

**2****MASS COMMUNICATION**

AIR FM Gold, AIR FM Rainbow, Radio Mirchi, Doordarshan, Star, Zee, Dishnet, Tata Sky... The list is unending. Breaking news, flash, sting operation, live coverage of cricket... The way we communicate has changed in the area of mass communication or for most people in the mass media.

We enjoy all that entertainment, music, reality shows, serials, beauty parades and fashion shows. From newspapers and magazines we have moved over to films, television and internet. All these are different forms of mass media and what they do is to communicate with the large unseen audiences nationally and internationally.

In this lesson, you will learn the meaning of mass communication and the different forms of mass media.

**OBJECTIVES**

After studying this lesson, you will be able to do the following :

- define mass communication;
- explain the functions of mass communication;
- describe the origin of mass communication;
- differentiate between different forms of mass media;
- describe the meaning of traditional media.

2.1 MEANING OF MASS COMMUNICATION

The simplest definition of mass communication is “*public communication transmitted electronically or mechanically.*” In this way messages are transmitted or sent to large, perhaps millions or billions of people spread across the world.



Notes

How are these messages sent ?

They are sent through different forms of mass media such as newspapers, magazines, films, radio, television and internet. Media is the plural for the word medium or ‘means of communication’.

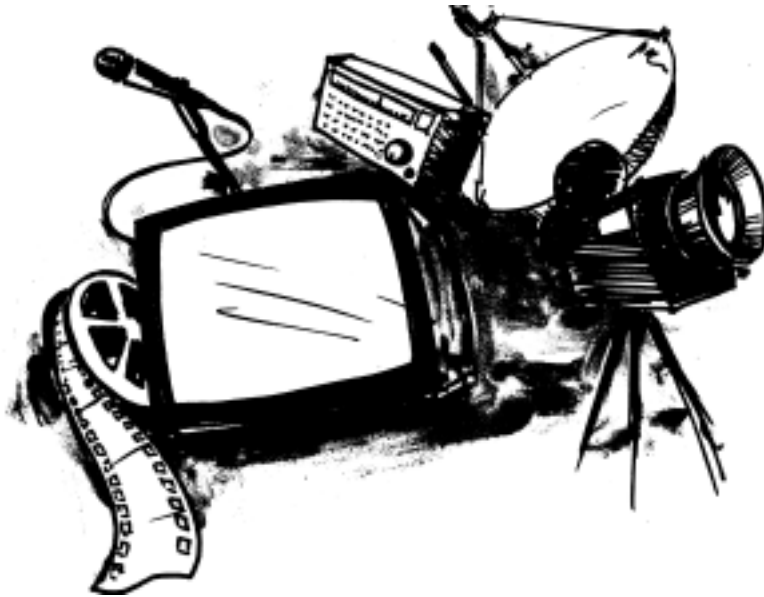


Fig. 2.1: Different forms of mass media

Means of communication is also called channel of communication. Mass communication can therefore also be defined as ‘who’, ‘says what’, ‘in which channel’, ‘to whom’, ‘with what effect’.

Look at the following figure.

Who?	Says what?	In which channel?	To whom?	With what effect?
Communicator	Message	Channel	Receiver	Effect
●	●	●	●	●

Fig. 2.2

‘Who’ : refers to the communicator.

Says ‘what’?: Here ‘what’ means the message. What the communicator has written, spoken or shown is the message.

‘In what channel’: This refers to the medium or channel like the newspaper, radio, or television.

‘To whom’ : This refers to the person receiving the message or the receiver.



Notes

“With what effect”: This refers to the impact of a message on a channel or medium. Let us assume that you have been informed about an event in a newspaper, or on radio of a social message. If this has changed your attitude towards a social evil like dowry or if a film song on television has entertained you, it may be called “the effect”.

People who make films, write news, produce radio and television programmes or advertisements are all communicators who have a message for you. The medium through which messages are communicated such as newspaper, radio or television are the channels. That brings us to the functions of mass communication.

2.2 FUNCTIONS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

News and discussions may inform you; radio and television programmes may educate you; films and television serials and programmes may entertain you.

