
UNIT 1 RADIO: A MEDIUM OF MASS COMMUNICATION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Radio is a fascinating medium among the various mass communication media because of its special characteristics. It continues to be as relevant and potent as it was in the early years despite the emergence of more glamorous media. It is a truism that in the first phase of broadcasting spanning three decades from the early twenties, radio reigned alone or was the dominant player. However, over a period of time, the media scene has changed drastically. Television with its inherent strength of audio-visual component has captured the imagination of the people. The advent of satellite television, the Internet and the convergence of technology have added further dimensions in media utilisation patterns. However, despite the presence of a plethora of media, there is room and scope for each medium. Experience has revealed that 'new technologies add things on but they don't replace'. One medium is not displaced by another - each medium reinvents itself in the context of changes in the communication environment. In the changed media scenario, radio is reorienting itself with more innovative programmes and formats.

This unit acts as a curtain raiser for the block which examines various issues relating to the growth of broadcasting in India, the latest trends in broadcasting and how radio has been used for supporting development. In this unit, we shall discuss the concept of communication, its types, functions, the characteristics and radio as a medium of mass communication. We shall discuss the role of mass media in general and the radio medium in particular. We shall examine the strengths and limitations of radio and how the role of radio in a developing country is different from that of in developed countries. We shall also analyse the present and future role of radio in our country in the context of the technological changes taking place.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After you have studied this unit, you will be able to:

- define communication;
- describe different types and functions of communication;
- explain mass communication;
- describe the strengths and limitations of radio;
- explain the present state of broadcasting; and
- analyse the future of radio broadcasting in India.

1.2 CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION

In order to appreciate the role of radio as a medium of mass communication, we need to understand what is the concept of communication, what are the various functions and types of communication.

1.2.1 Meaning and Definition

Talking with someone, arguing in a discussion, speaking in public, reading a newspaper, watching a television programme, etc., are all different kinds of communication that we are engaged in everyday. It means that we are constantly exchanging our thoughts, ideas, and notions with someone or the other either to satisfy our physical, emotional or other needs or to get work done. It is obvious that communication is an integral part of one's life. In fact, it would be impossible to think of a society in the absence of communication.

The word 'Communication' is derived from the Latin word "communis" which means, to make common or to share. There are numerous definitions of communication, and there is yet no agreement on any single definition. Some of the more functional definitions of communication describe it as "the transfer or conveying of meaning" (Oxford Dictionary), "transmission of stimuli" (Colin Cherry), "one mind affecting another" (Claude Shannon); "one system influences another" (Charles E. Osgood), "the mechanism through which human relations exist and develop," or "sharing of experience on the basis of commonness" (Wilbur Schramm).

You communicate to share a message or information. Communication is more than mere transferring or transmission of ideas or thoughts. It is not a static act, as some of the earlier definitions suggest, but it is a dynamic process of action and interaction towards a desired goal. Thus, **communication is, a process of sharing or exchange of ideas, information, knowledge, attitude or feeling among two or more persons through certain signs and symbols.**

What do we find in this definition? It says that two or more persons are involved in the act, the one who gives information (sender) and the one who receives it (receiver). What is being shared? – an idea or an information or an attitude (message). And through what means? The information is shared or exchanged through certain signs and symbols; it could be language, oral or written. While sharing and exchanging ideas or information with others, we are actually interacting with people and establishing a kind of relationship that helps us to achieve the task set before us.

1.2.2 Functions of Communication

Communication is vital for human existence, and for the progress of humanity. No person, group or society can exist without interaction with others. Think for a moment what would happen to us if we did not talk with anyone at home; didn't listen to lectures at school or college; didn't speak to friends and co-workers; or didn't play games or watch TV or films? And what would life be like in the absence of news, views, facts, figures or information? Obviously, we would be miserable and would miss out on many opportunities and challenges offering us security and success in our personal and professional life. Being at the heart of all social action and interaction, communication functions as a relating tool that creates understanding, facilitates work, and strengthens collective living among people.

Essentially, the primary function of communication is to inform, instruct/educate, entertain, influence and persuade people to make them function smoothly and effectively. Besides, communication has a secondary function to perform as well: through debate and discussion it promotes cultural integration, it fosters consensus, creativity, and understanding among people, groups and societies enabling them to live in peace and harmony.

