UNIT – 1 : COMMUNICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

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1.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- define the term communication
- outline the process of communication
- describe the functions of communication
- explain the different types of communication

1.2. INTRODUCTION

Communication has always been one of the foundations of development of human civilisation. Any change or any development in the human world is closely associated with communication. In the wake of massive advances in the various areas of science and technology in recent times, communication has taken centre-stage in contemporary political, economic, social and cultural life.

Communication has become the controlling mechanism in almost every area of human life. We can very well say that it has become the fourth 'basic human need' of the people - next only to food, shelter and clothes. This is why it has become all the more necessary to understand the communication concepts and relate them to contemporary human life. It is more so because you have chosen Mass Communication as a subject of study and career and we expect you to develop a clear understanding of the concepts of communication.

A good communication effort helps us immensely in influencing and winning over people, solving problems, building bridges among nations and societies. So, let us begin our journey of learning to know the tricks of this profession in the right earnest from now onwards.

1.3. CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION

Communication in the simplest terms is the process of getting to know about anything that matters in our life. It is through communication that most of the time we are gathering information in almost every sphere and activity of our life- to know about the status of other persons, institutions or organizations around us at a personal as well as a broader level. It is the system by which we get to know the well-being of the people close to us, public figures personally unknown to us, state of the society etc. Communication is a process in which people share or exchange ideas, information, knowledge, attitudes or feelings through certain signs and symbols.

The term comes from the Latin word 'Communicare' which means 'common'. To understand the term better let us go back in the annals of history. During the prehistoric era, in the initial stages of the human civilization people lived as individual persons and never had much need to talk to other human beings. But when they started living together in groups in sense of common, mutual accommodation, the need for a common system for talking or communicating amongst the members of the groups became essential. This is how the system of communication came into existence and gradually it developed and became central to all spheres of human life.

Even though under usual circumstances more than one person is needed for initiating as well as carrying out the process of communication, yet it can be completed within oneself also. This refers to communication that transpires inside a person. It is like talking to oneself, listening to oneself and relating one to oneself. It is called intrapersonal communication, the process that takes place within our own self in contemplating, conceptualizing and formulating our thoughts or ideas before we actually indulge in overt communication. It is quite important to note that even before communication with someone else, we invariably communicate with our own self. That is, we talk to ourselves first to decide how we would proceed to communicate with others. Hence, each and every communication process with someone else has to go through the process of scanning inside our minds first before it is actually allowed to proceed.



LET US KNOW

A few Interesting Observations on Communication

- We communicate something even by remaining silent
- Though communication usually requires more than one person to complete the process yet it can be completed within the same person also
- Each and every aspect of our physical and mental appearance communicates at least something to the others
- Communication is an unending process

1.3.1 Definition of Communication

Now let us look at a few definitions of this term to understand it better.

- Communication is the process of sending and receiving information.
- Communication is a vehicle through which we develop, maintain and improve human relationships.
- According to Dennis McQuail, communication is a process which increases commonality, but also requires elements of commonality for it to occur at all.

Let us now turn to another definition of communication – as given by the National Communication Systems of the UNESCO. According to it, communication is "a part of the very fabric of society. It takes place at all levels between people and between institutions, from government to people, from people back to government, and through many channels both inter-personal and mediated."

In addition to these few ones, you may find many more definitions of communication in the textbooks which also adequately explain the system. We do not intend to get confused with so many definitions; but rather we want you to write a suitable and adequate definition of communication on your own, the meaning of which should not be diluted.

1.3.2 Elements of Communication

A communication process necessarily involves several interesting elements that include a **sender**, a **receiver**, **feedback**, a **channel** and a **message**.

- A sender is the person who would like to send a message or information to the person intended by him or her. This means that this person, the sender, actually initiates or starts the communication process. For example, if I am interested in communicating with you I would begin the communication process myself aimed at you who will be my target audience. Before proceeding to do so, I or, for that matter, anybody who would like to start a communication process first decides what he or she would want to communicate to the other person; then the message is prepared in a language understandable to the target person; then the sender selects a channel and finally releases it targeting it to the other person, i.e., the receiver.
- The other person who is expected to receive the messages or information is termed the 'receiver' and is the partner in the communication process. This second person after receiving the message tries to understand the meaning of the message. He then frames an answer in a language understandable to the first person or the initiator of the process and then sends it back across to the sender of the message. If the first person is satisfied with the

response he or she would again communicate something and vice versa. This way the process continues to grow in an unending way.