INFORM, EDUCATE AND ENTERTAIN

These are the functions of media.

Let us learn more about these functions of media.

Those who write, direct or produce programmes are people who give us messages. Let us consider the example of a news bulletin on radio or television or a news item in a newspaper. They inform us of some event or happening.... “A new President is elected”, “The country has developed a new missile”, “India has beaten Pakistan in cricket”, “25 killed in a bomb blast”... All these **inform** us. These are properly designed or written messages given by people who are communicators.

A doctor speaks on radio or television or writes in a newspaper about how to prevent a disease. Experts tell farmers on radio or television about a new crop, seed or agricultural practice. Thereby, the farmers are **educated**.

All the commercial cinema, television serials and music programmes are **entertaining**.

The **channels** are the means through which messages are sent. These may be newspapers, films, radio, television or the internet.

Mass media have tremendous impact on their readers, listeners and viewers. That is the **effect**. People watch an advertisement on television and buy the product. They are motivated to buy the product to satisfy their needs.



Notes

When India became independent agriculture in the country was not developed. We did not produce enough rice or wheat to feed our people. We were importing food and the population was also growing fast. There were too many mouths to feed. So the government used the media, especially radio to change this situation. The farmers who were mostly illiterate were told to use the right seed, fertilizers and new techniques on farming. The effect was remarkable. We went through a revolution in agriculture and that was called the Green Revolution. Similarly, the media stressed on the need for small families. Many people followed the small family norm and decided to have only two or three children.

Take for example, the campaign on polio. The mass media informed and educated the people about the polio vaccine to eradicate polio. Messages are created using creativity and film stars deliver these messages. Have you seen Amitabh Bachhan saying “*Doh boond zindagi ki*” on television meaning “two drops of life”?

2.3 ORIGIN OF MASS COMMUNICATION

The term ‘mass communication’ may be considered as a 20th century development. Sending messages to a large number of people and at greater speed was what man was always looking for. There was a time when men on horseback travelled long distances to convey news about say, a war. Pigeons were used as postmen to deliver messages. You may have heard of Kalidasa who was one of the greatest Sanskrit poets. In his poem ‘Meghdoot’, a Yaksha (celestial singer) sends messages to his beloved through the clouds. The invention of paper and printing, and later newspapers, were the first steps towards mass communication. But it was only through the telegraph, invented by Samuel F. B. Morse in 1835, that messages could be sent to long distances using a code. The next step was to send messages through human voice. Alexander Graham Bell in 1876 succeeded in using wires to send the human voice across long distances. However, it was the invention of the radio by Marconi in 1901 which made sending of human voices over long distances possible. In 1947 the invention of the transistor made radio the most popular medium for sending voice messages. Today television, which can send voice as well as pictures, is found almost everywhere. This was invented by Baird in 1920.



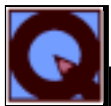
Fig. 2.3



You may be wondering what actually is the difference between mass communication and mass media.

The moment someone mentions the term mass media, you would probably think of television because that is the most popular mass medium today. When we discussed mass communication we used the word ‘channel’ or ‘medium’. Media, as you have already learnt is the plural of medium. A medium is just a means used to send messages. When we meet someone and speak to that person, it is face to face communication. But when we talk about a mass medium like television it is not face to face communication. There is a mass or a very large number of people watching it.

The first medium used to communicate with a large number of people was the newspaper. Then came a truly mass medium, the radio invented by Marconi. Newspapers had limitations like the time factor. News had to be collected, compiled, edited and printed in advance and then sent for people to read them. All these took plenty of time. For example, what you read in your morning newspaper was printed around midnight. That means it does not contain anything that happened after midnight. Of course, those who read a newspaper have to be literate. You will learn more about different forms of mass media in the subsequent modules.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1**

1. List at least five forms of mass media.
2. Name any one function of media with an example.

2.4 PAPER

You have already studied that the invention of paper was a turning point in communication.

