UNIT 2 MASS MEDIA AND INDIAN SOCIETY

Structure

2.0 Objectives
2.1 Introduction
2.2 Communication in India: Historical Perspectives
   2.2.1 Religion and Philosophy
   2.2.2 Mysticism and Intrapersonal Communication
2.3 Indian Heritage and Communication Values
   2.3.1 Jain and Buddhist Values
   2.3.2 Indian Schools of Philosophy
2.4 Implications for an Indian Perspective of Communication
2.5 Sadharanikaran: Basis of Communication
2.6 Indian Society and Communication
2.7 Emergence of Modern Mass Media
   2.7.1 Assumptions about Mass Society and Media
   2.7.2 India and the West: A Comparison
2.8 Media Impact on Indian Society
   2.8.1 Films
   2.8.2 Video
   2.8.3 Satellite Communication
2.9 Future of Communication in India
2.10 Let Us Sum Up
2.11 Further Reading
2.12 Check Your Progress: Model Answers

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this Unit you should be able to:

- describe the various concepts of communication stated in the sacred scriptures of India
- explain the process of development of communication in India
- trace and analyse the oral tradition of communication in Indian society
- compare the traditional oral method of communication with the modern methods of mass media
- discuss the changes taking place in socio-cultural, linguistic and communication patterns in India as a result of new communication technologies.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first Unit of this Block, we have discussed the evolution and growth of Indian society and culture. While discussing the salient features of Indian society, we considered the caste system, the features of tribal communities and the traditions of "little" and "great" cultural heritage.

In this Unit, we shall discuss and analyse the evolution and growth of communication in India. The importance and utility of oral tradition will be considered. We shall also discuss the characteristics of changes taking place in our society due to the influence of modern communication technologies. Having done this, we shall consider the aspect of access to media in the third unit of this block.
2.2 COMMUNICATION IN INDIA: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Communication, as it is known today, has originated and evolved in the West, particularly in the United States of America. With the development of technologies, the communication methods also developed.

The methods became complex and sophisticated. But the concept of 'communication' has been with us since the creation of man. The methods and the process is differ from region to region, country to country. Even now, with the idea of 'global village' becoming a reality, we differ as far as methods and process of communication are concerned.

The Upanishads, the Gita, the Sangeet Ratnakara, the Natya Shastra, Manu Smriti, Sanskrit literature, works on Vaishnavism, Bhakti, the medieval saints and Sufism did communicate and are still communicating valuable thoughts to us on the subject. We need to study these materials to find out the methods and process of communication prevailing at that time.

You must be aware of various seminars and workshops being conducted to formulate a policy regarding satellite communication. Some experts say as a result of exposures to foreign television programmes, our values and culture may be damaged beyond repair. The negative influence of such telecasts may prove detrimental to the development of the nation.

2.2.1 Religion and Philosophy

Some scholars say that the Indian tradition has hardly any thoughts on communications. Those who grant such thoughts have negative view on the issue. 'Communication' is a word coined in the recent past to explain a particular area of study. Therefore, in our ancient literature this view was not dealt with separately. But, a lot has been said on the process and methods of communication in our literature.

Communication does not exist in a vacuum. Communication is an integral part of our socio-political and cultural life. It was as important then as it is now. It worked according to the social and cultural norms. At present, we must ensure that it works as per the socio-cultural ethos of our nation. Otherwise the fabric of the nation may be disturbed.

Activity 1

In the previous unit, we have discussed the historical and sociological aspects of the growth and evolution of Indian society. Now, before you proceed further, take a pencil, use the space below, and present graphically the various sources of information people had at that time.
2.2.2 Mysticism and Intrapersonal Communication

Our way of life is influenced by religion and various philosophical teachings. As a God fearing people, we have found various ways to worship the almighty. Profound thoughts and philosophies took birth from those ways of worship. Mysticism is one such way.

Mysticism has given birth to a new method of communicating one's deep realisation and understanding of God and the Universe. Mysticism is centered on oneself. It is a process by which one plunges into the deepest core of one's heart or self. A profound communication takes place in one's innermost care. This communication process can be termed as intrapersonal communication—communication with oneself. Mira Bai and Kabir communicated so much in a very easy way because their realisation was clear. We have not explored this mystical process. This mystical approach possibly can help us to communicate with our people more effectively.

Intrapersonal Communication enriched interpersonal communication. This area of communication has not been sufficiently explored. Some enthusiastic communication professionals take a parochial view and try desperately to invent a communication theory or a model which existed in the ancient times. Having discussed the importance of intrapersonal and interpersonal communication, we shall discuss the importance of Indian philosophy in Communication. We come to know about the process of communication in ancient India through treatises on arts, religion, and mysticism. We can also go through Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu and Hindi sources.

