KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY
Patgaon, Rani Gate, Guwahati – 781017

SEMESTER 1

JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION
PAPER – 1
INTRODUCTION TO MASS COMMUNICATION
BLOCK -2

CONTENTS

UNIT - 6	:	**Mass media**
UNIT- 7	:	**Normative Theories of Mass Media**
UNIT- 8	:	**Sociological Theories of Mass Media**
UNIT - 9	:	**Media Effects Theories**
UNIT - 10	:	**Mass Audience and Society**
REFERENCES	:	**For All Units**

Subject Experts

1. Professor Abhijit Bora, Head , Department of Mass Communication & Journalism, Tezpur University
2. Dr. Ankuran Dutta, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Communication & Journalism, Gauhati University
3. Dr. Kh. Kabi, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Mass Communication, Rajiv Gandhi University , Arunachal Pradesh

Course Co-ordinator

Dr. Trisha Dowerah Baruah, Bhupen Hazarika School of Mass Communication, KKHSOU

SLM Preparation Team

Units	Contributors
6-7	Prof. Abhijit Bora
8-10	Dr. Trisha Dowerah Baruah

Editorial Team

Content (English Version) : Prof. K.V Nagaraj, Department of Mass Communication, Mizoram University

Language (English Version) : Sawpon Dowerah, Academic Officer (Retd.), SEBA & presently, Rector, Icon Academy

Structure, Format & Graphics : Dr. Trisha Dowerah Baruah

May, 2017

This Self Learning Material (SLM) of the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution - Non Commercial - Share Alike 4.0 License (international): http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/

Printed and published by Registrar on behalf of the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University.

Headquarter : Patgaon, Rani Gate, Guwahati – 781017; Web : www.kkhsou.in
City Office : Housefed Complex, Last Gate, Dispur, Guwahati – 781006

The university acknowledges with thanks the financial support provided by the **Distance Education Bureau, UGC** for the preparation of this study material.

DETAILED SYLLABUS
JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION
SEMESTER 1
BLOCK – 2
PAPER-1 : INTRODUCTION TO MASS COMMUNICATION

Unit – 6 : MASS MEDIA

Media of Mass Communication, Characteristics of different mass media, Audience, Reach and Access, Role of Media- creating public opinion, agenda-setting role

Unit – 7 : NORMATIVE THEORIES OF MASS MEDIA

Importance of Communication Theories, Normative theories of mass media-Authoritarian Theory, Libertarian Theory, Social Responsibility Theory, Soviet Communist Theory, Development Media Theory, Democratic Participant Media Theory

Unit – 8 : SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF MASS MEDIA

Sociological theories of mass communication – Cultivation Theory, Social Learning Theory, Agenda Setting Theory, Play Theory, Uses and Gratification Theory, Dependency Theory

Unit- 9 : MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES

Hypodermic Needle or Bullet Theory, Personal Influence Theory- Two step flow theory, Multi step flow theory, Individual Differences Theory

Unit – 10 : MASS AUDIENCE AND SOCIETY

Concept of mass audience- characteristics of mass audience, Media theories associated with the concept of audience, audience – reach and access, reciprocal relationship among media, audience and society

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This is the second block of the course on 'Introduction to Mass Communication'. This block will mainly deal with the different theories of mass media like normative, sociological and media effects theories. Theories of mass communication have changed dramatically from early 1900s to late 2000s, basically due to use of technology to a large extent in the communication process. A brief over view of the five units of the second block have been given below-

Unit 6 : MASS MEDIA

This is the sixth unit of the course on 'Introduction to Mass Communication'. This unit gives an overview of the different categories of mass media as well as their characteristics. This unit will also focus on how mass media helps in creating public opinion and in preparing agenda for the common masses.

Unit 7 : NORMATIVE THEORIES OF MASS MEDIA

In this unit, you will learn the different normative theories of mass media . A careful analysis of these theories will bring to light the impact media exerts on the way people communicate or for that matter to understand how an individual reacts in a given situation.

Unit 8 : SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF MASS MEDIA

This unit will help you to understand the meaning of sociological approach to communication theory by specifically focusing on cultivation theory, social learning theory, agenda setting theory, play theory, uses and gratification theory and dependency theory

Unit 9 : MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES

This unit will enable you to understand as to how media has an impact on the lives of the people. Special emphasis would be given on explaining some of the main media effects theories like Hypodermic Needle or Bullet Theory, Personal Influence Theory and Individual Differences theory

Unit 10 : MASS AUDIENCE AND SOCIETY

This is the final unit of the second block on 'Introduction to Mass Communication' paper. In this unit, you shall be given a brief overview of the concept of audience and mass audience, theories associated with the concept of audience as well as the relationship between mass audience and society.

While going through this course, you will come across some along-side boxes, which are put on the left side or right side of the text. These boxes will explain you the meaning of some words and concepts within the text. Apart from this, there will be some broad and short questions which have been included under 'Activity' and 'Check Your Progress' in every unit. Activities will increase your thinking capacity because questions put under 'Activity' section are not directly derived from text. Answers to the short questions have been put under section 'Answers to Check Your Progress' section. Besides, a few text-related questions have been put under the section 'Model Questions'. These questions will help to draw your attention on the probable topics for the examination so that you can prepare for the examination with confidence.



REFERENCES

1. Aggarwal, Vir Bala, V.S Gupta (2002). Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication. New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company
2. Adler, Ronald B. , Rodman ,George R. (2000) Understanding Human Communication. Harcourt Brace College Publishers
3. Baran, Stanley J. (2013). *Introduction to Mass Communication* : Media Literacy and Culture. McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
4. Chaturvedi, B.K, Medhi, Dr. S.K (2008) Mass Communication, principles and practices. New Delhi : Global Vision Publishing House
5. Fiske, John (1990) *Introduction to Communication Studies*. New York : Routledge.
6. Folkerts, Jean & Lacy, Stephen (2006) .*The Media in your life – An introduction to Mass Communication. New Delhi : Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt. Ltd*
7. Hartley, Peter. (1999). *Interpersonal Communication*. London : Routledge
8. Hartley, Peter. (1997). *Group Communication*. London : Routledge
9. Hilmes, Michele & Loviglio, Jason, (2002). *Radio Reader – essays in the cultural history of radio,* London : Routledge
10. Kumar, Keval J. (2006) Mass Communication in India. Mumbai : Jaico Publishing House
11. McQuail, Dennis. (2006). *Mass Communication (Four volume set)*. Sage publication
12. Narula, Uma (2001) Mass Communication : Theory and Practice. New Delhi : Har-Anand publications Pvt. Ltd.
13. Price, Stuart. (1996). *Communication Studies*. Longman.
14. Stone, Gerald, Singletory, Michael & Richmond, Virginia P. (2003). *Clarifying Communication Theories*, Surjeet Publications.
15. Vilanilam, J.V (2005) Mass Communication in India . New Delhi : Sage Publications

UNIT - 6: MASS MEDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives
6.2 Introduction
6.3 Media of Mass Communication
6.4 Characteristics of Different Mass Media
6.5 Audience, Reach and Access
6.6 Role of Media
6.6.1 Creating Public Opinion
6.6.2 Agenda-setting Role
6.7 Let us Sum up
6.8 Further Reading
5.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
6.10 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- name the different mass media
- describe the characteristics of the different mass media
- explain the terms 'audience', 'reach' and 'impact'
- illustrate the role of mass media in the society

6.2 INTRODUCTION

By now you must have understood that mass communication is the process of communicating with the masses, which needs different media or tools for carrying out this task. These media which act as the carrier of the mass communication messages to the people are known as the mass media.

Mass media is an essential element in achieving the goals of mass communication. Therefore, in this unit, we will discuss the various aspects of mass media in the light of its importance in the life of human beings as the bridge between the masses and mass communicators.

A good and clear concept about mass media is necessary for becoming successful in handling mass communication. Once you complete this unit, you will have developed a clear idea about the way of functioning of the different mass media along with their characteristics. It will allow you to be able to plan a media publicity campaign whenever needed.

6.3 MEDIA OF MASS COMMUNICATION



LET US KNOW

Blog: A blog (an abridgment of the term web log) is a website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events or other material such as graphics or video. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images and links to other blogs, web pages and other media related to its topic.

As carriers of messages of mass communication, mass media are very powerful instruments for informing the people or masses about virtually anything on the earth. The various types of mass media possess different characteristics, advantages, disadvantages etc. And most of the time, it is important to note that whenever a media publicity campaign has to be taken up in any sector or for any product, it will be a wiser idea to have a media mix of all the available media in the society rather than depending upon only a few selected ones. This is because due to technical and other characteristics, every mass medium has its unique aspects which also determine what kind of audience or readership it will attract.

Mass media can also be classified into several categories as given below:

Print Media - Newspapers and journals / magazines / books.

Electronic Media / Audio-Visual Media - Television / Radio / Films

New media - Internet, Internet Radio and Blogs.

Ans to Q.No 3 :

Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet

Ans to Q.No 4 :

Mass media is said to be an 'informal open university' , because, in addition to the profit-making goal, it has to necessarily shoulder the responsibility of educating the masses through entertainment, agenda-setting and showing the right path at times of crisis.

Ans to Q.No 5 :

Reach : Reach in Mass Communication terms means whether a particular mass medium is available to the masses at a certain place or not.

Access : Access means whether a person has the necessary means to avail the services of mass media vehicles like TV channels, newspapers if they are available at that place.



10.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 : What does the uses and gratification model signify?

Q.2 : Does the size of audience of different mass media differ ?why?

Q.3 : Why are electronic media texts more effective than print texts?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1 : What is the importance of audience in mass media?

Q.2 : Differentiate between the terms 'media reach' and 'media access'.

Q.3 : Can we say that the audience of all the different types of mass media does not have any overlapping preferences for any particular media or programme? How?

Q.4 : What do you mean by mass audience? What are its specific characteristics?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1 . How can we define the relationship between audience and mass media in an ideal situation?

Q.2 . Discuss the reciprocal relationship among media, audience and society with the help of a diagram.

* * * * *



10.8 FURTHER READING

1. Baran, Stanley J. (2013). Introduction to Mass Communication : Media Literacy and Culture. McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
2. Folkerts, Jean & Lacy, Stephen (2006) .The Media in your life - An introduction to Mass Communication. New Delhi : Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt. Ltd
3. Hartley, Peter. (1999). Interpersonal Communication. London : Routledge
4. Hartley, Peter. (1997). Group Communication. London : Routledge
5. Hilmes, Michele & Loviglio, Jason, (2002). Radio Reader - essays in the cultural history of radio, London : Routledge
6. McQuail, Dennis. (2006). Mass Communication (Four volume set). Sage publication
7. Price, Stuart. (1996). Communication Studies, Longman.
8. Stone, Gerald, Singletory, Michael & Richmond, Virginia P. (2003). Clarifying Communication Theories, Surjeet Publications.



10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1 :

'Media audience' can be termed to be a participative community with the media serving the educational and cultural needs of the society. A media audience is more than a 'conventionalized crowd' and usually refers to an aggregate of persons who are readers, listeners and viewers of different forms of media.

Ans to Q.No 2 :

The hypodermic needle theory is also commonly known as the magic bullet theory because people usually accept messages that are aimed at them. In fact, this theory suggests that the media injects its messages straight into the passive audience who are immediately affected by the messages.

Obvious from the above description that the category of print media includes the mass media of printed words. On the other hand, TV, Radio, films etc. are examples of electronic media or audio-visual media. These are the traditional forms of mass media.