1.2.3 Types of Communication

Human beings are engaged in a variety of communication acts. Although each type of communication appears to have distinctive features, they are all much alike in the sense that one enters into a meaningful relationship with one or more persons by means of signs and symbols. These are:

- Intrapersonal Communication;
- Interpersonal Communication;
- Group Communication; and
- Mass Communication.

Intrapersonal Communication refers to communication that transpires inside a person; and this happens all the time. It is like talking to oneself, listening to oneself and relating with oneself. It is important in contemplating, conceptualizing and formulating our thoughts or ideas before we actually indulge in overt communication.

Interpersonal Communication is the universal form of communication that takes place between two individuals. In interpersonal communication, there is face-to-face interaction between two persons, that is, both are sending and receiving messages. This is an ideal and effective communication situation because you can clarify and emphasize many points through your expressions, gestures and voice can get immediate feedback. Since there is proximity between sender and receiver, interpersonal communication has emotional appeal too. It can motivate, persuade, encourage, and coordinate work more effectively than any other form of communication.



Interpersonal communication

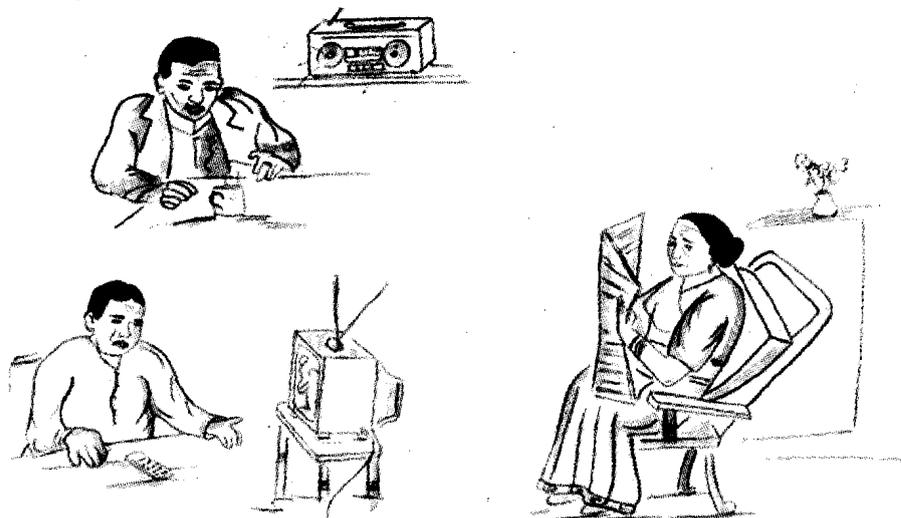
Group Communication is an extension of interpersonal communication where more than two individuals are involved in exchange of ideas, skills, and interests. Communication in a group, small or big, serves many goals including collective decision making, self-expression, increasing one's effect, elevating one's status, and relaxation. Group communication provides an opportunity for direct interaction among the members of the group, it helps in bringing about changes in attitudes and beliefs.



Group communication

1.3 MASS COMMUNICATION

Outside the realm of interpersonal communication exists another form of communication which involves communication with mass audiences and hence the nomenclature "mass communication." The channels through which this kind of communication takes place are referred to as mass media. Mass communication and mass media, are generally considered synonymous. Mass communication is unique and different from interpersonal communication as is evident from the following definition: **Any mechanical device that multiplies messages and takes them to a large number of people simultaneously is called mass communication.** The media through which messages are being transmitted include: radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, films, records, tape recorders, video cassette recorders, etc., and require large organisations and electronic devices to put across the messages.



Different mass media in use

Looking at the definition, it is clear that mass communication is a special kind of communication in which nature of the audience and feedback is different from that of interpersonal communication. An examination of these components will help in understanding the nature of mass communication.

1.3.1 Audience

Whosoever is the recipient of messages through mass media constitutes its 'audience'. For instance, individuals reading a newspaper, watching a film in a theatre, listening to radio or watching a television programme are the audience. In these situations, audience is large, heterogeneous, anonymous in character and physically separated from the communicator, both in terms of space and time. A large audience means that the receivers are masses of people not assembled at a single place. It may come in different sizes depending upon the media through which the message is sent. For TV network programmes, for example, there could be millions of viewers, but only a few thousand readers for a newspaper or a journal or a book. By anonymous, we mean that the receivers of the messages tend to be strangers to one another and to the source of those messages. With respect to the communicator, the message is addressed "to whom it may concern". The audience tends to be heterogeneous rather than homogeneous in the sense that messages are sent to the people in all walks of life, each person with unique characteristics.