Thus the communication process requires several elements to be completed under any circumstances, such as – sender, receiver, message, channel, feedback. The person who begins the communication process is the sender of messages, the one who receives it is the receiver and the information exchanged in the process are the messages. The common platform through which they communicate is the channel (a common language, air etc.). And when the sender sends information to the receiver, whatever is the response from the receiver is called the 'feedback'. For example – I say 'good morning' to my teacher and he or she also wishes me back. This wishing back is the feedback in the communication between the two.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS- A

1) Define communication.
2) What are the different necessary elements of Communication?
3) What do you mean by communicating with oneself? Is it essential that we do communicate with ourselves before communicating with someone else? Why?
4) What is the difference between message and feedback?



ACTIVITY- A

1) Make a team with a few of your close friends in class or otherwise. Then, ask a few selected questions about something and then trace the process everyone goes through and how – in thinking and framing an answer for the questions, properly understanding the questions and, time taken at each step etc.
2) Also, in the same exercise above, try to ascertain how the friends are taking help of their body gestures, waving of hands, eyebrows, change of voice pitches etc. while answering questions.

1.4 FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION

At different times different scholars have given various opinions regarding the functions of communication. In 1948, Harold Lasswell named three functions of communication:

I. Surveillance of the environment.
II. Correlation of the parts of the society in response to its environment.
III. Transmission of the cultural heritage.

In 1960, Wright added to this a fourth function, i.e., **entertainment**. In 1987, Dennis McQuail added to this another function, i.e., the **mobilization function of the media**. He, then, in his book 'Mass Communication Theory' summarized the functions of communication. The set of communication functions defined by McQuail is widely accepted as the basic functions of communication. They are as follows:

Information

- Providing information about events and conditions in society and the world.
- Indicating relations of power.
- Facilitating innovation, adaptation and progress.

Correlation

- Explaining, interpreting and commenting on the meaning of events and information.
- Providing support for established authority and norms.
- Socializing
- Co-ordinating separate activities.
- Consensus building.
- Setting orders of priority and signaling relative status.

Continuity

- Expressing the dominant culture and recognizing sub-cultures and new cultural developments.
- Forging and maintaining commonality of values.

Entertainment

- Providing amusement, diversion, and the means of relaxation.

Mobilization

- Campaigning for social objectives in the sphere of politics, war, economic development, work and sometimes religion.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – B

1) What are the functions of communication according to Lasswell?
2) What are the functions of communication according to McQuail?
3) Who introduced the 'entertainment' function of communication?

1.5 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

We can classify the communication system into several types, depending upon various factors like physical and linguistic expressions, number of participants, medium or tool or vehicles of transmission used, objectives to be achieved etc. We will discuss about all of them with examples for your better understanding of the system.

1.5.1 Types of communication based on physical and linguistic expressions

(a) Verbal communication is that communication which is carried out through the use of a written or spoken language. I may communicate with you by way of a written language. On the other hand, a teacher in a classroom or maybe I myself may sometime try to teach you this same piece of written lesson by spoken language in the classroom or somewhere else. This is called Verbal Communication because we are utilizing verbal words for communicating with the target audiences.

(b) Non-verbal Communication: When we do not utilize either the written or spoken modes and try to make people understand what we are trying to say by the extensive use of our facial expressions, dramatic movements of our bodies, modulation of our voices etc. then we use **Non Verbal language**. It is called non-verbal communication. An example of non-verbal

communication is the facial expression, or expressing our approval by nodding etc. The silent film Pushpak Vimanam by Kamal Hassan, the movies of Charlie Chaplin etc. are perfect instances of the use of non-verbal communication.

Both of these types of communication can't and should not be seen in isolation and must always be seen together to understand their meanings and also for making our communication better than anything else. This is because only a judicious and balanced combination of both these types of communication can really make the communication process successful.