Nowadays, as the Internet is gaining an ever-increasing popularity among the masses all over the world, it is being included in the category of new media. In this category, the system of Blogs is also becoming highly significant as they are being increasingly accepted as a medium of expression for mass use.

However, it is still being debated by the experts of mass media whether the internet and blogs can be declared as media of mass communication and an unanimous agreement is yet to be arrived at.

It is true that when a message is uploaded into the internet through an e-mail address or a blog, it becomes accessible to innumerable people anywhere in the world. But it lacks the specific characteristic of mass communication that the messages have to be available at the same instant to anyone interested in receiving it. This is because all people that the messages are aimed at, may not access it at the same time.

We all know that when we listen to or see something it leaves a much better influence on our minds than when we just read the same thing. We can say that credibility as well as influence increases in an ascending order from print to radio and TV. In other words, reading, listening and listening-viewing (combined), in this order, have ascending influences over us.

This happens because when sound and visuals are combined together, its influence and effect on human beings are greater than that from print media.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1.What is media of mass communication?

_____

_____

_____

Q.2. What are the categories into which mass media can be classified?

_____

_____

6.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT MASS MEDIA

In the last section you have learnt about the different mass media. Let us now glance over the different characteristics of the mass media.

Print Media:

1. Being a portable medium people can take it along to read it at leisure time.
2. Lot of space available for covering many news items.
3. The professional communicators involved with 'the read only medium' must be able to create the desired impact on the masses by using the appeal of written languages.
4. It has to be physically delivered to the peoples' houses by someone in person, but is a time-consuming process.
5. A person must be literate to read a newspaper.
6. Delivering it may be difficult at some places due to geographical constraints.
7. It is the oldest form of mass media and it has already acquired a special status in the minds of the masses in spite of the growing popularity of TV and Radio.
8. It provides enough scope and space for in-depth analyses of various current events and detailed description of incidents, events etc.
9. Scope for manipulation of news items is high in this medium.

Radio:

1. This old and widely-used technological communication device for disseminating information is a flexible, diversified and easily-accessible medium.
2. As it is an electronic medium, its messages need not be carried physically to the readers. If a person possesses a radio receiver set, he or she can receive the programmes anywhere under the coverage area of that particular radio station.

healthy situation may grow in due course of time. Unfortunately such an initiative is usually not experienced in our society. That is why even though we often keep hearing that mass media are performing in an irresponsible manner we hardly organize ourselves to take any affirmative action. The fact is that the audience is like an elephant which does not realize the extent of its immense powers it possesses at any given moment of time. As the switch is in our hands we the audience can force the mass media to change its ways by presenting us with responsible messages - whether it is news or entertainment or a mixture of both.



10.7 LET US SUM UP

- A media audience is more than a 'conventionalized crowd' and usually refers to an aggregate of persons who are readers, listeners and viewers of different forms of media.
- The hypodermic needle theory also commonly known as the magic bullet theory states that people usually accept messages that are aimed at them.
- The two-step flow of communication model or Multistep Flow Model states that people form their opinions under the influence of opinion leaders, who in turn are influenced by the mass media.
- Mass media is an 'informal open university' which, in addition to the profit-making goal, has to necessarily shoulder the responsibility of educating the masses through entertainment, agenda-setting and showing the right path at times of crisis.
- Reach in Mass Communication terms means whether a particular mass medium is available to the masses at a certain place or not.
- Access means whether a person has the necessary means to avail the services of mass media vehicles .
- Different forms of mass media goes a long way in shaping the beliefs , attitudes and behaviour of the people and help to make a sense of connectivity with social reality.
- The effectiveness of the communication through media channels depends on the reciprocal relationship among media, society and audience.

relationships

Source : Narula, Uma (2006). Communication Models. New Delhi : Atlantic Publishers & Distributors

As is indicated in the diagram given above , there is a tripartite relationship between society, media and audience. Media has significant effect on audience and society or that media has unbounded capacity to manipulate its messages. The media messages, thus delivered, construct the social realities of its people and people accordingly manage their social realities in a social set-up. When people are exposed to global cultures and new ways of life, they try to change or adopt new ways of life. Basically media effects takes place in three different ways-firstly in terms of change in belief systems, attitudes and values; secondly media's role in agenda setting and ; thirdly is the expansion of people's knowledge and belief system.

After going through the above discussions, you must have developed a definite and comprehensive idea about the whole concept of audience. As both audience and mass media share such a close relationship it is necessary also to look into the relationship between these two.

In an ideal situation the relationship between the masses or the audience and the mass media should be a complementary one, each side contributing to the other's healthy growth.

In this connection we can say that mass media should play a decisive role in transforming the audience into a learned, intellectual category by educating them through various means. In other words, media should try its best to create a good taste in the minds of the masses or the audience.

On the other hand, the audience also bears a good amount of responsibility in this regard. The audience as a whole should keep a close watch on the functioning of the media constantly to ensure that the latter does not play truant with its responsibilities. Whenever things may show a tendency to go astray, it is the major responsibility of the media to take unified action to make its demands known to the media authorities and force it to correct the situation.

Both sides should take each other into proper confidence so that a

3. One need not be literate to listen to radio programmes.
4. It being an audio medium the professional communicators involved in it must be able to create an influence on the listeners by the modulation of one's voice only.
5. As it is a portable medium one can carry a receiver set anywhere and listen to its programmes whenever one feels like.
6. It is a cheap medium which can be enjoyed by anyone irrespective of being rich or poor, literate or illiterate. Therefore, radio enjoys the reputation of being truly the 'medium of the masses'.
7. One can listen to programmes only at scheduled times.
8. It is also termed as a 'sightless' medium because the communicator remains invisible to the audience.
9. Many communication experts and practitioners firmly believe that it is primarily a rural medium.
10. Scope for manipulation of information is somewhat less than print medium.

Television:

1. The retention rate of messages among the masses is quite high in television due to its visual impact.
2. Being an audio-visual medium its impact on the masses is the highest amongst all the mass media.
3. Being a bulky instrument it is not a portable one.
4. Programmes can be enjoyed only at scheduled breaks of time.
5. Scope for manipulation of information is the least in this medium as visuals constitute a considerable part of its programme contents
6. Like Radio, physical delivery of messages is not necessary; which is a major point of convenience.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of Radio, Television and newspapers as mass media.

_____

_____

_____

6.6 ROLE OF MASS MEDIA

6.5.1 CREATING PUBLIC OPINION

By now you must have realized that mass media is very a powerful instrument for informing people at any level of the society about anything we would like to. Can any other media reach such innumerable masses at the same instant or within a very short time? The answer would be a certain 'No'.

Further, media also influences our minds to a great extent by shaping our attitude, personality and the overall lifestyle. Hence, whenever there is a need for creating public opinion about any specific issue, mass media is the most effective and important tool to do so.

For example - in recent times, the new style of national level talent shows like the Indian Idol followed by others have become a craze amongst the people. Things have gone to the extent of instilling even regional or state-level sentiments for voting for the contestants in the competition. All of you know yourself how much publicity and public opinion these have developed during those days which even went on to decide who will win and who will not.

In the same way, in case of the digging up of the Ram Setu at Rameswaram for facilitating better sea transport had to be abandoned due to widespread public protests. These public protests were appeared to be orchestrated by the media.

This is done in a careful manner to give an impression that the opinions and reactions from the masses are spontaneous and not projected by the media. But, in reality, media is responsible to a high extent for

belongingness in the society. Different forms of mass media also goes a long way in shaping the beliefs , attitudes and behaviour of the people and help to make a sense of connectivity with social reality. In this regard we can say that electronic media texts are more effective than print texts because of the use of moving images combined with sound elements. Media, thus operates in a 'contextual environment' which varies from society to society. The effectiveness of the communication through media channels depends on the reciprocal relationship among media, society and audience. The socio-economic, political, cultural and technological environments have a profound effect on the media systems. For instance under an authoritarian regime, mass media are under the control of the State whereby the media is allowed to operate by adhering to certain restrictions. We can represent this relationship in the form of a diagram as given below-

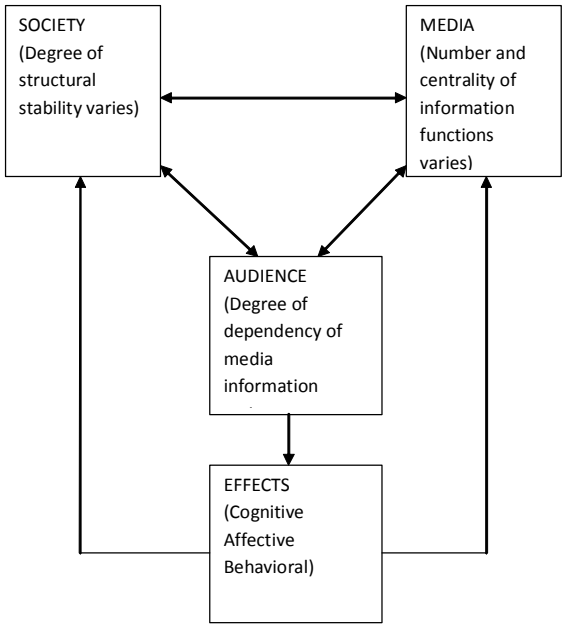


Diagram : Diagram showing society, media and audience reciprocal

This inability to access the mass media products / software may be due to several factors including financial problems, technical reasons for which a particular TV channel or a newspaper might not be available or 'reachable' at a particular area / spot of a place even though in general the larger area might have its availability.

Of course, there are examples of technical deficiencies due to which many times we may find that a mass media does not enjoy 'reach' in a certain area even within its general reach area. Let us take the example of mobile phones to illustrate this point. That is - we all know that Guwahati enjoys the Reach of several mobile phone service providers. However, at times we find that some pockets in the city show a lot of difficulty in accessing those signals and networks. This is due to technical problems.

Another important aspect in this connection is that even though we might be enjoying adequate 'reach' of some mass media yet due to our personal preferences, interests and personality we may not access all of them and choose only one or a few of the available ones. This is because we like to expose ourselves only to those things which we like or with which we are familiar, and none otherwise. We have discussed in detail this phenomenon in the initial part of this paper



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4 : Why is mass media said to be an 'informal open university'?

_____

_____

Q.5 : Define the terms - reach and access

_____

_____

10.6 RECIRPROCAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG MEDIA, AUDIENCE AND SOCIETY

Man is a social animal and as such he or she has to maintain a cordial relationship with the members of the society. People congregate in different places or pay social visits in order to communicate and maintain a sense of

stoking up these issues and then suggesting the course of action to be taken up by the people.

Even though media is not supposed to tell people what stand or side is to be taken in important issues at discussion, it gives adequate amount of hints to the people indirectly dictating which side should be taken and which not.

Let us talk about another example. You must be familiar with the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act or the IM (DT) Act which was declared null and void by the Supreme Court when its validity was challenged in the court.

Now, quite naturally, there might always be different opinions about the validity of the Act - someone may support it or oppose it. Now, the role of mass media is to present both the diverging views about the Act to the readers / people and let them form their own opinions.

On the other hand media as an integral part of the society has a definite responsibility to the nation or society and thus must provide 'leadership' through opinions to the masses who might not be educated or wise enough to know what to do under certain critical situations.

During our freedom struggle, media - newspapers - played a leading role in informing people as well as making them aware about the bad effects of the colonial rule and encouraged them to oppose it tooth and nail.