1.3.2 Feedback

As compared to interpersonal communication, feedback in mass media is slow and weak. It is not instantaneous or direct and is in fact invariably delayed. Feedback in mass media is rather a cumulative response which the source gets after a considerable gap in time. It is often expressed in quantitative terms, such as, circulation figures of newspapers and magazines, the popularity of a movie at box office, success of a book on the basis of its sales, or the findings of public opinion poll, and on the basis of other feedback devices which are used to determine what is acceptable or unacceptable to different audiences. In all such cases, considerable time and money are required to process the feedback received from the audience. Therefore, delayed and expensive feedback is ingrained in mass media.

1.3.3 Mass Media

As stated earlier, communicators use several media to transmit a message (a thought, idea, opinion, attitude) to the readers, listeners and or viewers. These media: film, print, broadcasting, are used differently by people for various purposes. Each mass medium has its own distinct nature and characteristics. For example, print medium (newspapers, magazines, etc.) provide detailed information which can be kept for a longer period; accessed whenever needed and used by many persons at a convenient time. Films can be watched and enjoyed at one single place (cinema hall) by many people in large or small groups, or at homes through television sets. Broadcasting on radio and television can bring voices and pictures to a large number of listeners and viewers from long distance.

Thus, we see every medium of mass communication works in its own unique way and carries the message far and wide. Each medium has its advantages and limitations in the areas of operation, influence and impact. For instance, print depends on the ability to read. For communicating a message to a child or an illiterate person, television, film or radio would be effective while the print medium will not be relevant. Every medium uses its strengths to provide information, education and entertainment to the public. The focus of this unit is radio and in the following section, we shall discuss the characteristics of radio in detail.

Check Your Progress: 1

- Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the strengths of interpersonal communication?

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2) What do you understand by mass communication?

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1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF RADIO

Unlike the live medium of the stage, where there are live performers (speaker, actor, etc.) and live audience, radio is a 'sightless' or a 'viewless' medium. In radio, the performer does not see his/her audience (called listener) and the listeners cannot see the performer, the talker, the actor, etc. That is why radio is sometimes called the blind medium (Vel Geilgud, BBC Drama Chief, 1952).

Since it is a blind or sightless medium, the performer (announcer, newsreader, discussant, narrator, etc.) has to creatively conjure up images of his/her listeners. The listeners too have to imagine the performance creatively. But the performer must spark off the imagination of the listeners with expressive performance or communication. Here are some important characteristics of radio:

1.4.1 Medium of Sound and Voice

It is an exclusive medium of the sound. It is an aural or auditory medium, a medium of the ear. There are three major elements of a radio broadcast: spoken-word, music and sound effects. They are all sounds carried on the air waves to the listener. To be acceptable, all these sounds must be pleasant and expressive for the ears. They must be artistically integrated or mixed to provoke the imagination of the listener, otherwise, the intention of the broadcast would be defeated.

Radio is a medium of the voice. The performer can use only his/her voice in a broadcast. The producer mixes voice with music and sound effects, but it does not mean that a broadcaster, say, an actor, has only to learn a few tricks of the voice. An actor, using only vocal tricks, would soon start sounding untruthful to the listener as a radio listener has a highly developed sound sense. It has been correctly said that an actor or any other performer must broadcast with his/her mind. For example, an actor is not wearing any costume or make-up; there is no scenery or properties. Neither s/he nor the co-actors are seen by the listener. So s/he must imaginatively give cues or intimations only through his/her expressive voice. This s/he will be able to do only if s/he mentally gets under the skin of the character and dialogues or speeches. Vocal tricks will fail a broadcaster because voice does not exist autonomously or independently. It is a part of the total person of the performer. A truthful vocal expression will come only if a person's mind, soul, psyche, imagination and body all are in tune with one another.

