located. Subscribers to electronic mail services are called users and as a user, that person can access messages on theirsystem from their home, office, hotel etc.

Messaging and Chats

Messaging and Chat applications are electronic communication tools that facilitate real-time, text-based conversation between two or more individuals. Unlike email, which is often used for longer, more formal messages, chatting is designed for quick, short and informal exchanges of information. It creates a conversational environment similar to face-to-face interaction but in a written format. This tool is most effective when immediate feedback is required or when simple questions need to be resolved quickly without the formality of a memo or letter. In modern organizations, enterprise chat applications allow teams to collaborate instantly irrespective of their physical location. However, care must be taken as the informal nature of chats can sometimes lead to misinterpretation if professional language is not maintained.

Discussion Forums

Discussion forums are digital platforms where participants can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. Unlike chats which happen in real-time, forums are generally asynchronous, meaning the sender and receiver do not need to be online at the same time. A discussion is started by posting a topic or a question and others respond with their comments or solutions, creating a "thread" of information. This tool is highly valuable for knowledge sharing, troubleshooting complex technical issues and brainstorming ideas where detailed thought is required before responding. It serves as a permanent record of the discussion, allowing employees to search for and reference past solutions to problems.

Social Media Applications

Social media applications refer to internet-based platforms that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. In the context of business communication, these tools are utilized for external communication to reach a vast audience for marketing, brand building and customer service, as well as for internal employee engagement. It is a powerful tool because it allows for two-way communication; the organization can transmit information to the public and the public can provide immediate feedback through comments, likes and shares. The selection of the specific social media platform depends on the target audience and the nature of the content, whether it is professional networking, visual storytelling or brief news updates. Effective use of social media requires a strategic approach to maintain the organization's public image.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Fill-in-the-blank

a. Effective communication is a ……. process in which the message received and understood is the same as the message intended by the sender.
b. The 7 C's of effective communication are clarity, conciseness, concreteness, correctness, coherence, ……. and courtesy.
c. In effective communication, the two-way cycle includes encoding, decoding and ……. to confirm understanding.
d. A logical argument is a claim backed by reasons that are supported by ……..
e. Ethos, pathos, and logos are three pillars of ……. techniques in communication.

2 4.8 LET US SUM UP

Effective communication means sharing information, ideas, or feelings so clearly that the receiver understands the message exactly as the sender intended. It is a two-way process that includes sending a clear message, interpreting it correctly and giving feedback to confirm understanding. Good communication is essential in professional, academic and library settings for efficient service delivery, teamwork and user guidance. The 7 C's clarity, conciseness, concreteness, correctness, coherence, completeness and courtesy act as a checklist to make messages clear and effective. Logical argument and persuasion techniques (ethos, pathos, logos) help structure messages with strong reasons and evidence so that others see why a conclusion is reasonable. Communication tools such as meetings, emails, chats, forums and social media must be chosen carefully based on the audience and purpose. Using each tool appropriately supports quick, accurate and respectful information sharing in organizations.

O 4.9 FURTHER READING

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K 4.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1:

a. two-way
b. completeness
c. feedback
d. evidence
e. persuasion

M 4.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Ethos focuses on the _____, expertise or ethics of the speaker.

Q 2: Messaging and chat applications are best suited for quick, informal exchanges that need _____ feedback.

Q 3: Discussion forums are usually _____, meaning participants do not have to be online at the same time.

Short questions

Q 1: What is effective communication? How is it a two-way process?

Q 2: List any four of the 7 C's of effective communication. Discuss each in brief.

Q 3: What is logical argument?

Q 4: Define ethos, pathos and logos in persuasion.

Long questions

Q 1: Explain the 7 C's of effective communication with suitable examples.

Q 2: What is a logical argument? Describe its components and discuss its uses.

Q 3: Discuss persuasion techniques in communication. Give suitable examples.

Q 4: What are communication tools? Explain the limitations of digital tools.

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UNIT 5: STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives
5.2 Introduction
5.3 Digital Divide
    5.3.1 Types and Levels of Digital Divide
    5.3.2 Measuring Digital Divide and Digital Inclusion
5.4 Economic Structure and Digital Divide
5.5 Social Structure
5.6 Educational Structure
5.7 Cultural Structure
5.8 Political Structure
5.9 Psychological Dimension
5.10 Role of Libraries and Information Centres
5.11 Let Us Sum Up
5.12 Answers to Check Your Progress
5.13 Further Readings
5.14 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- explain the concept of the digital divide and its main types and levels.
- describe how the structure of society (economic, social, educational, cultural, political, psychological) shapes digital inclusion and exclusion.
- discuss how the digital divide affects access to knowledge, education, work and civic participation.
- analyse the role of libraries and information centres in reducing different dimensions of the digital divide.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Society is organised through institutions and relationships that shape people's opportunities, choices and life outcomes. Economic systems, social hierarchies, education, culture, political processes and individual psychological factors together form the structure of society. In contemporary society, information and communication technologies have become basic channels for information and communication. Unequal access to these technologies therefore, creates a new form of structural inequality called the digital divide.

Public libraries are described as local gateways to knowledge that support education, inclusion and participation in society. They are expected to serve all members of the community without discrimination. This gives libraries and information centres a key role in confronting the digital divide, especially for groups who are disadvantaged by social and economic structures.

5.3 DIGITAL DIVIDE

The term digital divide describes the fact that the world can be divided into people who have and people who do not have, access to and the capability to use modern information technologies such as the telephone, television and the internet. This divide affects the economy, education and information access and has become a major concern for governments and citizens. It exists between cities and rural areas, between the educated and the uneducated, between economic classes and between more and less industrially developed nations.

This divide creates uneven opportunities across society and can influence economic participation, educational achievement and access to information and services. The digital divide is visible in several forms, including differences between urban and rural communities, between educated and less educated groups, between higher and lower income groups and between more industrially developed and less developed regions and countries. Because of these wide-ranging effects, bridging the digital divide has become an important concern for governments, educational institutions and information organisations.

Definition

OECD (2001) explains the digital divide as the gap between individuals, households, businesses and regions at different socio-economic levels in terms of their chances to access information and communication technologies (ICTs) and to use the internet. It highlights that this gap exists both within a country and between countries.

Cullen (2003) describes the digital divide as a metaphor for the perceived disadvantage of those who either are unable, or do not choose, to make use of ICT in their daily life.Taken together, these definitions show that society can be broadly divided into two groups: those who have access to ICT and the skills to use it and those who do not. This gap is often seen between rural and urban areas, rich and poor groups, educated and less educated people and developing and developed countries. The digital divide can also be linked to differences in gender, race, location, economic position, disability and digital skills. Overall, the divide exists at many levels, such as global, regional, national and state levels.

5.3.1 Types and Levels of Digital Divide

Although the digital divide is often spoken of as one gap, in reality, it has several types and operates at multiple levels. Understanding these types and levels helps in designing more effective responses.

(a) Major types of digital divide

1. **Access divide**
   This divide exists between those who have physical access to ICT infrastructure (computers, telephones, internet connections) and those who do not. Reasons include lack of infrastructure in rural or remote areas, high costs of devices and services and absence of supporting facilities such as electricity. Access divide is usually the first aspect discussed in policy debates.
2. **Skills and education divide**

Even where access is available, people need basic literacy, computer skills and information literacy to use ICT effectively. An education-based digital divide appears between educated and uneducated people, between students who learn ICT from early schooling and those who do not and between individuals who have opportunities for advanced training and those who lack such opportunities.

3. **Usage divide**
   Usage divide refers to differences in how and for what purposes people use ICT. Some individuals use the internet only occasionally and for limited functions, while others regularly use it for education, work, financial transactions and civic participation. Factors such as time, support from others and perceived relevance of online content influence usage.
4. **Economic divide**
   Economic divide is based on differences in income and wealth. Wealthier individuals and countries can more easily afford computers, smartphones, broadband connections and paid information resources. Poorer individuals and countries have less capacity to purchase and maintain ICT, resulting in unequal benefits from digital technologies.
5. **Linguistic and cultural divide**
   Where online content is mainly in a few dominant languages, people who do not know these languages face extra barriers. In India and South Asia, a small share of the population is fluent in English, yet most web content is in English or other foreign languages. Lack of local-language content and culturally relevant information reduces the usefulness of the internet for many communities.
6. **Physical disability divide**
   People with visual, hearing, or mobility impairments may be excluded if websites, software and devices are not designed for accessibility. Although screen readers and other assistive technologies exist, many web pages cannot be fully used by blind or visually impaired users.
7. **Infrastructure divides (telephone, electricity, transport, printing)**
   Low telephone connectivity, unreliable electricity, poor roads and limited printing and photocopying facilities restrict many people's ability to use computers, access the internet or obtain printed materials. Such infrastructural divides reinforce the digital divide, especially in rural and remote areas.

(b) Levels of digital divide

1. **Global level**
   At the global level, the digital divide appears between industrially developed nations and less developed nations. Developed countries in North America, Europe and parts of Asia have high telephone and computer ownership and internet penetration, while many African and Asian countries have very low levels. This is the global digital divide.
2. **National and regional level**
   Within a country, the divide may appear between richer and poorer states or regions, and between urban and rural areas. In India, for example, metropolitan cities and some IT-intensive states show high usage of ICT, whereas many rural districts and less developed states have limited infrastructure and lower levels of digital inclusion.
3. **Local and community level**
   At this level, differences can be seen between neighbourhoods that have good infrastructure and community facilities and those that do not. Public access

points such as telecentres, schools and libraries can reduce or widen local divides depending on their presence and quality.

4. **Household and individual level**
   Here, the divide appears between high-income and low-income households, between men and women, between younger and older adults and between able-bodied and disabled persons. Within one family, some members may be confident ICT users, while others are excluded because of a lack of education, free time or confidence.

5.3.2 Measuring Digital Divide and Digital Inclusion

Measuring the digital divide means assessing how far apart different groups are in terms of ICT access, use and skills. Measuring digital inclusion focuses on progress towards universal, affordable and meaningful access to ICT for all people. Measurement supports planning, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.

(a) Quantitative measures

Quantitative measures use numerical indicators to show differences between countries, regions, or groups. Typical questions include:

- To what extent has ICT spread in the country or region?
- Who uses computers and the internet and how frequently?
- What are the education and income levels of internet users?
- What proportion of the population uses advanced ICT applications such as e-commerce or e-learning?

Common quantitative indicators are:

- Number of computers, telephones and mobile phones per hundred inhabitants.
- Number of internet users per hundred inhabitants.
- Fixed and mobile broadband subscriptions.
- International bandwidth available.
- Number of secure web servers and e-commerce sites.
- Cost of internet access as a percentage of average income.

These indicators can be combined into composite indices that rate countries or regions on ICT development and digital inclusion.

(b) Qualitative and usage measures

Quantitative data are useful, but do not show how well people use technology or whether ICT improves their lives. Therefore, measurement also considers qualitative aspects such as:

- Frequency and duration of ICT use (daily, weekly, rarely).
- Places of use (home, workplace, school, public access points).
- Purposes of use (education, entertainment, work, communication, civic participation).
- Users' ability to search, evaluate and apply digital information.
- Users' confidence, perceived safety and satisfaction.

Surveys and e-readiness assessments that explore these aspects provide a more complete picture. It shows whether ICT is embedded in everyday life or remains marginal.

(c) Dimensions in digital inclusion indicators

Measures of digital inclusion often examine:

- **Access:** availability of devices and networks.
- **Affordability:** whether devices and connections are within financial reach.
- **Skills:** literacy, ICT skills and information literacy.
- **Usage:** range, depth and regularity of online activities.
- **Quality:** reliability, speed and usability of services.
- **Content and services:** presence of local-language, locally relevant and accessible content.

5.4 ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND DIGITAL DIVIDE

The economic structure of society includes income distribution, employment and access to resources such as housing, health services, education and technology. Digital access now functions as a key economic resource because jobs, markets and services depend on internet connectivity and digital devices.

In India, economic inequality combines with high connectivity costs, device costs and uneven infrastructure, leading to differences in digital participation between states and between rural and urban areas. At the global level, the 1999 United Nations Human Development Report highlighted the growing digital gap between rich and poor nations. On one side are information-rich nations, such as the United States, Sweden, Germany, Finland, and Japan, where household telephone connectivity is well over 90% and computer ownership is over 70%. On the other side is most of Africa, much of South America, large parts of Asia and countries such as China and Indonesia, where telephone connectivity is three percent or less, home computer ownership is around one to two percent and internet connectivity is even lower. This widening gap between information-rich nations of the North and information-poor nations of the South is an example of an economic digital divide at the global level.

5.5 SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Social structure refers to how society is organised through class, caste, gender, disability, region and social networks and these factors strongly influence who gets access to digital technologies and who is left out. The digital divide is therefore not only a technology gap but also a social gap, because existing inequalities often decide who can afford devices, who gets training and who has supportive environments to use ICT meaningfully.

Social exclusion can appear as limited access to internet infrastructure in rural or remote areas, limited opportunities for digital education and fewer public spaces where people can safely learn and use technology. In LIS, this situation is explained through the idea of information inequality, meaning unequal access to information sources, unequal ability to use information and unequal benefits gained from information. People may avoid seeking information even when services exist, because social context,

secrecy, perceived risk and trust shape information behaviour. This is important for the digital divide because providing connectivity alone may not close the gap if stigma, fear of embarrassment, or lack of trust prevents people from using digital services or asking for help.

Libraries and information centres reduce social exclusion by functioning as safe public spaces that provide internet access, guidance and digital literacy support, especially for underserved groups. The IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto emphasises equality of access and the need for public libraries to serve all community members, which directly supports libraries' role in narrowing digital divide outcomes. In practice, libraries help convert "access" into "use" by building trust, offering user support and creating inclusive services that consider local social barriers such as language, gender norms, disability access and rural constraints.

5.6 EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE

Educational structure covers access to schooling, quality of teaching, availability of learning resources and opportunities for lifelong learning and these factors shape who can benefit from education.Since education is a basic human need, unequal access to education creates a major divide between educated and non-educated groups, where the educated gain more power and opportunities. Socio-economic status strongly influences digital learning. The digital divide directly affects education because internet connectivity and devices are increasingly needed to access online learning materials, attend remote classes, submit assignments, apply for scholarships and use digital learning platforms.When students lack reliable connectivity or devices, educational inequality increases, because some learners can use digital resources daily while others are limited to occasional or no access.

In education, it is not only about access, but it also includes skills, as learners need basic ICT skills and information literacy to search, evaluate and use digital learning resources effectively. In India, the educational digital divide often overlaps with rural-urban differences, income differences and language barriers, which can limit access to quality online content and reduce performance and opportunities.

In India, literacy remains low compared to developed contexts and this produces an education-based digital divide. This divide is created by a lack of access to education, weak financial capacity, remote location, poor transport and safety issues for women.

In many urban schools, students are trained to use computers and the internet frequently, and they also have internet access at home due to better connectivity and economic advantages. Rural students, however, often have little or no access to computers and the internet, so a gap begins early in education. When students move to higher studies, those with earlier access can use relevant web content more easily, achieve better results and gain better prospects in life.

5.7 CULTURAL STRUCTURE

Cultural structure includes language, values, beliefs, traditions and shared meanings that shape communication, learning and what a community accepts as important knowledge. The digital divide has a cultural dimension as meaningful digital

participation relies on access to information in one's language and cultural context. When online information is mainly available in dominant languages, speakers of local or tribal languages face additional barriers even after getting internet access.

Linguistic and cultural divides appear when some ethnic or cultural groups have more access to ICTs than others and when the available information does not reflect local needs or practices. In India, less than ten percent of the population speaks fluent English, while more than 900 million Indians and about 1.2 billion South Asians speak other national languages. Because most websites in the world are in English or other foreign languages, a large part of the population cannot read and understand online content, so the internet has low priority or usefulness for them.

The absence of culturally relevant content adds complexity. There are only a small number of websites in Indian languages, although initiatives such as Technology Development for Indian Languages, the Digital Library of India, the Million Book Project and the National Mission on Libraries have begun to digitise and provide vernacular content. The scarcity of good, low-cost Indian language software remains a challenge.

Unequal digital access can reduce cultural participation by limiting access to cultural materials, limiting chances to document community heritage and limiting opportunities to share local knowledge online. In India, linguistic diversity makes this cultural digital divide more visible, because limited local-language content and limited language tools can reduce the usefulness of the internet for many users. Libraries reduce cultural barriers by building inclusive collections, supporting multilingual access in print and digital formats and guiding users to find reliable information in their preferred language. Community engagement and local partnerships help libraries identify culturally relevant content, support preservation priorities and design services that promote inclusion without imposing outside cultural preferences.

5.8 POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Political structure covers governance institutions, laws, rights and the processes through which citizens take part in public decision-making. As government services and information move online, the digital divide creates "participation gaps". People without reliable internet, devices, or skills may struggle to use online portals for applying for schemes, paying bills, tracking grievances or accessing official notifications.

A "democratic divide" exists between those who use new technologies to further political participation and those who do not. Online petitions, grievance redress platforms and digital consultations offer new forms of participation but are available mainly to digitally connected citizens. Differences in internet use by income, education, gender and geography suggest that unequal connectivity can lead to unequal ability to benefit from e-governance.

E-governance initiatives in India aim to reduce costs, delays and inefficiencies in service delivery through electronic systems. Examples include online bill payment, digital forms and access to government documents and data portals. These services can support transparency and the Right to Information, but only if citizens can reach and use them.

Libraries help reduce political exclusion by assisting users to locate and understand government information, use online portals and complete digital forms. Media and information literacy support in libraries helps users to evaluate political content, recognise bias and distinguish reliable information from rumours or disinformation. Outreach to rural residents, low-income users, older adults and first-time digital users is essential to ensure that they can use civic digital services effectively and exercise their rights.

5.9 PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

The psychological dimension includes motivation, confidence, identity, stress and trust and these factors shape how people search for, accept and use information. The digital divide has a psychological side because exclusion is not only about a lack of devices or connectivity; it also includes fear of technology, low self-confidence and anxiety about making mistakes while using digital services. People who are new to the internet may avoid online platforms if they expect social judgement or embarrassment, which can reduce their willingness to learn and practice digital skills.

Information seeking depends on perceived risk and trust, not just the availability of information.Chatman explains that people in “outsider” situations may limit information seeking because of fear of exposure, low trust and social norms that encourage secrecy and staying within a small trusted world.

Libraries can reduce these psychological barriers by offering a supportive environment, patient guidance and structured digital literacy training so that first-time users build confidence through practice.Trust-building services, such as respectful user support, privacy awareness and inclusive outreach are important because they encourage hesitant users to seek help and continue learning rather than withdrawing from digital participation.

5.10 ROLE OF LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES

Digital libraries and modern information services play a substantial role in overcoming the digital divide, because they offer opportunities for information access regardless of geography. Governments and institutions have invested in digital infrastructures, projects such as the Digital Library of India and the National Mission on Libraries and library networks like INFLIBNET and DELNET to support resource sharing and access to e-resources.

In the information era, librarians are expected to act as information managers and as educators in technology use. They know how to organise, retrieve and evaluate information and they understand standards for describing, categorising and preserving it. The information given by librarians is usually based on authentic, published sources and librarians can teach information literacy and media literacy skills.

Libraries can contribute to bridging the digital divide in several ways:

- Providing public access computers, internet connectivity, Wi-Fi and basic ICT tools.
- Training users in computer use, email, online search and e-government applications as part of information literacy and user education programmes.

- Designing services in local languages, with simple interfaces and clear guidance, to support users with low literacy or unfamiliarity with English.
- Supporting remote or rural communities through mobile libraries or mobile computer labs that bring digital access to villages and underserved areas.
- Coordinating with schools, universities, community organisations and development agencies to integrate locally generated information into digital collections.
- Sharing resources across academic and public libraries to give underprivileged users access to e-books, e-journals and other digital learning modules.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: The OECD definition of digital divide is given in which year?
Q 2: Cullen described the digital divide as a metaphor in which year?
Q 3: The gap between people who have and do not have access to the internet is called the …….. divide.

2 5.11 LET US SUM UP

The structure of society shapes who gains and who loses in the digital age. Economic, social, educational, cultural, political and psychological factors all influence access to ICT and the ability to use it in daily life. The digital divide therefore, reflects and reinforces existing inequalities in income, geography, education, language, social position and confidence.

At the same time, digital technologies can provide powerful tools for development if the conditions for meaningful use are created. Libraries and information centres play a central role in this process by offering access, training, multilingual and culturally relevant content and safe spaces where trust and confidence can grow. Understanding the structure of society and the multiple dimensions of the digital divide helps library and information professionals to design services that support inclusive education, equitable access to knowledge and informed participation in civic life.

K 5.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: 2001.
Answer to Q 2: 2003.
Answer to Q 3: Access.

O 5.13 FURTHER READING

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- Dijk, J. A. G. M. van. (2012). The evolution of the digital divide: The digital divide turns to inequality of skills and usage. Digital Enlightenment Yearbook.

