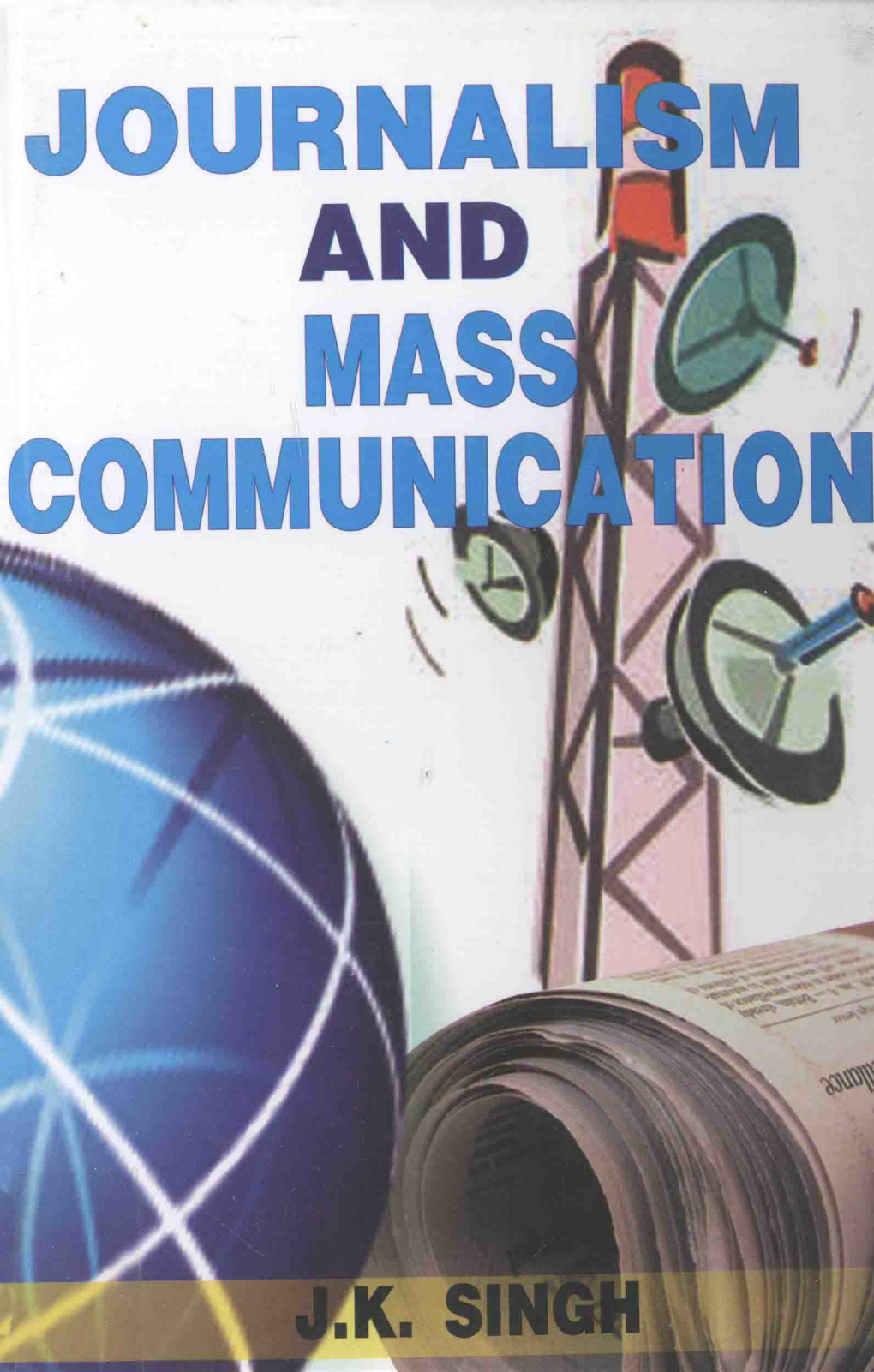
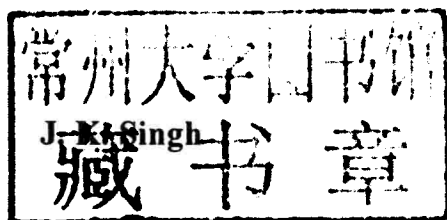


JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION



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Journalism and Mass Communication

Preface

Recent dramatic developments in all areas of human endeavour have also increasingly impacted various spheres of higher education in India. Besides, advancement in communication profession, strides in higher studies in mass communication have also witnessed profuse transformation in the course contents. Since gone for good is the era of journalism which was mainly crossing the t's and dotting the i's, journalism is now a part of larger discipline of mass communication.

Rapid expansion in the media industry in India has taken place in a big way. Several new newspapers and magazines have come into being. Electronic media also have surged forward. Along with print journalism, radio and television have also started expanding. The concept of mass communication has "arrived" in the real sense of the term. Research in the media issues has also started emerging, and social scientists have found media to be a rich field to be explored.

The most important and revolutionary changes in mass media have occurred with the arrival of the satellite communication and ushering in of the internet age. Today, all media of mass communication are taking rapid strides in their respective areas of operation what Marshall McLuhan predicted several years ago, has become a reality. The world has indeed become a 'global village'. Radio, television, newspapers, magazines, films everything is available instantly all over the world just for the asking. India is no exception.

The present publication addresses the academic requirements of graduate and post graduate teaching in the field of journalism and mass communication. It will be an essential reading for practising journalists, students and scholars of journalism and mass communication and also the interested general reader.

Editor

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Mass Communication—Basic Concepts

Communication is a common phenomenon that cuts across the daily activities of human being. As food and water are very important to man's survival so is communication. In its simplest form, communication can be defined as the transmission of a message from a source to a receiver, or the process of creating shared meaning. There exists various definitions for communication, as there are different disciplines. While some definitions are human centred, others are not. For example, communication system may incorporate computers, as well as less sophisticated reproducing devices such as photocopiers. A photocopier may see communication as meaning different thing from the way a marketer perceives it. Similarly, a gospel preacher may think communication is something, which is of course different from what a journalist thinks it is. Therefore, there is no single definition of communication agreed upon by scholars. Psychologists, sociologists, medical practitioners, philosophers and communication specialists, all define communication based on their orientations and perspectives.

Psychologists define communication as "the process by which an individual (the communicator) transmits stimuli (usually verbal symbols) to modify the behaviour of the other individuals (communicates)." This definition describes what many extension workers and change agents hope to achieve. Sociologists see communications "as the mechanism through which human relations exist and develop." Some people define communication rather narrowly, saying "communication is the process whereby one person tells another something through

the written or spoken word." This definition, from a book written by a journalist, seems reasonable for those in that field. So, there are definitions of communication as there are various disciplines.

Communication is from a Latin word—*Communis*, which means *common* or *shared understanding*. Communication therefore is a purposeful effort to establish *commonness* between a source and receiver. Whatever is being shared could be associated with knowledge, experience, thought, ideas, suggestion, opinions, feelings etc. We will define communication here as the process of exchanging or sharing information, ideas and feeling between the sender and the receiver.

Communication is very central to all human activities; this is because everything we do and do not, communicate. Man's interaction with other human beings is a result of communication. Communication is the key around which human life revolves. Communication is also innate—every man is born with the ability, from childhood, we learn to communicate by crying, smiling, kicking etc.

Communication is dynamic, ongoing and ever changing. Communication is made up of activities of interrelated elements which continue to function in the communication process. The fact is that the word communication is encompassing, ambiguous and pervasive. These three words capture the universal nature of communication and make everyone think they know something about communication.

FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication performs diverse kinds of functions. We will look at the following functions:

1. *Social interaction.* Human interaction is possible because we can communicate. We relate with friends, parents, colleagues, etc because we share codes that make us understand each other. Without communication this will not be possible.