6.5.2 AGENDA-SETTING ROLE

We have earlier mentioned that our literacy rate is not very impressive and even for the literate people a majority of them are not much concerned about different issues of our society, whether it is of utmost importance or not.

But, everyday, we are being confronted by hundreds of important issues with a potential to cause big damage to our society. And if the society in which we live is disturbed by them, definitely we will also be affected by it.

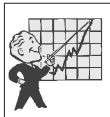
Now, the question is - out of so many issues and events taking place, trying to catch our attention, which of them should be given priority and which of them need not be given attention.

Right here, mass media has a great role to play by preparing an agenda to be put in front of people for acting on significant issues.

For example, during the time when the Sony TV Indian Idol programme was at its peak, an important incident took place in Assam in which one question paper of the HSLC examination was leaked before the examinations. Definitely there was some amount of protests at that time about it. But as the mass media was too busy featuring the Indian Idol contest, adequate emphasis was not put upon this issue whereas this was a more important issue than the Indian Idol contest. This is because it concerns the lives of lakhs of our future citizens. Media should not discriminate in the dissemination of news and information but the scale of coverage should be adequate enough for making people properly aware about a certain issue so that they can take a stand - whether to support it or oppose it.

It is natural that people look upon mass media for leadership and opinions at times of crisis. This is because most of the times we - the people - do not have enough access to sources of information which the media possess. That is why they are in a much more advantageous position to form a balanced opinion on those issues and can put them before the people for creating a public opinion.

So, it is the duty of the media to decide whether cricket matches between India and other countries should get more priority than question paper leakage or whether panchayat elections will get better coverage than hundreds of self-help groups (SHGs) doing a commendable service at the grassroots level of the society. This activity reflects the maturity of mass media in any society.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4. What are the two main roles of mass media?

_____

_____

_____

Now, mass media and the audiences form the two integral sides of the same coin. The very existence of media would be threatened if the other did not exist but not vice versa. Ideally, the relationship between mass media and its audiences should be very cordial and constructive.

This is because the media on its part should try its level best to inculcate a healthy, progressive and thought-provoking attitude in the audiences so that the edutainment function of media can be properly carried out.

Mass media is an 'informal open university' which, in addition to the profit-making goal, has to necessarily shoulder the responsibility of educating the masses through entertainment, agenda-setting and showing the right path at times of crisis.

Reach and Access

These two terms are very important constituents of the Mass Communication process and a clear appreciation of them will help one understand the process in a better manner.

Now, 'Reach' in Mass Communication terms means whether a particular mass medium is available to the masses at a certain place or not. For example, I stay at Namrup, a town in Dibrugarh district of upper Assam. Reach in this context will mean whether various Cable / satellite TV / Radio channels or newspapers and journals actually are available there or not. If they are available that means the place has Reach to those media. And if I possess the means for availing them I should be able to watch or read them without any hitch at all.

Again, let us say that the signals (messages / programmes) of All India Radio (AIR) Dibrugarh are not available in Guwahati and the same for AIR Guwahati in Dibrugarh. This means that AIR Guwahati does not have Reach for Dibrugarh and vice versa.

On the other hand, Access means whether a person has the necessary means to avail the services of mass media vehicles like TV channels, newspapers if they are available at that place. For example, if I do not possess a TV / Radio receiver set or cannot afford to buy a newspaper or a journal that means despite having Reach of those media I personally do not have Access to them.

Many a time you will also come across the term Target Audience which means nothing but the segment of audiences who are specifically targeted by a company for selling something. For a company selling any product, there are more chances of being successful if it can identify and pinpoint the audiences in an exact manner so that all efforts in advertising can be directed at them.

Further, the different types of products from the same group of companies will have different target audiences as the products are quite dissimilar to each other even though they are produced by the same company or group of companies.

Audiences, in other words, are the customers of those products. As 'customer is god' in the business world, companies try their level best to make themselves as much popular as possible. Because more popularity or circulation translates into more people receiving the advertising messages and this is expected to boost sales of that product.

Audience as 'consumers'

This is a new concept gaining ground over the last few decades which considers mass media instruments like TV / Radio / Newspaper contents as brands and audiences as the consumers of these services. So, packaging has become important due to the intense competition for attracting more and more audiences.

Today, as mass media organizations are driven by the urge to make maximum profits they seem to be governed by extremely market-friendly programmes and consider the audiences as mere 'consumers' of media contents. And just as there is immense cut-throat competition among various products or services for gaining customers' attention, the same is the case with media contents also.

Quite often advertisers make a choice between mass advertising and targeted advertising. Now, an advertisement in a local general commodity shop or a departmental store is aimed at the overall customer base of the area and so it is called mass advertising. On the other hand, a high profile motor vehicle or a luxury jewellery product range would aim only at a specific customer base identifying the places which such potential customers normally visit.

Q.5. How do mass media set the agenda for people?

_____

_____

_____



ACTIVITY 6.1

1. Read two daily newspapers - one in English and another in your mother tongue - regularly everyday for 30 days at a stretch. Now classify the main news items and other features into different functions of mass communication described above. Which function has the most number of entries?
2. Carry out the same exercise for two TV channels or radio channels. Try to take Doordarshan and a cable TV channel for the purpose.
3. Now, out of the findings in both the exercises, make a comparative study of the volume of functions performed by the electronic media and the print media.



6.7 LET US SUM UP

- The media which act as the carriers of the mass communication messages to the people are known as the mass media.
- Mass media can be classified into several categories:

  Print Media - Newspapers, journals / magazines / books

  Electronic Media / Audio-Visual Media - Television / Radio / Films

  New Media - Internet, Internet Radio, Blogs
- Every mass media has its unique aspects which also determine what kind of audiences or readership it will attract.
- Audiences are the consumers of different programmes or news items of mass media.
- More audience means more popularity of that specific media organization or a specific product which in the end means more revenue from advertisers.

- Control of the mass media is in the hands of the audiences / readers. They may switch it off if they don't like the programme or decide not to read a particular newspaper / news item. So, every mass media organization tries its best to attract the maximum number of people to itself by all possible means.
- Reach in Mass Communication terms means whether a particular mass medium is available to the masses at a certain place or not.
- Access means whether a person has the necessary means to avail the services of mass media vehicles like TV channels, newspapers etc. if they are available at that place.
- Media is a highly potent and effective weapon for creating public opinion on any important issue of the society.
- It is the duty of media to prepare agenda of issues to be taken up and deliberated by the people in the society, especially at times of crises.



6.8 FURTHER READING

1. Aggarwal, Vir Bala, V.S Gupta (2002). Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication. New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company
2. Adler, Ronald B. , Rodman ,George R. (2000) Understanding Human Communication. Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
3. Kumar, Keval J. (2006) Mass Communication in India. Mumbai : Jaico Publishing House
4. Narula, Uma (2001) Mass Communication : Theory and Practice. New Delhi : Har-Anand publications Pvt. Ltd.
5. Vilanilam, J.V (2005) Mass Communication in India . New Delhi : Sage Publications



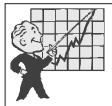
6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1:

Media of mass communication or mass media are the vehicles or carriers of the messages of mass communication as it carries the messages to people from the main communicator. While mass

f. Hypermedia seduction theory

This theory assumes that computer and Internet audiences are linked to the narratives those people like to see and express, and that people will befriend and defriend/unfriend people in order to maintain access to those narratives to the exclusion of less seductive ones.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.2 : Why is hypodermic needle theory also known as magic bullet theory?

_____

_____

Q.3 : Who introduced the two-step flow of communication model ?

_____

_____

10 .5 AUDIENCE- REACH AND ACCESS

When we are talking about media, one term which we cannot avoid is 'audience'. Audience here means the total number of persons, who form the class of readership of a newspaper, listenership of a radio programme, viewership of audio-visual programmes etc.

Now, depending upon several factors, the size of audience of a particular mass media and its types may differ widely. Such as - Doordarshan India (DD) and All India Radio (AIR) have an almost exhaustive terrestrial network coverage of the whole country including even some areas of the neighbouring countries. So, the entire population of the country can be termed as the audience of these two organizations. Similarly, if a newspaper or a magazine is available in most of the places in a state or a country then also the whole population is normally termed as its audience.

As against this overall audience, in a specific Mass Communication vehicle or media also, particular programmes, columns, events, issues do have their own individual audiences; for example - in TV or radio or newspapers, different columns, different serials, different news bulletins, talk shows etc. may have their own fan following which can be called its individual audience.

leaders, who in turn are influenced by the mass media. Thus, according to this model, ideas flow from mass media to opinion leaders, and from them to a wider population. This theory was introduced by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet in the People's Choice, a 1944 study which focused on the process of decision making during a Presidential election campaign.

c. The uses and gratification model

This model states that the audience is active and uses the text for his/her own gratification or pleasure. Herein the power lies within the audience and not the producers of the messages/text. Thus , the audience is free to reject and use the media messages for their own good without bowing down to any pressure to accept the messages. Thus, this theory states that audiences are responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and needs to achieve gratification.

d. The reception theory

The cultural theorist , Stuart Hall has been one of the main proponents of the reception theory. This theory states that a "text" - be it a book, movie, or other creative work - is not simply passively accepted by the audience, but that the reader or the viewer interprets the meanings of the text based on her or his individual cultural background and life experiences. In essence, the meaning of a text is not inherent within the text itself, but is created within the relationship between the text and the reader.

e. Obstinate audience theory

This theory assumes that there is a transnational communication between the audience and the media. The audience actively selects what messages he or she needs to pay attention to. In fact, the theory suggests that the public select whom to listen they believe them to have more authority than other people. For instance, the audiences are more likely to believe a doctor than a celebrity discussing over some medical issue.

communication is the process of communicating with innumerable people, mass media implies the instruments through which those messages move around.

Ans to Q.No 2 :

The categories into which mass communication can be classified are - Print Media, Electronic Media and New Media.

Ans to Q.No 3 :

Comparison between radio and newspaper

Ans to Q.No 4:

The two main roles of mass media are - Creating Public Opinion and Agenda Setting.

Ans to Q.No 5 :

If you think deeply, you will observe that people normally learn or pick up a lot of things from mass media, whether knowingly or unknowingly at any moment of time. Besides, it is a well-known fact that media influences us to a very high extent. So, media sets the agenda for discussion among the people by taking up a certain issue. You may remember that some time back, mass media decided to focus on a few singers from the North-Eastern region in a national level singing contest. But at the same time, a question paper was leaked in the matriculation examination in Assam. But the latter incident never received the same kind of treatment like the singers managed to get. In other words, this means that media wanted the people to think or discuss more about the signing contest than the question paper leakage. Hence, we find that most of the time it is the media which decides what issues we should think about and what issues we need not think about. Even though many a time, media's agenda-setting decisions may not conform to our own decisions, yet we, go by it because this is what the majority ask for.

Thus, we can say that media sets the agenda by consciously promoting certain issues, events at the cost of others. This depends upon quite a few factors including the interests, principles and goals of the individual media organizations, the editorial people in authoritative positions in the media etc.



6.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very short Questions

Q.1 What are the different categories of mass media?

Q.2 : What do you mean by blog?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1 : How does media help in creating public opinion?

Q.2 Describe the agenda setting role of mass media.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1 What do you understand by the term mass media? What are its characteristics? How do they differ from mass communication?