Before the invention of paper, writing was done on rocks, leather, palm leaves etc. You might have seen some old writings on rocks or, say, some ‘stupas’ of Ashoka or some old Sanskrit or other Indian language documents written on palm leaves. Though the Chinese are credited with the use of some sort of paper in 105 AD, the word ‘paper’ is derived from the name of a plant Papyrus, that grows on the banks of river Nile in Egypt.

For us, today, paper of different kinds and colours is neither a wonder nor a rare thing. Can you think of a world without paper? Your studies are almost entirely dependent on paper.



Notes

Your textbooks, note books, copies, examination question papers, different forms you fill in to join an educational institution , the answer sheets that you use to write the examination are all made of paper. Can you also think of a world without newspapers, magazines and even wall posters?

With paper universally available, ideas and thoughts of people could be shared by others. Paper plays an important role in every field of literary human activity, from education and knowledge to entertainment and business. Train, bus, air or cinema tickets are all made of paper.

2.5 PRINTING

It is believed that Johannes Gutenberg of Germany was the first to develop printing around 1439. With printing, there was a revolution in the way communication developed.

Knowledge and information, which were till then the monopoly of certain sections of the upper strata of society, slowly became available to ordinary people. Spread of knowledge, available in print between two hard covers, was fast. Schools, colleges and universities were places with their libraries making books available to those who wanted to read even if they could not afford to buy them. Later newspapers and journals also became popular.



Fig. 2.4 : Print Media

The printing process that Gutenberg developed later underwent much changes and mechanization. Today printing has become highly sophisticated and the print media, namely newspapers, weeklies and monthlies use these modern printing presses which are capable of printing very fast. Computers have further improved printing operations. You will learn more about printing in your next module on 'print media'.



Notes



Activity 2.1

Visit a small printing press near your place and later a newspaper printing press to understand how printing is done.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2

1. Match the following:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| i) paper | palm leaves |
| ii) early writing | developed printing |
| iii) Johannes Gutenberg | papyrus |
| iv) print media | India Today |
| v) weekly | newspapers |

2.6 DIFFERENT FORMS OF MASS MEDIA

NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALISM

You have already studied that the invention of paper and printing led to the development of newspapers. Newspapers are printed and published for providing information of public interest, advertisements and views. These publications are usually issued daily, weekly or at other regular intervals. Newspapers were first published in countries like Germany, Italy and the Netherlands in the 17th century. Later it spread to countries all over the world. Early owners of newspapers were people who took up journalism to fight social problems. You may now ask what is 'journalism'. Journalism involves the collection of information and communicating it. It also involves the selection and editing of information and printing and presentation of events, ideas, information and controversies in their proper context. You will learn more about this in your next module.

Journalism was started in India during the British days by Englishmen and later by national leaders and social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and later Mahatma Gandhi. They used journalism to fight the British during our freedom movement. Gandhiji started the Indian



Opinion in 1903 in South Africa to fight for the rights of the Indians there. Later in India he started the 'Harijan' and wrote for 'Young India'. Today in India, a large number of newspapers in various languages reach millions of people every morning.

You will also learn more about newspapers in the module on 'print media'.

WIRELESS COMMUNICATION

When we discussed the origin of mass communication two inventions were mentioned. The first was the efforts of Samuel Morse in sending messages using a code in 1835. Later on the international Morse Code was developed in 1851. Until, recently we had the electric telegraph of Morse to send messages across the continents. In course of time messages could be sent without using any wires or cables. The cell phone that we use today is a fine example of wireless communication.

PHOTOGRAPHY

You may be familiar with a camera and of course photographs. In photography, images are produced using light. Photography was developed in the 19th century by two people from France, Nicephore Niepce and Louis-Jacques-Mande Daguerre. Till a few years back we were taking black and white photographs. Later colour photographs could be taken using an emulsion. Newspapers, magazines and advertisements used photography. By the end of the 20th century photographers began using the digital technology, making photography easier and the cameras user friendly. Even cell phones today have such digital cameras.