Accounts of Vedanta, Bhakti, Vaishnavism and Sufism speak volumes on communication. To be effective in our communication we should be able to establish their relevance to the people of modern India. This Indian orientation will help us to recast and reframe the whole outlook towards communication concepts norms, and beliefs.

We ought to turn to the Indian philosophical tradition which has tremendous intellectual and spiritual resources and can easily supply us with a basic framework for a creative and relevant communication process. The impact of this heritage has been felt through the ages and its richness and universality has been acknowledged by the world. Since the present communication concept and discipline has developed in the west, we do get carried away by its Western perception and hence become ineffective in the Indian situation. It is necessary, therefore that we ground ourselves firmly in our culture, beliefs and ethos. We need not copy the western models blindly. And thus consequently suffer the loss of inspiration.

Check Your Progress 1

Note:

1) Use the space given below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.
2.3 INDIAN HERITAGE AND COMMUNICATION VALUES

In India, communication is inextricably linked with philosophy and religion. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan says, "the pursuit of philosophy is deemed a religious vocation. Therefore, in order to come to terms with the cultural ideal that animates Indian society, we need to examine, brief though they may be, the outlines of Indian philosophy".

The Upanishads call attention to the value of the knowledge (Vidya) of ultimate truth (Satya) as a means of liberation (Moksha). The Upanishads, greatly emphasise the need to look inward for a clearer understanding of reality. The basic tenet of the Upanishads is the need to acquire self-knowledge and thereby liberate oneself from worldly bondages.

2.3.1 Jain and Buddhist Values

With the passage of time, a number of non-Vedic philosophical traditions sprang up. The Charvakas placed heavy emphasis on the material world and discarded all notions of transcendentality. Jainism was another tradition of philosophy which was non-Vedic in character. It maintained that both the animate and the inanimate world were eternal and independent. Therefore one has to be tolerant to all that exists on earth.

Buddhism, another non-vedic philosophy constituted a powerful reaction against the ritualism that characterized the Vedas and the transcendentalism that was associated with the Upanishads. The individual, according to Buddhism, should diligently work out his salvation, from pain and suffering.

2.3.2 Indian Schools of Philosophy

Later, Indian Philosophy began to move further and further away from the original ways of thinking and, indeed, split into different and competing systems. Although these systems do not by any means constitute mutually exclusive categories, they display sufficient variation for each to warrant on autonomous conceptual status. Of these, there are six that deserve close attention. They are the Nyaya; Vaisesika; Sankhya; Yoga; Mimamsa; Vedanta and Advaita. These schools, too, contributed to the formation of the Indian tradition.

The Indian schools of philosophy originated from the Vedas; two schools are Vedic—the Mimamsa and the Vedanta; the four—Samkhya, Yoga, Vaisesika, and Nyaya—have their base in the Vedas. Therefore, these six schools are classed as Vedic or Astika. The two schools of Buddhism and Jainism are called Nastika as they do not accept Vedic authority. These eight schools are products of the great thought that characterised the post-Vedic age.
Each school of philosophy is called a Darsana, meaning a view or a vision of the truth. The aims and aspirations of life are not only the pursuit of material gains (Artha) and pleasure (Kama) but also virtue and morality which chasten life (Dharma) and spiritual enlightenment and freedom (Moksa).

Each school is associated with a sage (Rishi) as its first promulgator—Samkhya with Kapila, Yoga with Paanajali, Vaisesika with Kanada, Nyaya with Gautama, Mimamsa with Jaimini and Vedanta with Badarayana-Vyasa. Because of their mutual relationship, these six schools fall into three groups of allied systems, Samanatantras. Samkhya and Yoga go together; the philosophical framework of Samkhya is accepted by Yoga, with the addition of God as the omniscient first Teacher. The speciality of Yoga is the practical aspect of the methods of mental control by which the philosophical ideal of the Samkhya, namely, the isolation (Kaivalya) of the Spirit from Matter is achieved. But Yoga as a Sadhana or preparatory discipline and means came to be accepted by all schools. Today, it has, with the help of science, grown in strength and gained a world-wide vogue. The vaisesika doctrines form the basis of Nyaya, both being schools of realism and pluralism. The Mimamsa and Vedanta go together because of their common Vedic basis but otherwise they differ fundamentally. The former is concerned with Karma and Dharma, the performance of ordained duty, but the latter to the opposite of Karma, namely, renunciation from activity; according to Vedanta, knowledge (Jnana) is the means of salvation (Moksa). Mimamsa is thus related to the Karma-kanda (Samhita and the Brahmna portion of the Vedas), and Vedanta to the Upanishads. The Mimamsa also made a valuable contribution to the science of interpreting texts; it came to be known therefore as Vakya Sastra (the rules of constructing a sentence).

But what do all these mean to us today. Our tradition, philosophy, culture, and religion are not dead. We still practice our ancient religion. We do study our ancient philosophy and theology. Our beliefs are largely based on Karma and Dharma.