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UNESCAP. (2013). Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific.

- Servon, L. J. (2002). Bridging the Digital Divide: Technology, Community and Public Policy. Blackwell.
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M 5.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short questions

Q 1: Define the digital divide and mention any two types of divides.
Q.2: What is meant by economic divide?
Q 3: How does language contribute to the digital divide in India?
Q 4: State any two ways in which education is affected by the digital divide.

B. Long questions

Q 1: Explain how economic structure contributes to the digital divide at global and national levels.
Q 2: Discuss the relationship between social exclusion, information inequality and the digital divide.
Q 3: Describe the educational digital divide,
Q 4: Explain the cultural and linguistic dimensions of the digital divide and the role of libraries in addressing them.
Q 5: Discuss how e-governance can both reduce and increase political aspects of the digital divide.
Q 6: Discuss in detail the role of libraries and information centres in bridging different dimensions of the digital divide with reference to specific initiatives.

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UNIT 6: RIGHT TO INFORMATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives
6.2 Introduction
6.3 Concept and Legal Basis of Right to Information
6.4 Right To Information Act, 2005: Definitions And Scope
6.5 Obligations of Public Authorities and Proactive Disclosure
6.6 Public Information Officers and Request Process
6.6.1 Features of the Right to Information Act, 2005
6.7 Exemptions, Third Party Information and Severability
6.8 Appeals, Information Commissions and Penalties
6.9 Right to Information And Library and Information Centres
6.10 Let Us Sum Up
6.11 Further Readings
6.12 Answers To Check Your Progress
6/13 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- explain the concept of right to information and its role in a democratic system.
- describe the purpose and key features of the Right to Information Act, 2005.
- discuss the obligations of public authorities, especially proactive disclosure requirements.
- understand RTI implementation to record management and service delivery in library and information centres.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

Right to information is widely recognised as essential for meaningful participation in democratic governance because it enables citizens to understand how public authorities make decisions and use public resources. The Right to Information Act, 2005, was enacted to establish a practical framework through which citizens can access information held by public authorities, with the objective of promoting transparency and accountability while balancing legitimate needs for confidentiality in sensitive matters. The Act creates duties for public authorities to publish key information proactively, establishes a request and response mechanism through designated Public Information Officers and provides a structured system of appeals and oversight through Information Commissions. RTI is important because it highlights the value of systematic records management, indexing and dissemination practices that allow institutions to provide information accurately and within prescribed timelines.

6.3 CONCEPT AND LEGAL BASIS OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION

The idea of the right to information is grounded in the relationship between the citizen and the State in a constitutional democracy. The Preamble and opening statements of the RTI Act emphasise that democracy requires an informed citizenry and transparency of information, which are vital for containing corruption and holding governments and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed. At the same time, the Act acknowledges that disclosure in practice can conflict with other public interests such as efficient operations, optimum use of limited resources and preservation of confidentiality of sensitive information and therefore it aims to harmonise these interests while preserving the paramountcy of the democratic ideal.

In India, the demand for greater openness gained strength because public decision making was often viewed as opaque, influenced by administrative secrecy and limited access to official records. The RTI approach responds to this condition by shifting the default position from secrecy to disclosure, subject to clearly stated exemptions. From a governance perspective, RTI supports transparency not only through reactive disclosure on request but also through proactive publication so that citizens have minimum need to file formal applications for commonly required information. This dual approach is evident in the statutory obligations created under Section 4, which requires public authorities to publish certain categories of information and to constantly endeavour to provide information suo motu at regular intervals through various communication means including the internet.

A practical understanding of RTI also requires clarity about what the right enables citizens to do. Under the Act, all citizens have the right to information, subject to the Act's provisions. This right includes inspection of work, documents and records, taking notes or certified copies, taking certified samples of material and obtaining information in electronic modes or printouts where information is stored in a computer or other device. This broad concept of access supports not only individual grievances but also public oversight of administration and service delivery, making RTI an important instrument for accountability at central, state, and local levels.

6.4 RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT, 2005

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

A clear reading of statutory definitions is necessary because RTI practice depends on what counts as information, who must disclose it and in what form. The Act defines "information" as any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advice, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, and data material held in any electronic form. It also includes information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law in force. This definition is wide and is intended to cover both traditional paper files and digital information systems.

The Act also defines "record" to include any document, manuscript and file, as well as microfilm, microfiche and facsimile copies of documents, reproductions of images embodied in microfilm and any other material produced by a computer or other device. The definition ensures that record-keeping media do not determine whether information can be accessed, which is relevant for institutions that maintain hybrid archives.

The definition of “public authority” determines the institutional scope of RTI. A public authority means any authority, body, or institution of self-government established or constituted by or under the Constitution, by any law made by Parliament, by any law made by the State Legislature, or by notification or order made by the appropriate government. The definition also includes bodies owned, controlled or substantially financed by government funds and non-government organisations substantially financed directly or indirectly by the appropriate government. This inclusive design covers departments, public sector organisations, local bodies and many government-funded institutions, including those in education and research.

The Act defines “right to information” as the right to information accessible under the Act that is held by or under the control of any public authority and it explicitly lists the forms of access, such as inspection, certified copies, certified samples and electronic outputs. This definition clarifies that RTI is not limited to giving a written reply. It covers access to underlying records and where feasible, the form in which the applicant seeks the information, subject to constraints stated in the Act.

6.5 OBLIGATIONS OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE

A central design feature of the RTI Act is the set of obligations placed on public authorities so that transparency becomes routine rather than exceptional. Section 4(1)(a) requires every public authority to maintain records duly catalogued and indexed in a manner and form that facilitates the right to information. It also requires public authorities to ensure that records appropriate for computerisation are, within a reasonable time and subject to resource availability, computerised and connected through a network to facilitate access. These obligations highlight that transparency is linked to records management, indexing and system connectivity, not only to legal compliance.

Section 4(1)(b) requires a public authority to publish specified categories of information within 120 days of enactment and thereafter update these publications every year. The categories include organisational particulars, functions and duties; powers and duties of officers and employees; decision-making procedures and channels of supervision and accountability; norms for discharge of functions; rules, regulations, instructions, manuals and records used for discharging functions; categories of documents held; consultative arrangements; boards, councils, committees and whether meetings or minutes are accessible; directory of officers and employees; monthly remuneration and compensation system; budgets and disbursement reports; execution of subsidy programmes and beneficiaries; recipients of concessions, permits and authorisations; details of information in electronic form; citizen facilities including working hours of a library or reading room if maintained for public use; and names and particulars of Public Information Officers, along with any other prescribed information.

Beyond listing categories, Section 4 contains broader disclosure principles. Section 4(2) states that it shall be the constant endeavour of every public authority to provide as much information suo motu to the public at regular intervals through various means, including the internet, so that the public has minimum resort to the use of the Act to obtain information. Section 4(3) and 4(4) require information to be disseminated widely in an easily accessible form and manner, taking into account cost-effectiveness and local language and to be made accessible to the extent possible in electronic format with the Public Information Officer available free or at the cost of the medium or print

cost price as prescribed. The Explanation clarifies that dissemination includes notice boards, newspapers, public announcements, media broadcasts, the internet, or any other means, including inspection of offices.

These provisions create a strong link between proactive disclosure and institutional communication practices. For many public authorities, this implies developing and updating disclosure sections on their websites, issuing information handbooks and maintaining registers and indices that enable quick location of records. In the context of library and information centres within public authorities, proactive disclosure aligns with practices such as publishing service rules, timings and access facilities, but it also extends to administrative records and policy documentation that the institution generates as part of its functioning.

6.6 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS AND REQUEST PROCESS

The request and response mechanism under the RTI Act is built around designated Public Information Officers. Section 5(1) requires every public authority to designate as many officers as Central Public Information Officers or State Public Information Officers, as necessary, in all administrative units or offices to provide information to persons requesting information under the Act. Section 5(2) requires the designation of an Assistant Public Information Officer at each sub-divisional or sub-district level to receive applications or appeals and forward them to the appropriate officer or commission, with an additional five days added to response time when the application is submitted through an Assistant PIO. Section 5(3) states that the PIO shall deal with requests and render reasonable assistance to persons seeking information and Section 5(4) allows the PIO to seek assistance of any other officer, who then becomes responsible as a deemed PIO for purposes of contravention.

Section 6 explains how a citizen can make a request. A person desiring information must make a request in writing or through electronic means in English, Hindi, or the official language of the area, accompanied by the prescribed fee, to the concerned PIO or Assistant PIO. Where the request cannot be made in writing, the PIO must provide reasonable assistance to reduce it to writing. The applicant is not required to give any reason for requesting the information and need not provide personal details except those necessary for contacting the applicant. Section 6(3) requires the transfer of an application or relevant part of it to another public authority where the information is held by another authority or more closely connected to another authority's functions and such transfer must occur as soon as practicable and in any case within five days.

Section 7 sets out the disposal of requests and timelines. On receipt of a request, the PIO must provide the information or reject the request for reasons specified in Sections 8 and 9 as expeditiously as possible and in any case within thirty days. Where the information concerns the life or liberty of a person, it must be provided within forty-eight hours. If the PIO fails to decide within the prescribed period, the request is deemed refused. Where further fees are required, the PIO must send an intimation with calculations and the time between dispatch of the intimation and the payment is excluded from the thirty-day period. If a request is rejected, the PIO must communicate reasons, the period within which an appeal may be preferred and particulars of the appellate authority. The Act also provides that information should ordinarily be provided

in the form in which it is sought unless doing so would disproportionately divert resources or be detrimental to the safety or preservation of the record.

The process provisions show that RTI compliance is a combination of legal duty and administrative capacity. Timely response depends on clear file movement procedures, accessible indexes and staff awareness. For public authorities with large records, systematic digitisation, retention schedules and standard operating procedures improve the ability to respond within the statutory time frames while ensuring consistent application of exemptions and fee rules.

6.6.1 Features of the Right to Information Act, 2005

- **Statutory right:** Provides a legal right to information to all citizens, subject to the Act's provisions.
- **Broad meaning of "right to information":** Includes inspection of work, documents and records; taking notes/extracts/certified copies; taking certified samples; and obtaining information in electronic form or printouts.
- **Wide definition of "information":** Covers material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, circulars, orders, contracts, reports and data held electronically.
- **Coverage of public authorities:** Applies to authorities established by the Constitution/law/notification and includes bodies owned, controlled, or substantially financed by the government, and NGOs substantially financed by the government.
- **Proactive disclosure focus:** Requires proactive publication of key categories of information under Section 4(1)(b) and annual updating of such publications.
- **Record management orientation:** Requires records to be duly catalogued and indexed to facilitate access and encourages computerisation and networking of records, subject to resources.
- **Designated officers:** Mandates appointment of Public Information Officers and Assistant PIOs and allows the PIO to seek assistance of other officers (deemed PIO responsibility).
- **Time-bound delivery:** Fixes timelines for disposal of requests, normally within 30 days and within 48 hours when the information concerns life or liberty.
- **Transfer mechanism:** Provides for the transfer of applications to the appropriate public authority when information is held elsewhere, within five days.
- **Reasoned decisions and communication:** Requires the PIO to communicate reasons for rejection and details of the appellate authority and appeal period.
- **Balance through exemptions:** Protects specified categories of information through exemptions under Section 8 and includes a public interest override under Section 8(2).
- **Third- party protection:** Provides a consultation process for third- party confidential information under Section 11, with prescribed notice and decision timelines.
- **Partial disclosure (severability):** Permits disclosure of non-exempt portions of records under Section 10, with a notice explaining partial disclosure and review rights.
- **Appeals and oversight:** Provides an appeal system and independent

oversight through Central and State Information Commissions constituted under the Act.

- **Compliance reinforcement:** Includes penalty provisions to strengthen adherence to RTI duties.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Write the definition of "information" under the RTI Act, 2005.
Q 2: Who is covered under the definition of "public authority" in the RTI Act, 2005?
Q 3: What are the main proactive disclosure requirements under Section 4(1)(b)?
Q 4: What are the timelines for disposal of an RTI request under Section 7(1)?
Q 5: What is the purpose of transferring an RTI application under Section 6(3) and what is the time limit for transfer?

6.7 EXEMPTIONS, THIRD PARTY INFORMATION AND SEVERABILITY

RTI is not an absolute right. The Act contains exemptions to protect legitimate public and private interests, while still permitting disclosure when public interest outweighs harm. Section 8(1) lists categories of information that are exempt from disclosure. These include information whose disclosure would prejudicially affect sovereignty and integrity of India, security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the State, relations with foreign States, or lead to incitement of an offence; information forbidden to be published by a court or tribunal or whose disclosure may constitute contempt of court; information that would cause breach of privilege of Parliament or State Legislature; information including commercial confidence, trade secrets, or intellectual property where disclosure would harm competitive position of a third party unless larger public interest warrants disclosure; information available in fiduciary relationship unless larger public interest warrants disclosure; information received in confidence from a foreign government; information whose disclosure would endanger life or physical safety or identify a confidential source; information that would impede investigation or prosecution; cabinet papers including deliberations, subject to disclosure of decisions, reasons and material after the decision is taken and matter is complete; and information relating to personal information, as provided in the Act's text. Section 8(2) provides an overriding public interest test, stating that, notwithstanding the Official Secrets Act and the exemptions, a public authority may allow access to information if public interest in disclosure outweighs the harm to protected interests.

Section 9 provides an additional ground for rejection, allowing a PIO to reject a request where providing access would involve infringement of copyright subsisting in a person other than the State. This provision is relevant for records that include copyrighted material supplied by third parties, though it does not bar disclosure of information that can be provided without infringing copyright.

The principle of severability is a practical tool for balancing disclosure and confidentiality. Section 10(1) states that where access is rejected because it relates to exempt information, access may be provided to that part of the record that does not contain exempt information and can reasonably be severed from the exempt part. Section 10(2) requires the PIO to give a notice stating that only part of the record is

being provided, reasons for the decision with findings on material questions of fact, the name and designation of the decision maker, fee details and the applicant's rights to review the decision, including appellate particulars. This provision supports partial disclosure rather than complete denial when only some parts of a record are protected.

The Act also establishes a procedure for third party information. Under Section 11(1), where the PIO intends to disclose information that relates to or was supplied by a third party and has been treated as confidential, the PIO must give written notice to the third party within five days, inform them of the request and proposed disclosure and invite a submission on whether the information should be disclosed. The third party's submission must be considered while deciding disclosure. Section 11 provides a balancing approach and it also states that, except for trade or commercial secrets protected by law, disclosure may be allowed if the public interest in disclosure outweighs possible harm to the third party. The third party is allowed to make a representation within ten days and where this process applies, the PIO must make a decision within forty days from receipt of the request and notify the third party, including a statement of their right to appeal.

For public authorities, these provisions require clear internal guidance on identifying exempt material, applying public interest tests and documenting reasons for partial or complete denial. In information-intensive units such as libraries, administrative sections and academic institutions, records often contain mixed content, including personal information, procurement details and contractual terms. A good RTI response system, therefore, depends on classification of records, access controls and standard redaction or severance practices consistent with Section 10.

6.8 APPEALS, INFORMATION COMMISSIONS AND PENALTIES

The RTI Act provides a two-tier appeal mechanism and establishes Information Commissions as independent oversight bodies. Although the detailed appeal text is contained in Section 19, the overall framework is that an applicant who is aggrieved by a PIO decision or by non-response within the prescribed time, may file a first appeal to an officer senior in rank to the PIO within the public authority. A second appeal lies to the Central Information Commission or the State Information Commission, as appropriate. The Act also provides for complaints and powers of the Commission under Section 18 and monitoring and reporting mechanisms under Section 25. These provisions create external accountability for the functioning of PIOs and for proactive disclosure compliance.

The commissions are constituted under Sections 12 and 15. Section 12 provides for the constitution of the Central Information Commission by notification in the Official Gazette, consisting of the Chief Information Commissioner and up to ten Information Commissioners, appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister. Section 15 provides for State Information Commissions constituted by State Governments, with appointment by the Governor on recommendation of a committee comprising the Chief Minister, the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly and a Cabinet Minister nominated by the Chief Minister. The Act also provides for autonomy in superintendence, direction and management of commission affairs.

Penalty provisions are addressed in Section 20 and they are designed to discourage unreasonable denial and delay. The presence of penalty provisions also influences institutional behaviour by encouraging public authorities to maintain proper records, follow time limits and provide reasoned decisions when exemptions are applied. In practice, the effective functioning of the appeal mechanism depends on proper documentation at the PIO stage, since appeal authorities and commissions review whether the denial or delay was justified under the Act. Therefore, training of PIOs and systematic recordkeeping support both transparency and administrative fairness.

A related institutional safeguard is Section 22, which provides that the RTI Act has overriding effect over inconsistent provisions of other laws and Section 23, which bars jurisdiction of courts in respect of orders under the Act while not affecting constitutional remedies as recognised in general legal practice. These clauses reinforce the RTI mechanism as a specialised system for information access disputes within the framework of administrative law.

6.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF RTI FOR LIBRARIES

RTI is significant for libraries in publicly funded institutions because it imposes statutory expectations of transparency and timely disclosure on the parent public authority and libraries often support these obligations through their information-handling capacities.

- The relevant “information” for libraries is primarily data generated by the Library and Information Centre (LIC) in its administrative and managerial activities, rather than the general information contained in books or online resources.
- The role of the Library and Information Science Professional (LISP) is extended by RTI to include facilitating access to updated RTI materials and supporting responses to requests about the LIC’s financial, transactional and policy-related activities.
- RTI requires LICs to adopt structured record management practices, including clear allocation of responsibilities, defined access and security levels and compatibility of record-keeping software with that of the parent organisation or consortium.
- The Act increases the importance of documented procedures in LICs, such as written guidelines on categories of records, use of forms and checklists for retention, disposal and archival, so that information can be provided accurately within prescribed time limits.
- RTI underscores the need for regular updating of institutional information, especially on library websites, so that proactively disclosed details about activities, timings, facilities and services remain current and reduce the need for individual applications.
- Provisions on record retention schedules in the Act make planned retention and archiving policies more important in LICs, ensuring that records are preserved for required periods but not indefinitely and that they remain traceable when requested.
- The material recommends a two-tier records structure in LICs, with primary operational records (such as minutes, logbooks and transaction files) and secondary analytical records (such as budget summaries and usage statistics), which supports both institutional management and RTI-related information

needs.

2 6.10 LET US SUM UP

The Right to Information Act, 2005, provides a practical legal framework for citizens to access information under the control of public authorities, with the stated purpose of promoting transparency and accountability and strengthening democratic governance. It defines key concepts such as information, record, public authority and right to information and it sets out a clear process for making requests, receiving information within prescribed timelines and seeking review through appeals when information is denied or delayed.

At the same time, the Act recognises that openness must be balanced with legitimate public and private interests through exemptions, third party procedures and partial disclosure using severability. RTI also places strong emphasis on proactive disclosure and sound records management, creating clear implications for library and information centres in publicly funded institutions, where systematic organisation, indexing, digitisation and dissemination are essential for timely, lawful and user-oriented access to institutional records and information.

K 6.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: "Information" means any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form and information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law for the time being in force.

Answer to Q 2: "Public authority" includes authorities or bodies established by or under the Constitution, by laws made by Parliament or State Legislatures or by notification/order of the appropriate government and includes bodies owned, controlled or substantially financed by government funds and NGOs substantially financed directly or indirectly by government funds.

Answer to Q 3: Section 4(1)(b) mandates the publication of essential information regarding an organisation's structure, procedures, staffing, remuneration, budget, subsidies, concessions, records, electronic information, and citizen services (such as library hours, where applicable), along with details of the Public Information Officer (PIO). It also requires that these publications be updated annually.

Answer to Q 4: The PIO must provide information or reject the request within thirty days of receipt; where the information concerns life or liberty, it must be provided within forty-eight hours.

Answer to Q 5: Transfer under Section 6(3) ensures the request reaches the public authority that holds the information or is most closely connected to it and the transfer must be made as soon as practicable and not later than five days from receipt of the application.

6.12 FURTHER READINGS

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M 6.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short questions

Q 1: Define “information” and “record” under the RTI Act, 2005.
Q 2: Write the main duties of a Public Information Officer.
Q 3: State any five categories of information to be published under Section 4(1)(b).
Q 4: What is meant by severability under Section 10 of the RTI Act?

B. Long questions

Q 1: Explain the proactive disclosure provisions of Section 4 and their importance for transparency.
Q 2: Discuss the procedure for handling third- party information under Section 11.
Q 3: Describe how exemptions under Section 8 are balanced by the public interest test.
Q 4: Explain the role of Information Commissions in the RTI framework.
Q 5: Discuss the relevance of RTI for libraries and information centres in publicly funded institutions.