1.4.2 Link between Speaker and Listeners

Microphone is the instrument through which a radio broadcaster speaks to the listeners. And, microphone is a devilish precision instrument (G.B.Shaw, 1925). It is a hi-fi (high fidelity or faithful) instrument that catches the softest sigh, the minutest shade of the voice, the tiniest rustle of the paper. It exposes all vocal lies or untruthful expressions. It amplifies even the feeblest hiss or a sob. Microphone will tell all, the truth from a lie hence only truthful vocal expressions can go well with the ear of the listeners.

Because of these characteristics of the microphone, broadcaster must speak into the mike as if the listeners are sitting by his/her side. S/he must not speak like a stage performer who has to reach out to the last man in the last row. The stage performer has to project oneself because the auditorium diminishes the voice and body. But the radio performer must project 'inwards' because the microphone amplifies or magnifies the voice.

1.4.3 Intimate Medium

Radio is an intimate medium. The broadcaster must imagine the listeners sitting by his/her side, shoulder to shoulder. To the listeners, it sounds as if the broadcaster is speaking from within the sound box, the radio set or the transistor for each listener individually. Radio being an intimate medium, the best subjects for radio broadcasts are those which intimately concern the listener like the personal, the private and the innermost feelings. Intimate subjects are especially relevant to good radio drama and intimate style of acting is especially relevant to the radio. The manner of expressing or articulating the words must also be intimate because the condition in which broadcasts are received are very informal. May be one or two or three listeners are sitting by the fireside or in bed or moving about the house, or engaged in some activities. The communication must be informal and intimate.

The broadcaster must build an instant equation or rapport with the listener. If s/he does not find the show or the broadcast interesting enough for the first two or three minutes, s/he will switch off the broadcast. The rule of the oil industry applies here: if you cannot drill in the first two minutes, stop boring. Hence, a talk, a discussion, a documentary, a feature, or a docu-drama, etc., must get into the subject informally, intimately and interestingly right at the start.

1.4.4 Mobile Medium

Radio is a mobile medium. You can have it at home, take it to the picnic resort, listen to it while driving, have it on land or under the sea, in public or in private, hence, it is a convenient medium. It can accompany you and entertain you anywhere as a never-failing companion.

It does not follow the three unities of time, place and action as prescribed by Aristotle, more than two thousand years ago, for dramatic communication. Stage drama may, even now, respect these unities because of the obvious limitations of the stage medium. But radio drama, which is drama of the mind, may hop from any period or place to any other period or place. Because the radio player performs on the canvas of the listener's mind and the mind, truthfully sparked off by the player, can construct any period, any place. The subjects that the stage can never dream of dramatising (for example, going centuries back and, then, suddenly switching over to the present, tasting the atmosphere of, say, hell or heaven, going under the ground or the sea or to remote corners of the globe etc.) can be very well dramatised on the radio.

1.4.5 Quick and Inexpensive Medium

Radio is a medium of immediacy. It can report the events almost instantly, as they are happening, hence, it is a medium of the "here and now". It is the radio which can be the first to report the happenings while TV crew would take some time to reach the spot.

From the production angle also, radio is a quicker medium than television. For example, it requires a performer and a producer who may also be a recordist and an 'effects' person. As against this, a TV production (tele-production) would require a costumes person, a make-up person, two or three cameras and cameramen, a dolly man to assist the cameraman in moving the cameras, a scene designer, a carpenter, several lights and lightmen, several monitoring sets, engineers, a producer, a performer, etc. The cost of radio production is much less than that of TV production. Since the cost and time required to produce a programme are much less, radio can produce a wide variety of programmes. It can also afford to experiment with new and innovative programmes.

It costs much less to set up a radio station as compared to a TV station. Not only the capital cost, but recurring expenses to run a radio service are far less. A large number of people can afford a radio set but not a TV set.

1.4.6 Medium with Limitations

Radio has a plethora of limitations as well. The foremost limitation of radio is that it entirely depends on the sense of hearing. Broadcast is not reinforced by the powerful medium of sight. Comprehension and assimilation, therefore, require more efforts. For instance, it is almost impossible to convey the beauty or finer points of works of art such as paintings, sculptures or intricate handicrafts merely by trying to describe them.