Therefore, these things have meaning in our day to day life. The words coined in various philosophical and theological books are still being used by us to convey the same meaning. Thus, to communicate meaningfully, we must be well grounded in this rich heritage. But a little caution—we must not be so heavily grounded in these, so as not to be able to fly and explore the richness of clear blue sky.

2.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE OF COMMUNICATION

What implications does this survey of Indian philosophy have for communication theory? On the basis of these philosophical tenets, we can construct a workable model of communication for the Indian situation. This may differ substantially from models found in the Western countries. Each culture may have models of communication of its own. What is essential is that any communication model must be based on a cultural context. Otherwise the meaning conveyed may differ from the intended meaning to be conveyed in a communication. Many times, we may fail to communicate if we do not take this cultural context into consideration.

In India generally the primary focus of interest in communication is how does the receiver make sense of the stimuli that he receives so as to deepen his self-awareness. In the Western models, the basic questions that present themselves are how does the communicator affect/influence/manipulate the receiver and how does the communicator and receiver share information and enter into a two-way relationship. According to traditional Indian views, meaning should necessarily lead to self-awareness. Hence the Indian definition of communication would be that it is an inward search for meaning—a process of intra-personal communication.

In the West, communication is seen as the transference of meaning with the intention of influencing the receiver. But in India meaning brings enlightenment. Meaning, according to traditional Indian thought, was seen as a process which leads to self-awareness, then to freedom, and finally to truth. Here, by freedom we mean the liberation of persons from ignorance, from illusion of the world, and the web of the artificial categories constructed all around us.
Another significant point of divergence between the Indian and the Western ways is that the Indian way focusses attention on the intra-personal dimension as opposed to the inter-personal dimension. In western ways, intrapersonal communication leads to interpersonal communication, but in the Indian way interpersonal communication is secondary to intrapersonal communication.

The Western way is expression-oriented but the Indian way is interpretation oriented. The Indian way seems to suggest that what is important in human communication is to find out how a receiver makes sense of the verbal stimuli that are received by him and engages in a search for meaning. This search is an inward one. The traditional authorities maintain that the reality is indeed within man. To know it is to be. In other words, distinction between the knower and the known narrows down considerably. The realization of truth is facilitated neither by language nor by logic and rationality. To know is to be; to know is to become aware of the artificial categorization imposed on the world by language and logic. It is only through an intuitive process that man will be able to lift himself out of the illusory world, which, according to the Indian viewpoint, is indeed the aim of communication. People may differ with this view. But we all must agree that in India realization dawns when we internalise the communication. It needs to be pointed out that one may not understand the current development in communication solely in the light of this model. We are living in a world where the border lines between countries are disappearing very fast. We do know and feel at one with the happenings in other parts of the globe. We are passing through a phase of civilisation which could be termed, at best, the transition, and 'chaotic' at worst.

Check Your Progress 2

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

1) Write down three advantages which a person may acquire, if he/she orients himself/herself in Indian philosophy and culture before communicating with the masses.

2) Write down the two main characteristics of Western Communication ways.


2.5 SADHARANIKARAN: BASIS OF COMMUNICATION

Indian communication centres on the word Sadharanikaran. It is derived from the Sanskrit word Sadharan meaning simple, common or ordinary. Sadharanikaran would thus imply simplification. The word has a familiar ring and is equivalent to the Latin word "communs" that is communication, meaning commonness of experience.

Sadharanikaran has been vividly described in Bharata's Natya Shastra, which though discovered in the 10th century A.D. by Bhattanayak, has now been established to have its authorship in a period as early as 500 BC. It is also known as the fifth Veda, as in it Bharata Muni had condensed the essence of the four Vedas for the benefit of the common man.
How does Sadharanikaran take place? Bharata describes Sadharanikaran as that point in the climax of a drama when the audience becomes one with the actor who lives an experience through his acting on stage and starts simultaneously reliving the same experience. The process has been described as *rasa swadan* i.e. tasting the same flavour or relish. When Sadharanikaran happens, universalisation or commonness of experience takes place in full form. According to Bhattanayak, the essence of communication is to achieve commonness or oneness among the people. Later, this word was extensively used in literacy circles for explaining poetics, aesthetics and drama.

But today, Sadharanikaran is often employed to convey the idea of commonness and simplification. The entire superstructure of Indian aesthetics centres on the act of sadharanikaran through rasa swadan.

**Rasa** has been explained thus: man in his essential characteristics is a bundle of bhava (moods) that constitute his being and form part of his total consciousness. These have been categorised as 50 in number. Of these nine are described as Sthai bhawa (permanent moods), 33 as Vyabhicari bhawa (secondary moods) and the remaining as Satwik bhawa (wholesome mood). Bharata, after an intensive study of these moods, has grouped them under one all encompassing expression bhawa (moods) for purposes of establishing Sadharanikaran.