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UNIT 7: INFORMATION GENERATING AGENCY

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives
7.2 Introduction
7.3 Information and news
7.4 Information generating agencies
7.5 Print-based agencies: newspaper, magazine and journal
7.5.1 Print Agencies and Gatekeeping
7.6 Broadcast agencies: radio and television
7.7 Online and social media agencies: blogs and digital news platforms
7.8 Search engines and aggregators as information intermediaries: Google
7.9 Evaluation of information and news
7.10 Role of libraries and LIS professionals
7.11 Let Us Sum Up
7.12 Further Readings
7.13 Answers To Check Your Progress
7.14 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- explain the meaning of an information generating agency and its relevance in society.
- describe newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and television as major information generating agencies.
- explain blogs and digital platforms as emerging agencies for information and news.
- describe gatekeeping and selection processes that shape what becomes news.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Modern society depends on the continuous generation and circulation of information for education, economy, governance and everyday decision-making. Information is produced through many agencies, such as newspapers, magazines, journals, radio, television, blogs and search engines and each agency follows different practices and standards for selecting and presenting content. Mostly, media institutions shape public understanding by choosing which events and issues become visible and how they are framed.

Information generating agencies are important to libraries and information centres as they help users access, organise and evaluate information from multiple channels. Public demand for news and current information has increased with digital media, but increased volume also increases risks of misinformation, bias and low-quality sources. Gatekeeping theory explains that selection decisions, made at multiple levels from

individuals to institutions, strongly influence what information becomes news and reaches audiences.

7.3 INFORMATION AND NEWS: BASIC CONCEPTS

Information can be understood as knowledge communicated through messages, documents, or media content that reduces uncertainty and supports understanding. News is a specific form of information that reports recent or relevant events, typically selected and presented as being of public interest. McQuail explains that “news” is shaped by professional routines, organisational priorities and audience expectations, rather than being a simple mirror of events.

News has key features that distinguish it from general information. It usually has timeliness, public relevance and a focus on events and issues considered important for a community. News content is also shaped by norms such as verification, attribution and relevance, although these norms can vary across media types and across traditional and digital platforms.

7.4 INFORMATION GENERATING AGENCIES: MEANING AND CLASSIFICATION

An information generating agency is any organisation, platform, or system that produces and disseminates information for public or specialised use. Agencies differ in their purpose and audience. Some agencies primarily generate general news and public information, such as newspapers or television.
Information generating agencies can be classified by medium and mode of distribution. A common classification is print agencies, broadcast agencies and digital agencies. Print agencies include newspapers, magazines and journals. Broadcast agencies include radio and television. Digital agencies include blogs, online news portals, social media channels and search engines that organise and distribute information.

A second classification is based on the purpose and content type. General news agencies focus on current affairs, local community information and broad public interest topics. Specialised agencies focus on disciplines or professions, such as science, education, law, business and medicine, often using specialised vocabulary and evidence-based reporting.

7.5 PRINT-BASED AGENCIES: NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINE, AND JOURNAL

Print media has historically been a major channel for news and public information. Newspapers focus on current events, public affairs, local issues and public service information. They typically present shorter, timely reports and provide periodic updates, usually daily or weekly. Newspapers also include editorial content and opinion, which requires readers to distinguish between factual reporting and commentary. News agencies example includes

- Press Trust of India (PTI)
- United News of India (UNI)

- Hindustan Samachar (multilingual news agency)
- Asian News International (ANI)

Magazines usually provide less frequent publication than newspapers and often focus on thematic coverage, analysis and specialised interests. Many magazines target specific groups such as youth, women, farmers, business professionals, or hobby communities and their content may include both information and entertainment. Magazines often provide feature writing, interviews and background stories that explain issues in more depth than daily news reporting. Example includes India Today, Frontline, Economic and Political Weekly (EPW).

Scholarly journals are specialised information generating agencies focused on research communication. Journals publish peer-reviewed research articles, review papers and scholarly discussions intended for academic and professional audiences. Unlike newspapers and magazines, journals are part of the scholarly communication system and are used for validating and disseminating research knowledge. Journals are important because libraries manage journal access, indexing, discovery and research support services.

7.5.1 Print Agencies and Gatekeeping

Even in print media, not every event becomes news. Gatekeeping refers to the process by which information is selected, shaped and distributed and it operates through individual judgement, professional routines, organisational constraints and broader social systems. Shoemaker and Vos explain that gatekeeping is central because it transforms information about many events into a manageable number of media messages, influencing what audiences perceive as important. Examples of print agencies are:The Hindu, The Times of India, The Indian Express, Hindustan Times. Dainik Jagran, Dainik Bhaskar, Amar Ujala (Hindi)

In newspapers and magazines, editors decide what is newsworthy, what gets space and prominence and what is omitted. These decisions are influenced by organisational policies, time pressures, audience interest, advertising environments and legal and ethical considerations. Understanding gatekeeping helps one to evaluate news as constructed information rather than complete reality.

7.6 BROADCAST AGENCIES: RADIO AND TELEVISION

Radio is a broadcast agency that delivers news and information through audio formats. Radio has strengths in immediacy, portability and reaching wide audiences, including rural areas and low-literacy populations. Radio news is often structured as short bulletins, interviews, discussions and public announcements and it can support community information needs in emergencies and public health contexts. Example includes All India Radio (Akashvani).

Television combines audio and visual elements and is often influential in shaping public opinion due to its wide reach and strong presentation formats. Television news uses visuals, live reporting and studio discussions and it often relies on professional production routines and editorial selection similar to print media. McQuail’s framework helps explain how television news routines and institutional values influence content

and agenda setting. The example includes Doordarshan (DD), India's public TV broadcaster under Prasar Bharati.

Broadcast agencies also operate through gatekeeping. Time constraints, program schedules and the need for visuals or audio clips can shape what gets covered. This means some issues may be under-represented, especially complex topics that require long explanations or topics that lack strong visuals.

7.7 ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA AGENCIES: BLOGS AND DIGITAL NEWS PLATFORMS

Digital media has expanded the range of information generating agencies by lowering barriers to publishing. Blogs are a common form of online publishing where individuals or groups publish posts, commentary and curated links, and they can range from personal writing to professional reporting. Blogs can support rapid updates and community voices, but their reliability varies widely depending on author expertise, evidence use, editorial practices and accountability.

Digital news platforms include online versions of newspapers and television channels, as well as digital-only news organisations. They often combine text, audio, video and interactive features and distribute content through websites, apps and social media. Digital platforms also use engagement metrics, such as clicks and shares, which may influence editorial priorities and create incentives for sensational headlines.

Gatekeeping in digital environments is not removed, but it changes form. Editorial selection still exists, but it is supplemented by platform algorithms, audience sharing and search ranking. This leads to a shift from scarcity of information to abundance, with new challenges of attention, credibility and verification.

7.8 SEARCH ENGINES AND AGGREGATORS AS INFORMATION INTERMEDIARIES: GOOGLE

Search engines, especially Google, function as powerful intermediaries because they organise and rank information sources, influencing what users find first and what sources they trust. In news contexts, search ranking can shape exposure by directing users to particular outlets and stories, even when users are not searching for a specific news brand.

Google Search and news selection indicate that algorithmic factors like ranking influence which news results people choose. Ulloa and Kacperski report that in their study, ranking and representativeness influenced selection and they also found that Google Search can drive users to unfamiliar sources and increase source diversity in news consumption in their case study context. This supports the idea that search engines are not neutral gateways and that discovery processes can shape what becomes visible as "news" for users.

For libraries, search engines affect information access behaviour because many users begin with Google even when library databases are available. This creates a need for

information literacy training that explains search ranking, source evaluation and differences between general web search and curated scholarly discovery tools.

7.9 EVALUATION OF INFORMATION AND NEWS

Because information comes from many agencies with different standards, evaluation is a basic academic skill. Evaluation means judging accuracy, credibility, relevance and potential bias before using information for study, research, or decision-making. The media content reflects institutional processes and social influences, so users should view information as shaped by selection and framing rather than as a complete record.

Credibility is influenced by evidence, transparency and accountability. Reliable news normally provides clear attribution, uses multiple sources where possible, corrects errors and distinguishes reporting from opinion. However, credibility challenges increase in digital environments where content is produced quickly, shared widely and sometimes manipulated for attention.

A practical approach to evaluation includes checking source identity, editorial policy, author credentials, evidence and citations, date and context and cross-verifying with trusted sources. Understanding gatekeeping helps students recognise why some topics are highlighted while others are ignored and why headline framing can influence interpretation.

7.10 ROLE OF LIBRARIES AND LIS PROFESSIONALS

Libraries and LIS professionals connect people with information sources and help users navigate the changing information environment. Public and academic libraries provide access to newspapers, magazines, journals and broadcast archives and they also support access to digital platforms and databases. The role includes selection and acquisition, organisation and retrieval and building user skills in evaluation and ethical use of information.

Libraries also act as trusted intermediaries. They help users identify reliable sources, distinguish news from opinion and advertising and develop media and information literacy. In the digital environment, LIS professionals must also help users understand how search engines and social media algorithms shape information exposure, and how to avoid misinformation by verifying sources.

In the Indian context, libraries support informed citizenship and education by providing access to credible news sources in multiple languages and by helping users access government information and educational resources. This role becomes more important where digital access is uneven and where users rely on shared public infrastructure for information access.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Define an information generating agency and give two examples.
Q 2: Distinguish between information and news with suitable examples.

Q 3: Explain newspapers, magazines and journals as information generating agencies.
Q 4: What is gatekeeping and why is it important for understanding news?
Q 5: Explain how Google Search can influence news exposure and selection.

7.11 LET US SUM UP

Information generating agencies include print, broadcast, and digital systems that produce and distribute information and news for public and specialised use. Newspapers, magazines and broadcast media have long been central agencies for public information, while journals play a specialised role in scholarly communication. Digital media has expanded agencies through blogs and online platforms and search engines have become powerful intermediaries by organising and ranking information for users.

Understanding news requires understanding selection and framing processes. Gatekeeping theory explains how media organisations and systems filter events into news messages, while research on search engines shows that algorithmic ranking can influence what news users see and select. The key professional responsibility to support access and to strengthen users' ability to evaluate credibility, bias and reliability across all agencies, especially in the digital environment.

7.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: An information generating agency is an organisation, platform or system that produces and disseminates information for public or specialised use, such as newspapers, radio, television, journals, blogs, or search engines.

Answer to Q 2: Information is knowledge communicated through messages or documents, while news is a selected form of information about recent or relevant events presented as being of public interest and shaped by media routines and choices.

Answer to Q 3: Newspapers provide frequent coverage of current events and public information, magazines provide periodic thematic coverage and analysis and journals provide peer-reviewed scholarly research communication for academic audiences.

Answer to Q 4: Gatekeeping is the process of selecting and shaping information into media messages and it is important because it determines what becomes news and how audiences view the world.

Answer to Q 5: Research indicates that algorithmic factors, such as ranking influence, which news results people select and Google Search can direct users to unfamiliar sources and shape source diversity in news consumption.

O 7.13 FURTHER READING

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M 7.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short answer questions:

Q 1: Define information generating agency.
Q 2: What is the difference between information and news?
Q 3: What is gatekeeping?
Q 4: Mention two differences between a newspaper and a journal.
Q 5: State two ways libraries support news and information access.

B. Long questions:

Q 1: Explain newspapers, magazines and journals as information generating agencies.
Q 2: Discuss radio and television as agencies of information dissemination.
Q 3: Explain blogs and digital news platforms and discuss their strengths and limitations.
Q 4: Discuss search engines as information intermediaries.
Q 5: Explain key criteria for evaluating the credibility of news and information.

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UNIT 8: BARRIERS IN INFORMATION COMMUNICATION IN SOCIETY

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning objectives
8.2 Introduction
8.3 Barriers in communication
  8.3.1 Explicit and implicit barriers
  8.3.2 Physical Barriers
  8.3.3 Psychological Barriers
  8.3.4 Semantic Barriers
  8.3.5 Mechanical Barriers
  8.3.6 Cross-Cultural Barriers
  8.3.7 Organizational Barriers
8.4 Misinformation
8.5 Disinformation
8.6 Propaganda
8.7 Fake news
8.8 Security issues
8.9 Cyber fraud
8.10 Information protection
8.11 Communication barriers and the Library
8.12 Let us sum up
8.13 Answers to check your progress
8.14 Further readings
8.15 Model questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, learners will be able to:

- Identify and explain different types of barriers to information communication in society.
- Distinguish clearly between misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and fake news.
- Explain how security issues, cyber fraud and information protection influence communication behaviour.
- Recognise specific communication barriers in libraries and information centres and suggest suitable responses.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

Communication is a vital process that allows people to share ideas, information and feelings effectively. For communication to be meaningful, the receiver must understand the message in the same sense as the sender intends. However, the effectiveness of communication often depends on several factors that can either facilitate or obstruct the proper flow of information. Elements such as noise, indiscipline, lack of proper facilities, and absence of suitable materials can create unfavourable conditions that

hinder communication. Similarly, the use of complex or unfamiliar language, including technical or professional jargon, may confuse the receiver and distort the intended message. These obstacles, known as barriers to communication, may arise at any stage of the process and can lead to misunderstanding, misinterpretation, or wastage of time and effort. Therefore, to achieve effective communication, it is important to identify and overcome these barriers so that messages are conveyed clearly, accurately and meaningfully.

8.3 BARRIERS IN COMMUNICATION

8.3.1 Explicit and implicit barriers

In many situations, the communication barriers are visible and easily noticed. These are explicit barriers, such as loud noise in a room, a frequent power cut during an online session, or the absence of seating in a consultation area. The obstacle is directly observable even if it cannot be removed immediately. In other situations, the hindrance is hidden and less obvious. These implicit barriers may arise from attitudes, emotions, mistrust or unspoken assumptions that influence how people interpret messages. A receiver may keep silent but mentally reject what is being said, or a sender may hold stereotypes about the audience. Such implicit barriers create confusion and reduce trust, even when communication appears smooth on the surface.

8.3.2 Physical Barriers

Physical barriers refer to the environmental or physical conditions that interrupt or disturb the process of effective communication. These barriers may cause distraction, inattentiveness, or even distortion of the actual message, leading to misunderstanding or miscommunication. The main types of physical barriers are discussed below.

Time:
Time plays a significant role in communication. Expressions like “timely advice” or “timely caution” highlight the importance of prompt communication. In modern organizations where quick decisions are essential, delays in communication can adversely affect results. Similarly, in international communication, differences in time zones between countries make fast and modern channels such as email or video conferencing necessary.

Place:
The physical setting in which communication takes place also influences its effectiveness. Poor lighting, uncomfortable furniture, lack of space, or a noisy environment can make communication difficult. For example, the atmosphere in a well-designed office encourages smooth interaction, while a congested or poorly maintained office may lead to irritation and misunderstanding. A clean, well-lit and comfortable place promotes effective communication.

Distance:
The distance between people can create problems in communication. When employees work in separate buildings or on different floors, face-to-face discussions are reduced. As a result, they depend more on telephones, written messages or emails, which may cause misunderstanding or incomplete exchange of information. Physical closeness and frequent direct contact help to maintain better communication.

Climate:
The physical climate or atmosphere of a place also affects communication. A comfortable temperature and proper ventilation help participants remain calm, patient and attentive. On the other hand, an uncomfortable environment may make people restless and hinder the effective exchange of ideas.

Noise:
Noise is one of the most common physical barriers. It may come from machines, traffic or even other people in the surroundings. Noise distorts the message and reduces clarity. For instance, effective communication is difficult in places like factories, railway stations, or crowded markets. Choosing a quiet and suitable place helps to ensure smooth and successful communication.

8.3.3 Psychological Barriers

Psychological barriers arise from the mental and emotional state of individuals and can obstruct the process of effective communication. Factors such as misunderstanding, lack of trust, negative emotions, stress and personal worries often interfere with the proper exchange of ideas. When people are anxious, disturbed, or preoccupied, their ability to listen, understand and respond appropriately becomes limited. The level of interest, attention, motivation and concentration of both the sender and the receiver also plays a vital role in determining how effectively a message is conveyed. Moreover, negative attitudes and prejudices create resistance to communication, whereas positive feelings like empathy, kindness and cooperation encourage clarity, understanding and a smooth flow of messages.

8.3.4 Semantic Barriers

Semantic barriers happen when people have trouble understanding the meaning of words or language used in communication. Differences in language, use of technical terms, jargon or slang can confuse the receiver. Even when both people speak the same language, unfamiliar or difficult words may cause misunderstanding. Sometimes, when the sender uses very complex, formal or lengthy language, the message becomes unclear. Speaking too fast can also make it hard to follow. There may also be problems if the sender and receiver do not know each other's language well. In written communication, unclear symbols or graphics can create the wrong impression. To ensure effective communication, messages should be simple, clear and easy to understand.

8.3.5 Mechanical Barriers

Mechanical barriers occur when there are problems with the tools or equipment used for communication. These barriers are related to technical issues that interrupt or disturb the process of sending or receiving messages. They can happen in any kind of mechanical or electronic communication system, such as telephones, computers, radio, television or other devices.

Sometimes, machines create noise or may not work properly due to a lack of maintenance, leading to unclear transmission of messages. Faulty equipment or poor signal quality can also cause misunderstanding. Power failures are another major mechanical barrier, as communication tools like computers, projectors and online

platforms depend on electricity. When power is interrupted, the communication process also stops.

The choice of communication medium is equally important. Some messages are better conveyed face-to-face, while others may be suitable through emails, telephone calls, or audio-visual aids. Using the wrong medium can make communication less effective. Thus, for smooth communication, it is essential to maintain equipment properly, ensure a stable power supply and choose the right medium for each message.

8.3.6 Cross-Cultural Barriers

Cross-cultural barriers happen when people from different cultures find it difficult to understand each other because of differences in beliefs, customs and ways of behaving. Things like eating habits, religious practices, social rules, body language and marriage customs can all vary from culture to culture and may cause confusion or discomfort in communication.

Language can be a major barrier. Even when people speak the same language, they may understand words differently. A simple word like “soon” may mean very quickly to one person and “after some time” to another. Mispronunciation, unclear words, or lack of detail can also lead to misunderstanding.

Behaviour and body language also differ across cultures. For example, in the U.S., looking directly into someone’s eyes shows interest and respect, but in many Asian cultures, too much eye contact can be seen as rude or disrespectful. Gestures, facial expressions and how much personal space people keep while talking can all send different messages in different cultures.

Stereotypes are another barrier. A stereotype is a fixed idea about a group of people, such as assuming all members of a culture behave the same way. These ideas are often wrong and can hurt relationships. Making jokes or comments based on such assumptions can offend others and damage trust.

Ethnocentrism is when someone believes their own culture is better or more correct than others and judges other cultures by their own standards. This attitude blocks open and respectful communication. For instance, a person who prefers small talk before business may think someone who starts business talks immediately is rude, while the other person may see it as efficient. Understanding and respecting these differences helps reduce cross-cultural barriers.

8.3.7 Organizational Barriers

Organizational barriers are problems in the way an organization is planned, structured and managed that make communication difficult. Unclear plans, too many messages (information overload), wrong timing, overdependence on technology and differences in status or position can all create obstacles.

When an organization has many levels of hierarchy, messages often pass through several people and can get changed, delayed or lost. People at the top usually see the whole picture, while those at lower levels know only their own part, which can limit understanding.

Very strict rules and regulations can make communication too formal and rigid, so people may hesitate to share ideas or problems freely.

Group size also affects communication. A large group cannot be treated as one single unit because each person is different, with their own background, needs and way of understanding. These individual differences influence how messages are sent, received and interpreted.

. Indirect signs that a barrier exists

- **Verbal–nonverbal mismatch**: The user's words and body language conflict (e.g., says "I understood" but looks confused or distressed
- **Cognitive dissonance**: The user shows internal conflict (accepts guidance verbally but appears doubtful or inconsistent).
- **Unexpected resistance**: Pushback that seems disproportionate to the situation, indicating an unspoken concern.
- **Communicator discomfort**: The librarian feels uneasy/confused during the interaction, signalling a possible hidden barrier.
- **Noncompliance / low follow-through**: The user does not act on advice (does not use suggested sources/steps), suggesting misunderstanding or an unaddressed barrier.

8.4 MISINFORMATION

Misinformation is usually defined in academic literature as false, inaccurate or misleading information that is shared without a clear intention to deceive, often as an "honest mistake." Many scholars also now use a broader, "intent-neutral" definition: any false or misleading claim that contradicts well-established facts, regardless of whether it is spread intentionally or unintentionally.

In everyday life, misinformation may spread through conversations, social media posts, instant messages, pamphlets or even classroom discussions. People may pass on incorrect health tips, rumours about examinations, or false statistics because they believe them to be true. Although the sender does not intend harm, misinformation can still create confusion, public anxiety and poor decision making. During crises such as natural disasters or pandemics, the rapid spread of misinformation can affect public health behaviour and trust in institutions.