Then, suppose there has been a major disaster somewhere – say an earthquake or a war, the extent of damage, the hardship being faced by the people are instantly clear on television. On radio, one has to use one's imagination after listening to other accounts. By the same token, take a cricket, football or a tennis match. On TV, one does not even need a commentator, whereas on radio a commentator and a few sound effects are essential for the listener to follow the game. The same is true of colour, sense of space, a situation, or appearances. A listener can only use his/her imagination, which may or may not give a true picture. There can be gaps between illusion and reality.

At times, a facial expression or body language can communicate unuttered messages. Both, the broadcaster and the listener, have to constantly keep in mind that what is being conveyed will have to be heard, understood and remembered instantly. It is an ephemeral medium, unless one has access to a recording or a repeat broadcast, the message can be lost for ever. This puts immense limitations on the broadcaster and demands a great deal of concentration and involvement on the part of the listener. Radio has little value for the hearing-challenged just as television is of little use to the visually-challenged.

Check Your Progress: 2

- Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- 1) List five strengths of radio.

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- 2) List five limitations of radio.

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1.5 THE ROLE OF RADIO

The role of the mass media is to provide the audience information, education or entertainment or all the three balanced in different proportions. The role of radio, as a medium of mass communication varies from country to country. There are radio networks which devote themselves exclusively to entertainment. They are commercial enterprises which are run with profit motive serving trade interests. They carry a large number of advertisements along with programmes. There are radio networks operated by educational institutions, which specialise in educational programming. The third category of radio broadcasts are community broadcasters. The local communities or NGOs serving them operate radio service for the benefits of the local community. The most important and universally recognised category of broadcasting is often referred to as Public Service Broadcasting which uses radio for public service by providing a blend of programmes of information, education and entertainment in accordance with the communication needs of the people it serves.

Alfred Smerdits, noted communicator after a survey of broadcasting in Europe, observed that the public service media must perform the "democratic task of providing independent, free and pluralistic information and promoting cultural development." **Pierre Juneau**, of the World Radio & TV Council visualised a larger role encompassing not only information, education and entertainment, but also cultural enlightenment. It would be interesting to note that in the U.S., the need for a public service broadcasting was felt long after private broadcasting took firm roots in that country. In the U.K., it was public service broadcasting which was established first and private commercial broadcasting followed.

In communication, there are certain things which the people *want* and some other things which they *need*. Radio can bring about the convergence between the two through appropriate programming mix. To **Lord Reith** who helped the BBC to develop as a public service broadcasting organisation, information and education were its predominant components. **Merlyn Rees**, Privy Councillor, United Kingdom setting out the parameters of public service broadcasting observed that the public service broadcasting must be the one which is available to the entire population. It must be universally attractive. In other words, it must be concerned with as many interests and tastes as possible. Minorities and disadvantaged groups who suffer discrimination must receive special attention. Broadcasting must be distanced from vested interests.

In developing countries, the radio is looked upon as catalytic agent for development. The **Vidyalankar Committee** constituted by the Indian Planning Commission in 1963 envisaged an active role for radio when it observed "our development task is so great and our population so large that only by the most efficient possible programmes of public information can we hope to reach our people often enough and effectively enough to activate on the needed scale, discussion processes and subsequent actions in the cities, towns and villages". According to a policy document of the Government of India, "radio should become an input in the nation-building tasks and must strengthen the confidence of the people, promote the concept of self-reliance and encourage forces of unity and national harmony."

In tune with various policy guidelines, the educational and information programmes of radio aim at preparing the people to receive and assimilate the new opportunities created for their advancement and well-being. They seek to strengthen the confidence of the people, promote the concept of self-reliance, encourage forces of unity and national harmony and help in the establishment of an egalitarian society. In the preparation of software to realise these objectives, the programme planners constantly bear in mind of what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said while addressing the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on March 15, 1948. Referring to the approach in broadcasting programmes he said "If anybody is going to sermonise, I am not going to listen to that sermon ... you must do it in an entertaining way."

Bertolt Brecht, renowned playwright warned that the 'one-way' nature of radio would condemn it to sterility. The organisation of *Charcha Mandals* in the early phase of farm broadcasting facilitated participatory programming. *Akashvani Gaon se*, the Farm-school-on-the-Air, the rural science gatherings, the science *sammelans*; the People's Forum Programmes are some of the later-day innovations to make radio a two-way communication medium constantly striving to "reach the people effectively enough to activate on the needed scale, discussions, processes and actions." The Phone-in programme, Voice Mail Programmes, the People's Forum Programmes (which while voicing the grievances of the people bring the administration and the audiences on a common platform in the exercise for resolving problems) and the radio-bridge programmes connecting experts and the listeners situated in different places are all aimed at strengthening the two-way communication system.