See for yourself. When we try to make people understand something, don't you feel that a proper combination of both our Verbal communication or spoken language as well the gestures of our hands and body expressions add a lot more meaning to what we are trying to say.

1.5.2 Types of communication based on the number of persons involved

Here comes the need for the classification of communication based upon the number of persons involved in the process rather than the mode of language employed for carrying across our messages to the other people. This classification has quite a few interesting types of communication to be studied properly for a better understanding of the various aspects and issues related to it.

(a) Intrapersonal Communication: In the initial part of this Unit it has been mentioned that a communication process can be completed within the same person also. That is, a person can initiate a communication process with himself or herself and see to it that it is finished within his self only. For example – when you get up in the morning you may ask yourself whether you will go to office or not or you may try to remember the things to be done during that day. Then you communicate with yourself and may decide that as you are feeling uneasy due to fever you won't go to office or may re-arrange the list of works to be completed during the day. You complete the whole process within yourself and arrive at a certain decision. This is called **'intrapersonal'** communication as the communication is completed within the same person only, not involving two separate persons for the purpose.

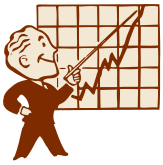
(b) Interpersonal Communication: When communicate with more than one person normally in a close proximity it is called **'Inter-personal'** communication as this communication process involves more than one person. The number of persons engaged in the communication in this way may go up to five or six beyond which it is called a small group communication.

(c) Small group communication: Small group communication means the communication process taking place in a small group involving about six to eight persons. In this case, the number of people involved in the process is too big to call it an Interpersonal communication and therefore it is called a Small group communication. These groups can be of several types –

(i) Democratic: Here all the members get an equal opportunity to speak and participate in discussions whenever some discussions take place.

(ii) Leader-centric: In this case, there emerges a leader out of the members of the group who then takes charge of the things and decides on the general rules for the group's functioning.

(d) Large Group Communication: When the communication process takes place amongst about 15 / 20 people taken together it is called a Large Group communication because the number of persons involved in the process is much bigger than just six to eight in case of a Small Group communication.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS C

1. Describe the basis of classification of the different types of communication.
2. What is Verbal communication?
3. What is Non Verbal communication?
4. Discuss the types of communication based on the number of persons involved.
5. Draw the difference between the interpersonal and intrapersonal communication.



ACTIVITY- B

1. Observe two of your close friends' behaviour and note down how they use the gestures of their hands, their eye contacts with others, voice modulations, their walking etc. Compare both of them and find out who is good in both verbal communication and Non Verbal Communication and who is good in only one of them.
2. After finding out from the friends' behaviour, which of the Verbal and Non Verbal communications gestures would you combine to make an effective communication effort.
3. Closely observe how the communication process takes place in a Small Group and also a Large Group. Note down these points following your observation of the groups' activities — how the leader was chosen, how does the leader performs his or her own job, whether the majority of the members find an opportunity to speak and participate in the deliberations of the group, how the decisions of the group have been taken etc.

1.6 MASS COMMUNICATION

Now we have come to the exciting and revolutionary world of Mass Communication which encompasses each and every sphere of our life – whether in personal or social life. As it is assuming such significance for our life, it will be essential to understand it better so that we can utilize its various aspects for society's benefits. Mass Communication is also a type of communication classified and described in terms of the number of persons involved as well as the tools and instruments utilized for carrying it out.

Simply speaking, this form of communication means the process of communicating with the masses. Here the target audience with whom we are trying to communicate might be too large and spread across anywhere in the country or the world.

We can say that this is that type of communication through which we communicate with the world without any discrimination on the grounds of gender, caste, creed, age, geographical or political barriers etc. All the citizens of the different nations across the globe are the target audiences of mass communication from any nation or society of the world at large.

1.6.1 Characteristics of mass communication

Let us discuss the characteristics of Mass Communication for a clear understanding of the term and its concept.