8.5 DISINFORMATION

UNESCO defines disinformation as the intentional distribution of incorrect or inaccurate information, typically aimed at deceiving or manipulating individuals or groups. The terms disinformation and misinformation are frequently utilised synonymously. Certain authors characterise disinformation as a broader word that includes misinformation. Within UN agencies (UNESCO, OHCHR), the predominant distinction between misinformation and disinformation is based on the presence or absence of intent. Misinformation possesses a neutral or positive goal, while disinformation is characterised by a deliberate intention to deceive.

Disinformation refers to incorrect or misleading information that is deliberately manufactured, published or disseminated with the purpose of deceiving individuals, often resulting in various forms of harm (political, social, financial or personal).

Principal Attributes

- It is factually inaccurate or significantly deceptive in content, context or presentation.

- The originator or initial distributor is aware that it is inaccurate or deceptive.

- It is disseminated to mislead, alter perceptions, erode trust, or do harm to individuals, groups, institutions or nations

Differentiation from misinformation

- Misinformation is erroneous or faulty information disseminated without the intention to mislead, as individuals may see it as true or remain unaware of its inaccuracy.

- Disinformation, in contrast, constitutes a component of intentional influence or manipulation endeavours, occasionally orchestrated by state or non-state entities. - A systematic effort that concocts evidence to undermine an election outcome or a minority group is disinformation, as the information is deliberately false and strategically disseminated to deceive.

- An individual disseminating a false health rumour they perceive as accurate is propagating misinformation; but, if a collective contrived such a rumour to subvert public health guidance, such a contrivance constitutes disinformation.

8.6 PROPAGANDA

According to Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, propaganda is “the deliberate and systematic attempt to influence perception and affect behaviour in ways that further the desired objectives of the propagandist.”

Propaganda is a form of communication that aims at influencing the opinions, emotions or behaviour of a large group of people in a systematic manner. Propaganda employs strategically crafted messages to alter individuals' perceptions and garner support for a specific objective or agenda. These messages are disseminated through several mediums, including art, pamphlets, literature, film, radio, television and, more recently, social media.

It is commonly linked with political causes, social movements, wartime messaging and ideological campaigns, although it may also be used in commercial or social contexts. Propaganda does not always rely on false information. It may present selected facts, half-truths or one-sided arguments, repeating them frequently so that audiences accept a particular viewpoint without considering alternatives.

Propaganda messages often appeal to emotions such as fear, pride, anger or loyalty. They can appear in posters, slogans, speeches, films, songs, textbooks and, in the present era, across social media platforms and messaging applications. Visual symbols and simplified narratives are preferred because they are easy to remember and share.

8.7 FAKE NEWS

Fake news denotes information that is entirely concocted, devoid of verifiable facts, credible sources, or authentic quotations. The issue is inherently more intricate and nuanced, as the term has become significantly politicised and is frequently employed to invalidate or assail dissenting perspectives. Individuals may designate contentious topics, opposing viewpoints, or specific media organisations as “fake news” to diminish their legitimacy. Technological advancements, particularly the pervasive utilisation of social media and artificial intelligence, have significantly facilitated the rapid and extensive dissemination of false news narratives.

8.8 SECURITY ISSUE

Security concerns restrict communication when fear of data breaches, hacking, spying, or information misuse prevents individuals from sharing or receiving messages via digital platforms. When individuals or organisations are concerned about the privacy of their interactions or the potential exposure of sensitive data, they frequently restrict their discussion, avoid specific platforms, or conceal critical information, hindering successful information flow.

Concerns regarding security and privacy are acknowledged as a distinct technological impediment to communication, since they diminish trust in communication technologies and hinder collaboration and decision-making unless strong precautions (encryption, access control, explicit privacy regulations) are implemented.

8.9 CYBER FRAUD

Cyber fraud acts as a barrier to communication as it undermines people’s trust in digital channels and platforms. When users repeatedly encounter scams, phishing messages, fake websites, or fraudulent social-media accounts, they become more cautious, avoid responding or stop using certain online services altogether, which reduces open and effective communication.

Fear of identity theft, financial loss and misuse of personal data also leads individuals and organizations to share less information online, slowing collaboration and discouraging honest interaction unless strong safeguards and visible anti-fraud measures are in place.

8.10 INFORMATION PROTECTION

Information protection means keeping information safe from unauthorized access, use, change or destruction, so that it stays confidential, accurate and available to the right people when needed. It includes all the policies, technologies and practices used to prevent data breaches, leaks, or loss and to ensure that information is handled in line with legal and ethical requirements.

The information protection ensures that messages remain private where required, that they reach the right receiver without alteration and that systems remain functional. Organisations implement various measures such as strong passwords, multi-factor authentication, access control lists, encryption, secure backups and regular audits. Legal frameworks, including data protection laws and sector- specific regulations, define responsibilities and penalties related to information misuse. From the user

perspective, information protection builds trust and encourages honest sharing of data in services such as online banking, e governance, e learning and telemedicine.

8.11 COMMUNICATION BARRIERS AND LIBRARY

The communication barriers commonly arise in library and information centres

- **Technical barriers:** Problems like network failures, software errors, outdated hardware or difficulty using OPACs and databases interrupt interaction between staff and users and make access to digital resources difficult.
- **Language barriers:** When staff and users do not share a common language or translation support is weak, users struggle to ask questions and understand instructions, reducing effective use of services.
- **Information overload:** The huge volume of documents, databases and search options can overwhelm users, making it hard for them to find relevant information even with staff help.
- **Lack of information literacy:** Many users do not know how to search catalogues, use keywords, or evaluate sources, so they cannot clearly express their needs or properly follow guidance.
- **Environmental factors:** Noise, crowding and lack of privacy in reading rooms or counters make it harder for staff and users to talk clearly, ask detailed queries, or give focused reference help.

Skills of a good communicator for LIS professionals

Effective library service depends heavily on the librarian's communication competence and behaviour during user interactions. The skills essential for a library professional-

- **Listening**: Active listening, giving full attention and encouraging the user to explain the need; listening is treated as a core communication skill alongside speaking.
- **Observation**: Noticing cues in tone, facial expression, posture, hesitation and confusion; these cues help detect problems in understanding.
- **Empathy**: Understanding the user's background and viewpoint, especially when users differ in language, culture or confidence.
- **Encouragement**: Using supportive verbal and non-verbal feedback (nodding, brief prompts) to help users speak freely and reduce anxiety.
- **Summarising**: Restating the user's query and agreed next steps to confirm shared understanding and reduce semantic confusion.
- **Flexibility**: Adjusting language level, pace, examples and even the communication medium based on the user's response and capacity.
- **Timing**: Communicating at the right time, avoiding delays and choosing the correct moment to clarify or probe further.
- **Planning**: Structuring oral explanations and choosing the most suitable channel/medium for the message.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is the difference between explicit and implicit barriers in communication?
Q 2: Describe any three types of physical barriers.

Q 3: How do misinformation and disinformation differ in terms of intention and impact and why is this distinction important for information professionals?

Q 4: Write any four communication skills that are essential for LIS professionals to provide effective user-centred services.

8.12 LET US SUM UP

Barriers in information communication in society arise from physical, psychological, semantic, mechanical, cross-cultural and organisational factors that interrupt the smooth flow of messages and lead to misunderstanding or incomplete sharing of information. In library and information centres, communication is further affected by technical failures, language differences, information overload, low information literacy and unsuitable environments, all of which reduce effective access to resources. Contemporary information environments also face challenges from misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and fake news, which weaken trust and distort public understanding. Security issues and cyber fraud influence how confidently people use digital platforms and increase the need for systematic information protection. Communication skills of library and information science professionals, such as active listening, empathy, summarising, flexibility, timing and careful planning, play a crucial role in overcoming these barriers and supporting user-centred services.

8.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: Explicit barriers are directly visible obstacles such as noise, poor seating or frequent system failures, whereas implicit barriers are hidden factors such as mistrust, prejudice or unspoken assumptions.

Answer to Q 2: Time is a physical barrier when delays in sending or receiving messages reduce their usefulness, for example, when examination schedules or administrative decisions reach students late. Place becomes a barrier when poor lighting, lack of ventilation or inadequate space makes participants uncomfortable and unwilling to stay for long discussions. Noise from traffic, construction or crowded corridors is another physical barrier, especially in urban campuses where open windows and shared spaces are common.

Answer to Q 3: Misinformation is false or inaccurate information shared without the intention to mislead, while disinformation is deliberately created and spread to deceive or manipulate audiences. The impact of disinformation can be more severe because it is often part of planned campaigns that target elections, public health or social harmony. For information professionals, understanding this distinction is important for designing media literacy programmes, advising users about credible sources and responding responsibly to rumours in both offline and online environments.

Answer to Q 4: Four important skills for LIS professionals are active listening, empathy, summarising and flexibility.

8.14 FURTHER READING

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M 8.15 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short Questions

Q 1: Define psychological barrier with one example.
Q 2: What is meant by a semantic barrier in communication?
Q 3: Write a short note on fake news.
Q 4: State any two attributes of disinformation.
Q 5: What is information protection?

B. Long Questions

Q 1: Discuss different types of physical barriers.
Q 2: Explain cross -cultural barriers in the Indian context with appropriate examples.
Q 3: Describe the major communication barriers in library and information centres. Distinguish between misinformation, disinformation and propaganda.

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UNIT 9: SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives
9.2 Introduction
9.3 Definition and Scope Of Scholarly Communication
9.4 Process Of Scholarly and Scientific Communication
  9.4.1 Creation of Scholarly Work
  9.4.2 Quality Control and Evaluation
  9.4.3 Dissemination and Discovery
  9.4.4 Preservation and Long-Term Access
9.5 Scholarly Communication In The Digital Environment
9.6 Open Access To Scholarly Information
  9.6.1 Gold And Green Routes
9.7 Open Access Repositories And Opendoar
9.8 Open Access Journals And Doaj
9.9 Role Of Libraries and Lis Professionals In Scholarly Communication
9.10 Scholarly Communication In India
9.11 Let Us Sum Up
9.12 Answers To Check Your Progress
9.13 Further Readings
9.14 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- Define scholarly communication and explain its scope.
- Describe the main stages in the scholarly communication process.
- Explain scientific communication and how it relates to scholarly communication.
- Describe institutional repositories and their role in open access.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

Scholarly communication is central to higher education because it is the system through which knowledge is created, assessed, shared and preserved for future learning and research. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) define scholarly communication as the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community and preserved for future use, including formal channels such as peer-reviewed journals and informal channels such as electronic mailing lists. Scholarly communication has expanded beyond traditional print to include digital dissemination such as e-journals, repositories and other online channels and this expansion creates new issues for copyright, access and long-term digital preservation.

Scholarly communication is both major purchasers of scholarly resources and major support systems for research discovery, access and preservation. ACRL states that

scholarly research is created as a public good to facilitate inquiry and knowledge and that a substantial portion is publicly supported, with most scholars disseminating research with no expectation of direct financial reward. These features explain why access, affordability and sustainability have become key concerns in scholarly communication and why open access has emerged as a significant reform movement.

9.3 DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

Scholarly communication refers to the connected system through which scholarly knowledge is produced and circulated within and beyond the academic community. ACRL defines it as the system in which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community and preserved for future use and it includes both formal and informal channels. Scholarly communication can be described as the process by which academics, scholars and researchers share and publish findings so that these are available to the wider academic community and beyond and it presents scholarly communication as including creation, transformation, dissemination and preservation of knowledge related to teaching and research.

The scope of scholarly communication includes research articles, scholarly books, conference papers, theses and dissertations, datasets, preprints, technical reports and learning objects, along with the systems that support them. The online environment introduces issues such as copyright, intellectual property rights and long-term preservation of digital assets, which shows that scholarly communication includes legal, economic and technical dimensions. The ACRL “Principles and Strategies” focuses primarily on the formal system of scholarly communication, especially publication in peer-reviewed journals and related access and preservation issues.

Scholarly communication also includes “scientific communication” as a major component, because scientific disciplines rely heavily on journal publishing, conference dissemination and systematic peer review. In practice, “scientific communication” can be treated as the scholarly communication of science, technology and medicine, while “scholarly communication” is broader and includes humanities and social sciences, where monographs and edited volumes may be more prominent. The problems, such as journal price rises and market consolidation, have been especially visible in scientific, technical and medical fields.

9.4 PROCESS OF SCHOLARLY AND SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION

The scholarly communication process can be understood as a lifecycle, beginning with research and ending with long-term preservation and reuse. ACRL’s definition already implies four core stages: creation, quality evaluation, dissemination and preservation for future use. In a typical academic setting, researchers identify a problem, conduct research, write results, submit for evaluation, publish and then the work is discovered and used by other researchers, students and practitioners, which creates further cycles of knowledge creation.

9.4.1 Creation Of Scholarly Work

Creation includes designing research, collecting evidence, analysing results and writing scholarly outputs. Scholarly research is public good that facilitates inquiry and knowledge and much of this research is publicly supported, either through funded projects or through institutional support.

9.4.2 Quality Control And Evaluation

Quality evaluation often occurs through peer review, editorial screening and research ethics processes. Quality assurance in publishing through peer review is one of the principles supported for reform of scholarly communication. Quality control also includes methodological checking and improvement through reviewer comments and editorial decisions and it contributes to the reliability of the scholarly record.

9.4.3 Dissemination And Discovery

Dissemination occurs through journals, books, conference proceedings, repositories and academic networks, while discovery occurs through library catalogues, indexing services, databases and search engines. The dissemination includes formal means such as publication in peer-reviewed journals and informal channels such as electronic mailing lists. In digital environments, dissemination is accelerated through online publishing and repository deposit, and discovery is supported through interoperability standards and metadata harvesting used by repositories.

9.4.4 Preservation And Long-Term Access

Preservation ensures that scholarly works remain available and usable over time. Electronic publishing creates challenges for long-term preservation because libraries often license access rather than owning and storing journal content, so new preservation models are needed. Preservation of intellectual assets and digital outputs as part of scholarly communication, including preservation challenges due to changing technology platforms.

9.5 SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

Digital technologies have expanded both the formats and channels of scholarly communication. The scholarship has moved beyond traditional print formats to include dissemination through email, preprint servers, e-journals, e-books, e-reserves and distance learning systems. This expansion increases speed and reach, but it also introduces new complexities around copyright, intellectual property rights and preservation of digital assets.

The shift to electronic publishing changes the legal framework from copyright law toward contract law through licensing agreements, which can include restrictions that would not apply in print environments under fair use principles. The libraries may lose content in aggregated journal databases when agreements change, showing that

digital access can be unstable if preservation and perpetual access rights are not secured. This is why libraries and consortia negotiate licensing terms and why open access and repositories are viewed as alternatives that can improve the stability of access.

9.6 OPEN ACCESS TO SCHOLARLY INFORMATION

Open access refers to free availability of scholarly literature online without price barriers for readers. The open access calls for free availability of scholarly literature on the internet and describes open access as immediate, free and unrestricted online access to digital scholarly material, focusing especially on peer-reviewed research articles. Open access is promoted as a way to increase access to scholarship, especially when traditional subscription prices and restrictive licensing reduce access for libraries and for readers outside universities.

The need for reform due to journal prices has risen well above general inflation and above library budget growth, causing subscription cuts and reduced access to scholarship. The commercial firms have gained increasing control over scholarly journals, particularly in STM fields and that consolidation has contributed to pricing pressure. Open access is therefore connected to the goal of the broadest possible access to research and to principles such as fair pricing, diversified publishing and preservation.

9.6.1 Gold and Green Routes

There are two main routes to open access. The gold route involves publishing in open access journals, which may be fully open access or partially open and may or may not charge fees. The green route involves self-archiving, where authors deposit their work in an institutional or subject repository such as arXiv, and it can involve depositing preprints or postprints depending on policy. These two routes are often complementary in practice because publishing choices and repository deposit practices both contribute to increasing access.

9.7 OPEN ACCESS REPOSITORIES AND OPENDOAR

Institutional repositories are key infrastructure for green open access. Institutional repositories are digital collections of outputs created within a university or research institution and they store, disseminate and preserve digital versions of institutional intellectual output such as journal articles, theses, technical reports and other materials. Repositories often follow interoperability standards and may use OAI-PMH to expose metadata for harvesting and indexing, supporting discovery across systems.

Open DOAR is a major directory that supports repository discovery and quality assurance. Jisc describes Open DOAR as a quality-assured global directory of academic open access repositories that enables identification, browsing and searching for repositories by features such as location, software or type of material held. Jisc also notes that Open DOAR provides tools and support to share best practices and improve repository infrastructure quality and it highlights benefits such as raising visibility of repositories to search services and enabling benchmarking and analytics. For end

users, Jisc notes that Open DOAR helps researchers find institutional, subject-based, or governmental repositories of open access material.

9.8 OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS AND DOAJ

Open access journals provide a gold route to open access by making articles openly available on publication. The ACRL principles explicitly support open access to scholarship and support strategies such as developing peer-reviewed open access journals that avoid subscription barriers. For libraries and researchers, one key issue is identifying open access journals that follow credible quality control and transparent practices.

DOAJ is widely used for this purpose. DOAJ is an online directory that indexes and provides access to high quality open access peer-reviewed journals and aims to increase visibility and ease of use of open access scholarly journals. DOAJ's own "About" pages describe it as a community-curated index of open access journals and emphasise quality standards and openness, supporting librarians in identifying reputable journals for users and for collection guidance. DOAJ supports open access discovery and helps distinguish credible journals from low-quality or misleading publishing outlets.

9.9 ROLE OF LIBRARIES AND LIS PROFESSIONALS IN SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

Libraries play a direct role in supporting scholarly communication by enabling discovery, access, literacy and preservation. The scholarly communication problems include licensing restrictions, reduced access due to pricing and preservation challenges in electronic environments, all of which are library concerns. Libraries therefore work on strategies such as negotiating licences, supporting institutional repositories, promoting author rights awareness and providing services that improve access and responsible use.

Libraries also support reform and advocacy. The strategies include developing institutional repositories, supporting self-archiving by scholars and encouraging publishing and copyright agreements that allow authors to retain self-archiving rights. The issues such as author rights, economics of scholarly resources, new publishing models including open access and repositories and preservation of intellectual assets as key scholarly communication issues also exist. LIS professionals may work as scholarly communication librarians, repository managers, metadata specialists, copyright advisors and trainers for research visibility and open access compliance.

9.10 SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IN INDIA

In India, scholarly communication is shaped by the scale of higher education, diverse research institutions and public funding of research and education. The idea of scholarly research as a public good is relevant in India because many universities and research institutions are publicly supported and the case for broad access becomes stronger when research is publicly funded. Open access is also relevant due to budget

limits in many academic libraries and the need for access by learners and researchers in institutions with fewer subscriptions.

Indian libraries increasingly engage with open access through institutional repositories and through guidance on open access journals and indexing. The repositories improve visibility and impact of institutional outputs and preserve grey literature such as theses and technical reports, which is particularly valuable in contexts where local research may not always be widely distributed through commercial channels. The scholarly communication support in India involves building and maintaining repositories, guiding researchers to credible journals and directories and strengthening discovery through metadata and standards.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Write the definition of scholarly communication.
Q 2: List and explain four major stages of the scholarly communication lifecycle.
Q 3: Why is scholarly research often described as a public good?
Q 4: Explain the difference between gold open access and green open access.
Q 5L What are Open DOAR and DOAJ, and why are they useful to libraries?

2 9.11 LET US SUM UP

Scholarly communication is the system that connects research creation, quality evaluation, dissemination and preservation, using both formal publishing, such as peer-reviewed journals and informal channels such as electronic mailing lists. Digital technologies have expanded scholarly communication channels but have also introduced challenges related to licensing restrictions, rising costs and long-term preservation, which have increased the importance of reform efforts led by academic communities and libraries.

Open access is a key reform approach that aims to make scholarly literature freely available online, supported by gold open access journals and green open access repositories. Infrastructure and discovery tools such as OpenDOAR and DOAJ help libraries and researchers identify repositories and open access journals, while libraries and LIS professionals play crucial roles in advocacy, repository development, metadata and interoperability, and user education that strengthen access and responsible scholarly publishing.

K 9.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: Scholarly communication is the system through which scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community and preserved for future use, using both formal publication channels and informal channels such as electronic mailing lists.

Answer to Q 2: The process includes the creation of research outputs, evaluation for quality such as peer review, dissemination through formal and informal

channels and preservation for future use, especially important in digital environments.

Answer to Q 3: The scholarly research is created as a public good to facilitate inquiry and knowledge and much of this research is publicly supported, with most scholars disseminating work without expecting direct financial reward.

Answer to Q 4: Gold open access involves publishing in open access journals, while green open access involves self-archiving by depositing works in institutional or subject repositories, including preprints or postprints depending on policy.

Answer to Q 5: Open DOAR is a quality-assured global directory of academic open access repositories used to identify and search repositories by features such as location or content type, while DOAJ is used as a directory and index to find quality open access journals.

O 9.13 FURTHER READING

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M 9.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short questions:

Q 1: Define scholarly communication.
Q 2: What is meant by the scholarly communication lifecycle?
Q 3: What is open access?
Q 4: What are Open DOAR and DOAJ?