Coomaraswamy describes ‘bhawa’ as springing from aesthetic emotion of a person who derives its existence from sensory experience. Each mood is capable of arousing a relevant state of feeling/quality of response.

Bharat Muni also postulated that for Sadharanikaran to take place, Sthai Bhava, that is, permanent moods in the audience, have to be aroused which will result in the unleashing of the attendant Rasas, feelings or aesthetic pleasures, thereby completing the process of communication.

A **Bhava** is the first reaction or sensation caused in the sympathetic mind by a stimulus called Vibhavas song, a bird, a picture. A sustained Bhava (emotion) that leads to Rasa is the Sthayee Bhava (for example : seasons).

An **Anubhava** is the physical manifestation that takes place immediately as a Bhava (emotion) registers itself in the mind. (examples : Glance, lifting of eye, smile, etc.)

The Sthayee Bhava is stimulated by the Vibhava in the mind and is heightened by Anubhavas and Sanchari Bhavas. In this state, the mind will be highly receptive to the Rasa experience.

When a person experiences the intensity of the Bhavas (emotions) of the Vaibhavas (Determinants), he overcomes his own personality and completely identifies himself with the actual state of the Vibhava. This is the state of universalisation. The universalisation leads to identification and involvement. Whatever is communicated leaves deep impact. Rasa can be understood only by the Sahridaya, the person who alone is capable of rasaswadan (partaking of the flavour). Who is a Sahridaya? He/she is a person in a state of emotional intensity i.e., a quality of emotional dimension coequal to that of the sender of the message or communicator. Both must be sahridayas.
In India, communication lays great stress on the communicator and the one who receives communication belonging to the same cultural group. The same cultural context will help the communicator and the receiver to communicate effectively. The sender and receiver of a communication belonging to the same culture, would be able to communicate more effectively. In other words, it is emphasised, that communication may be ineffective between an individuals or groups, not belonging to the same culture as total grasp of symbols, signs and meanings are essential for effective communication. The relevance of the message, the code, and the experience that the code stands for, to the group with which communication is sought to be established, is an important factor in communication.

In Western societies sources and receivers, at least in principle, communicate as equals, but in Indian society, it is not the case. The source is viewed as higher and the receiver as lower in status. The relationship is a hierarchical one of dominance and subordination. The source is held in high esteem by the receiver of communication, a relationship idealized in the gurusishya relationship. Even though the source and receiver are unequal, they are Sahridayas, having a common cultural orientation. This makes the communication in their unequal relationship satisfying.

The hierarchical aspect of Sadharanikaran contributed to the blossoming of Indian civilization through efficient communication. This was, however, later taken to the level of absurdity, resulting in a highly rigid and hierarchical society. To some extent, it made Indian society into a more or less closed system and thereby contributed towards its stagnancy and decay. It is true Natyashastra was written by Bharat Muni to simplify the complex Vedas for the benefit of the common man and thereby bridge the gap between the elites, the priests, the nobles and Sudras. However, with the passage of time, Sadharanikaran resulted in divisions within society. Later, with institutionalization of difference the society became stagnant.

Sadharanikaran, through communication, between unequals over a period of time, contributed toward the development of more or less permanent and rigid hierarchical social relationships, as reflected in the caste system. Not only that, it seems that the values supporting the hierarchical nature of social arousal of permanent mood(s) (Sthai Bhava) and the particular aesthetic pleasure (Rasa Utpathi) made them natural and acceptable as well as satisfying. Acceptance of this type of communication pattern by the people belonging to different castes, made the system stronger and permanent.

Today, to a great extent, the caste system influences communication patterns, particularly in Indian villages. Within a village community, far more communication takes place among the members of a caste than between castes because of the highly stratified and hierarchical nature of the caste system. People of "high" and "low" castes accept their position as natural. The asymmetrical relationship between "high" and "low" caste members is hereditary and is accepted by those who are in a disadvantageous position.

It may be pointed out here that in India many sages and saints, in different times, launched reform movements against social inequalities. They attempted to further simplify and reinterpret Indian philosophy for the benefit of the common people and thereby bridge the gap between elites and commoners.

However, the question arises: apart from the academic exercise, is there any use of studying the Indian view on communication? I think, it is necessary and the need is urgent. Some of the reasons are as follow:

a) The Indian view of communication takes into consideration the man and his environment as a healthy unit as against the mechanical and quantitative view of man.

b) The use of technology has added a new dimension to the use of words as a tool of communication. The printing press, radio, TV and satellite have multiplied words and their use to an immeasurable extent. The knowledge of Indian view of communication may help in minimising the use of words to create a greater effect with the aid of visuals.

c) The emergence and use of a large number of words has resulted in the distortion of the meaning of words. Words, however, would continue to occupy primacy in human communication in future despite the expansion of electronic media.
“Better than a collection of a thousand meaningless words is one word full of meaning on hearing which one becomes peaceful”, says the Dhammapada.

d) The sadharanikaran theory underlines the role of communication. It is total communication and communication at its best. It is a more integrated approach to communication because it seeks to affect the behaviour of human beings by arousing emotional and physical response simultaneously.