2. *Business and trade.* Communication provides opportunity to transact business and engage in trade. We are able to make known what we are offering for sales and what we want to buy. We also negotiate the prices, mode of delivery etc. through communication.
3. *Exchange of ideas and spread of knowledge.* We express freely our ideas, opinions and feelings on issues affecting us. We also share knowledge as we engage in discussion and write books. In classroom situation, a teacher is able to impart knowledge into students through communication.
4. *Social-political development.* Development is made possible through communication. Communication helps to mobilise people to work together for their social and political development.
5. *Social-cultural integration.* Communication enables exchange of culture and values. Through music, interaction in communities, we are able to learn one another's cultures and blend for harmonious co-habitation.

FUNCTIONAL MEANING OF COMMUNICATION

Communication could be defined based on its perceived functions. Severin and Tankard highlight some of the basic differences in the way communication has been perceived. They grouped these into three major areas:

1. Definitions that stress sharing
2. Definitions that stress intentional influence and
3. Definitions that include any kind of influence or response (with or without intent)

Definitions that Stress Sharing

A number of scholars defined communication in relation to its etymology hence, communication is seen as a concept of sharing or making common. One of such definitions is Cheryl et al which says that it is "the process of sharing thoughts, ideas and feelings with each other in commonly understandable ways". Similarly, Bennett refers to communication as the process of sharing meaning through the use of symbols.

Definitions that Stress Intentional Influence

Another school of thought suggests that communication is mainly dependent on persuasion. Horne et al lend credence to this when they stated that "communication is the process through which a person motivates and influences others to control and modifying their behaviours". Keegan refers to communication as "all forms of information transfer and persuasion concerning a product".

Definition that Include any Kind of Influence or Response

These definitions could also be referred to as "all inclusive" definitions. As Lederman puts it: Communication is a word used to refer to multitude of activities in which people engage such as talking, touching, writing, looking etc". Luthans opines that "communication means the flow of material information, perception and understanding between various parts and members of an organisation".

A second look at the aforementioned functional definitions would show that each of them serves some useful purposes despite their inherent weaknesses. For instance, the belief that the essence of communication is based on persuasion may be true in some cases but definitely not in every situation. When a piece of public service announcement is made in the broadcast media or print media, the goal may not necessarily be to persuade the public into believing the message but simply to inform them. However, this does not mean that, we don't have occasions when communication is designed mainly to persuade the listeners or reading public. This is true of advertisement and public relations activities. From the foregoing, we can conclude here that, communication can serve a number of different functions like information, education, entertainment, persuasion, and so on.

CONCEPT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Mass Communication involves communication with the mass audiences and hence the name Mass Communication. When we are thinking, it is intra-personal communication, when there is

face-to-face conversation between two people it is interpersonal communication, college lecture or speech would be an example of group communication, but there is another level of communication when we read newspapers, magazines, listen to Radio or watch TV. This would be called 'Mass communication' as the message is reached to the masses through different media.

Mass communication is defined as 'any mechanical device that multiplies messages and takes it to a large number of people simultaneously'. Face to face conversation is called interpersonal communication, a college lecture or a public speech will be examples of group communication, when we are involved in thinking process, it is intra-personal communication. In addition to all these types of communication we also indulge in yet another level of communication when we read newspapers, magazines or books, listen to radio or watch T V. As the message is communicated to a very large number of people or to a mass of people, it is called Mass communication.

Mass communication is unique and different from interpersonal communication as it is a special kind of communication in which the nature of the audience and the feedback is different from that of inter personal communication. Mass communication is the term used to describe the academic study of various means by which individuals and entities relay information to large segments of the population all at once through mass media. Both mass communication and mass media are generally considered synonymous for the sake of convenience. The media through which messages are being transmitted include radio, T V, newspapers, magazines, films, records, tape recorders, video cassette recorders, internet, etc. and require large organisations and electronic devices to put across the message. Mass communication is a special kind of communication in which the nature of the audience and the feedback is different from that of interpersonal communication.