- In Mass Communication, one sender or a few senders initiate the message which is received by a large widespread audience. In Mass communication the use of technology is of paramount importance as it has made it possible for a few people to communicate successfully with a large audience. Technology is used to reach people living thousands of miles away through TV, Radio or the Print media. Technology has made it so much easier for us.
- Secondly, mass communication is also called a 'mediated communication' because it is carried out through the use of some mechanical devices and by a group of skilled people who gather, analyze and disseminate the information and thus are 'mediating'. For example – a communicator in this mode of communication has necessarily to take the help of a certain instrument – the microphone, TV, studio equipment, printing press, the radio transistor sets etc. for reaching those innumerable number of people anywhere across the world. As the mechanical device comes in between the communicator and the audiences it is called the 'mediated' communication.
- Another characteristic of Mass Communication is related to the delay in the response or feedback of the audiences to the communication. For example – if a person on watching a TV programme or listening to the radio or reading a feature in the newspapers finds it objectionable and decides to lodge a protest against it or alternatively wants to express a positive reaction about it, it will take at least some time for him to do so. And it will take even more time for the media

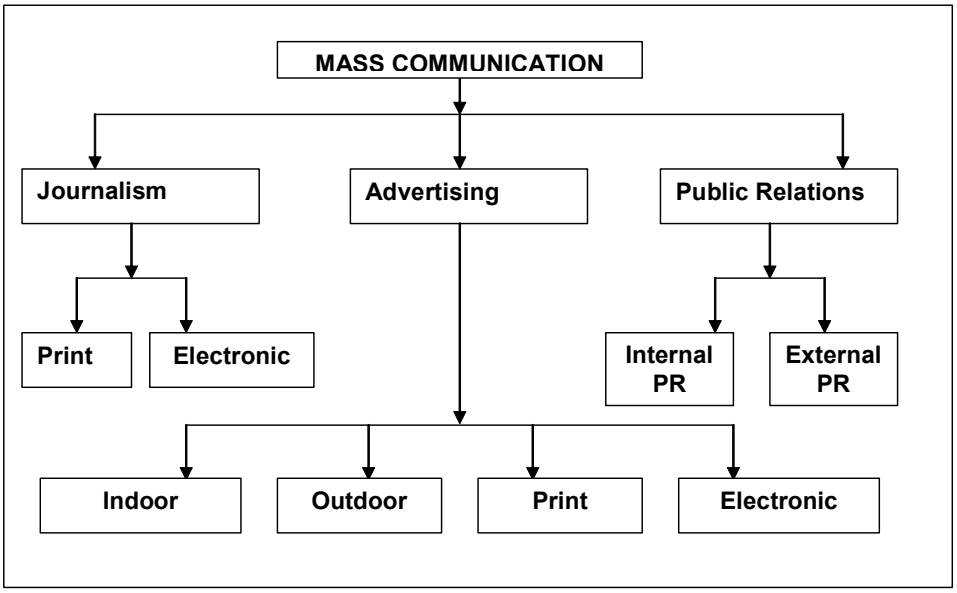
organization to take cognizance of the fact and act accordingly. Media organisations also gather feedback by using various market research tools.

- 'Professional communicators' are involved in this communication system for carrying out the various stages of the programme production activities which include selection of story, script for the programme, editing, production, shooting, post production etc. in case of TV and in case of radio or films, media planning, deciding on the right time slot for releasing the stories or the programmes etc. Professional communicators are very useful for us in preparing and delivering messages to other people.
- Every person who has something to say to the world is not an expert in communication skills. So they need to take help of professional communicators for suitably preparing and then delivering the messages to the people.
- Another very significant characteristic of mass communication is that broadcasting or printing of the news items must essentially be a 'simultaneous' process. It implies that if a news bulletin is broadcast by Radio or telecast on TV it has to be available at the same time anywhere to anyone who would like to watch or listen to it.
- Lastly, Mass communication is a highly 'impersonal' form of communication. This is because the communicator can't have a direct touch with the target audiences and everything is done only through the mechanical devices.

1.6.2 Types of Mass Communication

The following table shows the types of mass communication and mass media –

It is seen from the above table the main types of Mass Communication are Journalism, Advertising and Public Relations. Each of them is divided into some other types. Journalism is the oldest type of Mass Communication. It pertains to communicating 'news'. It is followed by Public Relations and

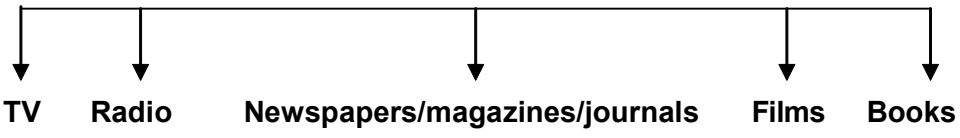


Advertising. We will discuss in detail each of these types of mass communication separately in different blocks and units. It may be noted here that the traditional concept of news is also undergoing a change and entertainment is also a significant and major component of mass communication in addition to the above three categories.