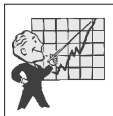
Q.2. What are the different types of mass media? Which one of them is the most suitable for communicating with the rural and underdeveloped areas of the country and why?

Q.3. How would you define audience? Why is it important in connection with mass communication?

Q.4. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of the different mass media vehicles. Which of these is your favourite and why?

* * * * *

The entire business of mass media is fully dependent upon the whims and choices of the mass audience base. So there is every effort on the part of the media to popularize its products and attract the maximum number of people to their channel or programme at all costs. This endeavour many a time leads to an unhealthy practice of 'doing anything' to attract more audience and influence the numbers at the rating system of the channels and programmes.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1 : What do you mean by mass audience?

_____

_____

10.4 MEDIA THEORIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONCEPT OF AUDIENCE

Over the years , a number of media theories have come up explaining the different facets of media and its association with the audience. The association between media and audience is a long accepted fact and that has been proved and again by the formulation of the following media theories which have been highlighted below-

a. The hypodermic needle theory :

The hypodermic needle theory also commonly known as the magic bullet theory states that people usually accept messages that are aimed at them. Based on the concept developed by Hitler's Publicity Minister Goebbles during the Second World War, the theory states that masses are passive receivers . In fact, this theory suggests that the media injects its messages straight into the passive audience who are immediately affected by the messages. However, with increase in mass consciousness among the people, they have somewhat shed the passive receivers and are inching closer towards active receivers.

b. Two-step flow theory :

The two-step flow of communication model or Multistep Flow Model states that people form their opinions under the influence of opinion

- It must be heterogeneous. The members of the audience are a heterogeneous group scattered over a long distance.
- There can be no discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, educational qualification, age etc. Anybody who possesses the means of accessing any mass media anywhere in the world is a member of the mass audience.
- Mass audience are goal-oriented. In fact, they do not simply accept each and every media message. They question what they see and develop their own interpretation of a media product based on their life experiences, education, family and cultural influences.

Hence , mass audience in the words of McQuail is , "an aggregate of individuals united by a common focus of interest ,engaging in an identical form of behaviour and open to activation towards common ends ; yet the individuals involved are unknown to each other, have only a restricted amount of interaction, do not orient their actions to each other and are only loosely organised or lacking in organisation. The composition of the audience is continually shifting ; it has no leadership or feelings of identity".

It is easy to explain these characteristics of mass audience. As they are spread over the vast space across the world there is hardly any possibility of contact among them at all. Besides, anybody may have access to any mass media instrument and therefore there can be hardly any homogenity among the mass audience.

There is also going to be some kind of overlapping of mass media exposure and access among the audience. This means that the same person watching TV may also listen to a radio programme or read a newspaper or magazine or a book and yet watch a film. Again, someone may not at all prefer a specific media - for example a member of the audience may not like to use Radio or TV at all and enjoys reading the print media and vice versa. However, in a majority of the cases we find that usually most of the audience members do have a varied mass media choice rather than concentrating on any specific one.

UNIT - 7: NORMATIVE THEORIES OF MASS MEDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives
7.2 Introduction
7.3 Importance of Communication Theories
7.4 Normative Theories of Mass Media
7.5 Let us Sum up
7.6 Further Reading
7.7 Answers to Check Your Progress
7.8 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- describe the theories of mass communication and their significance for the society
- explain the various meanings and implications of these theories
- examine their elements for facilitating a better understanding of the media's impact on the society and vice versa

7.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units we have learnt about the concept of mass communication, mass media and various communication models. In this unit we will learn about some theories of mass communication.

Theories of mass communication make efforts at understanding the relationship between mass media and the masses, and how they affect and influence each other. It also tries to ascertain how this relationship can be improved if needed in future. So, a fair understanding of these theories is very important for mass communication.

We hope that after going through the various theories discussed in this unit, you will be able to understand the effects of the media on the society much better. But before going into the details of different theories, let us first understand the importance of theories of mass communication.

7.3 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Communication experts and academic scholars have always been highly interested in studying the relationship between mass media and society because communication is an all-encompassing activity that affects almost every walk of our life. In fact, they all wanted to find out the effects of mass communication within society. This had resulted in a number of theories which essentially trace the relationship between mass communication and society. Any attempt to explain or represent a phenomenon is known as a theory. The term communication theory usually refers to the body of theories in order to understand the communication process. These theories are based on the study of signs, symbols, their meaning and their relationship to the objects or concepts to which they belong. A careful analysis of these theories will bring to light the impact media exerts on the way people communicate or for that matter to understand how an individual reacts in a given situation.

Mass media is an integral part of any society. It is also an ideal mirror of the society. If anyone likes to know about a society or a nation a detailed study of its mass media would be sufficient enough to afford a clear idea about that society. Socio-economic and political developments in any society or nation definitely exerts great influence on the mass media systems prevailing there. Further, depending upon various factors including racial composition, standard of literacy, socio-economic development, and political system etc., mass media system of every society shows some unique characteristics.

In simple terms, media systems are nothing but the general media policies of any nation. You must have already known that mass media has been accorded the status of the fourth pillar of democracy. It is also very powerful as millions of people read or watch it. So, it is important to study media systems in order to understand their influence over the society to which they belong.

Mass communication is directly related to social phenomena. How a person or media interacts with society depends on how much the concerned person knows about the society. Thus, mass communication theories are the explanations and predictions of social phenomena that make an effort

10.3 CONCEPT OF MASS AUDIENCE

A proper definition of mass audience depends on one's perspective of the role of communication in society. For example, if we look upon communication as a commodity or as merchandise and media as tools for selling that commodity, a 'media audience' would mean no more than a potential market for products and services. On the other hand, if we consider communication to be a social good and a public service, 'media audience' can be termed to be a participative community with the media serving the educational and cultural needs of the society. Most of the sociologists define audience as a 'conventionalized crowd' which have assembled together for some purpose. A media audience is more than a 'conventionalized crowd' and usually refers to an aggregate of persons who are readers, listeners and viewers of different forms of media. However, it is not necessary that a group of persons has to come under one common roof in order to listen, read or watch the different media texts or absorb the sights and sounds of media landscape. In fact, they can attend to the different components of any medium at their own pace and convenience. Digital technology has made a significant contribution in this regard whereby people can read online versions of newspapers, magazines or even watch pre-recorded television programmes over various social networking sites.

Audiences interpret the various media messages in their own way by accepting or rejecting the open and the latent layers of meanings. Generally audiences do not interact with media messages as a 'mass audience' but rather as a family, a cultural group, a social class, a caste or tribal group.

10.3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF MASS AUDIENCE :

The following characteristics of mass audience will enable you to understand the concept of mass audience in the context of mass communication-

- It may be spread anywhere across the world, the country or the state. In other words it is never confined to a specific space unless a very special programme is broadcast or an item published with a special audience in mind.

UNIT -10 : MASS AUDIENCE AND SOCIETY

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning objectives
10.2 Introduction
10.3 Concept of mass audience
10.3.1 Characteristics of mass audience
10.4 Media theories associated with the concept of audience
10.5 Audience - reach and access
10.6 Reciprocal relationship among media, audience and society
10.7 Let us Sum up
10.8 Further Reading
10.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
10.10 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to-

- understand the concept of mass audience
- explain the characteristics of mass audience
- analyse how communication caters to these diverse groups of audiences
- describe the concept of audience reach and access
- understand the relationship among media, audience and society

10.2 INTRODUCTION

So far you have been introduced to the different aspects of communication and mass communication. You have also been given an overview of the different models of communication along with the different theories of mass media. These models and theories will help you to understand how the entire process of communication takes place. In this unit, you will be given a brief overview of the concept of audience and mass audience , theories associated with the concept of audience as well as the relationship between mass audience and society. Audience plays an important role in the communication process specially in group and public communication.

to relate mass communication to various facts of our cultural and social milieu. Communication scholars the world over have categorised different theories into different categories based on their distinctive characteristics like normative theories, sociological theories, media effect theories and so on. In this unit , we shall limit our discussion to the normative theories while in the next two units, we shall discuss in detail about sociological and media effect theories.

7.4 NORMATIVE THEORIES OF MASS MEDIA

The Normative Theories of Mass Media explain how the media should operate under the prevailing political and economic circumstances. Every society controls its mass media in accordance with its existing political system, its policies and norms. According to the normative theories, the political system determines the exact relationship between the media and the government. Initially four normative theories were mentioned by Siebert and his colleagues in 1956. These theories were later found to be outdated and too simplistic to be used in present day media research. Later on Dennis McQuail added two more theories to the original set of four. They have been found to be more useful and they contain principles for current media policy and practice. Let us now study all the six theories.

7.4.1 Authoritarian Theory

Authoritarian theory says that the media is subordinate to the state or the ruling authority and thus it is not free to function in an independent and impartial manner. As it is just an extension of the state. Mass media in these nations do not have independence at all and have to abide by the directions of their Government.

There are various types of censorship provisions for the media in these nations which normally forbid adverse criticism of the authorities and non compliance of the official codes. Else, such activities are punishable in different forms.

Autocratic and dictatorial nations are good examples for having this type of media system. However, it must also be noted that even in the democratic nations of the world, freedom of media may be curtailed

or cut down in case of declaration of national-level emergency which is only a temporary measure.

In Autocratic system, as long as the media support the ruling Government it is fine. But the moment they start criticizing the Government sharply, trouble will definitely follow them.

In many countries not anyone and everyone is allowed to run mass media organizations even though they might be otherwise qualified and efficient to do so.

This theory basically says that -

- Media is a subordinate entity of the state and therefore must not do anything which may have the potential for undermining the position of the ruling authority.
- Media should avoid such references and news items which may generate dissatisfaction to the dominant political parties, ethnic groups, societies etc.
- Unsolicited offences to majority of the people, or the society as a whole must be avoided and existing moral and social values should be closely adhered to and not to be offended.
- Mass media is not for mass education or instruction. It should always strive for providing only entertainment for the masses. This is to prevent any intellectual development among the people due to the dissemination of information and messages by the media.
- Normally only a few organizations are allowed to set up media establishments so that mass consumption of information can be prevented for the safety of the ruling authorities who would not like to encourage revolt or protests from an informed public against the authorities.
- Judging from these aspects, it is quite natural that the media persons and journalists never enjoy any freedom in their expression in the true sense of the term as they can't write or broadcast whatever they would like to.

Q.3 :When do the selective exposure occur under Individual Differences Theory?

Q.4 Which theory says that mass media audiences are passive receivers? Why?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1 : What do you mean by personal influence theory?

Q.2 : What is the role played by opinion leaders in the two step flow theory?

Q.3 Which theory says that people seek out messages which are in tune with their existing opinions? Why?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1 : Among the different media effects theories, which theory is applicable in the present day context and why? Justify your answer with the help of examples.

Q.2 : "An individual's needs, attitudes, values, prior beliefs and other cognitive and emotional states play an important part in screening and selecting media exposure and interpretation"- Explain it in the context of Individual Differences Theory.

* * * * *

Ans to Q No 4 :

Paul Lazarsfeld , Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet introduced the two-step flow theory in 'The People's Choice', a 1944 study that focused on the process of decision-making during a Presidential election campaign.

Ans to Q.No 5:

The multi-step flow theory also states that opinion leaders are affected more by "elite media" than run-of-the-mill, mass media . Opinion leaders intervene between the "media's direct message and the audience's reaction to that message." Opinion leaders tend to have the great effect on those they are most similar to-based on personality, interests, demographics, or socio-economic factors. These leaders tend to influence others to change their attitudes and behaviours more quickly than conventional media because the audience is able to better identify or relate to an opinion leader than an article in a newspaper or a news program.