FILMS

In the previous section, we discussed photography. The pictures or photographs taken using a camera may be called 'still photographs' because they are permanent and do not move. The logical development from still photography was what we call 'motion pictures' or 'movies'. In this technology, a series of still photographs on films were projected in rapid succession onto a screen. The camera used for this was called a movie camera. The motion picture machines used to project the films into moving images and later talking pictures were developed by Thomas Alva Edison in the USA and the Lumiere brothers in France. In fact the Lumiere brothers came to India and showed moving pictures in Bombay. Just as in Hollywood in America, India also developed the art and technology of motion pictures.

First they were silent and then the talkies came in 1927. The first Indian motion picture was *Raja Harischandra* by Dada Saheb Phalke and the first talkie was *Alam Ara*.

Today films are an integral part of our lives. Films brought in the cult of stars. Who are your favourite film stars? In India the early films were based on mythology and later social issues were also taken up which continues even today.



Activity 2.2

Write down the names of two Indian films which were based on social issues.



Notes

RADIO

From mere curiosity and technical experiments radio became a truly powerful and popular medium of mass communication. After it was developed in the west we had radio by the 1920s and the first formal radio station was started in Bombay. You will learn about radio in detail in the module on 'Radio'.

TELEVISION

One of the technological marvels of the 20th century was television invented in 1920 by Baird. In India, television started in 1959 on an experimental basis and the first television station was set up in Delhi. The beginnings were modest and slow but television was popular and became available in colour in 1982. Today Doordarshan has one of the largest television networks. From early 1990s satellite television also came to India and later Direct to Home (DTH) television. You will learn more about television in a later module.

NEW MEDIA

Development and widespread use of computers and information technology have resulted in the emergence of what is called 'new media'. It includes computers, information technology, communication networks and digital media. This has led to another process in mass communication called 'convergence'. Convergence means coming together of many forms of media and other formats like printed text, photographs, films, recorded music or radio, television etc. Though it is hard to separate old media from new media the world wide web or internet has changed the way in which we communicate. You will learn more about this later.

**Notes****TRADITIONAL MEDIA**

Traditional media are a part of our country's rich heritage. They have as a base our strong oral tradition. They belong to our own land and are strongly rooted in our culture. They are as varied and diverse as our culture itself.

Life in India is deeply influenced by agriculture and religion. So also are the seasons. From very ancient days we have been having fairs and festivals celebrated with spontaneous songs and dances. These songs and dances are traditional forms of media which inform, educate and entertain people.

The advent of more faster forms of media has affected traditional media. However the performers or communicators and the audience in traditional media are known to each other unlike in radio or television. The environment in which the performances take place is natural, known and friendly. The messages are also simple; the content known and the language and idioms are familiar. Unlike other modern media, people never get tired of them.

Let us consider the example of the Ram Lila celebrated and performed all over north India. The story of Ramayana is known to every one and so are the performers. They repeat the same story every year, yet people come in large numbers to see them. But can you see an ordinary Hindi film a number of times?

There are several forms of traditional media in our country. They are known by different names in different regions. Some common examples of traditional media are story telling, folk songs, street theatre and puppetry.

Some forms of traditional media like traditional songs and mythological stories are written down as proper text. But different forms of folk media are generally spontaneous or are made on the spot.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.3**

1. List any three forms of traditional media found in India

2. What is meant by the term 'convergence'.



2.7 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

Mass Communication

- Definition of mass communication
- Functions of mass communication
 - inform
 - educate
 - entertain
- Origin of mass communication
 - invention of paper and printing
 - invention of telegraph, radio and television
- Different forms of mass media:
 - wireless communication
 - photography
 - newspapers
 - radio
 - television
 - films
 - new media
 - traditional media



2.8 TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Define the term 'mass communication' with examples.
 2. Describe the functions and origin of mass communication.
 3. Explain briefly the different forms of mass media.
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Notes

**Notes****2.9 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**

- 2.1** 1. i) newspapers ii) films iii) radio iv) television v) internet vi) any other
2. Refer to Section 2.2
- 2.2** 1. i) papyrus ii) palm leaves iii) printing iv) newspapers v) India Today
- 2.3** 1. Refer to Section 2.6
2. Refer to Section 2.6