We would only be inviting peril if we ignore the study of sadharanikaran.

Check Your Progress 3

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

1) Why is ‘Sadharanikaran’ important in Communication?
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................

2) In a communication context, how does the source and receiver in a Western model differ from that of the Eastern Model?
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................

3) How did ‘Sadharanikaran’ help build the rigid caste system?
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................

2.6 INDIAN SOCIETY AND COMMUNICATION

Indian society is often characterized as one of “unity in diversity” and its villages as “independent republics”. These characterizations have important implications for the patterns of human communication in India.

In ancient India, cultures blossomed in different parts of the subcontinent. These were unique and independent of each other. These cultures derived strength and inspirations from each other. The merits of cultures were communicated through the long established oral tradition.

The roving saints and scribes performed the task of communicating messages. They propagated the gospels of truth enshrined in the Vedas, Puranas, epic stories like Ramayana and Mahabharata, and other scriptures. They reinterpreted these messages as per the realities prevailing in the society. In the process, they succeeded in communicating the norms and values proper for decent social living.

At the community level, known as a class of knowledgeable people, Brahmins enjoyed the highest social status. They played an effective role as “link persons” between the common man of their own community and persons from outside the community.
Village communities were mostly self-sufficient. Each community had strong and extensive cultural links with other communities beyond the neighbouring villages and towns. Administrative contacts were minimal, largely confined to revenue collections. Even this task was performed through intermediaries such as the Nawabs, Zamindars, and Lambardars. Thus, in ancient or traditional India, there existed effective systems of communication which were both local and pan-Indian in character. Such communication provided meaning and justification for the social order. It inculcated the spirit of devotion, love, and faith.

Indian society was highly stratified and hierarchical. Communication tended to flow from persons of higher status to persons of lower status. In any communication situation, the relationship between the source and the receiver was that of dominance and subordination. In spite of this there was some dialogue between the two. Both shared a common frame of reference which made communication smooth and effective.

### 2.7 EMERGENCE OF MODERN MASS MEDIA

With the advent of British rule in India, there was an increase in the administrative links, and physical mobility was encouraged through rails and roads. A new philosophy and culture spread by Macaulay's education system started making inroads into traditional Indian society and culture. The two were incompatible in many ways. However, the communication of foreign concepts, ideas, and philosophies was successful as a lot of Indians accepted them. At the same time the conflict between the Indian and British ways of life became evident. As a consequence, there were upheavals, and tumults, which ultimately led to the birth of independent India.

Free India has adopted democracy based on universal adult franchise as a form of government. As a welfare state it has opted for planned development. The technological growth and developments, huge development in communication, and increases in the scale of economic activities have enlarged the range of choices. The philosophy of equality, irrespective of caste, creed, and religion, and the compulsions of democratic elections at all levels—village panchayats to the Parliament help to minimise the disadvantages of the traditional social and political relationships.

Communication is not confined only through to religion and practice of social norms. Its task is much more than maintaining the order and stability in society. Though the speaker is still viewed as an authority figure, particularly in rural areas, and the listener as a subordinate, such a relationship does not go unchallenged in many parts of our country to day. Tensions centred on such relationship do exist and reports of social tensions from different parts of the country are frequently published. At the same time, there are situations (among urban educated elites, for example) where communication patterns are more on a basis of equality. Communication is no longer viewed only as a means to stability and harmony but for change as well. Thus communication in India has become a complex subject.

#### 2.7.1 Assumptions about Mass Society and Media

We are well aware of societal conditions that have given rise to various mass media. It is normally assumed that technology has been necessary for the reproduction of communications for mass audiences. Industrialisation, with the division of labour, and urbanization, has created mass and heterogenous audiences. The proponents of this idea also hold that "in the pre-industrial period, the communication system was restricted to direct face-to-face communication between individuals."

These assumptions, as far as India is concerned, are not wholly true. First, despite passing from the First Information and Communication revolution (printing) to the second Information and Communication Revolution (electronics and computers), the Indian society has largely retained the traditions of oral and interpersonal communication. Therefore, when we consider the distinguishing features of modern
society, it is not the ‘mass’ of people (numbers) that constitutes ‘a mass society’, but the relationships between the members. The western concept of mass society explains its heterogenous nature due to its being alienated by technology, socially differentiated due to occupation, and physically separated through expansion of urbanisation. Thus the need to reach out to this highly “impersonalized” mass society, requires various “mass media” not only to bring together its members into the mainstream, but also to seek their consent for social action.