B. Long questions:

Q 1: Explain the process of scholarly communication from research creation to preservation.

Q 2: Discuss major challenges in the formal scholarly communication system and their impact on libraries.
Q 3: Explain institutional repositories and their role in open access.
Q 4: Describe Open DOAR and explain how libraries can use it for repository discovery and benchmarking.
Q 5: Explain DOAJ and discuss its importance for identifying quality open access journals.

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UNIT 10: TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE COMMUNICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives
10.2 Introduction
10.3 Traditional Knowledge: Meaning, Definition and Scope
10.3.1 Features of Traditional Knowledge
10.4 Significance of Traditional Knowledge
10.5 Challenges In Traditional Knowledge and Its Communication
10.6 Traditional Knowledge Communication: Concept and Importance
10.7 Traditional Knowledge Communication and Information Systems
10.8 Traditional Knowledge Communication Vs Scientific Knowledge Communication
10.9 Traditional Knowledge Communication in India: TKDL and Related Initiatives
10.10 Role Of Libraries and LIS Professionals
10.11 Let Us Sum Up
10.12 Answers To Check Your Progress
10.13 Further Readings
10.14 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- explain the meaning and define traditional knowledge.
- describe the scope and main features of traditional knowledge systems.
- explain why traditional knowledge is significant for society.
- identify major challenges in the protection, documentation and communication of traditional knowledge.
- explain the concept and importance of traditional knowledge communication.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

Traditional knowledge is a living body of knowledge that communities develop and transmit over generations through cultural practice and everyday life. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) describes traditional knowledge as knowledge, know-how, skills, innovations or practices passed between generations in a traditional context and forming part of the cultural or spiritual identity of communities that act as custodians of that knowledge. This knowledge often includes ecological, agricultural and medicinal understanding, as well as skills and practices connected with a particular place, language and community history.

Traditional knowledge communication refers to how such knowledge is shared, maintained and used within a community and how it is sometimes translated for use in education, policy, research and development. Indigenous knowledge is often conveyed formally and informally through social encounters, oral traditions, ritual practices and

other activities and it can include both common knowledge and specialized knowledge guarded by trained knowledge keepers. In the modern information environment, traditional knowledge communication has become important as it involves documentation, ethical access, intellectual property concerns and the risk of misuse when knowledge is separated from its context.

10.3 TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: MEANING, DEFINITION, AND SCOPE

Traditional knowledge is commonly understood as knowledge rooted in long-term community experience and sustained through cultural systems of learning and practice. WIPO explains that traditional knowledge is a living body of knowledge developed, sustained and passed on within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity. This definition emphasises three essential points: traditional knowledge is living and dynamic, it is connected to communities and it is transmitted across generations rather than created for one-time publication.

Traditional or Indigenous knowledge is also described as a network of knowledges, beliefs and traditions intended to preserve, communicate and contextualize Indigenous relationships with culture, landscape and other beings over time. In this perspective, knowledge includes practical skills and observations, beliefs include religious or spiritual concepts and traditions include practices, but in real community life, these categories may overlap and work together. Traditional knowledge is often holistic, meaning it connects ecological, cultural, spiritual and social dimensions rather than separating them into academic disciplines.

The scope of traditional knowledge can be broad. WIPO notes that traditional knowledge can include agricultural, environmental or medicinal knowledge and knowledge associated with genetic resources and it gives examples such as traditional medicines, hunting or fishing techniques and knowledge about water management or animal migration patterns. Bruchac explains that Indigenous knowledges may include oral narratives, time-reckoning, symbolic communication, harvesting and hunting skills, specialized understandings of ecosystems and technologies such as tool-making and medicinal remedies. It is important to see traditional knowledge not as a single subject area but as a wide range of knowledge practices that are embedded in communities and expressed through multiple communication forms.

10.3.1 Features of Traditional Knowledge

Traditional knowledge is linked to community identity and responsibility. WIPO states that what makes knowledge “traditional” is not simply its antiquity but its relationship with a community, including how it is developed, sustained and passed on through customary systems of transmission. Bruchac notes that knowledge is often passed through regular community performances, including oral tradition, song, dance and ceremony and that some individuals and families may be entrusted with protecting specialized or esoteric knowledge. These features directly influence how knowledge can be documented, described and shared in library and information systems.

10.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Traditional knowledge is significant because it supports community survival, well-being and continuity. Bruchac describes traditional ecological knowledge as practical, applied Indigenous knowledge of the natural world that provides moral guidelines and practical advice, emerging from incremental learning, trial and error and long observation. This makes traditional knowledge highly relevant for areas such as agriculture, biodiversity conservation, resource management and local health practices.

Traditional knowledge is also significant for cultural identity and intergenerational learning. Bruchac explains that oral traditions function as collective memories that teach, carry and reinforce other knowledge and they are regularly recounted and verified by knowledgeable elders in many communities. WIPO notes that protecting traditional knowledge and related cultural expressions may support policy goals such as preserving and promoting cultural heritage, preventing misappropriation, recognising community value, preventing offensive use and promoting cultural diversity. This means traditional knowledge is not only informational content but also a cultural and ethical domain involving rights, respect and appropriate access.

In contemporary settings, traditional knowledge is also significant in legal and policy debates about misuse and benefit sharing. WIPO explains that many communities and governments seek protection because traditional remedies or cultural materials can be taken and used by outsiders, including through patents or copyrighted adaptations, without acknowledgement or fair sharing of benefits. The CBD framework links traditional knowledge to biodiversity objectives and includes provisions that emphasize respect, preservation and maintenance of such knowledge and equitable benefit sharing.

10.5 CHALLENGES IN TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND ITS COMMUNICATION

Traditional knowledge communication faces challenges that are social, ethical, legal and technical. A major challenge is the risk of misappropriation, where knowledge is used commercially or formally protected by outsiders without consent, acknowledgement or benefit sharing. WIPO describes concerns that traditional knowledge and cultural expressions have often been treated as if they are in the public domain under conventional intellectual property approaches, which communities reject because it can expose them to misuse. The article on TKDL also situates the debate in a broader discourse of “biopiracy” and explains that the turmeric and neem patent cases in the 1990s became symbols of appropriation of Indian traditional practices through patent systems.

Another challenge is the tension between preservation and protection. WIPO explains that preservation and safeguarding involve identification, documentation, transmission, revitalization and promotion, while IP-type protection focuses on preventing unauthorized or inappropriate use by third parties. WIPO also warns that documentation and digitization can increase accessibility and therefore increase vulnerability to misappropriation if proper safeguards are not in place. This is a key

issue for LIS because libraries and archives often aim for access and preservation, but traditional knowledge sometimes requires restricted access or culturally appropriate controls.A third challenge is decontextualization, meaning that knowledge can lose meaning when separated from community practice and relationships. Bruchac explains that meaning in Indigenous knowledge is often tied to local ecosystems, cultural experience and specific contexts and outsiders may misinterpret physical evidence or recorded narratives without community guidance. Research on TKDL (Traditional Knowledge Digital Library) argues that documenting knowledge in databases can decontextualize it and may dispossess original owners, even when the goal is protection. These concerns require careful, ethical approaches to any information system that stores or shares traditional knowledge.

A fourth challenge is the existence of specialised knowledge keepers and customary rules. Bruchac notes that some knowledge is protected by gatekeepers such as ritual practitioners, medicine people and elders who preserve esoteric knowledge and disclosure can cause harm if sacred or restricted knowledge is revealed. WIPO similarly emphasises respect for customary laws and practices as part of a protection framework and notes that IP protection should complement, not replace, traditional patterns of knowledge systems. This requires sensitivity to community protocols when collecting, describing or providing access.

10.6 TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE COMMUNICATION: CONCEPT AND IMPORTANCE

Traditional knowledge communication refers to the ways knowledge is transmitted, validated and applied inside a community and in some cases, exchanged with external institutions. Bruchac explains that Indigenous knowledges are conveyed through social encounters, oral traditions, ritual practices and everyday activities and that oral narratives and performances may carry both literal and metaphorical truths. The Pressbooks chapter on Indigenous knowledge systems also describes Indigenous knowledge as passed down orally and embedded in cultural and social life, using storytelling, ceremony and consensus-oriented dialogue as key communication modes.

The importance of traditional knowledge communication lies in its role in continuity and practical guidance. Oral traditions support intergenerational transfer and help maintain cultural coherence through repetition and training of knowledge keepers. Communication also supports community decision-making, stewardship and sustainable practices, especially when knowledge is place-based and reflects long observation of ecosystems and seasonal change.

Traditional knowledge communication is also important at the interface with modern institutions such as universities, research bodies and government agencies. Bruchac notes that researchers can gain insight by consulting Indigenous traditions, but they must avoid interference with sacred sites and esoteric knowledge and should consult local knowledge bearers to ensure ethical practice. WIPO highlights prior informed consent and equitable benefit sharing as principles that are often invoked when knowledge is accessed and used by third parties, especially for sensitive materials.

10.7 TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

When traditional knowledge is documented in information systems, communication shifts from lived practice to recorded “information.” WIPO describes documentation initiatives such as databases, registries and inventories and notes that these are often created for preservation but can also support defensive protection in patent examination by serving as prior art evidence. WIPO also notes that India has compiled a searchable database of traditional medical knowledge that can be used as prior art by patent examiners, presenting TKDL as an example of defensive protection.

The TKDL research article explains that patent systems assume prior art is in written or visual documentation reasonably accessible to examiners, which is one reason traditional knowledge is sometimes overlooked during patent searches. It further explains that TKDL aims to bridge knowledge systems by translating Indian traditional medical knowledge into formats and classifications usable by patent examiners, including alignment with international patent classifications. This example shows that “communication” in a modern sense can involve translation into standardized metadata and classification codes, which raises both opportunities and risks.

The key point is that information systems are not neutral containers. The TKDL article argues that classification systems reflect social relations and power and changes in classification can reshape how knowledge circulates and who can claim authority over it. Therefore, documenting traditional knowledge requires careful design choices about representation, language, access controls and community governance.

10.8 TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE COMMUNICATION VS SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE COMMUNICATION

Traditional knowledge communication and scientific knowledge communication differ in context, authority structures and typical media of transmission, though they can also complement each other. Bruchac notes that Indigenous knowledges are holistic and integrative and often rooted in sensory awareness and relationships among organisms in ecosystems, whereas scientific models often rely on disciplinary divisions and classification systems that detach data from lived context. The Pressbooks chapter similarly contrasts Indigenous knowledge as holistic and relational with Western scientific knowledge that compartmentalizes knowledge into disciplines.

They also differ in typical communication channels. Traditional knowledge is often transmitted through oral tradition, stories, ceremony and community-based learning and practice, while scientific knowledge is typically communicated through formal publications, standardized reporting and institutional evaluation systems. Scientific communication usually values written documentation and replicable methods, whereas traditional knowledge communication may place stronger emphasis on lived experience, place-based meaning and the authority of elders and knowledge keepers.

However, the difference should not be treated as a strict opposition. Bruchac states that Indigenous knowledge is not wholly unscientific and that scientific and Indigenous approaches need not stand in opposition because they can be complementary ways of

organizing understanding of the natural world. The TKDL article also argues that the TKDL fits into Indian agendas of documenting and modernizing traditional medicine and challenges a simple dichotomy between traditional and scientific knowledge systems. In practical terms, respectful integration requires recognising different validation systems and ensuring consent, benefit sharing and contextual integrity.

10.9 TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE COMMUNICATION IN INDIA: TKDL AND RELATED INITIATIVES

India has developed specific approaches to protect and communicate parts of traditional knowledge, especially traditional medical knowledge, within global intellectual property systems. CSIR (full form) describes the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) as a programme that documents Indian traditional medicinal knowledge and makes it accessible in a form that supports patent examination to prevent misappropriation. The TKDL research article explains that TKDL was established in 2001 and that its prehistory is linked to patent disputes such as the turmeric and neem cases, where patents were challenged on the grounds that the claimed “inventions” were already known in Indian tradition.

The TKDL article explains that TKDL bridges Indian traditional medicine and the International Patent Classification system by translating knowledge into a format patent examiners can use and it notes that it contributed to revisions in patent classification to better incorporate traditional medical knowledge. At the same time, the article discusses criticisms that traditional knowledge databases can decontextualize knowledge and potentially dispossess original owners, which is relevant to ethical information management in India as well. Government of India sources also state that India has taken steps to protect ancient and traditional knowledge and TKDL is a key part of that approach.

10.10 ROLE OF LIBRARIES AND LIS PROFESSIONALS

Libraries and LIS professionals can support traditional knowledge communication by working with communities to document, preserve and provide access in ethically appropriate ways. WIPO notes that cultural institutions such as museums, libraries and archives play a key role in the preservation and promotion of materials documenting community life, cultural expressions, and knowledge systems, and it highlights that institutions are developing best practices to address intellectual property and community control issues. LIS professionals are therefore responsible for understanding that access decisions may require culturally appropriate restrictions rather than default open access, particularly for sacred or secret knowledge.

LIS professionals also contribute through metadata, classification and retrieval systems, but these must be designed carefully. The TKDL article shows that classification systems shape power relations and that translating traditional knowledge into standardized formats may increase visibility but can also change meaning and control.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Define traditional knowledge.
Q 2: Describe any three features of traditional knowledge transmission in communities.
Q 3: Explain the difference between preservation of traditional knowledge and protection of traditional knowledge.
Q 4: Why can documentation and digitization of traditional knowledge create new risks?
Q 5: Compare traditional knowledge communication and scientific knowledge communication in two points each.

2 10.11 LET US SUM UP

Traditional knowledge is best understood as a living, community-rooted body of knowledge, skills and practices that is sustained and transmitted across generations and often forms part of cultural or spiritual identity. It includes many domains such as ecological and medicinal knowledge and it is commonly communicated through oral tradition, storytelling, ritual and community practice, often supported by elders and specialised knowledge keepers.

Traditional knowledge communication has become an important area as modern documentation and digitization can support preservation and defensive protection, but they can also create risks of misappropriation and decontextualization. Comparing traditional and scientific knowledge communication highlights differences in typical media, validation practices and knowledge organization, while also showing that respectful collaboration can allow both knowledge systems to inform each other when consent, customary rules and benefit sharing are respected.

K 10.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: Traditional knowledge is a living body of knowledge developed, sustained and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity and it includes knowledge, know-how, skills, innovations or practices passed between generations in a traditional context.

Answer to Q 2: Traditional knowledge can be conveyed through oral traditions, ritual practices and social encounters and it may be maintained by elders or specialised knowledge keepers who protect certain forms of esoteric knowledge.

Answer to Q 3: WIPO distinguishes IP-type protection, which aims to prevent unauthorized or inappropriate uses by third parties, from preservation or safeguarding, which focuses on documentation, transmission and revitalization to ensure knowledge is maintained and does not disappear.

Answer to Q 4: WIPO notes that documentation and digitization can make traditional knowledge more accessible and therefore more vulnerable to

misappropriation and the TKDL research also discusses how databases can decontextualize knowledge and raise concerns about dispossession.

Answer to Q 5: Traditional knowledge communication is often oral, relational and embedded in cultural practice and holistic context, while scientific knowledge communication is typically formalized through standardized documentation and institutional systems; Bruchac also notes that the two need not be strict opposites and can be complementary.

O 10.13 FURTHER READING

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M 10.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short questions:

Q 1: Define traditional knowledge.
Q 2: What is meant by traditional knowledge communication?
Q 3: Who are knowledge keepers in traditional knowledge systems?
Q 4: Distinguish between protection and preservation of traditional knowledge.
Q 5: What is TKDL?

B. Long questions:

Q 1: Explain the features and scope of traditional knowledge with examples.

Q 2: Discuss the significance of traditional knowledge for society and the environment.

Q 3: Describe key challenges in communicating and documenting traditional knowledge.

Q 4: Explain the concept of traditional knowledge communication and its importance.

Q 5: Explain how information systems and classification affect traditional knowledge communication.

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UNIT 11: TRANSFORMATION OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives
11.2 Introduction
11.3 Concept, Key Terms and Need for Transformation of Information Communication
- 11.3.1 Key Terms and Scope
- 11.3.2 Brief Historical View of Communication Eras
- 11.3.3 Need for Transformation Of Communication In The Library
- 11.3.4 Drivers and Need for Transformation
- 11.3.5 Information Ethics, Privacy and Trust
- 11.3.6 Media and Information Literacy (Mil)

11.4 Transformation in Libraries and Information Services
- 11.4.1 From Traditional Libraries to Hybrid Services
- 11.4.2 Digitisation and Digital Libraries
- 11.4.3 Equity of Access, Inclusion, and Public Internet Access
- 11.4.4 Library 2.0, Participation, and Community Engagement
- 11.4.5 Quality, Responsibility, and Ethical Issues In Participation
- 11.4.6 Scholarly Communication Support: Open Access and Repositories

11.5 Impact on Society: Economic, Social, Political, Cultural and Research Dimensions
- 11.5.1 Economic Impact
- 11.5.2 Social Impact
- 11.5.3 Political Impact
- 11.5.4 Cultural Impact
- 11.5.5 Research Impact and Scholarly Communication

11.6 Enterprise Emergence in Society Through Self-Learning
- 11.6.1 Self-Learning Ecosystems In The Digital Era
- 11.6.2 From Self-Learning To Employability and Enterprise
- 11.6.3 Role of Libraries In Supporting Self-Learning and Enterprise

11.7 Let Us Sum Up
11.8 Answers To Check Your Progress
11.9 Further Readings
11.10 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- explain the meaning and scope of information communication and its transformation.
- identify key drivers that create the need for transformation in information communication.
- describe major changes in libraries due to digitisation, networked services and participatory practices.

- discuss how transformation affects society in economic, social, political and cultural terms.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

Information and communication shape education, governance, work, culture and everyday decision making. As societies change, the ways people create information, store it, find it, share it and judge its reliability also change. In earlier periods, information communication relied heavily on print and face-to-face channels and on physical institutions. Today, it increasingly relies on digital networks, mobile devices and interactive platforms that enable rapid sharing and feedback. This shift has affected individuals and organisations and it has strongly affected libraries because libraries historically organised recorded knowledge and provided structured access to it. The transformation of information communication is therefore not only technological. It includes changes in user expectations, institutional roles and power relations connected with access to knowledge.

11.3 CONCEPT, KEY TERMS AND NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION

11.3.1 Key Terms and Scope

Transformation of information communication refers to major changes in how information is produced, organised, accessed, shared, evaluated and preserved. It includes changes in technology, but also changes in social behaviour and institutional practices. In academic contexts, it also includes changes in how research is communicated and validated.

Key terms include:

- **Information:** Recorded or communicated knowledge that reduces uncertainty and supports understanding and decisions.
- **Communication:** The process of exchanging messages and meaning through various channels.
- **ICT:** Tools and systems for creating, storing, processing and transmitting information, especially digital and network technologies.
- **Digital transformation:** The restructuring of processes and services using digital technologies, along with changes in roles and workflows.
- **Knowledge society:** A society where knowledge creation, access and use significantly influence development and participation.
- **Scholarly communication:** The system through which research is created, evaluated, disseminated and preserved.

11.3.2 Brief Historical View of Communication Eras

A clear way to understand communication change over time is to use Marshall McLuhan’s four-step model of human communication as discussed in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. The four stages are: oral communication, written manuscript culture, the book

printing era (the “Gutenberg Galaxy”) and a civilisation based on electronic technology. A fifth stage is also present, an internet-based network culture shaped by the internet, Web 2.0 and social networks, sometimes expressed as a movement from “Gutenberg” to “Zuckerberg.”

i. **ORAL COMMUNICATION (PRE-LITERATE STAGE)**
   In the oral communication stage, communication is mainly face-to-face and depends on spoken language, memory and direct social interaction. Knowledge is transmitted through speech, storytelling and community practices rather than being stored as stable written records.
   Oral societies still have systems of knowledge, but these systems are embedded in people, roles, traditions and shared practices. The main constraint is that long-term preservation and standardised dissemination are difficult because continuity depends on accurate human transmission across time. Communication therefore, remains closely tied to local contexts and social relationships.

ii. **WRITTEN MANUSCRIPT CULTURE (HAND-COPIED TEXTS)**
   Written manuscript culture begins when societies increasingly rely on written records. Writing makes information more stable than oral memory and allows storage, comparison and transmission of knowledge across long periods. In this stage, libraries begin to emerge as institutions because societies require organised methods to preserve important records and texts.

   The earliest libraries, such as those in ancient Sumer, served as collections of important state and economic documents, preserving primary texts that were closely associated with sacred authority and governmental power.Access to this knowledge was limited and often reserved for selected groups, showing that control of access was central from the early stages of recorded knowledge institutions.

   A shift in antiquity associated with Aristotle’s period happened, when learning moved more toward reading fixed texts rather than only oral learning. This strengthened the educational and communicative roles of libraries, in addition to preservation.