Ans to Q.No 6 :

The individual differences theory states that each of us have different tastes and preferences as far as the selection of media messages are concerned. In fact, people react to media content depending on the motivational level, their position to accept or reject a given message, intelligence, beliefs, opinions, values, needs etc.

Ans to Q.No 7 :

Selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention.

Ans to Q.No 8 :

The Cognitive Dissonance Theory was propounded by L.A. Festinger in the year 1957.



9.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 : Who introduced the multistep flow theory?

Q.2 What is the basic difference between two step flow and multi step flow theory?

- Everything is fine till the ruling authorities are satisfied and are kept in good humour by the mass media's functions. But trouble begins once media start behaving in independent manner that may go against the interests of the ruling class or its allies both inside and outside.

7.4.2 Libertarian Theory

Also known as the Free Press theory, this theory advocates that media is absolutely free to perform its duties and responsibilities in any manner deemed suitable and adequate. It is based upon the belief that 'any amount of freedom to an organization or person is also attached with a string of responsibilities in return'. So, to enjoy the given freedom fully, the organization must also mind its own responsibilities corresponding with the freedom granted to it.

This system or the concept which had its origin in Europe, especially Great Britain among the pioneers of the advocacy of freedom of expression and personal freedom, exists mainly in the democratic countries where media is relatively free from any control of the state authorities and can carry out its duties in a responsible way.

For example - the US Constitution very clearly prevents the Congress (the country's Legislature) from making any law at all which might restrict the freedom of expression of the people.

In India, our Constitution provides elaborate freedom of expression in the Articles 19 to 24 which allow sufficient amount of freedom to mass media.

At a global level the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is an ideal example of how mass media can maintain autonomy and exercise its freedom of expression even though it is funded mainly by the British Government.

On many occasions, when the situation demanded, BBC has maintained high standards by not showing a favourable and partial view of the British government's activities in a crisis or issue.

This theory basically says that -

- The media should be independent of Government control.
- The media should be free to publish anything based on its own judgement.
- Writing against the Government or any political party should not be punishable.
- The media should not face any compulsion to publish anything.
- There should be no restriction of any kind on gathering of information for publication.
- There should be no requirement of license or permit for publication and distribution of news.

7.4.3 Social Responsibility Theory

According to this theory, as media is engaged in a highly serious activity of disseminating news and views to the society with far-reaching consequences, it must maintain a high standard of impartiality as well as professionalism in its functioning.

The professional communicators including journalists should never compromise on the question of truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance. They must also develop a strict sense of self-regulatory system to ward off any bias or vested interests towards any party or individual.

In simple terms, the media community must play the role of self-censorship and self-restraint based on personal and social concerns for avoiding news items and programmes which might be harmful for the overall well-being of the society. For example, news items having the potential for causing damage to the society directly or indirectly should either be avoided or be published in a way that would not cause any such damage.

According to Theodore Peterson, a co-author of the Four Normative Theories of the Press, "freedom carries concomitant obligations, and the press which enjoys a privileged position under our Government

- Cognitive Dissonance is a psychological state that describes the uncomfortable feeling a person experiences when he begins to understand that something he believes to be true is, in fact, not true. It is the perception of incompatibility between two cognitions.



9.8 FURTHER READING

1. Aggarwal, Vir Bala, V.S Gupta (2002) Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication. New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company
2. Kumar, Keval J. (2006) Mass Communication in India. Mumbai : Jaico Publishing House



9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1:

Bullet theory is that type of media effects theory which states that mass media has a direct, immediate and powerful effect on audiences. It assumes that receivers are passive and defenceless and take whatever is shot at them.

Ans to Q.No 2 :

The bullet theory is not applicable in the present day context because it is not based on empirical results from research but rather on assumptions of the time about human nature. People were assumed to be consistently managed by 'instincts' and those they give reaction uniformly to whatever 'stimuli' came along. However, nowadays, people have become aware of what goes around in the surroundings. They can distinguish between what is right and wrong and as such they are not greatly influenced by the media. Moreover, the influence of media on individuals depend on many factors like individual psychological differences, membership in social categories and patterns of social relationship that serves alternative channels of communication.

Ans to Q.No 3 :

Opinion leaders are those who can influence others in matters of decisions and opinion formation.

Q.7 What are the different selectivity processes as used by media audiences?

_____

_____

Q.8 Who propounded the Cognitive Dissonance Theory and in which year?

_____

_____



9.7 LET US SUM UP

- Magic bullet theory portrays that the media has direct, immediate and powerful effects on those who pay attention to their content.
- Harold Lasswell pioneered the work of Propaganda Technique during the World War (1927).
- Personal influence theory was the outcome of a classic study of the 1940 presidential elections in the United States which was conducted by Paul Lazarsfeld , Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet.
- Paul Lazarsfeld , Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet introduced the two-step flow theory in The People's Choice, a 1944 study that focused on the process of decision-making during a Presidential election campaign. According to this theory, communication flows in two directions- horizontal and vertical. Horizontally opinion leaders are cultivated and the information is passed from the various mass media to certain opinion leaders and vertically the message is passed on from these opinion leaders to the other people within the population.
- This theory was first introduced by sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld in 1944 and elaborated by Elihu Katz and Lazarsfeld in 1955. The multi-step flow theory also states opinion leaders are affected more by "elite media" than run-of-the-mill, mass media .
- The individual differences theory states that each of us have different tastes and preferences as far as the selection of media messages are concerned.

(the US Government), is obliged to be responsible to the society for carrying out certain essential functions of Mass Communication in contemporary society."

On the other hand, critics of the theory feel that 'social responsibility' as a method of self-censorship may deprive the readers or audiences of information which may be potentially beneficial in future.

This theory has its origin in the findings of the Commission on the Freedom of the Press (Hutchins, 1947) of the USA. The Commission found that the media in the free market economy had in reality failed to live up to the expectations of the information and entertainment needs of the society. And so there was a need for looking for an improvement in the situation by the media itself. Or, the Commission felt that the solution to this problem had to come from the media persons themselves and nothing should be imposed on them from outside bodies.

It has led to the setting up of self-regulatory bodies and mechanisms amongst the media community in various forms, such as - drawing up of statutes for protecting editorial and journalistic practices, preparing a universal code of ethics, ensuring implementation of anti-monopoly legislation, regulation of advertising etc.

For example, if you had the opportunity to notice the coverage of the New York Twin Tower blasts in 2001, you would find that there was hardly any photograph of the dead bodies or injured persons in the media. This was a conscious decision of their media not to cause any further panic among the people. This is self-censorship or self-regulation.

In contrast, what do we see in our media? Photographs of violent scenes in newspapers or news channels often greet us in the morning. Such visuals affect us not only with their unpleasantness but may also disturb peace in general.

When the media publishes or airs the news items, photographs, views etc. highlighting the sabotage or other activities of secessionist organizations, terrorists, vandals or anti social elements, it gives a boost to their image and morale. Many people come to know about

their functioning and activities and many of them may be influenced. Hence, the media has to follow a judicious balance between the types of coverage to be highlighted and those not to be focused.

This theory basically says that --

- The media should assume some social obligations and responsibilities like setting high professional standards.
- Truth, accuracy, objectivity, authenticity, balance and restraint should be the cornerstones of the media profession.
- The media should exercise self regulation in keeping with the country's laws and social norms.
- All media professionals should be accountable to their society and their organization.

7.4.4 Soviet Communist Theory

The Soviet Communist theory is closely tied to the communist ideology. Siebert traces the roots of this theory back to the 1917 Russian Revolution. The media organizations in this system were not intended to be privately owned and were to serve the interests of the working class.

Mass Communication, according to the Soviet Communist theory, is an instrument of the State. The media do not have an identity of their own. An illustration of the Soviet system would appear to be the same as the authoritarian model, in that both theories acknowledge the Government as superior to the media institutions:

However, there is a major difference between the two theories that needs to be clarified: The mass media in the Soviet model are expected to be self-regulatory with regard to the content of their messages. Also, the Soviet theory differs from the authoritarian theory in that the media organizations have a certain responsibility to meet the wishes of their audience. Still, the underlying standard is to provide a complete and objective view of the world according to Marxist-Leninist principles.

Today, the name of this theory is only of historical interest. Beginning in the mid-eighties and continuing after the fall of the Soviet Union,

Selective Retention : Selective retention states that individuals would retain only those messages which support their beliefs and attitudes. The messages which are not consistent with their views are not retained by individuals. For example, if a politician is making a speech, we might retain only those portions of the speech with which we agree. If we perceive the speech as unfavourable we may wipe it entirely from our mind. Thus, factors influencing selective retention include the importance of the message for later utility, the extent to which the message coincided with predispositions, the intensity of the message and the means by which it was transmitted.

9.6 COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

This theory was propounded by L.A. Festinger in the year 1957. According to this theory people will seek information which would match existing attitudes and views of the world and they reject information that does not conform to existing views. We tend to filter the information that conflicts with what we already believe, in an effort to ignore that information and reinforce our existing beliefs.

Cognitive Dissonance is a psychological state that describes the uncomfortable feeling a person experiences when he begins to understand that something he believes to be true is, in fact, not true. It is the perception of incompatibility between two cognitions. By cognition, we mean any element of knowledge, including attitude, emotion, belief, or behaviour.

The theory states that contradicting cognitions serves as a driving force that compels the mind to acquire or invent new thoughts or beliefs, or to modify existing beliefs, so as to reduce the amount of dissonance (conflict) between cognitions, thus finding comfort.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.6 : What does the individual difference theory state?

_____

_____

9.5 INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES THEORY

The individual differences theory states that each of us have different tastes and preferences as far as the selection of media messages are concerned. In fact, people react to media content depending on the motivational level, their position to accept or reject a given message, intelligence, beliefs, opinions, values, needs etc. Melvin DeFluer and Sandra Ball-Rokeach in their book 'Theories of Mass Communication' have stated that ,' Individual differences perspective implies that media messages contain particular stimulus attributes that have differential interaction with personality characteristics of audience members. Since there are individual differences in personality characteristics among such members, it is natural to assume that there will be variations in effect which correspond to these individual differences'. In fact, this theory states that though some messages are delivered by the medium of media to the masses, each individual receives and interprets the media messages differently.

Thus, an individual's needs, attitudes, values, prior beliefs and other cognitive and emotional states play an important part in screening and selecting media exposure and interpretation. This means that each member of the audience are very selective in nature and that the patterns of understanding and interpretation differ from one person to another. Media audiences are heterogeneous in nature and follow the selectivity process i.e. selective exposure, perception and retention.

Selective Exposure : This occurs when people tend to expose themselves to various messages or stimuli that are in accordance with their existing opinions and interests and avoid communication which cause dissonance to their beliefs. The theory of selective exposure states that people will select those media which support their beliefs and appeal to their interests.

Selective Perception : After the individuals have selectively exposed themselves to the messages in accordance with their preferences, they read only those messages which are in accordance with their existing attitudes. Thus they may ignore or misinterpret those messages or parts of a message which do not conform to their beliefs and expectations.

Russia has performed a mass media model closer to the social responsibility principle. The clearest current example of the Soviet media theory is how the media function in China, where TV, Radio, and Newspapers are controlled by the communist Government.

