

Lesson – II

INTRODUCTION TO MASS COMMUNICATION

This lesson discusses the mass communication process, features, classification and functions. Mass communication is “the process by which a person, group of people, or large organization creates a message and transmits it through some type of medium to a large, anonymous, heterogeneous audience. This implies that the audience of mass communication are mostly made up of different cultures, behavior and belief systems.

OBJECTIVE

- To learn about the mass communication process.
- To discuss features of mass communication
- To learn about the mass communication – classification
- The functions of mass communication and mass media

STRUCTURE

- Mass Communication
- Feature of Mass Communication
- Process of Mass Communication
- Characteristics of Mass Communication
- Mass Communication as a Source of Information
- Functions of Mass Communication
- Functions of Mass Media

- Summary
- Questions for Discussion

MASS COMMUNICATION



Mass communication involves communication with the mass audience and hence the name

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mass

communication. Group communication has now been extended by the tools of mass communication: books, the press, the cinema, radio, television, video and the internet. Mass communication generally identified with these modern mass media, but it must be noted that these media are processes and must not be mistaken for the phenomenon of communication itself. Daniel Lerner termed them ‘mobility multipliers’ and Wilbur Schramm considered them to be ‘magic multipliers’. Indeed, both the terms ‘mass communication’ and ‘mass media’ are inappropriate in the context of developing societies. Mass communication is defined as ‘**any mechanical device**

that multiplies messages and takes it to a large number of people simultaneously ‘.

DeFleur & Dennis – "Mass Communication is a process in which professional communicators use media to disseminate messages widely, rapidly and continuously to arouse intended meanings in Large and diverse audiences in attempts to influence them in a variety of ways."

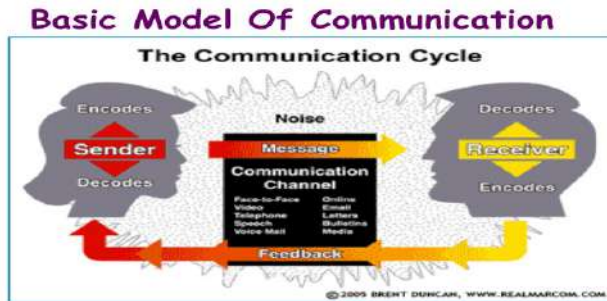
Orlik – "Mass Communication is the process of rapidly conveying identical information, assertions and attitudes to potentially large, dispersed and diversified audiences via mechanisms capable of achieving that task."

Berge – "Mass Communication involves the use of print and electronic media such as newspapers, magazines, film, radio or TV to communicate the large number of people who are located in various places often scattered all over the country or the world."

FEATURES 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 aspects.

- Large audience
- Fairly undifferentiated audience composition
- Some form of message reproduction
- Rapid distribution and delivery
- Low cost to the consumers



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PROCESS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Source: Source mostly represents the institution or organization 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

TV. In case of newspaper 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 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 Media – Newspapers, books, magazine, pamphlets etc.,
2. Electronic Media – Radio, Television, Cinema, Internet (New Media)

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 behavior towards common ends (listening, viewing or reading)’. 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 organizations do gate keeping. Whether done by individuals or organizations, gate keeping involves setting certain standards and limitations that serve as guidelines for both content development and delivery of a mass communication message.

Noise: It is in mass communication is of two types-channel noises and semantic noise. **Channel Noise** is any disturbance within transmission aspects of media. In print media, it may be misspellings, scrambled words 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, socio-economic 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.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

1. Directs messages toward relatively large, heterogeneous and anonymous audience.
2. Messages are transmitted publicly
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 organization 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

MASS COMMUNICATION AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION



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Mass communication is a process in which a person, group of people, or an organization sends a message through a channel of communication to a large group of

anonymous and heterogeneous people and organizations. You can think of a large group of anonymous and heterogeneous people as either the general public. Channels of communication include broadcast television, radio, social media, and print. The sender of the message is usually a professional communicator that often represents an organization. Mass communication is an

expensive process. Unlike interpersonal communication feedback for mass communication is usually slow and indirect.

Mass communication is the study of how people and entities relay information through mass media to large segments of the population at the same time. It is usually understood to relate newspaper, magazine, book publishing, as well as radio, television and film, even via internet as these mediums are used for disseminating information, news and advertising.

Mass communication differs from the studies of other forms of communication, such as interpersonal communication or organizational communication, in that it focuses on a single source transmitting information to a large number of receivers. The study of mass communication is chiefly concerned with how the content of mass communication persuades or otherwise affects the behavior, attitude, opinion or emotion of the person or people receiving the information.

The following are some types of mass communication:

- Advertising, which consists of communications attempting to induce purchasing behavior.
- Journalism such as news
- Public relations, which is communication intended to influence behavior, public opinion on a product or organization
- Broadcasting, which the channels offer informative and entertaining content of general and specific interest audience.

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.**

Mass communication has the following basic functions:



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- To inform
- To educate
- To entertain and
- To persuade

Additionally it also helps in transmission of culture.