Mass communication can also be defined as 'a process whereby mass produced messages are transmitted to large, anonymous and heterogeneous masses of receivers'. By 'mass produced' we mean putting the content or message of mass

communication in a form suitable to be distributed to large masses of people. 'Heterogeneous' means that the individual members of the mass are from a wide variety of classes of the society. 'Anonymous' means the individuals in the mass do not know each other. The source or sender of message in mass communication does not know the individual members of the mass. Also the receivers in mass communication are physically separated from each other and share no physical proximity. Finally, the individual members forming a mass are not united. They have no social organisation and no customs and traditions, no established sets of rules, no structure or status role and no established leadership.

Mass communication is having the following characteristics:

1. Directs messages toward relatively large, heterogeneous and anonymous audience.
2. Messages are transmitted publicly (no privacy).
3. Short duration message for immediate consumption
4. Feedback is indirect, non-existent or delayed
5. Cost per exposure per individual is minimum
6. Source belongs to organisation or institutions
7. Mostly one way
8. Involves good deal of selection that is, medium chooses its audience (newspaper for literates) and audience choose media (poor, illiterates select radio)
9. There is need for fewer media to reach vast and widespread audience because of wide reach of each
10. Communication is done by social institutions which are responsive to the environment in which they operate

ELEMENTS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

We require a sender, a message, a channel and a receiver for communication to occur. Further there is feedback, which is the response or reaction of the receiver, which comes back to the sender through the same or some other channel. Another element, which plays an important role in communication, is

noise or the disturbances. It is observed that the term mass communication must have at least five aspect:

1. Large audience
2. Fairly undifferentiated audience composition
3. Some form of message reproduction
4. Rapid distribution and delivery
5. Low cost to the consumers

Source

Source or sender of the message may become same or different. Source mostly represents the institution or organisation where the idea has been started. In case of source and the sender being different, the sender belongs to media institution or is a professional in media communication. Thus, a scientist or a technologist may use the mass communication media himself for propagating his idea. Or else, they can send the script of the message to the media for delivering the message by an announcer or a reporter.

Message

A message needs reproduction for making it communicable through the media. The message is processed and put to various forms like talk, discussion interview, documentary, play, etc. in case of radio and T V. In case of newspapers, the message is processed by means of article, feature, news story, etc.

Channel

The term channel and media are used interchangeably in mass communication. Modern mass media like radio, television; newspapers spread the message with enormous speed far and wide. The ability of mass communication to encompass vast boundaries of space is expressed by Mc Luhan's term 'global village'. The term expresses that the world is smaller than before due to advances in mass communication. More information is coming faster, at cheaper rates per unit, from farther away and from more sources through more channels including

multimedia channels with more varied subject matter. Channels of mass communication can be classified into two broad categories:

1. Print-newspapers, books, magazines, pamphlets, etc.
2. Electronic-radio, television, cinema.

There is also a third category which include all traditional media like folk dance, drama, folk songs and so on. The mass media may also be categorised according to their ability to provide sensory inputs. Thus, visual media are newspapers, magazines, books, still photographs, paintings, etc. The audio medium is radio and audio-visual media are television, motion pictures, drama, etc. Audio-visual media are more efficient than either audio or visual.

Receiver

Mass communication means communication to the mass, so there remains mass of individuals at the receiver end of the communication. This mass of receivers, are often called as mass audience. Mass audience can be defined as 'individuals united by a common focus of interest (to be informed, educated or entertained) engaging in identical behaviour towards common ends (listening, viewing or reading)'. Yet the individuals involved are unknown to one other (anonymous). The most outstanding characteristic of the mass communication is that it has a widespread audience separated from the source by a considerable distance. Mass communication has an enormous ability to multiply a message and make it available in many places. The greatest advantage of this mode of communication is the rapid spread of message to a sizeable audience remaining scattered far and wide and thus cost of exposure per individual is lowest.

Feedback

Mass communication will have indirect feedback. A source having communicated a message regarding family planning through radio, television or print either has to depend on indirect means like survey of audience reaction, letters and telephone calls from audience members, review of the

programme by columnists to know the reaction of audience to the message. Direct feedback which is possible in interpersonal and to a limited extent in group communication, is almost absent in the mass communication.