This theory basically says that -

- Media should not be privately owned and should be owned by and be of service to the working class.
- Media should carry out certain responsibilities like education, information, motivation and mobilization.
- The media can be punished by the society for anti-societal publications
- Media should be completely dedicated to the society, fulfilling the wishes and needs of the society and providing a complete and objective view of the society.

7.4.5 Development Media Theory

The Development Media theory says that mass media can be utilized for developing the nation or the society to a great extent. This is because media can help us in extending the information needs of the masses widely to make them wiser in the different activities of life.

In developing nations like ours, one of the most important deficiencies is the lack of 'useful information' for the masses. If a person can gain information, he or she can improve the living standard by applying the information in a wise manner. Now, the media has to play this crucial role of bringing the information to the doorsteps of the people.

In the Third World nations which became free from the colonial powers, a very challenging task immediately after becoming free was to make the masses aware of a modern way of life. This was necessary as the major portion of the population did not enjoy the benefits of a formal educational system and then even today it is still a cause of concern.

Mass media had to take up this responsibility of acting as an 'informal university' for enlightening the masses about all these issues. In other

words, mass media is expected to play the role of a disseminator of Government's developmental policies to a big extent.

This can be considered as a 'media activism' by which media takes up the good causes on behalf of the Government or society for delivering the benefits to the masses for whom they are actually meant.

This theory basically says that -

- The media should take up the responsibility of positive development activities in keeping with the established policies.
- The media should uphold national language and culture.
- Media freedom should be restricted to an extent in view of the economic and development priorities of the society and the Government can intervene in media operations in the interest of the country's development.
- Media has freedom, but that has to be used with a sense of responsibility.

7.4.6 Democratic Participant Media Theory

This theory advocates that the needs and aspirations of the masses should be the only concern of the media rather than the interests of their owners.

It mainly means that media should do its best for allowing more people from its readership to participate in its functioning. This will ensure that the issues and interests of the masses are adequately reflected in the media.

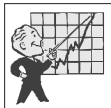
You may be familiar with a term called 'democratic decentralization' which means more representation of the people or the masses in a specific work, rather than allowing only a few persons to take a decision. This theory is also based on such a consideration - to allow more and more people to have a say in the decisions made by the authorities.

The concept of Participatory Mass Communication has become important over the years. For example - our country has a population of about 105 crore today and about 200 million copies of 62,000

Leaders. Information receivers are those among the masses who neither influence nor are influenced by others). In Step 2, both information and influence are transmitted from the Opinion Leaders to the Opinion Receivers/Seekers. Step 3 completes the two-way exchange and illustrates the transfer of information and influence from Opinion Receivers to Opinion Leaders. The exact number of steps in the process depends upon the-

- intentions of the source
- availability of mass media
- the extent of audience exposure to agencies of communication
- the nature of the message, and
- the importance of the message to the audience

Former American Vice President, Al Gore also utilized the multi-step flow theory to gain support for his nonprofit, The Climate Project. Gore recruited individuals who were educated on environmental issues and had the ability to be influential in their community and amongst their friends and family. He then trained his opinion leaders on the information he wanted them to disseminate. This ultimately enabled them to educate many Americans about The Climate Project and Gore's overall ideas about climate change.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3 : Who are known as the opinion leaders?

_____

_____

Q.4 :Who introduced the two step flow theory?

_____

_____

Q.5 : What does the multi step flow theory signify?

_____

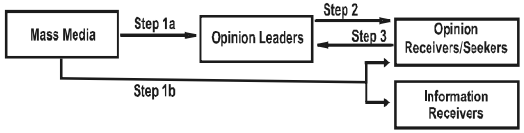
_____

information. It is also not wise to tell that opinion leaders are the only source of information for a consumer. The mass media influences both the opinion leaders as well as the consumers.

9.4.2 MULTI -STEP FLOW THEORY

This theory was first introduced by sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld in 1944 and elaborated by Elihu Katz and Lazarsfeld in 1955. The multi-step flow theory also states that opinion leaders are affected more by "elite media" than run-of-the-mill, mass media . Opinion leaders intervene between the "media's direct message and the audience's reaction to that message." Opinion leaders tend to have the great effect on those they are most similar to-based on personality, interests, demographics, or socio-economic factors. These leaders tend to influence others to change their attitudes and behaviours more quickly than conventional media because the audience is able to better identify or relate to an opinion leader than an article in a newspaper or a news program.

The Multi-step Flow Model is more integrated and comprehensive in nature. The Model illustrates the flow of communication as multi-stepped in nature; it depicts the transmission of information from the mass media as a multistep flow. The theory proposes that information and influence are a two-way process, wherein Opinion Leaders can both influence and are influenced by Opinion Receivers.



Source: Schifman, L.G. and Kanuk, L.L., Consumer Behavior, 9th Edition, Pearson, Prentice Hall.

The Figure given above illustrates the Multistep Flow of Communication Theory. In Step 1a and 1b information through/from mass media flows simultaneously to the Opinion Leaders, Opinion Receivers/Seekers, and Information Receivers. Opinion Seekers are those who solicit information and advice (i.e. they initiate the process) from Opinion

newspapers and journals are published in a year. Now, if a newspaper, a TV or a radio channel has to cater to the requirements of several lakhs of people or target audience, we can expect even a quarter of this population to be cared for properly by those channels and newspapers.

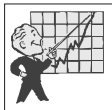
In India there are about 1,700 languages and dialects spread across the nation, each possessing a distinct identity of its own. That is why the Union Government has taken up the policy of promoting and encouraging small-scale mass media like TV or radio centres with a smaller area and target audience. By this, it is expected that more people out of the whole target audience can be catered to properly rather than just a handful of people in a very huge target audience.

The Community Radio that the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) has been encouraging in the recent years is an ideal example of a device for involving more people in the media.

The MIB has set up five CRs in the north-eastern region at - Williamnagar and Nongstoin (Garo and Khasi, Meghalaya), Mon and Tuensang (Both English, Nagaland), and Saiha (Mizo, Mizoram).

This theory basically says that -

- Media should be controlled by the audience and individual citizens and minority groups should have the right to communicate.
- Organisations and local communities should have their own media.
- Media should be small scale and participative and should cater to the individual needs of the communities.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1. How many normative theories are there? Name them.

_____

_____

_____

Q.2. Who propounded the normative theories?

_____

_____

_____

Q.3. Summarise in about 50 words each, what is advocated by the different normative theories.

_____

_____

_____

Q.4. Which media theory applies best to India?

_____

_____

_____



ACTIVITY 7.1

1. Find out at least two countries corresponding to each of the normative media theories.



7.6 LET US SUM UP

- In simple terms, media systems are nothing but the general media policies of any nation
- The Normative Theories of Mass Media explain how the media should operate under the prevailing political and economic circumstances.
- Authoritarian theory advocates that mass media is subordinate to the state with no independent identity of its own.
- The Libertarian theory is also known as the Free Press theory.
- The Libertarian theory says that mass media should be absolutely free in its functioning so as to allow a healthy atmosphere of debates and discussions among the people for evolving better things for the society.
- Social Responsibility theory believes that mass media, especially in a developing nation like ours should exercise a sufficient amount of duties

According to this theory, communication flows in two directions- horizontal and vertical. Horizontally opinion leaders are cultivated and the information is passed from the various mass media to certain opinion leaders and vertically the message is passed on from these opinion leaders to the other people within the population. The term 'personal influence' was invented to refer to the process of intervening between the media's direct message and the audience's ultimate reaction to that message. Opinion leaders are relatively powerful in getting people to change their attitudes and behaviour and they are quite similar in characteristics to those they influence. The two-step flow theory explains how mass media can manipulate decision making. The theory processed the ability to predict the influence of media messages on audience behaviour, and it helped explain why certain media campaigns may be unsuccessful to change target audience's attitudes and behaviour. The two-step flow theory caved in to the multi-step flow theory of mass communication or diffusion of innovation theory. This model presents the mass audience as being composed of interacting and responsive individuals rather than of the socially isolated, passive atoms of earlier mass society theories.

Thus, the theory lays emphasis on the role played by the Opinion Leaders in information transmission, advice and opinion. The theory rejects the belief that mass media can alone influence the masses. As a major contribution, the theory supports the premise that social interaction between people serves as major means for spread of information, development of attitudes (favourable and unfavourable), and acts of behaviour. As such, the opinion receiver is more likely to be influenced by the opinion leader than by the media.

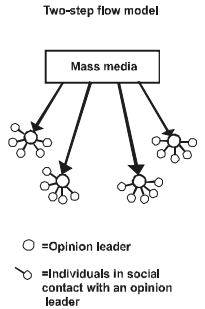
However, with passage of time, the Two-Step Theory came to be regarded as inadequate and inaccurate on account of the following reasons: Opinion leaders are not generic in nature. They are specific to a product category and vary from product to product. An expert in one product category would not be an expert for another product category. The theory also states that information flow is one-way from the opinion leader to opinion receivers (or the masses). In reality, however information does not flow one way; both parties exchange

the voting behaviour of the voters. Researchers suggested that within the group to which we belong, certain voters have a particularly strong influence. These people, known as opinion leaders (those who can influence others in matters of decisions and opinion formation) are said to be better informed and to be heavy users of the various forms of mass media. They tend to be influenced by mass media and this influence in turn is passed on to others in face-to-face communication. This revelation generated a two-step flow of communication which ultimately paved the way for the development of multi-step flow of communication that has been analysed in the next two sub sections .

9.4.1 TWO STEP FLOW THEORY

Paul Lazarsfeld , Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet introduced the two-step flow theory in The People's Choice, a 1944 study that focused on the process of decision-making during a Presidential election campaign. These researchers expected to find empirical support for the direct influence of media messages on voting intentions. They were surprised to discover, however, that informal, personal contacts were mentioned far more frequently than exposure to radio or newspaper as sources of influence on voting behaviour. Katz and Lazarsfeld developed the two-step flow theory of mass communication based on the data.

This theory can be understood with the help of the following diagram-



Source : Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955)

for executing the social responsibilities in different ways rather than leaving it to others for implementation.

- The Soviet Communist theory is closely tied to the communist ideology. Siebert traces the roots of this theory back to the 1917 Russian Revolution.
- Soviet Communist media theory believes that the media should serve the working class.
- Development Media theory says that media must inform the masses who are normally idle about the various developmental activities so that their life can be enriched and propelled towards a meaningful existence.
- Democratic Participant theory on the other hand advocates facilitating optimum possible participation of the masses in the whole activity of production, broadcasting and publication of mass media contents or programme software. This is expected to facilitate the reflection of local problems of various areas and the people of the country.
- Mass media plays a crucial role in creating, mobilizing as well as guiding public opinion whenever needed; to create awareness on any issue which needs to be tackled from time to time.



7.7 FURTHER READING

1. Aggarwal, Vir Bala, V.S Gupta (2002). Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication. New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company
2. Adler, Ronald B. , Rodman ,George R. (2000) Understanding Human Communication. Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
3. Kumar, Keval J. (2006) Mass Communication in India. Mumbai : Jaico Publishing House
4. Narula, Uma (2001) Mass Communication : Theory and Practice. New Delhi : Har-Anand publications Pvt. Ltd.
5. Vilanilam, J.V (2005) Mass Communication in India . New Delhi : Sage Publications

7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1 :

There are six normative theories. They are:

a. Authoritarian theory

b. Libertarian theory

c. Social Responsibility theory

d. Soviet Communist Media theory

e. Development Media theory

f. Democratic Participant Media theory

Ans to Q.No 2 :

The original set of four normative media theories was propounded by Siebert and his colleagues. Later on, Dennis McQuail added two more normative theories to make it six.