Does this portrayal of the “mass” of people provide an accurate picture of present-day Indian society? Clearly it does not. Yes, we have undergone industrialization, urbanisation, and modernisation. Yes, life in contemporary Indian society is very different, because of these changes. But when we look at the villages in India, we see large “masses” of people living together as homogenized blocks, linked together by their myriad languages, dialects, common culture, traditions, and so on. So, what we have today are groups of “masses” linked together by oral tradition, culture and language, giving a picture of homogeneity.

2.7.2 India and the West: A Comparison

However, in recent years, even among communication scholars, there has been a tendency to transplant communication models from the West to developing countries. They have transplanted the idea that rational, independent messages beamed at “individuals” will lead to motivation and attitude change. This is basically the advertising and marketing model of a society believing in perfect competition.

We are now beginning to realise that there is another model of society in which the individual derives his legitimacy from the system. In such a society the role of “communication” is quite different. Therefore, attempts to inform, educate and motivate the individual in many a times do not succeed. However, messages with symbols appealing to the “collective” consciousness many times do succeed. The Indian society, with its unique concept of the “collective” nature of interpersonal networks, affirms that while we keep our windows open to the world, our feet are rooted in the innate wisdom that has come down to us over the last 5000 years. It is within these parameters, that India’s transition from the oral to the modern mass media-based society, has to be perceived.

---

Check Your Progress 4

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

1) In India, we have largely a hierarchical asymmetrical communication relationship existing between the sender and the receiver. But recently this is changing. sender and the receiver are considering each other equals, specially in the urban areas. Mention four factors responsible for such change.

2) How does the oral tradition of communication help India to bind its people together? Write down three positive points.
In India, the print media took roots first in the major provincial capitals of British India—Calcutta and Madras and later Bombay. These cities with their surrounding areas accounted for the bulk of their newspaper circulations. Advertising also developed in these metropolitan centres. As the freedom struggle gained momentum, newspapers were published from the main centres of the agitation like Delhi, Lahore, Lucknow and Kanpur. Other newspaper centres were concentrated in the princely states of Mysore, Hyderabad, Bhopal and Baroda. These cities also had their own radio stations.

Newspaper readership continued to remain in urban areas. After independence the print medium emerged from its pre-colonial past and spread into the semi urban and rural areas. Advanced technology, better roads and transport helped the press to move into semi urban centres, but they were still rooted in the cities. A new class emerged—the information rich who were already modernised, literate and economically well off. With the development and growth of newspaper technology and sharp competition the costs of publishing a newspaper also rose. The advertising world—the backbone of newspaper—hitched its wagon to the highly-circulated newspapers and magazines, fuelling the growing difference between big and small newspapers and magazines. The power of the print media attracted big industrialists to invest in the newspaper industry. Monopolies and chain newspapers became the order of the day. Suddenly, the missionary zeal of pre-independence days gave away to a competitive frenzy in commerce. Today we have chain-newspapers controlled by business tycoons who run them purely on commercial lines.

What has been the impact of newspapers on Indian society? A difficult question to answer. But a few pointers would give us a somewhat clear picture. Newspapers have become a class medium, catering only to the rich and the powerful. However, the language newspapers do cater to the lower levels of society. But their reach and access are linked to literacy and capacity to purchase. According to present estimates, newspapers are purchased and read by less than 20 per cent of India’s 900 million population. A wide gulf has been created between the “information-rich” and “information-poor”. Instead of a democratising and bringing equity the newspapers have helped to perpetuate a class structure in society.

The broadcasting media (TV and Radio), though under government control, have the capacity to reach out to the people in every nook and corner of the country. While both are highly capital-intensive, it is their capacity to reach out to millions that makes them a people’s medium. The development of Akashwani and Doordarshan in India has had its ups and downs, but today we have about 545 TV stations covering about 90 per cent of area and catering to about 60 per cent of the population. Radio has a much wider reach and access. But in the case of the two media, it is not the development of infrastructure that we need to look into, but their programme content and how it is being received by the people. It is in this area that both AIR and Doordarshan have not been found wanting. While “news” has been accepted as the important segment in their programme content, other aspects like development and education have been given adequate attention. However, entertainment has become synonymous with these two corporations.

AIR has opened various channels for entertainment; but has failed to evoke the same kind of audience response to other development-oriented programmes as to entertainment. Even its educational programmes have restricted listenership. Researchers have pointed out to the lack of quality programmes over AIR.

Doordarshan has fared no better. The criticism levelled against AIR also applies to Doordarshan. The criticism levelled against Doordarshan is sometimes more severe as the policy formulated for it says that it should serve the developmental aspirations of the majority. The Doordarshan has ended up with more entertainment than any other type of programmes. Except for news and a few current affairs programmes, DD largely depends on films and film-based programmes to fill in its telecast time. Criticism about lack of professionalism, creativity and production skills, have been levelled against DD. What has been its impact on society?
People do say that TV is an "idiot box" and has harmful effects on children. But TV is a tool of learning also, and so far, has been well-received. Further, information on health, family planning and eradication of social evils like drugs, smoking, alcoholism, and dowry, have all been successfully projected over Doordarshan.