Gate keeping

This is again a characteristic unique to mass communication. The enormous scope of mass communication demands some control over the selection and editing of the messages that are constantly transmitted to the mass audience. Both individuals and organisations do gate keeping. Whether done by individuals or organisations, gate keeping involves setting certain standards and limitations that serve as guidelines for both content development and delivery of a mass communication message.

Noise

Noise in mass communication is of two types-channel noise and semantic noise. Channel noise is any disturbance within transmission aspects of media. In print media, channel noise will be mis-spellings, scrambled words, omitted lines or misprinting. Any type of mechanical failure stops the message from reaching the audience in its original form. Semantic noise will include language barriers, difference in education level, socioeconomic status, occupation, age, experience and interests between the source and the audience members. One way of solving the problem of semantic noise is to use simplicity and commonality.

MEDIA OF MASS COMMUNICATION

There are different media involved in the process of mass communication. They reach every corner of the world and are very powerful. They invade even the privacy of our bedrooms. They inform, educate, entertain and persuade. They also help in the transmission of culture and perform the job of surveillance of the society. They are the mass media. The prominent ones, which have become household names are newspapers, magazines, books, radio, film, television, and more recently, satellite TV and cable TV. Mass media is broadly divided into

print media and electronic media. While the print media are the oldest, having a history of about five hundred years, the electronic media are products of the 20th century technological revolution.

FUNCTIONS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

The content of mass communication seem diverse in nature to audience as they expose themselves to thousands of media stimuli throughout the day and round the clock. News, reviews, commentaries, advertisements, etc can saturate the audience. Thus, the audience members select the messages according to their needs. The major functions of mass communication are that it informs, enriches, educates and entertains.

Surveillance of Environment

It is one of the most important major functions of mass communication conceptualised by Laswell. Schramm observed that in this function media took on watchman's role. Surveillance is the process of monitoring the behaviour of people, objects or processes within systems for conformity to expected or desired norms in trusted systems for security or social control. Although the word surveillance literally means "watching over" the term is often used for all forms of observation or monitoring, not just visual observation.

Surveillance of environment involves seeking out and then transmitting information about the society and all other relevant elements. Mass communication keeps watch on socio-political-economic events of the close and faraway localities and reaches the accounts to the audience through creative reporting. The effect of surveillance of environment function can be counted on individuals and society. Effects of news on individuals are:

1. *Increase personal esteem:* Personal esteem is built through the prestige that comes from knowing the news. There is social gain from being the first with the news. Quite many individuals are aware of this gain and so collect news from various media sources.
2. *Provide social base for personal interchange:* Individuals remain aware in advance about what will be the subject of

interaction with their friends, how and what parts of the mass media content will be highly desirable during conversation with others and so on.

3. Gains in and feeling for knowledge: individuals remain knowledgeable about the information on the environment and that encourage them to seek more knowledge and satisfy their curiosity.

Information

The quality of our life would be poorer without the bit of information we get from mass media. In the western countries, information is now regarded as power. The more informed you are, the more powerful you become. Those who have access to information can take advantage of it in their own interest. Mass communication provides us enormous information about the environment in which we live. Information such as news of war, danger, crisis, earthquake, famine, etc. is important for that helps us in taking appropriate steps to safeguard our interests.

Entertainment

We all need entertainment to break the monotony of our hectic stressful life and divert our attention from the troubles and tensions. Such diversion will have a positive impact on our lives. Mass media provides a variety of entertainment to audiences through films, TV shows, drama, dance, music, art, comedy, games, animation, etc.

Persuasion

Persuasion is an alternative term used to denote an act of influencing others. One of the most important functions of mass communication is to persuade the other person. It is only through persuasion that one can control and govern others. But it is also possible that one may resort to persuasion with a bad motive. The receiver must be careful about the source of such persuasion. The persuasive potential of mass communication is used heavily in both developing and developed countries. Media are extensively used for socio-economic progress and for sales promotion of the consumer goods.