   In medieval times, many libraries were located in monasteries and churches. Their main focus often returned to preservation rather than broad communication and access remained limited. Later, university libraries re-emerged as stronger educational institutions. An example is the University of Paris library, where the catalogue recorded a large number of books, but only a portion was intended for student use, indicating restricted access even in academic settings. The symbol of chained books in cathedral libraries represents controlled access and limited communicative openness in this era.

iii. **BOOK PRINTING ERA (THE “GUTENBERG GALAXY”)**
   The third stage is the printing press era, described as the Gutenberg Galaxy. Printing enables large-scale reproduction of texts, strengthens reading culture and increases the social role of libraries. The link of this era with the rise of the “reading man” and with libraries becoming key institutions for knowledge and learning. Even with print, access remained unequal for a long time. The early access to private and court libraries was mainly for scholars, students and educated elites. During the Enlightenment, new library buildings emerged and library architecture often symbolised authority and the “temple of knowledge.” Libraries in this era could

appear as the main place where people could find answers to many questions, which strengthened their authoritative communicative position.

A major development was standardisation in cataloguing and classification. The year 1791 was a key point when an early European cataloguing instruction was distributed to French libraries, after which rule-based coding of knowledge became obligatory. This strengthened library organisation and discoverability, but it also shaped how users searched, because users needed to follow the library's classification codes and terminology.

The libraries could become instruments of ideology in the twentieth century, including restricted access through closed collections in totalitarian contexts. In contrast, democratic public library development supported wider access, including open shelves, linked with values of accessibility and impartiality.

iv. **CIVILISATION BASED ON ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY**

The fourth stage is based on electronic technology. In McLuhan's usage, this includes radio, television and early personal computers. Communication becomes faster and less dependent on print distribution alone, since electronic channels transmit messages quickly to large audiences.

For libraries, this stage begins to reduce the earlier monopoly of libraries as the main place to obtain information, because people receive information through other electronic channels. However, libraries remain important because they provide organised access, preservation and mediation of recorded knowledge and they continue to support education and cultural memory.

v. **INTERNET-BASED NETWORK CULTURE (NETWORK SOCIETY AND SOCIAL MEDIA)**

The fifth stage reflects today: an internet-based network culture shaped by the internet, Web 2.0 and social networks. The early twenty-first century is described as a "Zuckerberg time," symbolising the growing importance of social media in communication.

In this stage, users are not only receivers of information but also contributors. They comment, review, share and create content. The one-way communication is no longer sufficient, because users want to interact with information and with each other. Libraries respond by moving toward Library 2.0, where technological capabilities combine with social practices and communication becomes more dialogue-based, horizontal and participatory. Users can complement library web spaces, evaluate books, contribute ideas and interact with both librarians and other users.

Across these eras, the issue of access remains central. The library-user communication is primarily shaped by power relations in which access is the key keyword. In the network culture stage, access is not limited to physical entry and printed materials. It also includes digital access, platforms, licensing and the skills required to navigate and interpret information systems. The overall historical shift therefore, shows not only changing technologies, but also changing roles, changing

expectations and changing forms of control and participation in knowledge institutions.

11.3.3 Need for Transformation of Communication In The Library

- New ways of searching for information made the library's earlier stable position less secure, as use of search engines for information was simple, fast and comfortable, often without leaving home.
- Users' preference to search independently and also rely on network forums and social media for help from friends and communities, so the library must transform to remain relevant to actual user behaviour.
- The library's mission and social role are shaped by social conditions and by political, ideological and value structures, so transformation is needed whenever society's needs and conditions change.
- The "digital turn" created changes in practice and in relationships between cultural institutions and audiences, so library services and communication models must change accordingly.
- Traditional library communication was largely one-way, where the library selected information and passed it to readers, but users in the social media environment want to comment, review and add to information, so a transformation toward dialogue and participation is required.
- Library-user communication is strongly linked with power relations in which access is the key issue and as access shifts from mainly physical access to more complex digital access, the library must transform its policies, systems and services to manage access effectively.
- ICTs,transformed how scholars communicate by enabling unprecedented dissemination and new publishing models, so libraries and research systems must transform to support open access archives, open access publishing and web-based scholarly communication practices.

11.3.4 Drivers and Need for Transformation

The need for transformation arises because older information communication systems cannot fully meet the scale, speed and complexity of current demands.

Major drivers include:

- **Technological change:** Internet connectivity, mobile devices, cloud systems and interactive platforms.
- **User expectations:** Demand for quick search, remote access and continuous availability.
- **Information volume:** Rapid growth of digital content, including data, multimedia and informal outputs.
- **Economic pressures:** Rising costs of scholarly publishing and constraints on library budgets.
- **Governance needs:** Growth of e-governance, digital service delivery and digital identity ecosystems in India.

- **Education and skills:** Need for digital literacy, information literacy and lifelong learning pathways.

In India, national initiatives such as Digital India emphasise digital empowerment and online service delivery, which increases the need for citizens to access reliable information and develop digital skills. This strengthens the role of public institutions, including libraries, in enabling inclusion and informed participation.

11.3.5 Information Ethics, Privacy and Trust

Transformation increases ethical challenges because information flows become faster and less bound by physical institutions. Privacy concerns arise when platforms collect personal data and trust becomes harder to maintain when misinformation spreads quickly. Libraries and educational institutions have an important role in promoting ethical use of information, responsible sharing and awareness of privacy and legal rights.

11.3.6 Media and Information Literacy (Mil)

Media and information literacy are essential in transformed communication environments. It includes the ability to find information, evaluate credibility, understand bias, use information legally and ethically and communicate responsibly. For distance learners and first-generation digital users, MIL is necessary for safe and meaningful participation in digital society, especially when information is abundant but quality varies widely.

11.4 TRANSFORMATION IN LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES

11.4.1 From Traditional Libraries to Hybrid Services

Libraries are social institutions that preserve and provide access to recorded knowledge, and their transformation can be understood as a change in “library communication” between users, librarians, collections, catalogues and digital services. Historically, libraries often used one-way communication models, where the library selected and delivered information to users. In network society, libraries increasingly move toward dialogue and participation, including user feedback and community engagement. Access remains a central issue because libraries organise and control pathways to knowledge, even when access becomes more open and digital.

11.4.2 Digitisation and Digital Libraries

Digitisation converts print and other physical materials into digital form for access and preservation. Digital libraries refer to organised digital collections and services that enable users to discover, access and use digital resources. They are not only scanning projects. They require metadata standards, search systems, preservation planning and rights management.

Important areas in digitisation and digital libraries include:

- Selection and prioritisation of materials for digitisation.
- Metadata creation for discovery and interoperability.
- Storage, backup and digital preservation strategies.
- Access design for usability, language support and disability access.
- Copyright and licensing management for lawful access.

11.4.3 Equity of Access, Inclusion, and Public Internet Access

Transformation is meaningful only if it improves access for diverse groups. Libraries can support inclusion by providing internet access, guidance and learning support. This is especially relevant in Indian contexts where digital divides persist across regions, income levels and language communities.

Libraries can support equitable access through:

- Public internet access and digital help desks.
- User training for e-governance services and digital forms.
- Accessible technologies for persons with disabilities.
- Local language resources and community outreach.

11.4.4 Library 2.0, Participation, and Community Engagement

Library transformation increasingly includes participatory services, often described in Library 2.0 discussions. Users may contribute reviews, tags and suggestions and participate in service development. Libraries may also use social media and online platforms to maintain communication beyond the building.

Examples of participatory practices include:

- User suggestions for acquisition and services.
- Community programmes for reading, digital skills and career awareness.
- Online interaction through library websites and social media channels.
- Feasibility of makerspaces and collaborative learning sessions.

11.4.5 Quality, Responsibility, and Ethical Issues In Participation

Participation increases engagement but raises concerns related to quality and responsibility. When users contribute content or influence discovery systems, libraries must ensure reliability and fairness. Libraries must balance openness with accountability, especially because they provide public services and are expected to support trustworthy knowledge access.

Key concerns include:

- Quality control and misinformation risks.
- Professional responsibility for reference services and guidance.
- Privacy of users in digital platforms and logs.
- Equity concerns if participation reflects only vocal groups.

11.4.6 Scholarly Communication Support: Open Access and Repositories

Scholarly communication has changed due to ICTs and the internet, enabling faster dissemination and new publishing models. Libraries now support researchers with open access options, institutional repositories and guidance on rights and preservation. Institutional repositories can include articles, theses, dissertations, reports, presentations and datasets and they help increase the dissemination and visibility of research outputs.

Libraries typically support scholarly communication through:

- Institutional repositories and metadata support.
- Guidance on open access publishing choices.
- Support in copyright awareness and author rights basics.
- Preservation planning for digital research outputs.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: List the major drivers of transformation of information communication.
Q 2: Why is media and information literacy important in a transformed communication environment?
Q 3: Explain how digitisation and digital libraries change library services.

11.5 IMPACT ON SOCIETY

11.5.1 Economic Impact

Transformation of information communication affects the economy by changing how people learn skills, find jobs, access markets and reduce transaction costs. Digital communication enables faster information search, online service delivery and easier coordination across distances. It also supports innovation by enabling the rapid circulation of ideas and research outputs.

Major economic impacts include:

- Improved access to labour market information and skill learning resources.
- Expansion of digital services and platform-based work.
- Greater efficiency in business processes due to online communication and documentation.
- New costs related to devices, connectivity, subscriptions and cybersecurity.

11.5.2 Social Impact

Socially, transformation changes learning patterns, community participation and inclusion. It enables social learning through networks and peer communities, but it also creates risks of exclusion if access and skills are uneven. Libraries and educational institutions become important support structures for learners who require guidance, safe access and credible resources.

Key social impacts include:

- Increased opportunities for lifelong learning and self-directed learning.
- New forms of community participation through digital platforms.
- Risk of digital exclusion due to lack of access, skills or language support.
- Changing social behaviour related to attention, reading patterns and information overload.

11.5.3 Political Impact

Politically, transformation supports e-governance, faster dissemination of public information and new forms of civic participation. At the same time, it raises concerns related to surveillance, privacy, platform power and control over information flows. Libraries remain connected to power relations because access and classification influence what information is visible and usable.

Political issues to consider include:

- Greater citizen access to government services and information through digital channels.
- Increased need for transparency and accountable information systems.
- Privacy concerns and data governance challenges.
- Influence of misinformation on public discourse.

11.5.4 Cultural Impact

Cultural impact includes changes in how culture is preserved and expressed. Digital platforms enable documentation of local histories, languages and traditions and they support new cultural forms such as digital storytelling and online archives. However, digital preservation is difficult because formats change rapidly and long-term storage requires planning and resources.

Cultural impacts include:

- Wider access to cultural materials through digitisation and online access.
- New possibilities for community co-creation and local documentation.
- Risks of cultural homogenisation through dominant platforms and languages.
- Preservation challenges for born-digital and digitised cultural content.

11.5.5 RESEARCH IMPACT AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

Research is strongly affected by transformed communication systems. Scholarly communication involves creating, evaluating, disseminating and preserving research outputs and it includes both formal and informal channels. ICTs have changed dissemination speed, access possibilities and interaction between authors and readers. Open access models and repositories can reduce barriers and increase global reach. However, costs, licensing restrictions and long-term preservation remain major concerns, especially for institutions with limited budgets.

Research impacts include:

- Faster dissemination of research outputs through digital channels.
- Growth of open access and repository-based distribution.
- New evaluation practices such as usage statistics and online attention indicators.
- Continued challenges related to journal costs, licensing and preservation responsibilities.

11.6 ENTERPRISE EMERGENCE IN SOCIETY THROUGH SELF-LEARNING

11.6.1 Self-Learning Ecosystems In The Digital Era

Self-learning has expanded due to transformed information communication. Learners can access tutorials, open educational resources, repositories and peer communities without being fully dependent on formal institutions. This helps people upgrade skills continuously, which is important in fast-changing labour markets.

Main components of a self-learning ecosystem include:

- Access to learning resources such as open courses, videos, e-books and repositories.
- Peer communities for feedback and collaborative learning.
- Opportunities to practise skills through projects, internships and freelancing tasks.
- Guidance and mentoring provided by teachers, libraries and community institutions.

11.6.2 From Self-Learning to Employability and Enterprise

Self-learning supports enterprise by lowering barriers to skill acquisition and experimentation. People can learn practical skills, test services and reach customers through digital communication. However, self-learning becomes economically meaningful when skills are applied and connected to opportunities.

Ways self-learning supports enterprise include:

- Skill development for micro-enterprises, services and digital work.
- Market awareness through online information and customer feedback.
- Networking and collaboration through digital communities.
- Access to government services and schemes through digital portals.

11.6.3 Role of Libraries in Supporting Self-Learning and Enterprise

Libraries can support self-learning and enterprise by providing access, guidance and learning spaces. Libraries can act as community learning hubs, offering digital literacy support and helping users identify credible resources. In suitable settings, libraries can also host career guidance sessions and basic entrepreneurship information programmes.

Library support may include:

- Availability of internet access and device support..
- Training in searching, evaluating and using information resources.
- Orientation to government portals and e-services.
- Access to local business information, newspapers and market reports.

2 11.7 LET US SUM UP

Transformation of information communication is a broad change in the ways societies create, share, organise and preserve knowledge. It is driven by ICT growth, changing user expectations and increasing complexity in governance, education and research. It also creates new ethical challenges, such as privacy concerns and misinformation risks. Media and information literacy therefore, becomes essential for meaningful participation and responsible use of digital information environments.

Libraries are central to this transformation because they manage access to recorded knowledge and support learning and research. Library transformation includes digitisation, digital services, participatory models and support for open access and repositories, while balancing quality, equity and accountability. The broader social impact appears across economic, social, political, cultural and research domains. Self-learning enabled by digital access contributes to employability and enterprise emergence, especially when supported by inclusive infrastructure and strong public institutions such as libraries.

K 11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: Major drivers include ICT growth, changing user expectations, increasing information volume, economic pressures in publishing, governance digitisation and demand for digital and information literacy skills.

Answer to Q 2: MIL is important because information is abundant and uneven in quality, so learners must evaluate credibility, understand bias, use information ethically and communicate responsibly in digital environments.

Answer to Q 3: Digitisation and digital libraries change services by enabling remote access, improving preservation and discovery and requiring new systems for metadata, storage, access design and rights management.

O 11.9 FURTHER READING

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M 11.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short questions

Q 1: Define ICT and state its role in transforming information communication.

Q 2: What is digitisation in the library context?

Q 3: Mention two ways libraries can support digital inclusion.

B. Long questions

Q 1: Explain the key drivers of the transformation of information communication.

Q 2: Discuss the social and political impacts of digital transformation of information communication.

Q 3: Describe how self-learning contributes to enterprise emergence and what role libraries can play.

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UNIT 12: KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives
12.2 Introduction
12.3 Information Society and Knowledge Society
12.3 Characteristics of Knowledge Society
12.4 Features of Knowledge Society
12.5 Role of Knowledge in Society
  12.5.1 Central Role of Knowledge and Innovation
  12.5.2 Education, Literacy, and Lifelong Learning
  12.5.3 Information and Communication Technology Infrastructure
  12.5.4 Human Capital, Research, and Intellectual Assets
  12.5.5 Inclusiveness, Equity, and Public Good Orientation
  12.5.6 Global Connectivity, Collaboration, and Sustainability
12.6 Indicators of Knowledge Society
12.7 Concept and Definition of Knowledge Management
12.8 Objectives and Processes of Knowledge Management
12.9 Role of Knowledge Managers
12.12 Let Us Sum Up
12.11 Answers to Check Your Progress
12.15 Further Readings
12.13 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- explain the concept and definitions of information society and knowledge society
- describe the main characteristics and indicators of a knowledge society.
- explain the concept and definition of knowledge management.
- analyse the role and functions of knowledge managers in different types of organisations.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

Knowledge has been the cornerstone of human growth and civilization since time immemorial. The capacity to invent, innovate and create new knowledge to trigger the development of processes and services that improve the quality of life has always been a principal human occupation. However, specific terms such as "knowledge society" and "knowledge-based economy" are relatively recent coinages. Peter Drucker is credited with first person to use the term "knowledge society" in 1969. This concept emerged alongside related notions such as learning societies and lifelong education.

While every society in history has utilized knowledge assets, the contemporary usage of "knowledge society" refers specifically to a society where knowledge is the primary factor of economic productivity, contrasting with earlier societies ruled by capital and labor. A distinct feature of the modern knowledge society is its focus on human rights, inclusivity and participation. Ideally, it generates, shares and applies knowledge for the prosperity, well-being and overall development of all people.

Distinguishing Data, Information and Knowledge

To understand these societal shifts, one must distinguish between the core concepts:

- **Information:** This takes the shape of structured and formatted data. It remains passive and inert until it is used.
- **Knowledge:** This is a matter of cognitive capability. Knowledge empowers its possessors with the capability for action, whether intellectual or physical. It is required to interpret and process information.

Historical Context: The Post-Industrial Shift

The concept of the "Information Society" did not appear in a vacuum. A closely related term, "Post-industrial society," was used as early as 1914 but was revived and popularized by Daniel Bell in his seminal work, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*. This term defined the emerging socio-economic phenomenon by emphasizing that the old structures of the industrial era were being replaced by new ones.

Subsequently, "Information Society" became the widely accepted term to describe the reality resulting from the revolution in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

12.3 INFORMATION SOCIETY AND KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

Although often used interchangeably, there is a critical distinction between an "Information Society" and a "Knowledge Society":

- **Information Society:** Primarily based on technological breakthroughs and ICT infrastructure. It is often linked to the idea of technological innovation.
- **Knowledge Society:** Includes broader implications spanning social, political, cultural and ethical dimensions. It encompasses pluralistic and developmental perspectives, institutional transformation and human rights.

Abdul Waheed Khan of the UNESCO Division for Communication and Information articulate this distinction clearly: "Information society is the building block for knowledge societies... In my view, the concept of ‘knowledge societies’ is preferable to that of the ‘information society’ because it better captures the complexity and dynamism of the changes taking place."

Terminology and Definition

There is an ongoing academic debate regarding the appropriate terminology for this era.

Critique of "Information Society"

Some scholars argue that "to inform" implies a unidirectional process aimed at a passive receiver. They suggest "information and communication societies" as a better

alternative, as "communication" emphasizes simultaneous reception and dissemination.

Critique of "Knowledge Management"
The corporate sector often treats knowledge as a commodity to be exploited for economic advantage (Knowledge Management). Civil society groups criticize this approach, arguing that knowledge should be viewed as a public good rather than a product subordinated to market interests. This resistance advocates for exceptions to international trade rules to ensure universal access to information.

Definitions
László Z. Karvalics lists over 50 definitions of these concepts. Notable examples include:

- **Daniel Bell:** A society organized around knowledge for social control and the management of innovation.
- **Yoneji Masuda:** A new society where the possession of information, rather than material wealth, drives development and human creativity.
- **John Naisbitt:** An economic reality where information is used as a resource.
- **Manuel Castells:** Prefers the term "informational society," indicating a specific form of social organization where information generation and processing are the fundamental sources of productivity and power.

The Vision: Towards an Inclusive Society
It is vital to differentiate between the *existing* reality (often an Information Society driven by tech) and the *ideal* vision (a Knowledge Society).

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) played a major role in shaping this vision. The **Geneva Declaration of Principles** outlines a shared commitment to building a "people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society."

Furthermore, the **Civil Society Declaration** extends this vision, emphasizing that:

1. Everyone should freely create, access, utilize and share information.
2. Social, political and economic justice are essential.
3. Capacity building is necessary for sustainable development, democracy and gender equality.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY
1. Indicators of the Knowledge Society

Before examining specific traits, it is essential to recognize the indicators suggesting that a transition to a knowledge society has occurred. The arrival of this era is marked by three primary shifts:

- **Speed of Knowledge Creation:** The single most important indicator is the unprecedented speed at which new knowledge is created and accumulated, alongside the rapid rate at which its economic value depreciates. This directly reflects the accelerating pace of scientific and technological progress.
- **Human Resource Capacity:** Disparities in productivity and growth between nations are increasingly defined by their capacity to improve human resources and create new ideas, rather than the availability of natural resources.
- **Workforce Composition:** A significant proportion of the workforce is actively involved in knowledge-related activities rather than manuallabour.

2. Societal Categorization and Evolution

Prominent scholars have categorized the evolution of human society to highlight the distinct features of the current era.

Daniel Bell's Typology

Daniel Bell is widely credited with defining the information society by contrasting it with previous eras. He categorizes societies into three broad groups:

1. **Pre-Industrial Society**
2. **Industrial Society**
3. **Post-Industrial Society** (The precursor to the Information/Knowledge Society)

Corroborating Theories

Bell's classification corresponds with other major theoretical frameworks:

- **Alvin Toffler:** These periods align with the "waves" defined in his seminal book, *The Third Wave* (1980).
- **Tadao Umesao:** Matches the economic typology dividing sectors into endodermal (agriculture/fishing), mesodermal (transportation/heavy industry) and ectodermal (information/communication/training).
- **Masuda:** Provides detailed comparisons between industrial and information societies to highlight their fundamental differences.
- **Schement and Curtis:** While using standard categories like goods and industry, they introduce new conceptual components such as "interconnectedness," "media environment" and "community."