2.8.1 Films

Let us take another important mass medium—films. Films can be produced on almost all subjects of human interest and include, broadly speaking, feature films, documentaries and newsreels. The themes may encompass such diverse subjects as industry, agriculture, development, education, environment, and vital national issues like family welfare, national integration and untouchability. In fact, a large number of films are not commercial in the usual sense.

Contemporary film making, more than ever before, is a big financial venture. It is usually controlled by commercial considerations rather than the demands of the art. The star system, lavish promotion and publicity and huge budgets for formula pictures are all frantic attempts to minimise the financial risk involve in film making. No wonder such films aim to please the audience by creating a synthetic world of unreal emotions. They make no demands on the power of thinking and ignores art for the sake of commerce. Films seeks to attract the audience by providing rather glib and naive entertainment in order to convert people's childishness into cash. For the majority of the viewers, a film is a day-dreaming device in which they forget their worries and get lost in a world of fantasy—full of melodramatic sentiments, songs and
dance, violence and sex. In fact, with only a few honourable exceptions, cinema in India has been overwhelmingly entertainment-oriented almost since its beginning. The Indian film stars have exerted such a hypnotic hold on the masses that they have made a place for themselves in public life, politics and even influenced the living style of the people. Exceptional Indian Films, with their intense realism and abiding concern for the common man, have found their way to international acclaim. The emergence of the new cinema as a movement, presenting a modern humanistic approach, offered a refreshing contrast to the commercial cinema.

2.8.2 Video

Video has grown to be a very popular mass medium within a remarkably short time. It has endless possibilities for entertainment and education. Video in India is largely perceived as an alternative source of entertainment. However, video news magazine has caught the popular fancy and many leading newspapers have come forward to launch news magazines in audio-visual form. Public sector companies have utilised the video medium for bringing out house journals. But video has also come to occupy an important place in political and poll campaigns in India.

2.8.3 Satellite Communication

A communication satellite is a man-made platform launched into space; it remains relatively stationary over the earth. It serves as a platform for radio relay stations which receive radio signals beamed to it from the earth and relays those signals back to other locations on earth. Satellite communication greatly benefited the newspaper industry. It made possible fascimiles of newspaper pages to be sent electronically via satellite to a receiving station anywhere in the world where printing facilities may be located.

The satellite distribution systems give the newspapers a flexibility hitherto not possible. Satellites now link news bureaus all over the country and can instantly transmit news reports to any station. Computers can automatically set the stories into type and start the process rolling. The cable TV system can receive programmes through satellite and deliver them by cable to subscribers' sets. In another form of transmission, called Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS), television programmes are directly received by the dish antenna at home, totally bypassing the cable system.

But the strongest impact of TV comes through the Hong Kong-based STAR-TV, CNN, the BBC, and Pakistan TV, using satellites to beam programmes right into our homes. There has been a furore over the role of these foreign satellite broadcasts, referred to as post-colonial cultural imperialism. They have made serious inroads into DD viewership. Innumerable dish antennae dot the horizon of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore and Ahmedabad and a large number of smaller cities in the country. DD replied to this "invasion from the sky" by opening the 5 Metro channels to Indian viewers from August 15, 1993. It also hopes to use the terrestrial links to further upgrade the coverage geographically. Multiplicity of channels has increased the choice for the viewers. The question always is as to which channel will win the audience—ratings race. It has been observed that a large majority of TV viewers seem to be convinced that the foreign-based TV channels, though better produced, are not culturally conducive to a large number of viewers.
2.9 FUTURE OF COMMUNICATION IN INDIA

It should be obvious by now that for an Indian approach to communication a sound knowledge of its philosophical, cultural and linguistic traditions is necessary. It is also necessary to go to Sanskrit, as it may provide us with a lot of materials on communication which could be of use to communicate to our people properly and effectively. It is only by undertaking such kind of studies and by relating these to the demands of modern life that we will be able to re-cast and reframe our whole outlook towards communication concepts, norms and beliefs.

In this connection, we have to look at the trends in characteristic of the highly industrialised west and particularly of the USA. There, the art and science of communication have been mastered, but because of a highly materialistic focus, who are losing the true purpose of communication is lost sight of in their eagerness to consume more, and provide themselves with more free time and leisure, the listener has unleashed a Frankensteinian unstoppable momentum to the growth of sophisticated technology. The wisdom of the East, from India and China, may help them to reframe their communication priorities.