Ans to Q.No 3 :

Authoritarian theory: This normative theory advocates that mass media is subordinate to the state with no independent identity of its own. According to this, media is a machinery of the state and should be used for state propaganda.

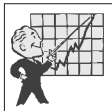
Libertarian theory: According to this theory, mass media should be absolutely free in its functioning so as to allow a healthy atmosphere of debates and discussions among the people for evolving better things for the society.

Social Responsibility theory: This is a theory which believes that mass media, especially in developing nations like ours, should exercise a sufficient amount of duties for executing the social responsibilities in different ways rather than leaving it to others for implementation.

Soviet Communist media theory: This theory believes that the media should not be privately owned and should serve the working class. Mass communication, according to the Soviet Communist theory, is an instrument of the state. The media do not have integrity of their own.

factors like individual psychological differences, membership in social categories and patterns of social relationship that serves alternative channels of communication.

New assessments that the Magic Bullet Theory was not accurate came out of election studies in "The People's Choice,"(Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944/1968). The project was conducted during the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940 to determine voting patterns and the relationship between the media and political behaviour. The majority of people remained untouched by the propaganda; interpersonal outlets brought more influence than the media. The effects of the campaign were not all-powerful to where they persuaded helpless audiences uniformly and directly, which is the very definition of what the magic bullet theory does. As focus group testing, questionnaires, and other methods of marketing effectiveness testing came into widespread use; and as more interactive forms of media (e.g., internet, radio call-in shows, etc.) became available, the magic bullet theory was replaced by a variety of other, more instrumental models, like the two step of flow theory and diffusion of innovations theory.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1 : What do you mean by bullet theory?

_____

_____

Q.2 : Is the bullet theory applicable in the present day context?

_____

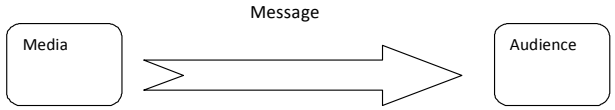
_____

9.4 PERSONAL INFLUENCE THEORY

This theory was the outcome of a classic study of the 1940 presidential elections in the United States which was conducted by Paul Lazarsfeld , Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. They were quite inquisitive about the general impact of mass media on the voting behaviour specially on those people who very often changed their voting intention during the course of the campaign. Their findings revealed that broad coverage of the campaign by the mass media simply reinforced the initial preferences of the voters. It was only the personal influence or interpersonal relationships that changed

to the receiver who were assumed to be passive in nature. Magic bullet theory portrays that the media have direct, immediate and powerful effects on those who pay attention to their content. We can infer two assumptions from such an approach- (a) people receive information directly from the mass media and not through an intermediary and (b) that reaction is individual and not based on how other people might influence them.

Let us look at a simplified diagram of the bullet theory-



As is evident from the figure given above, media transmit messages that are picked up by the audience who are said to be passive receivers and acted upon.

In the 1940s and 1950s it was observed that mass media had a powerful influence on behaviour changes. The fast popularization of radio and television, the emergence of the persuasion media industries along with advertising and propaganda, the impact of motion pictures and use of mass media during World War II to unify the German public behind the Nazi party, contributed to this "strong effects" theory of communication. Harold Lasswell pioneered the work of Propaganda Technique during the World War (1927). He gave his opinion that the people had been duped and degraded by propaganda during the war. Lasswell based his work on a stimulus-response model focusing on mass effects. This approach sighted human feedbacks to the media as uniform and immediate. E. D. Martin opined, "Propaganda offers ready-made opinions for the unthinking herd".

The "Magic Bullet" or "Hypodermic Needle Theory" sometimes is not widely accepted by scholars. Lowery & DeFleur said that it is thought that it was not based on empirical results from research but rather on assumptions of the time about human nature. People were assumed to be consistently managed by 'instincts' and those they give reaction uniformly to whatever 'stimuli' came along. The influence of media on individuals depend on many

Development Media theory: This theory says that media must inform the masses, who are normally idle, about the various developmental activities so that their life can be enriched and propelled towards a meaningful existence.

Democratic Participant Media theory: This theory advocates facilitating optimum possible participation of the masses in the whole activity of production, broadcasting and publication of mass media contents or programme software. This is expected to facilitate reflection of local problems of various areas and the people of the country.

Ans to Q.No 4 :

Development Media theory



7.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 : What do you mean by normative theories of mass media?

Q.2 : What is the difference between authoritarian and libertarian theory?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1 : What is the concept of Participatory Mass Communication? Write with suitable examples

Q.2 : What is the importance of communication theories?

Q.3 : Which theory says that mass media can be utilized for developing a nation? Why?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1 : What type of a media system is prevailing in India at present? Examine if any of the other theories or systems is relevant for our country's socio-political situation. If yes, why?

Q.2 : What do you understand by theories of mass Communication? Write a few lines about each one of them.

Q.3 : Explore the role of mass media in creating, mobilizing and guiding public opinion from time to time. Cite suitable examples in support of your answer.

* * * * *

UNIT-8 SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF MASS MEDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives
8.2 Introduction
8.3 Sociological theories of mass communication
8.3.1 Cultivation Theory
8.3.2 Social Learning Theory
8.3.3 Agenda Setting Theory
8.3.4 Play Theory
8.3.5 Uses and Gratification Theory
8.3.6 Dependency Theory
8.4 Let us Sum up
8.5 Further Reading
8.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
8.7 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- understand the meaning of sociological approach to communication theory
- explain the different sociological theories of mass communication

8.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you were introduced to the different normative theories of mass media like authoritarian theory and libertarian theory. Those theories helped you to understand how media operate under the prevailing set of political-economic circumstances. In this unit, you will be given a brief overview of the different sociological theories, like cultivation theory, social learning theory, uses and gratification theory etc.

UNIT - 9 : MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives
9.2 Introduction
9.3 Hypodermic Needle or Bullet Theory
9.4 Personal Influence Theory
9.4.1 Two step flow theory
9.4.2 Multi step flow theory
9.5 Individual Differences Theory
9.6 Cognitive Dissonance Theory
9.7 Let us Sum up
9.8 Further Reading
9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
9.10 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- describe the two-step flow theory
- understand the concept of multi-step flow theory
- analyse the bullet theory and examine its importance in the present context

9.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you have been introduced to the different sociological theories of mass communication like Cultivation Theory, Social Learning Theory, Agenda setting Theory, Play Theory, Uses and Gratification Theory and Dependency Theory. In this unit , we shall discuss some of the important media effects theories like Bullet Theory, Personal Influence Theory and Individual Differences Theory.

9.3 HYPODERMIC NEEDLE OR BULLET THEORY

Bullet theory which came into existence during World War II suggests that messages were thought to be like magic bullets that were shot directly

Ans to Q.No 5 :

Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur first proposed Dependency theory in 1976.

8.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 : What does the sociological approach to communication theory state? Explain with the help of a sociological theory.

Q.2 : Who proposed the agenda setting theory? What are the principles of this theory?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1 : Write a note on the 'Uses and Gratifications Theory'.

Q.2 : Are the different sociological theories relevant in the present day context? Why?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1 Explain the dependency theory with the help of a diagram.

Q.2 : In a country like India, which theory is most applicable and why?

* * * * *

8.3 SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF MASS COMMUNICATION

The sociological approach to communication theory is based on the assumption that there exists a definitive relationship between mass communication and social change.

8.3.1 CULTIVATION THEORY

Cultivation theory by George Gerbner (1967) stresses on the opinion that mass media has subtle effects on audience who absorb the message of media. With the help of constant exposure to media, people are able to cultivate some common conceptions on world. The theory views that the television does not portray the image and messages of reality of the society. Repeated presentation of these types by television, leads the society to distortion rather than development. For e.g. the usual projection of colourful, expensive cloth, jewellery and high cost cars and flats cannot be beneficial for the poor and unprivileged community. The various principles of this theory are discussed in brief:

- Media is a powerful weapon to cultivate common belief among the general mass.
- The television is not quite the real message sender in the society.
- The influential effect of mass media proceeds as moulders of society.
- Cultivation analysis concentrates on long term effects of exposure than the short term impact on approach and opinion.

But some critics study focuses on some points like cultivation appears to be dependent on the motivation for viewing. The casual television audience is more affected. Cultivation assumes to be enhanced when the viewer perceives the content of activity demonstrated as realistic. On the other hand, it has been noticed that in the indirect and distant contact between the topic and audience, cultivation is expected to be the best task.

8.3.2 SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Social learning theory or SLT explains that people learn new behaviour through overt reinforcement or punishment, or via observational learning of the social factors in their environment. If people observe positive, desired outcomes in the observed behaviour, then they are more likely to model, imitate, and adopt the behaviour themselves. Social learning theory is derived from the work of Cornell Montgomery (1843-1904) who proposed that social learning occurred through four main stages of limitation, such as close contact, imitation of superiors, understanding of concepts, and role model behaviour. It consists of three parts - observing, imitating, and reinforcements. Julian Rotter moved away from theories based on psychosis and behaviourism, and developed a learning theory. In Social Learning and Clinical Psychology (1954), Rotter suggests that the effect of behaviour has an impact on the motivation of people to engage in that specific behaviour. People wish to avoid negative consequences, while desiring positive results or effects. If one expects a positive outcome from a behaviour, or thinks there is a high probability of a positive outcome, then they will be more likely to engage in that behaviour. The behaviour is reinforced, with positive outcomes, leading a person to repeat the behaviour. This social learning theory suggests that behaviour is influenced by these environmental factors or stimulus, and not psychological factors alone. Social learning theory is a combination of behavioural and cognitive theories. Bandura (1971) suggests that both internal and external factors are equally important. The basic equation set forth is: Personal factors, such as beliefs, expectations, attitudes and knowledge (cognitive) plus environmental factors, such as resources, consequences of actions, physical setting (behavioural) plus behaviours, such as individual actions, choices, and verbal statements influence learning and motivation.

One of the more important concepts with social learning theory is observational learning. The power of observational learning is well documented in literature. No-trial learning is when a human being acquires new behaviour all at once, entirely through observation. In

- Dependency theory is essentially a body of social science theories predicated on the notion that resources flow from a "periphery" of poor and underdeveloped states to a "core" of wealthy states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former.
- Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur first proposed Dependency theory in 1976 which integrates several view points like the merging of psychology and social perspectives.



8.5 FURTHER READING

1. Aggarwal, Vir Bala, V.S Gupta (2002) Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication. New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company
2. Chaturvedi, B.K, Medhi, Dr. S.K (2008) Mass Communication, principles and practices. New Delhi : Global Vision Publishing House



8.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1 : George Gerbner

Ans to Q.No 2 : The main principles of the cultivation theory are-

- Media is a powerful weapon to cultivate common belief among the general mass.
- The television is not quite real message sender in the society.
- The influential effect of mass media proceeds as moulders of society.
- Cultivation analysis concentrates on long term effects of exposure than the short term impact on approach and opinion.

Ans to Q.No 3 :

Social learning theory or SLT explains that people learn new behaviour through overt reinforcement or punishment, or via observational learning of the social factors in their environment.

Ans to Q.No 4 :

Social learning theory is derived from the work of Cornell Montgomery (1843-1904) who proposed that social learning occurred through four main stages of limitation, such as close contact, imitation of superiors, understanding of concepts and role model behavior.