3. Emerging Patterns and Core Characteristics

While there are different ways to characterize this societal shift, the Knowledge/Information Society is broadly defined by specific emerging patterns.

A. Focus on Ideas over Goods

Tangible goods are no longer the primary forces driving the economy. Instead, new ideas and innovations that bring about changes in the quality of life are the main drivers of economic growth and development.

B. Focus on Continuous Education

The dominance of information and technology places a premium on human capital. This necessitates a shift toward lifelong learning, where education is not a one-time phase but a continuous requirement for participation in the knowledge society.

C. Shift in the Workplace

The physical constraints of the workplace have diminished. New communication technologies allow work to be performed from a variety of locations, fundamentally altering the traditional office structure.

D. Focus on Empowering People

The objective is to ensure people are not merely passive beneficiaries of the technological revolution. Ideally, they are empowered to actively participate in the process of development and decision-making.

E. Dominance of the Service Sector

The service sector has replaced the production of goods as the primary driving force of the economy. Communication and technology industries have expanded rapidly, attracting a vast number of "white-collar" employees to service-oriented roles.

4. Pervasive Impact

The transition to a Knowledge Society is not theoretical; it is experiential. The impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is visible in everyday sectors, including:

- Banking and Finance
- Travel (Airline/Railway reservations)
- Education
- Governance
- Retail and Shopping

The impact has been so pervasive that hardly any sector of human activity remains untouched by the revolution in ICTs.

12.5 FEATURES OF KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

12.5.1 Central Role of Knowledge and Innovation

A key characteristic of a knowledge society is the central role of knowledge and innovation in economic and social life. Economic disparities between nations increasingly depend on their capacity to create, absorb and apply new knowledge rather than on their stock of natural resources. Knowledge intensive sectors such as information technology, biotechnology, advanced services, and creative industries become important sources of growth, employment and competitiveness. Continuous innovation in products, processes and services is encouraged through research and development, collaboration between universities and industry and supportive policy frameworks.

12.5.2 Education, Literacy, and Lifelong Learning

Knowledge societies are built upon strong foundations of education, literacy and lifelong learning. High levels of basic literacy enable citizens to access and interpret information, while secondary and higher education provide specialised skills and conceptual understanding. Education systems in a knowledge society emphasise critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and the ability to learn independently, rather than rote memorisation. Lifelong learning opportunities, including distance education, open universities, online courses and workplace training, are essential because rapid changes in knowledge require people to update their competencies throughout life.

12.5.3 Information and Communication Technology Infrastructure

A well-developed ICT infrastructure is another important feature of a knowledge society, as it supports the creation, storage, dissemination and use of information and knowledge. This includes telecommunications networks, internet connectivity, broadband access, digital libraries, databases and other online platforms that enable individuals and organisations to communicate and collaborate across distances. Indicators such as Internet users per population, mobile subscriptions, broadband penetration and access to computers in schools and public institutions are commonly used to assess the technological readiness of a society. However, physical connectivity

alone is not sufficient; people also need skills, relevant content and supportive policies to use ICTs effectively.

12.5.4 Human Capital, Research, and Intellectual Assets

Human capital refers to the knowledge, skills and competencies possessed by individuals, which become crucial assets in a knowledge society. High quality higher education, specialised training and research institutions help to develop scientists, engineers, professionals and knowledge workers. Investment in research and development leads to the production of new knowledge, technologies and innovations and indicators such as R&D expenditure, number of researchers, patents and scientific publications are often used as measures of knowledge creation. Intellectual assets such as patents, copyrights, trademarks and proprietary technologies play an important role in knowledge-based economies but also raise questions about equitable access and the balance between private rights and public interest.

12.5.5 Inclusiveness, Equity, and Public Good Orientation

A normative characteristic of an ideal knowledge society is its commitment to inclusiveness, equity and the recognition of knowledge as a public good. International declarations stress that everyone should be able to create, access, use and share information and knowledge in order to achieve their full potential and to improve their quality of life. This implies policies to reduce digital divides between rich and poor, urban and rural, men and women and different regions and communities. Public institutions such as libraries, schools, community centres and e-governance initiatives play an important role in providing equitable access to information and knowledge resources.

In the Indian context, issues of language, literacy, socio economic disparity and geographical diversity make the pursuit of an inclusive knowledge society particularly challenging. Initiatives such as community information centres, national knowledge networks, open educational resources and digital library projects aim to extend the benefits of knowledge to wider sections of society.

12.5.6 Global Connectivity, Collaboration, and Sustainability

Knowledge societies are also characterised by intense global connectivity and collaborative networks that transcend national boundaries. Researchers, professionals and institutions collaborate through digital platforms, international projects and virtual communities to address complex problems in areas such as health, environment and development. The knowledge society has been linked to the sustainability paradigm, which emphasises that knowledge should support social cohesion, economic stability, environmental protection and responsible use of resources. Thus, a mature knowledge society is expected not only to drive economic growth but also to contribute to sustainable and equitable development.

Role of knowledge in society

- Knowledge is a key resource that drives the growth and functioning of a knowledge society, influencing economic, social, cultural and political development.

- Knowledge for economic development:Increases productivity by improving processes, technologies and organisational practices.
- Enhances the competitiveness of firms and nations in global markets through innovation and specialised skills.
- Transforms employment structures from manual and routine work to knowledge intensive jobs, creating demand for educated and skilled workers.
- Creates new value through research, innovation and knowledge-based services rather than only through natural resources or low-cost labour.
- Knowledge for social development:Improves quality of life through education, which raises literacy, skills and the capacity for informed choice.
- Enables better health outcomes when people and health workers have access to accurate health information and advice.
- Supports informed decision making in daily life, work, and the use of public services, reducing vulnerability and social exclusion.
- Knowledge for cultural and political development:Helps preserve and transmit cultural traditions, languages and values, while allowing societies to adapt to change.
- Enables civic participation by providing citizens with information about rights, laws and public policies, so they can engage in public debate.
- Supports informed public discourse and democratic governance when knowledge and information are widely accessible and critically used by citizens and institutions.

12.8 CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

As knowledge becomes a strategic resource, organisations need systematic approaches to handle it. Knowledge Management (KM) refers to the organised processes by which an organisation creates, captures, organises, shares and uses knowledge to achieve its objectives. It involves managing both explicit knowledge, which can be documented in reports, databases and manuals and tacit knowledge, which resides in the experiences, skills and insights of individuals.

The common elements of knowledge management include the identification of knowledge assets, the design of processes and systems to facilitate knowledge flow and the creation of a culture that encourages learning and sharing. One practical description views knowledge management as a set of activities that ensure that the right knowledge reaches the right people at the right time, so that they can make better decisions and improve organisational performance. KM is relevant not only to business enterprises but also to libraries, universities, government agencies and nonprofit organisations, especially in a knowledge society where organisational success depends on how effectively knowledge is utilised.

12.9 OBJECTIVES AND PROCESSES OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The main objectives of knowledge management are as follows:

- To capture and preserve critical knowledge so that it is not lost when individuals leave or roles change.

- To facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration across departments, locations and professional groups.
- To improve access to relevant information and expertise, reducing duplication of effort and enabling faster problem solving.
- To support innovation by combining existing knowledge in new ways and by learning from past successes and failures.
- To align knowledge resources with organisational goals and strategies.

Typical knowledge management processes include knowledge identification and mapping, where key knowledge domains and experts are identified; knowledge acquisition and creation, through research, projects and learning activities; knowledge organisation and storage, using repositories, taxonomies and metadata; knowledge sharing and dissemination, through communities of practice, intranets, training and collaborative tools; and knowledge application and evaluation, where knowledge is used in decision making and its impact is assessed.

12.10 ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGERS

Knowledge managers are responsible for overseeing knowledge related processes, systemsand practices so that organisational knowledge assets are effectively captured, organised, shared and used.

Key roles and responsibilities of knowledge managers include:

- Promoting a culture of knowledge sharing by encouraging collaboration, communication and trust among employees.
- Designing and maintaining knowledge repositories, databases and knowledge bases that store documents, best practices, lessons learned and other knowledge resources.
- Developing policies and guidelines for knowledge creation, documentation and use, including standards for metadata, version control and confidentiality.
- Facilitating the conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit forms through interviews, documentation of best practices, mentoring and communities of practice.
- Ensuring that staff are trained to use knowledge systems and tools effectively and providing support and coaching where needed.
- Monitoring and evaluating the performance of knowledge management initiatives using appropriate metrics such as usage statistics, user feedback and impact on organisational outcomes.

In libraries and information centres, knowledge managers may work closely with librarians, IT staff and subject specialists to develop digital libraries, institutional repositories, portals and other services that support learning and research in the wider knowledge society.

12.6 INDICATORS OF KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

- **Education and human capital:**Literacy rates, school enrolment and completion, higher education participation, number of graduates in science and technology and quality of educational outcomes.

- **Research and development:** R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP, number of researchers, research institutions, publications and patents.
- **ICT infrastructure and access:**Telephone and mobile penetration, internet users per population, broadband access, public Internet access points and availability of computers in educational and public institutions.
- **Innovation and entrepreneurship:**Number of technology-based enterprises, startup ecosystems, innovation indices and knowledge intensive service sectors.
- **Institutional and policy frameworks:**Existence of national information and knowledge policies, intellectual property regimes, support for open access and investments in digital content and e-governance.
- **Social inclusion:**Measures of digital divide, gender and regional disparities in ICT access and use of knowledge resources by disadvantaged groups.

International composite indices such as the Global Innovation Index and various knowledge indices combine several of these indicators to rank countries according to their knowledge economy or knowledge society performance. These measures help governments and institutions to identify strengths and gaps, to plan interventions and to monitor progress over time.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is meant by the term knowledge society?
Q 2: In what ways is the notion of a knowledge-based economy linked to a knowledge society
Q 3: List any four key characteristics of a knowledge society.

2 11.12 LET US SUM UP

Knowledge society refers to a form of social and economic organisation in which knowledge creation, sharing and use become the main forces shaping development, rather than land, labour or physical capital. The discussion distinguished this from information society, which focuses more narrowly on ICT-based information production and flows and highlighted broader social, cultural, ethical and human rights dimensions, including the idea of knowledge as a public good and the vision of a people centred, inclusive and development-oriented information and knowledge order.

Key aspects covered include the rapid growth of knowledge, shifts in workforce composition and the historical evolution from pre-industrial to post-industrial and information-based societies. Central features such as the role of innovation, education and lifelong learning, ICT infrastructure, human capital and research, inclusiveness and equity and global connectivity linked to sustainability were outlined, along with indicators used to assess movement towards a knowledge society. The role of knowledge in economic, social, cultural and political development was related to the organisational practice of knowledge management, whose concepts, objectives and processes were described, together with the responsibilities of knowledge managers in capturing, organising and sharing

organisational knowledge to support more effective, equitable and sustainable knowledge-based development.

K 11.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: A knowledge society is a society in which knowledge generation, sharing and application become central to economic growth, social development and improved quality of life for individuals and communities.

Answer to Q 2: A knowledge-based economy relies on research, innovation and skilled human resources and is therefore both a component and an outcome of a knowledge society, which provides the broader social, educational and cultural environment in which such an economy can flourish.

Answer to Q 3: Key characteristics include centrality of knowledge and innovation, strong education and lifelong learning systems, advanced ICT infrastructure, inclusive access to knowledge resources and global connectivity linked to sustainability.

O 12.15 FURTHER READING

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M 12.15 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short questions

1. Describe the responsibilities of a knowledge manager.
2. Discuss the major characteristics of a knowledge society with suitable examples.

B. Long questions

1. Explain the importance of education, research and ICT infrastructure in building a knowledge society in India.
2. Describe the main components of a knowledge management process in an organisation.
3. Discuss the challenges faced by developing countries in their transition towards a knowledge society.

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UNIT 13: MEDIA LITERACY

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives
13.2 Introduction
13.3 Concept and Definition of Media Literacy
- 13.3.1 Concept of Media Literacy
- 13.3.2 Definitions of Media Literacy
- 13.3.3 Core Elements and Skills of Media Literacy

13.4 Need and Purpose of Media Literacy
- 13.4.1 Technological Changes and Information Abundance
- 13.4.2 Misinformation, Disinformation and Harmful Content
- 13.4.3 Social and Cultural Diversity
- 13.4.4 Civic Engagement and Democracy
- 13.4.5 Personal Development and Lifelong Learning
- 13.4.6 Key Purposes of Media Literacy Education

13.5 Role of Media Literacy In Society
- 13.5.1 Media Literacy and Democratic Society
- 13.5.2 Media Literacy and Social Inclusion
- 13.5.3 Media Literacy, Culture and Identity
- 13.5.4 Media Literacy and Economic Life
- 13.5.5 Role of Libraries and Information Centres

13.6 Media Literacy In India
13.7 Challenges and Ethical Issues In Media Literacy
13.8 Let Us Sum Up
13.9 Answers To Check Your Progress
13.10 Further Readings
13.11 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- explain the concept and meaning of media literacy
- understand key elements of media literacy
- analyse the need for media literacy
- describe the main purposes of media literacy education
- distinguish media literacy from information literacy and news literacy.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, people receive information, ideas and images from many different media such as television, radio, newspapers, films, social media platforms, online news portals and messaging applications. These media shape how individuals understand themselves, others and the wider world. The rapid spread of digital and networked technologies has increased the volume, speed and reach of media messages, while also making it easier for anyone to create and share content. This environment

provides many opportunities for learning, communication and participation, but it also creates challenges bias and privacy risks.

So, as an individual, citizens need more than the ability to read and write traditional printed texts. They require the capacity to access, analyse, evaluate, create and act using different forms of media. This set of abilities is commonly referred to as media literacy. Media literacy is now considered an essential component of lifelong learning and a key competence for participation in social, cultural, political and economic life. For library and information professionals, teachers and community educators, it is important to understand what media literacy means, why it is needed and how it contributes to society.

This unit introduces the concept and definition of media literacy, discusses its need and purpose and explains its role in society with illustrations that are relevant to the Indian context.

13.3 CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF MEDIA LITERACY

The term media literacy has developed over several decades in response to changes in communication technologies and media systems. It has been used interchangeably with expressions such as media education, media awareness and new media literacy, but there is broad agreement that it refers to a set of competencies that help individuals engage critically and creatively with media.

13.3.1 Concept of Media Literacy

Historically, literacy was often limited to the ability to read and write printed texts. With the growth of mass media, scholars and educators recognised that citizens also needed the ability to understand and interpret audiovisual and digital messages. This recognition led to the development of media education and later to the concept of media literacy.

Media literacy can be understood as a multidimensional concept that brings together several related abilities. These typically include:

- technical and access skills required to use media devices and platforms
- cognitive skills needed to analyse, interpret and evaluate media messages
- social and ethical skills involved in the responsible use and sharing of media content
- creative skills needed to produce and communicate messages in different media formats.

Media literacy is not a fixed state but a lifelong learning process. As media technologies, business models and cultural practices change, citizens have to continuously adapt and update their media competencies. This is particularly important in a society where digital platforms combine news, entertainment, advertising and user generated content in the same interfaces, often guided by invisible algorithms.

Media literacy is closely linked to other literacies such as information literacy, digital literacy and news literacy. Information literacy focuses on recognising information needs and locating, evaluating and using information effectively. Media literacy focuses more specifically on how media messages are constructed, distributed and interpreted and on how individuals can critically and ethically engage with them. News literacy is

often treated as a subfield of media literacy that deals with the ability to judge the credibility of news reports and to understand news production processes. In practice, these literacies overlap and many educational programmes integrate them.

13.3.2 Definitions of Media Literacy

The definition provided by the National Association for Media Literacy Education, states media literacy as the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, create and act using all forms of communication. This definition highlights both receptive and productive dimensions and stresses that media literacy empowers people to be critical thinkers, effective communicators and active citizens.

The American Library Association describes media literacy in similar terms, emphasising that it is build upon traditional literacy and equips people to make informed choices in a complex communication environment. Academic authors have also defined media literacy as the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to know when and what information is required, how to obtain it, how to critically evaluate it and how to use it ethically.

Media literacy can therefore be summarised as the ability of individuals and groups to:

- access and use media technologies and content
- analyse and interpret media messages in different formats
- evaluate the credibility, quality and values embedded in media
- create and share media content responsibly
- participate in social, cultural and civic life through media.

13.3.3 Core Elements and Skills of Media Literacy

The identified range of skills that media literate individuals should possess. The five broad elements are-

1. **Access skills**
   Access involves locating, selecting and using appropriate media tools and services. It includes basic technical abilities such as operating devices, connecting to networks, using search engines and navigating interfaces, as well as the ability to overcome barriers related to cost, language or disability. In library settings, access skills enable users to log in to library computers or Wi Fi, search e-resources, use online catalogues and reach credible websites.
2. **Analytical skills**
   Analytical skills refer to the ability to examine media messages in terms of their structure, content, format, audience and production context. A media literate person asks questions such as who created this message, for whom, using which techniques and what viewpoints are included or omitted. This involves recognising stereotypes, emotional appeals, framing and other representational strategies used in news, films, advertisements and social media posts.
3. **Evaluation skills**
   Evaluation skills involve making judgements about the quality, credibility and relevance of media messages. This includes checking facts, comparing sources, distinguishing opinion from evidence and identifying misinformation, disinformation or harmful content. Evaluation also requires awareness of

ethical, legal and social standards, such as respect for privacy, intellectual property and human rights.

4. **Communication and creation skills**
   Media literacy includes the ability to produce and share media content in ways that are clear, responsible and appropriate for intended audiences. Individuals should be able to create messages in multiple formats, such as text, audio, video or graphics and to understand the consequences of their communication choices. For example, library staff may create instructional videos, podcasts or social media posts, while community members may produce blogs, short films or campaign materials.
5. **Participatory skills**
   Participatory skills relate to using media for social interaction, collaboration and civic engagement. This may involve joining online communities, contributing to public debates, supporting causes, or engaging in citizen journalism. Media literate individuals know how to engage respectfully with diverse perspectives and how to use media platforms to express their views and to work with others to solve common problems.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: The ability to access, analyse, evaluate, create and act using communication is ……...
Q 2: Term used for the skills required to examine the structure, content and techniques of media messages.
Q 3: The literacy that focuses specifically on judging the credibility of news reports.
Q 4: One core element of media literacy is concerned with using media tools and services.
Q 5: Term used for voluntary reporting by ordinary citizens using digital media.

13.4 NEED AND PURPOSE OF MEDIA LITERACY

Media literacy has become a necessity in contemporary societies that are saturated with media messages. The need arises from technological, social, political, cultural and economic developments. The purposes of media literacy education reflect these developments and aim to equip individuals and communities to navigate the media environment effectively and ethically.

13.4.1 Technological Changes and Information Abundance

Digital technologies and the internet have transformed how information is produced, distributed and consumed. In many countries, including India, mobile phones and affordable data plans have made it possible for a large proportion of the population to access online content on a daily basis. Social media platforms, video sharing sites and messaging applications allow users to consume, create and share messages with great ease.

This environment has created information abundance. Individuals are exposed to a continuous flow of news, entertainment, advertisements and personal updates from multiple sources. While this can be enriching, it also leads to information overload.

Without adequate media literacy skills, people may struggle to select relevant information, understand complex issues or manage their time and attention.

Technological changes have also blurred the boundaries between producers and audiences. Anyone with a smartphone can record and distribute content that may reach a large audience. This has democratic potential, but it also means that not all content passes through traditional editorial processes or quality checks. Media literacy is therefore needed so that citizens can cope with the scale, speed and diversity of digital media.

13.4.2 Misinformation, Disinformation and Harmful Content

One of the strongest reasons for promoting media literacy is the spread of misinformation and disinformation. Misinformation refers to false or inaccurate information shared without the intention to deceive, while disinformation is false information created and spread deliberately to mislead. Both can influence public opinion, damage reputations, create fear and in some cases, incite violence.

Online platforms can amplify misleading content through algorithms that prioritise engagement, regardless of accuracy. During the COVID 19 pandemic, for example, false claims circulated widely about cures, preventive measures and the origins of the virus.

Media literacy helps individuals to recognise misleading content, verify information using credible sources and avoid sharing unverified messages. It also encourages a habit of reflection, so that people pause before forwarding, liking or commenting on content that may be harmful.

13.4.3 Social and Cultural Diversity

Modern societies are characterised by cultural, linguistic and social diversity. Media are important spaces where different identities, values and experiences are represented. However, media content may also reproduce stereotypes, marginalise certain groups or present narrow views of gender, caste, religion or region.

Media literacy enables viewers to recognise patterns of representation and to question how different groups are portrayed. It supports respect for diversity by helping individuals to identify bias, understand multiple perspectives and appreciate alternative narratives. This is particularly significant in India, where national and regional media reflect a wide range of languages, cultures and political positions.