To inform: Dissemination of information is the primary function of the news media. Newspapers, radio and TV provide us news from around the world and keep us informed. Describing the events, news media have come to include human interest, analysis and factorized

treatment to news. Journalists are not just ‘reporters’ now. They have become news analysis analysts who discuss the implications of important news stories. Also more ‘soft stories’ are filed these days. In addition to dissemination of information news media provided us information and also helps understand the news events, ideas, policy changes, etc.,

To entertain: The most common function of mass communication is entertainment. Radio, television and films are basically entertainment media. Even newspapers provide entertainment through comics, cartoons, features, cross word puzzles etc., Entertainment through radio consists of mainly music and also drama, talk shows, comedy etc.

Television has become primarily an entertainment medium. Even highly specialized channels like news, nature and wildlife channels also have a lot of humorous and comic content. Among all media, films are perhaps the only medium concentrating on entertainment.

To Persuade: Most of the mass media are used as vehicles of promotion and persuasion. Goods, services,

ideas, persons, places, events – the range of things that are advertised through mass media is endless. Different media have different features and reach. Advertisers and advertising agencies analyze these features and depending upon the nature of the message and the target audience, choose where and how the message should be placed.

Transmission of culture: Any communication leaves a direct or indirect impact on an individual. It becomes part of one's experience, knowledge and accumulated learning. Through individuals, communication becomes part of the collective experience of groups, audiences of all kinds and finally the masses. Mass communication plays an important role in the transmission of culture from one generation to another.

FUNCTIONS OF MASS MEDIA

Mass media is the term applied to the technical device that is used to transmit the message. Print and the electronic are the two major classifications of the mass media. Primarily are four major activities or functions of mass media: **surveillance, correlation- interpretation, socialization and entertainment.**



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Surveillance of environment: It is one of the most important major functions of mass communication conceptualized by Lasswell. This refers to the collection and distribution of information on events both outside and within the society. Generally this refers to the news function of the press.

Correlation – Interpretation: This involve interpretation of information to improve the quantity of the usefulness of the information for the citizen. Interpretative journalism is a major manifestation of the effort to fulfill this function. Editorial and other propaganda activities of the print media is often referred to as helping the society respond to the environment.

Transmitting the social heritage: Often identifies as socialization, this educational activity is the

communication of information, values and social norms from one generation to another. This helps the individual know the current common base of norms, values and collective experience to help unify the society.

Entertainment: Communication acts primarily intended for amusement is distinguished from information and fills the readers/audiences time, by providing a release from tension, stress and difficulties. Entertainment is a major factor in Stephenson's play theory of mass communication. The most obvious of all media functions is that of entertainment. Even though most of the newspaper is devoted to covering the events of the day, comic, puzzles, horoscopes, games, advice gossip, humor, and general entertainment features usually account for 20% of a typical content in a daily paper. The entertainment content of radio varies widely according to station format. Television is primarily devoted to entertainment, with about three quarters of a typical broadcast day falling into this category.

Marketing: Mass media are currently an irreplaceable element in the marketing process. A consumer society we are, a smoothly marketing system is important to all of us.

Media carry advertising messages which influence consumers and also inform them. Some feel that mass media exist primarily for delivering commercial messages.

Watchdogging: Media are on the constant look out for any malfunctions of importance to be brought to the notice of the society. Watchdog reporting covers an array of malfeasance: from sex and personal scandals to financial wrongdoing, political corruption, enrichment in public office and other types of wrongdoing.

Status conferral: Persons and issues when given coverage in the media are conferred status to get the attention of the society.

Message Reinforcement: Mass communication often reinforces and stabilizes/beliefs which might otherwise change. By stabilizing beliefs it stabilizes social action. Mass communication plays significant role in affecting and substituting personal aspects of human behavior. As mass communication affect the values and attitudes of the users, in turn these have an influence on mass communication. Since communication functions in relation to society. It must be viewed as one among the

many factors that come to play on the individual and social behaviour. Education, creating social changes, changing social style and safeguarding our liberties are some related functions of mass media.

SUMMARY

Mass communication involves communication with the mass audience and hence the name mass communication. DeFleur & Dennis – "Mass Communication is a process in which professional communicators use media to disseminate messages widely, rapidly and continuously to arouse intended meanings in Large and diverse audiences in attempts to influence them in a variety of ways." 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 aspects: Large audience, fairly undifferentiated audience composition,

some form of message reproduction, Rapid distribution and delivery, Low cost to the consumers.

Mass communication is a process in which a person, group of people, or an organization sends a message through a channel of communication to a large group of anonymous and heterogeneous people and organizations. Mass communication has the following basic functions: To inform, To educate, To entertain and To persuade. Mass media is the term applied to the technical device that is used to transmit the message. Print and the electronic are the two major classifications of the mass media. Primarily are four major activities or functions of mass media: surveillance, correlation-interpretation, socialization and entertainment.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the elements of mass communication.
2. Define and explain the process of mass communication
3. Elaborately discuss the functions of mass media.