Various educational programme projects have an in-built provision for listeners' participation.

Radio's primary role as a public service broadcaster is crucial for a developing society. However, a new programming orientation is urgently needed to avoid 'unimaginative' and 'heavy' broadcasts. All programming should be meaningful, interesting, entertaining, relevant and imaginative. In the words of P. C. Joshi "we have to ensure that communication media does not widen the hiatus between the rich and poor, town and village, elite and the mass, men and women, centre and periphery".

1.6 RADIO PROGRAMMING: TODAY AND TOMORROW

Radio programming is undergoing intense metamorphosis these days keeping in view the challenge thrown by 24 hour television programming. In the recent years, there is a quantum jump in the media channels, particularly TV channels. Most of them are commercial channels dishing out entertainment programmes. Since television offers multifaceted and multifarious fare on national networks, in a commercialised media-environment, radio receives less attention. However, some positive developments have taken place which hold great future for radio broadcasting. One such major development in the field of radio in this country is the end of government's monopoly of the airwaves. The demand for permission to establish private channels has been made from time to time, but the Supreme Court gave the landmark judgment, that the airwaves cannot be controlled solely by the government. With the setting up of the Prasar Bharati Broadcasting Corporation, there is a change in the situation. The advent of private radio broadcasting has become a reality.

The introduction of **Frequency Modulation (FM) channels** in metro cities is another development which has brought in a breath of fresh air in their content and style of presentation. More than 70 per cent radio listening in the U.S. today is on the F.M. stations and the same trend is catching up in India as well. While 50 per cent radio stations in U.S. are commercial, in India, the trend towards commercialisation is limited but is catching on. A number of private operators have been given licences to operate FM channels. The FM channels that have come up recently are at major centres addressing the modern, urban youth. However, FM channels mean much more than mere pop and film music for the entertainment of a privileged few.

The **Gyan Vani** network allotted to IGNOU has started broadcasting programmes on education and development from several cities. The number of such channels is bound to increase in the years to come. Under a scheme devised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, educational institutions can get licences to operate radio stations for educational purposes.

Yet another significant development in radio broadcasting all over the world is the concept of **Community radio**. It has come to be known as the 'narrow casting' as opposed to 'broadcasting'. The introduction of the community radio is a milestone not only in reaching out to the remotest area but also persuading the citizen to share in the vision and excitement of development. With the avowed objective of developing itself as community broadcasting, the local radio strives to demolish the division between the broadcaster and the audience and serve as a link between the citizen and the extension agencies. In course of time, these community radio stations would act as a catalytic agent in galvanising the local community into action for their own development.

In India, this concept can be effectively harnessed keeping in view the variety in region, background, culture, language, education and economic status. Community radio stations can be used to project and reflect the needs, desires, problems, joys and sorrows of a society clearly defined within a limited area. For example, the need to construct a new road, remove stagnant water, put down gang warfare or whatever problem is being faced by the people in a specific area, could be dealt with in a meaningful way. Fruitful negotiations could be held by the affected people with area development workers, local authorities and voluntary agencies. Similar background of the people facilitates problem solving, and imparting instructions on various development related issues.

Technological Developments are taking place at a meteoric pace globally. The advent of internet and the convergence of technology is opening up new possibilities. Radio is increasingly becoming an integral part of the multimedia concept. Technology has brought in innovations in the hardware aspects of broadcasting. Satellite technology has rendered it possible to have digital broadcasting on Direct Broadcast Receivers. This has triggered the need for innovations in the software generation. In shaping the radio of tomorrow conscious efforts are made by all those involved in conceiving, planning and producing to make radio programmes absorbing, relevant, topical and need-based. Concerted efforts are made to identify those programming areas which are radio's forte and innovations encouraged for fully exploiting the medium's potential. Increasing attention is paid to 'leisure time' listening. Formats like entertaining contests, competitions, quiz shows and family serials are ingeniously exploited for enhancing listenership. Radio stations in the West have developed innovating styles and features, for example, 'contemporary hit radio' (CHR) is a recent popular category targeting the younger audiences. Creative formats, modes, styles of presentation and publicity, are being used. Play-by-play sports, talks, interview and children's programmes with a mix of education and entertainment are some popular formats. Motivation services devoted to health and nutrition, stress reduction, and personal improvement programmes are popular.