In addition, many young people learn about themselves and others through media characters, influencers and online communities. Media literacy education can help them to reflect critically on these influences and to develop a balanced sense of identity that is grounded in reality and respectful of others.

13.4.4 Civic Engagement and Democracy

Democratic societies depend on informed and active citizens. The media play a central role in providing information about public issues, government actions and electoral choices. At the same time, political campaigns increasingly use digital advertising, social media messaging and data analytics to influence voters.

Citizens, therefore, need media literacy to understand how political information is produced, framed and targeted. This includes recognising the difference between news and opinion, distinguishing journalism from propaganda and understanding how algorithms can create filter bubbles that reinforce existing views. Media literacy also supports civil discourse by encouraging respectful dialogue and by equipping individuals to evaluate claims before accepting or sharing them.

Public libraries and educational institutions in many countries are incorporating media literacy activities that help adults to understand topics such as the architecture of the internet, the media economy, misinformation and civic participation. These efforts recognise that media literacy is essential for protecting the integrity of democratic processes.

13.4.5 Personal Development and Lifelong Learning

Media literacy contributes to personal development in several ways. It helps individuals to become self directed learners who can use media resources to explore interests, acquire new skills and follow developments in their fields. It supports emotional well being by enabling people to reflect on how media consumption affects their mood, body image and relationships. It also encourages responsible and ethical behaviour, such as respecting others online and protecting personal data.

As media environments evolve, people of all ages need opportunities to update their skills. Media literacy is therefore a lifelong learning requirement rather than a one time educational outcome. Libraries, community centres and online courses can play an important role in providing accessible learning opportunities for different groups, including children, youth, adults and senior citizens.

13.4.6 Key Purposes of Media Literacy Education

Based on these needs, the main purposes of media literacy education can be outlined as follows:

- To enable individuals to access and use a wide range of media resources for information, education, work and leisure.
- To develop critical thinking skills for analysing and evaluating media messages and their underlying values.
- To promote informed and responsible decision making in personal, professional and civic life.
- To foster creative expression and communication through multiple media forms.
- To encourage respectful and ethical participation in media environments, including awareness of rights and responsibilities.
- To support social inclusion by helping marginalised groups to voice their perspectives and to engage with public issues.

13.5 ROLE OF MEDIA LITERACY IN SOCIETY

Media literacy plays several interconnected roles in society. It supports democratic governance, social cohesion, cultural expression, economic development and the work of institutions such as libraries, schools and civil society organisations.

13.5.1 Media Literacy and Democratic Society

In democratic systems, citizens are expected to understand public issues, evaluate the performance of leaders and participate in decision making processes through voting, advocacy and public discussion. News media and digital platforms are key sources of information and channels for communication. However, media systems are also shaped by economic, political and technological forces, including concentration of ownership, advertising pressures and algorithmic curation.

Media literacy helps citizens to navigate this complex landscape by understanding how media organisations operate, how content is financed and how media can both support and undermine democratic values. It encourages individuals to seek diverse sources, to compare viewpoints and to question messages that appear to be sensational, one sided or manipulative. By doing so, it contributes to a more informed public sphere.

Media literacy also supports active citizenship. Citizens who understand media processes can use various platforms to voice concerns, participate in consultations, monitor public authorities and organise collective action. Examples include community reporters documenting local issues, students creating campaigns on social issues, or residents using online tools to track government spending. These activities require not only technical skills but also ethical and critical awareness, which media literacy education provides.

13.5.2 Media Literacy and Social Inclusion

Media can either bridge or widen social divides. Groups with limited access to media technologies or low levels of media literacy may be excluded from important information, services and opportunities. This digital divide often reflects existing inequalities related to income, education, gender, disability or location.

Libraries and community organisations that support media literacy can help reduce these gaps by providing access to devices and connectivity, offering training and creating inclusive spaces where people can learn at their own pace. In the Indian context, public libraries, community information centres and school libraries can be important sites for such initiatives, especially in rural or underserved urban areas.

Media literacy also plays a role in challenging stereotypes and prejudices. When citizens critically examine how media portray different communities, they are better able to resist discriminatory narratives and to support more balanced and respectful representations. This contributes to social cohesion in a diverse society.

13.5.3 Media Literacy, Culture and Identity

The media are an important source of cultural expression. Films, music, television programmes, online videos and social media content all reflect and shape cultural identities. At the same time, global media flows mean that people are exposed to cultural influences from around the world.

Media literacy allows individuals to appreciate cultural diversity and to critically reflect on the cultural messages they receive. It helps them to recognise how media industries select, adapt or omit cultural elements and how commercial considerations influence representation. For example, media literacy education can encourage students to

compare coverage of festivals, social movements or historical events across different channels and languages and to reflect on the values communicated.

Media literacy also supports creative cultural production. When communities learn to produce their own media, they can tell stories that might otherwise remain invisible. Local history projects, oral history podcasts, community radio programmes and student films are examples of media creations that strengthen cultural identity and intergenerational understanding.

13.5.4 Media Literacy and Economic Life

Media literacy has economic implications as well. Many occupations now require the ability to search for information online, use digital tools, understand data visualisations and communicate through multimedia formats. Employers look for workers who can adapt to new technologies and who can critically evaluate digital information relevant to their tasks.

Consumers also need media literacy to make informed decisions about products and services. Advertisements, sponsored content and influencer marketing can be persuasive. Media literate consumers are better able to recognise persuasive techniques, distinguish advertising from editorial content and evaluate claims about products, including financial services, health products or educational opportunities.

At a broader level, a media literate population can contribute to the growth of creative industries, digital entrepreneurship and innovation. Individuals with strong media and communication skills can create content, develop platforms or provide services that generate employment and income.

13.5.5 Role of Libraries and Information Centres

Libraries and information centres have long been associated with information literacy. They are now increasingly recognised as key institutions for media literacy education as well.

Academic studies on media literacy in library and information centres identify several roles for library staff. These include:

- providing access to diverse media collections and digital resources
- integrating media literacy concepts into reference interactions and user education
- designing programmes and workshops on topics such as misinformation, online privacy, news evaluation and media creation
- collaborating with schools, community organisations and media professionals to reach different user groups.

Public libraries in particular are seen as important community spaces where adults can receive informal and non formal media literacy support. Surveys of library and information professionals show that many patrons, especially older adults and families, seek help with general internet use, device operation and finding trustworthy online information. Library workers report a strong sense of responsibility for helping the public to develop media literacy, and they express interest in professional development to strengthen their own skills.

In the Indian context, national and state library systems, university libraries and school libraries can play complementary roles in promoting media literacy among students, researchers and the general public. They can adapt international guidelines and toolkits to local needs, languages and cultural settings.

13.6 MEDIA LITERACY IN INDIA

In India, media literacy has become increasingly important in the context of rapid digitisation and the national thrust towards a Digital India. This expansion of digital infrastructure has multiplied access to communication technologies and interactive media, leading to greater participation on social media platforms and a higher risk of information overload. In this situation, citizens need skills to select, interpret and use information from diverse and convergent media sources.

The CIET–NCERT initiatives link media literacy directly with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which stresses critical thinking, digital literacy and media awareness as essential competencies for students in the digital age. Media literacy is encouraged across subjects to help learners become informed and responsible users of media. Beyond schools, universities, libraries, community centres and civil society organisations in India can also promote media literacy by providing access to resources, offering training programmes and supporting reflective engagement with media in everyday life.

13.7 CHALLENGES AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN MEDIA LITERACY

Media literacy in practice faces several important challenges and ethical questions. A major challenge is inequality in access and participation. Social and economic differences mean that not everyone has the same opportunities to go online, obtain devices, pay for data or find supportive learning spaces. As a result, media literacy programmes must consider not only teaching skills but also addressing unequal conditions that limit who can benefit from digital media.

A second challenge is the complexity of evaluation and the contested nature of standards. When learners evaluate media, they may use aesthetic, political, ideological or economic criteria and these standards are not always agreed upon. Media literacy education should therefore avoid imposing a single viewpoint. Instead, it should help learners to justify their judgements with evidence and clear reasoning. A third challenge is balancing empowerment with protection. Learners need both critical autonomy and awareness of risks. Ethical issues include responsible creation, avoiding harm when sharing content, respecting others and recognising commercial and political influences in media.

2 13.8 LET US SUM UP

Media literacy emerges as a multidimensional competence that goes beyond basic reading and writing to include the abilities to access, analyse, evaluate, create and act using a wide range of media. It brings together technical, cognitive, social, ethical and creative skills and is closely related to, yet distinct from, information literacy and news literacy. In a media rich environment where news, entertainment, advertising and user generated content are all interconnected, these skills support

critical engagement with media messages, informed decision making and active participation in social, cultural, economic and political life.

The technological change, information abundance, misinformation and disinformation, social and cultural diversity and democratic processes all intensify the demand for media literacy. Media literate citizens are better equipped to recognise bias, resist harmful or misleading content, appreciate diverse perspectives and contribute constructively to public discourse. Library and information centres, alongside schools and other community institutions, play a strategic role by providing access, guidance and learning opportunities across the life span. The rapid digitisation, the emphasis of NEP 2020 on critical and digital skills and the involvement of CIET–NCERT underline media literacy as a vital life skill, while ongoing challenges of inequality, contested standards and ethical responsibilities call for thoughtful, inclusive and reflective media literacy education.

K 13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: Media literacy
Answer to Q 2: Analytical skills
Answer to Q 3: News literacy
Answer to Q 4: Access skills
Answer to Q 5: Citizen journalism

O 13.10 FURTHER READING

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M 13.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short questions

Q 1: Define media literacy.
Q 2: Mention any two differences between media literacy and information literacy.
Q 3: List any three core skills associated with media literacy.

Q 4: What is disinformation?
Q 5: State two reasons why media literacy is important.

B. Long questions

Q 1: Discuss the main elements of media literacy with suitable examples.
Q 2: Explain the need for media literacy.
Q 3: Describe the relationship between media literacy, misinformation and disinformation.
Q 4: Examine the role of libraries and information centres in promoting media literacy.

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UNIT 14: MEDIA CONVERGENCE

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives
14.2 Introduction
14.3 Core Definition and Concept of Media Convergence
14.4 Historical Evolution and Technological Basis
14.5 Concept of 3C's In Media Convergence
  14.5.1 Computing
  14.5.2 Communication
  14.5.3 Content
  14.5.4 An Illustrative Example: The Smartphone
14.6 Types and Dimensions of Media Convergence
14.7 Convergence In The Digital Age
14.8 Significance of Media Convergence
14.9 Implications And Challenges of Media Convergence
14.10 Relevance to Library And Information Centres
14.11 Let Us Sum Up
14.12 Answers To Check Your Progress
14.13 Further Readings
14.14 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to,

- define media convergence in a formal academic way.
- explain the core concept and key drivers of media convergence, especially digitisation and the internet.
- describe the 3C's of media convergence and give simple examples.
- explain convergence in the digital age with examples from platforms and multi-device access.
- discuss the significance, implications and challenges of media convergence for industry, society and governance.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Media convergence is a central concept for understanding contemporary communication because it explains why media that once existed as separate systems now operate within shared digital environments. Encyclopaedia Britannica describes media convergence as a phenomenon involving the interconnection of information and communications technologies, computer networks and media content and it links this directly to the digitisation of media content and the popularisation of the internet. In practical terms, convergence helps explain how a single device and a single network can carry voice calls, news, entertainment, learning resources and social interaction in integrated ways.

Media convergence provides a foundation for studying changes in media industries, professional practices and audience behaviour, including new forms of content production and participation. Britannica also notes that convergence transforms established industries, services and work practices and enables new forms of content to emerge, which indicates that convergence is not only technical but also organisational and cultural. This unit explains the core definition and concept, the 3C's framework, convergence in the digital age and the significance and implications of convergence, with a specific section on relevance to libraries and information centres.

14.3 CORE DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE

Media convergence can be defined formally as the interconnection of information and communications technologies, computer networks and media content, which brings together the "three C's" of computing, communication and content. Britannica further states that this phenomenon is a direct consequence of the digitisation of media content and the popularisation of the internet, clearly identifying digitisation and the internet as core enabling forces. This definition is useful because it connects the technological process of digitising content with the networked systems that distribute it and the media forms that people consume and share.

The core concept of media convergence is that different media functions and forms are integrated within a single digital system. Media convergence is the interconnection of information technologies, media content and computer networks and it emphasises that convergence is a transformative process for industries, technologies and standards. This concept helps explain why media production and distribution increasingly take place across multiple channels and why a single device can support varied media experiences and communication functions.

Convergence should also be understood as more than a technical merging of tools. Britannica notes that media convergence transforms work practices and enables new content forms to emerge, which implies organisational change and innovation in media production and distribution. In this sense, convergence includes changes in how institutions operate, how professionals work and how audiences experience and circulate content in daily life.

14.4 HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND TECHNOLOGICAL BASIS

A basic way to understand the historical movement toward convergence is to compare earlier media systems with digital systems. In earlier periods, media such as newspapers, radio and television were organised around distinct technologies and distribution systems, whereas digital environments allow content to be digitised, stored and moved across computer networks. Convergence is connected to the digitisation of media content and the popularisation of the internet, which provides the technological basis for content to circulate across platforms.

Digitisation is central because it converts different media types into digital data that can be processed by computing devices and transmitted through communication networks. This is consistent with the fact that convergence is a direct consequence of digitisation and internet popularisation, which together support interconnection among ICTs, networks and content. As digitised media became widespread, it became possible for

the same networks and devices to deliver multiple media services, which is why convergence is closely associated with computerisation and internet-based distribution.

14.5 CONCEPT OF 3C'S IN MEDIA CONVERGENCE

The 3C's model is a common framework used to explain the building blocks of media convergence. Britannica states that media convergence brings together the "three C's" of computing, communication and content. The 3C's are computing, communications and contentand links their integration to digitisation and the promotion of the internet.

14.5.1 Computing

Computing refers to the computing power and digital processing that allow media to be created, edited, stored and accessed through devices and applications. Media convergence to computing by describing the smartphone as a computer-like device that supports communication and content sharing, illustrating how computing capability sits at the centre of converged media use. In simple terms, computing enables media to exist as digital files and streams that can be manipulated and delivered through digital systems.

14.5.2 Communication

Communication refers to the networks and connectivity that carry digitised content and enable interaction. The interconnection of ICTs and computer networks as part of media convergence, which indicates that communication networks are essential to convergence. In everyday life, communication networks allow users to access content and to send messages, share posts and participate in online environments through the same connected infrastructure.

14.5.3 Content

Content refers to the media material that people consume and circulate, such as news, entertainment, educational resources and user posts. Britannica includes *"media content"* as a core part of the interconnection that defines convergence, placing content alongside ICTs and networks. Convergence is the integration of content with communication technologies and computer networks, reinforcing that content is one of the three essential elements.

14.5.4 AN ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE: THE SMARTPHONE

A smartphone exemplifies the three C's because it is a computer that allows users to communicate with others by sharing content. Smartphones are a common example of media convergence, describing how multiple media functions are brought together in one device.

14.6 TYPES AND DIMENSIONS OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE

Media convergence can be classified into types to support clearer analysis of how convergence works in society and industry. The media convergence involves changes in media technologies, distribution and user experience, which can be organised into

different forms of convergence for learning purposes. Media convergence acts as an umbrella term that can be defined in technological, industrial, social, textual and political terms and it also identifies three main types: technological, economic and cultural convergence.

Technological convergence refers to the merging of media functions through digital technology and networked devices, making multiple media services accessible through shared systems. This emphasis is on the interconnection of ICTs, networks and content enabled by digitisation and the internet. Economic convergence refers to industry and market changes, including how media organisations integrate operations and how media products and advertising strategies adjust to cross-platform environments. Cultural convergence refers to audience practices and cultural circulation across platforms, including the ways audiences experience content across interconnected media environments.

W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Write the definition of media convergence.
Q 2: Why are digitisation and the internet considered key drivers of media convergence?
Q 3: Explain the 3C's framework and define each "C" in your own words.

14.7 CONVERGENCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In the digital age, convergence becomes more visible because traditional and digital media are integrated through technology within connected platforms and devices. Media convergence can be said to be integrating or merging traditional and digital media through technology, sometimes framed through the "3 Cs" of communication, computing and content. It also notes that this blending includes print, broadcast, online media and tools such as social media, blogs and video-sharing platforms, which reflects how multiple media forms coexist within unified digital environments.

A key feature of digital-age convergence is seamless multi-device access, where users can access content through interconnected devices and channels. The integration creates a seamless experience for consumers to access content across various interconnected devices and channels.

Digital-age convergence also shapes production and distribution strategies. The cross-media convergence has become a requirement for media organisations to remain relevant, and the media houses create content in several forms, such as website text, podcasts, videos and infographics. This indicates how convergence pushes media producers toward multi-format content and integrated publishing routines suited to platform environments.

14.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE

Media convergence is significant because it transforms established industries, services and work practices and enables new forms of content to emerge. This transformation includes how media organisations produce and distribute content and how they redesign workflows for cross-platform communication.

Convergence is also significant for audiences because it changes how users access information and entertainment and how they participate in communication. The convergence affects distribution and user experience, implying changes in convenience, immediacy and interaction as users engage with content through converged devices and networks. The integrated environments where users access content across channels, reinforcing that user experience is reshaped by multi-platform integration.

Media convergence has educational significance as well. Convergence can transform education by integrating multiple learning formats into a single digital platform, combining resources such as videos, documents, quizzes and live classes for learning access through devices such as smartphones, tablets or laptops.

14.9 IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE

Media convergence has implications for media industries and professional practices. Britannica states that convergence transforms established industries, services and work practices, which implies organisational restructuring, changes in job roles and new production routines.

Convergence also has implications for audiences and public communication because the same systems that enable wide participation also intensify the circulation of user-generated content. The user-generated content and interactive elements such as comment sections and user-submitted content, in digital content production, indicate how audiences may participate more directly in media processes. The audiences have become creators through memes and social media posts, highlighting participatory content creation as an implication of convergence.

Economic and strategic implications include changes in targeting and personalisation. The converged media provides access to audience data through websites, social media and mobile apps and it links this to improved targeting and personalised messaging. While this can increase efficiency in communication, it also raises governance and ethical concerns around data use, which becomes relevant when discussing privacy and responsible communication in converged digital systems.

14.10 RELEVANCE TO LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTRES

Media convergence is relevant to library and information centres because the converged environment changes how learners find, evaluate and use information across formats and platforms. The St. Clair College Library (location missing) “Media Convergence: Getting Started” guide is designed to help students research and locate relevant information and resources for media convergence studies, indicating the role of libraries in supporting learning in converged media fields. This highlights libraries as key access points for curated resources, databases and learning support related to media convergence.

Media convergence also connects to media and information literacy (MIL), which is important for enabling learners to navigate converged information environments. In media and information literacy instruction in higher education, including how educational frameworks can align to support learners in using information effectively

and critically. In practical terms, this supports the idea that libraries and educators need to teach learners how to evaluate sources, understand information creation processes, and participate responsibly in digital and converged media spaces.

2 14.11 LET US SUM UP

Media convergence refers to the interconnection of ICTs, computer networks and media content and it brings together the three C's of computing, communication and content as a result of digitisation and the popularisation of the internet. This concept explains why media that once functioned through separate technologies and institutions now operate within shared digital environments, reshaping how content is produced, distributed and experienced.

In the digital age, convergence is evident in integrated platforms and multi-device access, where print, broadcast and online media and tools such as social media and video-sharing services function together for audiences and organisations. Convergence is significant because it transforms industries and work practices and enables new forms of content, while also creating implications related to participatory content creation, multi-format production and the growing importance of media and information literacy supported by libraries and educators.

K 14.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1: Media convergence is the interconnection of information and communications technologies, computer networks and media content, bringing together the three C's of computing, communication and content, and it is a direct consequence of the digitisation of media content and the popularisation of the internet.

Answer to Q 2: Digitisation and the internet are key drivers because digitised content can be processed and distributed through computer networks and Britannica identify convergence as a direct consequence of digitisation and the popularisation of the internet.

Answer to Q 3: The 3C's are computing, communication and content and convergence occurs when these three elements operate together within the same digital environment.

O 14.13 FURTHER READING

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M 14.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short questions:

Q 1: Define media convergence as described by Encyclopaedia Britannica.
Q 2: What are the three C's of media convergence?
Q 3: Give one example that illustrates computing, communication and content together.
Q 4: What is meant by technological convergence?
Q 5: How is media convergence connected to media and information literacy?

B. Descriptive questions:

Q 1: Explain the core concept of media convergence and its technological basis.
Q 2: Discuss the 3C's framework with suitable examples.
Q 3: Describe major types of media convergence and explain why they are useful for analysis.
Q 4: Explain how convergence in the digital age changes user experience and content distribution.
Q 5: Discuss the role of libraries and information centres in supporting learning in converged media environments.

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