8.4 LET US SUM UP

- Cultivation theory by George Gerbner (1967) stresses on the opinion that mass media has subtle effects on audience who absorb the message of media.
- Social learning theory or SLT explains that people learn new behaviour through overt reinforcement or punishment, or via observational learning of the social factors in their environment. If people observe positive, desired outcomes in the observed behaviour, then they are more likely to model, imitate, and adopt the behaviour themselves.
- Social learning theory is derived from the work of Cornell Montgomery (1843-1904) who proposed that social learning occurred through four main stages of limitation, such as close contact, imitation of superiors, understanding of concepts, role model behaviour. It consists of three parts - observing, imitating, and reinforcements.
- The Agenda Setting Theory is proposed by Maxwell, Mc Combs and Donald L. Shaw (1972) in connection with the election campaign and other related and relevant issues.
- The Agenda Setting Theory focuses that news media always gives the direction of people's thinking by selection of reports about the world. 'What is what' is directed and presented by the media.
- Uses and Gratifications Theory was a popular approach in mass communication. This theory gives more importance to the consumer, or audience, instead of the actual message itself by asking "what people do with media" rather than "what media does to people" (Katz, 1959).
- The Uses & Gratification approach has been criticized as 'vulgar gratification'. It is individualistic and psycho logistic tending to ignore the socio-cultural context. As a theoretical stance it foregrounds individual psychological and personality factors and backgrounds sociological interpretations.

this type, one does not need to go through the process of trial and error learning with differential reinforcement for each small response. When this new behaviour is acquired through observation alone, the learning appears to be cognitive.

In today's society, media has a powerful influence on our lives. As children enter adolescence, print and electronic media help them define who they are and what they want to become. By the time children reach middle school, they have spent tens of thousands of hours watching television, movies, and videos; listening to the radio, CDs and cassettes; reading magazines, newspapers, and books; playing video and computer games and surfing the internet. Advertisers of alcohol use the power and influence of media to convey a positive message for their products. Alcohol advertisements glamorize drinking and play directly into the needs of teen-agers by promising fun, popularity, relaxation and escape.

Social learning theory has generated much research. Evidence shows that social learning theory and one's sense of self efficacy predicts such diverse outcomes as alcohol abuse, smoking cessation, pain tolerance, athletic performance, career choices, assertiveness, coping with feared events, recovery from medical procedures and sales performance.

8.3.3 AGENDA SETTING THEORY

The Agenda Setting Theory was proposed by Maxwell, Mc Combs and Donald L. Shaw (1972) in connection with the election campaign and other related and relevant issues. In order to understand the theory the meaning of the term should be known. Agenda means the list of the items based on their significance according to the demand of the plan. Setting means the arrangements itself. This theory focuses that news media always gives the direction of people's thinking by selection of reports about the world. 'What is what' is directed and presented by the media. The public is bound to think and believe that it is important. In this theory we can get the conception of gatekeeping also. Amongst the heaps of news only some are selected by media person. This

process is called gatekeeping which has already been discussed earlier. Many factors like ethics, background information, politics, economics, society, time limitation, different types of pressure and personal desire can affect the gatekeeping process.

The different types of principles of this theory are discussed below-

- There is a high increase in the use of mass communication during a presidential campaign.
- The influence of media program on individuals is most regularly depicted in mass communication in order to explain higher level of agreement between personal agendas and mass media agenda.

8.3.4 PLAY THEORY

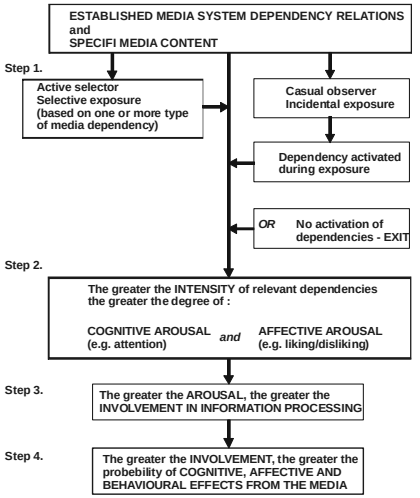
Some critics are of the opinion that media do not always have a positive effect on the audience and the society as a whole. They, in fact talk about the harmful effects of mass media. William Stephenson tries to counter those attacks by saying that the media serve audiences as play experiences. According to him, even newspapers are read for pleasure rather than for the purpose of gaining knowledge and information. Stephenson sees the media as a buffer against conditions which would otherwise be anxiety producing. For him, mass communication should serve two purposes- it should suggest how best to maximize the communication-pleasure in the world and should also show how far autonomy for the individual can be achieved in spite of the weight of social controls against him or her.

8.3.5 USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY

Uses and Gratifications Theory is a popular approach in mass communication. This theory gives more importance to the consumer, or audience, instead of the actual message itself by asking "what people do with media" rather than "what media does to people" (Katz, 1959). It presumes that audience are not passive but take an active role in the interpretation and amalgamating media into their own lives.

This model is the general idea of the dependency theory.

Source: Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur (1976)





CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1 : Who propounded the cultivation theory?

Q.2 : What are the principles of cultivation theory?

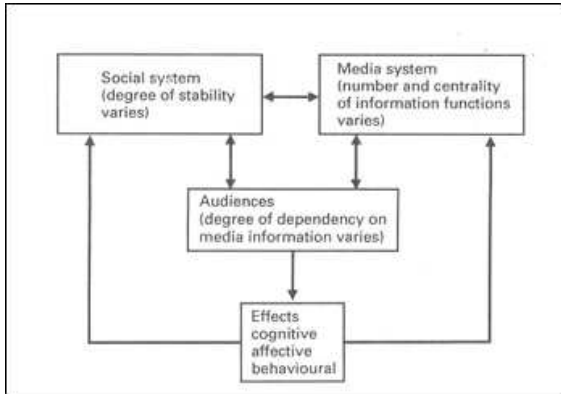
Q.3 : What does the social learning theory signify?

Q.4 : Social Learning Theory is derived from whose work?

Q.5 : Who proposed the Dependency Theory and in which year?

means such as investment, technology transfers, and closer integration into the world market. The dependency theory which came up around 1950s as a reaction to the earlier theories rejected it and argued that underdeveloped countries are not merely primitive versions of developed countries, but have unique features and structures of their own and importantly, are in the situation of being the weaker members in a world market economy, whereas the developed nations were never in an analogous position and they never had to exist in relation to a bloc of more powerful countries than themselves. In opposition to free market economists, the dependency theorists argued that the underdeveloped countries needed to reduce their connectedness with the world market so that they could pursue a path more in keeping with their own needs, less dictated by external pressures.

Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur first proposed Dependency theory in 1976 which integrates several view points like the merging of psychology and social perspectives. On the other hand, it puts together system perspectives with elements from more causal approaches. Thirdly, it blends components from the uses and gratifications research with those of media effects traditions and finally, philosophy is integrated into the theory, which also describes traditional method with the content of media messages and their effects on audience.



The theory also holds the audience responsible for choosing media to meet their needs. This approach opines that people use the media to fulfill specific gratifications or satisfactions. If so, this theory would imply that the media competes against other information sources for the viewer's gratification.

One influential tradition in media research is referred to as 'uses and gratifications' (occasionally 'needs and gratifications'). This approach focuses on why people use a particular media rather than on content. In contrast to the concern of the 'media effects' tradition with 'what media do to people' (which assumes a homogeneous mass audience and a 'hypodermic' view of media), Uses and Gratifications can be seen as part of a broader trend amongst media researchers which is more concerned with 'what people do with media', allowing for a variety of responses and interpretations.

Uses and Gratifications arose originally in the 1940s and underwent a revival in the 1970s and 1980s. Blumler & Katz mention that this approach emerged from a functionalist paradigm in the social sciences where the use of media is depicted in terms of the gratification of social or psychological needs of an individual. The mass media compete with other sources of gratification, but gratifications can be obtained from a medium's content (e.g. watching a specific programme), from familiarity with a genre within the medium (e.g. watching soap operas), from general exposure to the medium (e.g. watching television) and from the social context in which it is used (e.g. watching television with the family). Uses and Gratification theorists argue that people's needs influence how they use and respond to a medium. Zillmann (cited by McQuail 1987: 236) has shown the influence of mood on media choice: boredom encourages the choice of exciting content and stress encourages a choice of relaxing content. The same television programme may gratify different needs for different individuals. Different needs are associated with individual personalities, stages of maturation, backgrounds and social roles.

Dennis McQuail offers the following typology of common reasons for

using media :

Information : Audience need information from immediate surroundings, society and the world for taking decision, seeking advice or opinion etc.

Personal Identity : For personal identity they need reinforcement of personal values and insight into one's self.

Integration and Social Interaction : They need the insight into circumstances of others

Social Empathy : Gaining a sense of belonging, social interaction, to carry out social roles and to be in society, they need media use.

Entertainment : Handling the problem, to get relaxation, getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment, emotional release etc, they require media use.

Criticisms of 'Uses and Gratifications' Theory

The use of retrospective 'self-reports' has several limitations. Viewers may not know why they chose to watch what they did, or may not be able to explain fully. The reasons which can be articulated may be of least importance as they may simply offer reasons which they have heard others mention. Therefore, a study of people's engagement with media as it happens would rather be more effective. Some degree of selectivity of media and content is clearly exercised by audience, for e.g. choice or avoidance of television soap operas. However, instrumental (goal-directed) accounts assume a rational choice of appropriate media for predetermined purposes. Such accounts over-emphasize informational purposes and ignore a great deal in people's engagement with media: Television viewing can be an end in itself. There is evidence that media use is often habitual, ritualistic and unselective (Barwise & Ehrenberg 1988). But more positively, television viewing can sometimes be seen as aesthetic experience in which intrinsic motivation is involved.

The Uses & Gratification approach has been criticized as 'vulgar gratification'. It is individualistic and psycho logistic tending to ignore

the socio-cultural context. As a theoretical stance it foregrounds individual psychological and personality factors and backgrounds sociological interpretations. For instance, David Morley (1992) acknowledges that individual differences in interpretation do exist, but he stresses the importance of sub-cultural socio-economic differences in shaping the ways in which people interpret their experiences with TV (via shared 'cultural codes'). Uses & Gratification theorists tend to exaggerate active and conscious choice, whereas media can be forced on some people rather than freely chosen. The stance can also lead to the exaggeration of openness of interpretation, implying that audience may obtain almost any kind of gratification regardless of content or of 'preferred readings'. Its functionalist emphasis is politically conservative: if we insist that people will always find some gratifications from any use of media, we may adopt a complacently uncritical stance towards what the mass media currently offer.

Uses & Gratification research has been concerned with why people use media. When this approach sprang from 'mainstream' research in social science, an interpretive tradition has arisen primarily from the more arts-oriented 'cultural (and 'critical') studies'.

8.3.6 DEPENDENCY THEORY

Dependency theory is essentially a body of social science theories predicated on the notion that resources flow from a "periphery" of poor and underdeveloped states to a "core" of wealthy states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former. It is a central contention of dependency theory that poor states are impoverished and rich ones enriched by the way poor states are integrated into the "world system".

Earlier theories of development mentioned that all societies should progress through similar stages of development, that today's underdeveloped areas are thus in a similar situation to that of today's developed areas at some time in the past, and that therefore the task in helping the underdeveloped areas out of poverty is to accelerate them along this supposed common path of development, by various