It is a matter of concern, that the lure of technology is creating a wide gap among various communities and classes in Indian society. We require to prioritize our use of technology, particularly those needs related to the socio-cultural and linguistic demands. According to many scholars, catering to this large number of people with diverse needs has become a problem. Faced with the spectre of proliferating communication technology, India is on the threshold of a giant leap forward.
Just acquisition of communication technology may not help the Indian society. India has used a lot of communication technology in almost five decades since Independence. But the increase in the use of modern technology for development did not make our communication better. Analysis reveals that during this process of modernisation, very powerful political and economic forces have gained control over the communication system. This in turn has led to either distortion, discrimination or even total obstruction of the communication flow from and to the grassroot level. This has not only resulted in cultural erosion, but at the same time has pushed large masses of people below the poverty line of information. This needs to be guarded against. India with its teeming millions cannot afford to sustain an imbalanced system of communication. We have communicated with our people for so long through the oral tradition, now, let us not destroy this tradition.

Check Your Progress 5

Note:

i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Mention three reasons why Doordarshan and All India Radio are having negative impact on audiences.

2) How can the cable TV help in education? Mention two advantages.

2.10 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the Indian concept of communication as embodied in its sacred scriptures. In the vedic texts great Indian heritage and culture are enshrined. We have traced the evolution of the oral tradition—the word-of-mouth communication—that epitomized the cohesive and unified nature of Indian society, despite its myriad languages, dialects, diverse cultures, and philosophical systems.

We have also traced the transition of this 5000-year old civilisation into the modern industrialized one. We have discussed how technology, guided by consumerism, and sustained by the modern mass media, has brought about a profound change in our society. This transition has not been easy. Initially the print media, followed by radio, film and TV, have provided impetus to development efforts in India after independence. But the shape of modern communication systems have created more problems than solved existing them. One such problem is the division of the Indian Society into two classes—the information “haves” and “have-nots”. These two classes have parallel existence in our society.

We also explained to you the impact of modern mass media, on the society and discussed their influence on the Indian-Communication system. Indian communication system has its roots in the age-old Sadharanikaran, evolved by Bharata Muni in his Natya Shastra. An Indian approach needs to be evolved in keeping with our great traditions enshrined in the doctrines of Vedanta, Vaishnavism, Bhakti cult, and Sufism. The best of modern communication technology has to be tempered by the wisdom of the Indian traditional values.
2.11 FURTHER READING


2.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The communication technologies developed at a galloping pace in this century, particularly after the IIInd World War. The application of these technologies and the usages produced a lot of literature. And this literature assumed a distinct character which reflected the various aspects of communication. Soon, these aspects were recognised as a very important phenomenon in our society and categorised as ‘communication’.

2) In India, we have been communicating with each other since thousands of years. In the process, we have developed a distinct way of communicating among ourselves using symbols, language, idioms, expressions both verbal and non-verbal, etc. These are very important to the whole process of communication.

Check Your Progress 2

1) In India, philosophy and religion are interlinked and religion is very much alive among people. Therefore, a good orientation in Indian religion and philosophy would help a communicator to communicate well and effectively with the people.
   - Indian tradition and religion help people to be aware and to acquire self knowledge. Knowledge of this characteristics would help a communicator to communicate well.
   - The words and languages we use in our daily life have originated from religious scriptures and philosophical books. A good grasp of these scriptures and books would help the communicators to bring in appropriate meaning to whatever they communicate.
   - Knowledge of Indian religion, tradition and culture will give a communicator the typical context for the communication.

2) Western communication models have been devised to influence the receiver.
   - These models do not give enough importance to the contexts of communication.

Check Your Progress 3

1) ‘Sadharanikaran’ helps the receiver of communication to be emotionally at par with the communicator. The Communicator simplifies the whole process and content of communication. Therefore, simplicity makes the communication very effective.

2) In Western communication model, the source and the receiver treat each other as equals. But in our model, as explained in the text, the source is always considered higher than the receiver. Therefore, in this eastern model hierarchical relations in communication always exist.
3) The hierarchical relationship between the source and the receiver got deeply rooted in the social system. This gave rise to the stratification of the society. And this stratification later on became permanent in the caste system.

Check Your Progress 4
1) • Spread of literacy
   • Increase in the level of education of women
   • Breaking down of religious superstitions and myths
   • Mobility of the members in the society.
2) • Trustworthiness—as the people come to know the information from their near and dear ones.
   • Simplicity of language and local colours
   • The problem of illiteracy is nonexistent.

Check Your Progress 5
1) • They toe the line of the government as they are under the full control of Information and Broadcasting Ministry.
   • They have failed to address the needs of large number of people
   • They do not feel the need to improve as they have total monopoly on the broadcasting industry.
2) • Cable TV operates in a small and particular area. Therefore, after assessing the education needs, it can serve the small audience well.
   • The feedback mechanism can be implemented and assessment of the effect of the programmes can be quick and less expensive.
   • It is also cheap and easy to operate.