In the changes scenario, outmoded, impersonal approaches are being discarded away for a more personalised, informal and direct style, in which the listener plays an active role. Music is the backbone or mainstay of the overall radio fare. Thematic presentations, featurised formats or personalised treatment go a long way in making these programmes popular among the diverse radio audiences.

International hook-ups for sharing and exchange of ideas among specialists, political and other personalities are also being explored. All India Radio may swap airtime with Voice of America (VoA) and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). AIR may get an equal amount of air time on BBC's local channels in Britain, VoA cannot offer that since it has no domestic service. Both broadcasters may be given half hour weekly slots for entertainment and lifestyle programmes. Other broadcasting organisations are also likely to follow.

With the expansion of technology, the possibilities of making radio programmes exciting and alluring are limitless. Widening the scope of a programme also opens up fresh opportunities for building up radio personalities, presenters, and anchor persons. As future radio professionals, you need to prepare yourselves to meet these challenges. Your role in making radio an interesting, creative and relevant medium of mass communication in the era of multi-channel communication is crucial.

Check Your Progress: 3

- Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- 1) List some developments which hold great future for radio.

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- 2) What steps need to be taken to make radio broadcasting more absorbing?

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the concept of communication, its meaning, definition and functions. We read that any mechanical device that multiplies messages and takes them to a large number of people simultaneously is called mass communication. The media through which messages are being transmitted include: radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, films, records, tape recorders, video cassette recorders, etc.

We examined in detail some important characteristics of radio. It is an exclusive medium of sound and voice which is intimate, personal and mobile in nature. It is also relatively inexpensive as compared to other mass communication media. However, radio has certain inherent limitations. It is a sound only medium, as such the listener has to use imagination, it may lead to a gap between reality and imagination.

Radio programmes can be made absorbing, relevant, topical and need-based. This requires conscious and deliberate efforts by all those involved in conceiving, planning and producing radio programmes. While content is the key, innovative presentation skills immensely contribute to the success of a programme. Special efforts to eschew rigidity and hackneyed techniques and warm, intimate and interactive approaches would prove successful.

1.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress: 1

- 1) Interpersonal communication is an ideal and effective communication situation because the proximity between sender and receiver allows immediate feedback. They can clarify and emphasize many points through expressions, gestures and voice reducing the scope for misunderstanding. It is also possible to motivate, persuade and influence the other person.
- 2) Any mechanical device that multiplies messages and takes them to a large number of people simultaneously is called mass communication. The different mass communication media are: radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, films, records, tape recorders, video cassette recorders, etc.

Check Your Progress: 2

- 1) Five strengths of radio are:
 - It is an intimate and personal medium;
 - It is a convenient medium which can be carried anywhere;
 - It is relatively inexpensive;
 - It can overcome the barrier of literacy;
 - It can reach remote rural and tribal areas thus overcoming geographical barriers.
- 2) Five limitations of radio are:
 - It is a sound only medium, as such, can only be heard and not seen;
 - It cannot provide finer details;
 - Listener has to use imagination, it may lead to a gap between reality and imagination.
 - It is an ephemeral medium, i.e. the message once broadcast cannot be retraced unless earlier recorded; and
 - Radio is not useful for the hearing-challenged.

Check Your Progress: 3

- 1) The end of the monopoly of the government over broadcasting ushers in competitiveness in broadcasting which will help enhance the range and quality of programmes. The expansion of the FM channels and the local radio offers immense opportunity for more entertainment oriented community development programmes. The opening up of specialised 24 hours broadcast channels exclusively for education, music, finance, sports, etc would enlarge the programme fare offered to the listeners.
- 2) Concerted efforts in innovative programming exploiting the medium's potential, introduction of competitions and prizes for listeners participation and motivational services, discarding of outmoded impersonal approaches are some of the steps that need to be taken to make radio broadcasts more absorbing.