1.6.3 Mass Media and Mass Audience

In the preceeding sections, we have already discussed about Mass Communication. When we talk about Mass Communication, two concepts which we invariably have to learn about are Mass Media and Mass Audience. Let us discuss them one by one.

(a) Mass Media: While mass communication is the process of communicating with the masses, **mass media** are the devices through which this process is carried out for the benefit of the audiences. There are several types of mass media such as —-



These mass media actually form the backbone of mass communication. These are the devices or instruments through which the messages are

carried forward to the masses at the grassroots level. And the masses on their part can listen to or watch or read those messages through these devices.

(b) Mass Audience:

As the mass communication involves huge number of audience for receiving and consuming the contents, a clear concept about this term is essential. Success of mass communication depends upon how the audiences receive the contents or programmes offered by the media.

When we say audience,it can either mean audiences for a particular mass media entity such as TV, Radio, Newspapers, Films, Books etc. or specific audience for different segments of programme contents, say, a particular sports, a teleserial, political programmes etc.

Nowadays, majority of the mass media have started splitting themselves up to cater to the smaller niche groups of audiences so that they can serve particular identifiable groups of audiences in a better manner.

Because of the intense competition due to the advent of such large number of channels, newspapers, magazines, films in circulation, the media organisations are trying their best to attract the audiences and the various means are being adopted to serve the purpose. So the concept, 'audience is the king' has come to stay.

It is also quite a difficult proposition to pinpoint exactly the 'target audience' for a programme, any channel or film etc. Yet, we may assure you that no mass media organization would ever launch any programme without first making a detailed survey of the audiences and identifying the audience segment for their programmes.



CHECK YOUR PRGRESS - D

1. Define Mass Communication?
2. Discuss the characteristics of Mass Communication.
3. Compare the various aspects of Interpersonal communication and Mass Communication.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have been introduced to the basic concepts of communication and mass communication.

- Communication is the system of exchanging and sharing information, ideas, knowledge, attitudes or feelings with each other through a certain channel which is a never-ending process.
- Communication performs some definite functions such as informing, educating, persuading and entertaining which are highly useful for the human beings and thereby they need to be studied effectively and properly.
- Communication can be both verbal and non-verbal.
- Communication may be Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, among groups and between a very large audience and a few communicators-the mass communication- depending upon various circumstances and necessities.
- Mass Communication is the process of communicating with a very large mass of people which may be spread anywhere around the world. This type of communication has to be necessarily carried out through the use of a mechanical device both for communicating as well as receiving the messages at the same time.
- A breed of 'professional communicators' is involved to properly refine and edit the messages of mass communication from the original communicator before it is released for human consumption.
- Mass media are the instruments or devices through which people can receive those messages and get benefitted in the long run. This is because without such devices it would have been impossible to reach so many people at the same time throughout the world.



1.8 FURTHER READINGS

- Mass communication, an introduction — John Bitter, (*Prentice Hall),*
- Theories of communication — Defleur, ML & Ball-Rokeach S*, (Longman),*
- Communication media, yesterday, today and tomorrow — PN Malhan, (*Publications Divisions, GOI),*
- Mass communication theory, an introduction — Dennis McQuaily, (Sage),
- Communication models for the study of mass communication — Dennis McQuail, (*Longman),*
- Understanding media — Marshall McLuhan, (*Routledge and Paul Kegan, London)*,
- Understanding the media — Eoin Devereux (Sage)
- Mass communication theory and practice — Uma Narula, (*Harchand Publications, Delhi)*
- Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication –
- V B Agarwal and V S Gupta



1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A

1) Communication is the process of exchanging information with ourselves as well as with others. It helps us in maintaining a healthy relationship with our fellow human beings and also different institutions, organizations in the society. It is almost the fourth basic human right for mankind.

2) Communication has a few essential elements such as —-

a. Sender who initiates the communication process or sends a message to the other persons,

b. Receiver for whom the messages are being sent by the Sender,

c. Channel is the common platform on which both sender and receiver can communicate,

d. Message is the information that we exchange between ourselves in the process of communication,
e. Feedback is the response we get in response to our communication.

3) Communicating with oneself refers to the communication that transpires inside a person. It is like talking to oneself, listening to oneself and relating one to oneself. It is called intrapersonal communication, the process that takes place within our own self in contemplating, conceptualizing and formulating our thoughts or ideas before we actually indulge in overt communication.

Yes, it is essential to communicate with ourselves before communicating with someone else because before going to communicate with someone else we need to decide in our own minds what we are going to say or communicate to the other person or the receiver of messages. Only after a detailed consultation with ourselves we go ahead to communicate or discuss with the others what we would like to discuss or speak with others in the end.

4) The difference between message and feedback is that message is the information transmitted from the sender to the receiver whereas when the sender sends information to the receiver, whatever is the response from the receiver is called the feedback.

B)

1) The functions of communication according to Lasswell are:
   a. Surveillance of the environment.
   b. Correlation of the parts of the society in responding to its environment.
   c. Transmission of the cultural heritage.
2) The functions of communication according to McQuail are:
   a. Information
   b. Correlation
   c. Continuity
   d. Entertainment
   e. Mobilization

3) Wright

C

1) Communication can be classified into various formats from the point of view of the number of people involved as well as the use of language.

- → From the point of use of language there can be Verbal and Non Verbal Communication.
- → Again, from the point of view of number of people involved it can be classified as Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Small and Large group communication and finally Mass Communication.

2) Verbal communication is the communication which essentially is carried out by using spoken as well as written language for getting across the message to the target audiences.

3) Non Verbal communication is the one which is carried out using our facial expressions, bodily gestures, our activities, dress sense etc. Here there is no use of spoken or written language codes. The overall percentage of Non Verbal communication in our life is much more than Verbal communication. This communication is much more expressive than even Verbal communication.

4) Based on the number of persons involved, communication can be of several types. When communication is completed within the same person only, not involving two separate persons for the purpose, it is called **'intrapersonal'** communication. When we communicate with more than one person normally in a close proximity it is called **'Inter-personal'** communication. The number of persons engaged in the communication in this way may go up to five or six. When communication takes place in a small group involving about six to eight persons, it is called **Small group** communication. When the communication process takes place amongst about 15 / 20 people taken together it is called a **Large Group** communication

5) The difference between Intrapersonal and Interpersonal communication is that, in Intrapersonal communication, the communication takes place within oneself, but in interpersonal communication we communicate with other people.

D

1) Mass communication is the process through which one or a few senders of messages or communicators communicate with a very large, innumerable people spread anywhere around the world through the use of some mechanical devices known as mass media. The receivers of the messages in this type of communication are never discriminated on the basis of caste, creed, gender, age, religion etc. If a person has the means to access the mass media, he or she must be able to watch, listen to or read a TV / Radio channel, a newspaper etc.

2) Characteristics of mass communication can be identified as —-

- → A few or just one communicator or sender of messages,
- → Audience is too large, spread all over the world,
- → Messages are published / broadcast simultaneously,
- → Feedback is delayed to a big degree,
- → A mediated communication,
- → A highly impersonal medium,
- → A magic multiplier or force multiplier,

3)

	Interpersonal Communication	**Mass Communication**
1	Interpersonal communication is 'personal'	Mass communication is 'impersonal'
2	It is carried out at a close personal distance	It is carried out at large distances
3	The feedback is instant	The feedback is delayed
4	Interpersonal is more effective	Mass communication is less effective
5	Here there is no need of a mechanical device to be employed	Here one must essentially employ a mechanical device to reach the people or audiences



1.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1) What is communication? Describe its characteristics.
2) Make a classification of various types of communication with examples based on the number of people involved and the use of language.
3) What are the functions of communication?
4) Compare Interpersonal communication and mass communication.
5) Why is mass communication so important for our life today? Write with suitable examples.