UNIT 18 COMMUNICATION: CONCEPT AND PROCESS

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18.0 INTRODUCTION

What exactly is communication? The word is derived from the Latin word 'communis' which means 'to make common'. Communication, at the simplest level, involves understanding what someone conveys and means and in turn making someone else understand what you mean. However, for communication to take place, it is important for some basic understanding to exist, which is possible only when the two people feel and think about that subject on common lines. The more the commonness between two people, the better their communication gets. In the parlance of communication, the person who sends a message or communicates is called Sender/ Source and the one who receives it is called the Receiver. A well-known media expert, Denis McQuail in his book "Mass Communication Theory" defined communication as:

"The process that increases commonality but also requires elements of commonality to occur at all."

Many social scientists have attempted to define communication from different perspectives. One of the oldest and most widely quoted one is from a western political scientist, Harold Lasswell (1948) who posed some questions the answers to which would have communication defined. He described it as:

"Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?"

Channel here stands for the medium of communication which may be language, book or even a mass medium like radio, television or newspaper. The effect is the common understanding that communication aims at building. According John C. Merrill and Ralph L. Lowenstein, communication is:

"A meeting of minds, a bringing about of a common set of symbols in the minds of participants – in short, an understanding."

18.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- Analyze communication, its process and need;
- Development of communications media;
- Differentiate between conventional and new media; and
- Interpret how the media plays a role in social construction of reality.

18.2 UNDERSTANDING OF DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS

Communication is as important a need for all living beings as is food and shelter. And all living beings invariably communicate within their community, be it the evening call of the birds to return back to their homes or barking of dogs in protest when a non-member enters their territory or the dance of the honeybees to convey to other members where nectar can be found. For human beings too, this is a natural individual and social need as man is a social animal. No normal human being can exist in isolation, irrespective of his age, gender and interests.

18.2.1 Communication Process

Communication leads to creation of meaning that gets shared between the participants as a continuous, cyclic process. What the sender shares with the receiver is knowledge or information based on his own individual experiences. What the sender understands as an outcome of those experiences is what he further conveys to the receiver. So, one common functional definition for communication can be:

"*A cyclic process of sharing of experiences between two or more participants*"

This brings us to the process of communication. The process of communication involves four basic elements – the sender (S), the message (M), the channel (C) and the receiver (R) – what is also called the SMCR model of communication. The representation below (Fig.18.1) indicates how communication which takes place in a cyclic process:

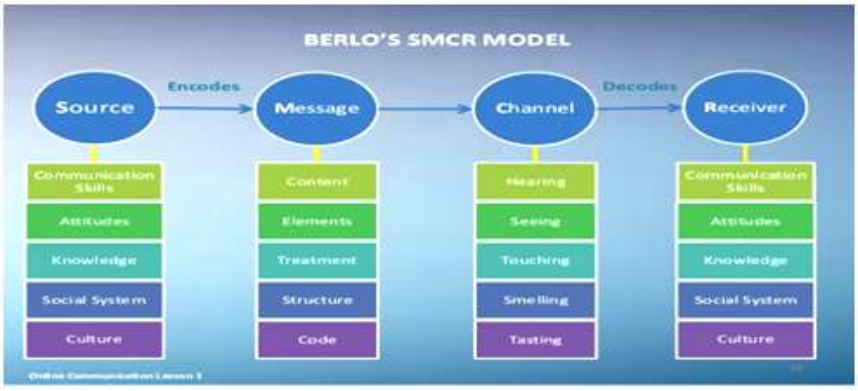

Fig. 18.1 Interaction models of communication

https://etechmethod.wordpress.com/2016/10/11/berlos-smcr-model-of-communication/

The sender initiates communication by sending a message and the receiver or the audience is/are the one(s) who receives it, message is the actual content that the sender desires to convey and channel is the medium of conveying that message. Channel, the medium of conveying the message can be mass media, language, gestures, body language, signs and symbols. When the sender sends a message through some channel to the receiver, the receiver decodes that message in his brain, makes meaning out of it (interpreting) and then encodes the response of that message in his mind and conveys it back to the sender. This process of conveying back is called feedback, an important component in the process of communication. Feedback indicates whether what has been understood is what the source/sender meant or is it different from the source's understanding. While receiving the feedback, the sender becomes the receiver and the receiver becomes the sender.

18.2.2 Effective Communication

A communication is considered effective if it produces the desired results. For example, if a political leader through his speech is able to motivate the electorate to cast their votes for him, his communication may be termed as effective. Alternately, a child tends to take the warning or instructions of his parents or teachers seriously but will not listen to a stranger. His parents' communication to him is effective but the latter is not. From both the examples it is clear that it is the relationship between the source and the receiver that communicates, it is this factor that decides how the meaning would be interpreted at the receiver's end. The perception of the source by the receiver or the trust factor that exists in their relationship decides how positively the receiver would respond to the source's message. Any communication is called effective if the meaning of the message interpreted by the receiver is the same as that desired by the sender. The effectiveness of the message would be clear from whether or to what extent any desired behavioral change is brought about in the receiver. This is also termed as feedback which can be in words and/or actions. The response that a communication message emanates in the receiver is termed as feedback. Feedback may be positive, negative or neutral. When an employee continues to come late to office despite repeated reminders, it is a negative feedback as the communication is not having the desired response on the employee. When a student makes all efforts to meet the assignment deadlines of a teacher, it is a positive feedback as it is the result of the high regard the student may have towards the teacher and hence the teacher's communication is termed effective. When a voter does not exercise his right to vote, leave alone voting in favour of or against a political leader, then it is called a neutral feedback as the communication did not have any effect on him.

18.2.3 Barriers to Communication

There are certain barriers to communication which may hinder its effectiveness. These may be of varied types:

- Communicating to the receiver at a wrong/inconvenient time.
- The message communicated is distorted (i.e. change in the meaning of the message due to noise) some reason. Noise is termed as the change

that is introduced in the message so that its meaning does not remain what was intended by the source. Information overload is yet another barrier as every individual has a limited attention span during which he/she is receptive to communication messages.

Besides technical barriers, there are also language and psychological barriers to communication. Language barriers may be of two kinds:

- Vocabulary (use of difficult words that the receiver may not understand)
- Semantics (when the meaning of the message is not clear to the audience or what the audience understands is different from what the source meant).
- Psychological barriers may include these factors:
- Noise: Sometimes when the student in the class is thinking of an India-Pakistan cricket match that is to take place that evening, what the teacher is talking may be noise to him. Alternatively, any disturbance in the frequency of a radio channel can create disturbance and the audience may not be able to hear what is being broadcast.
- Perception set differences: Over a period of time, individuals build a certain tendency to perceive a message in a certain way. For example, some people believe what advertisements claim about a certain product as their experiences with it may be positive. Alternately, there may be others who may not believe such messages as their experiences with the same product/ service may not be satisfactory. This tendency is called perception set. Due to differences in experiences, value systems, beliefs and social realities of individuals, differences in perception set will always exist due to which a message may not have the same effect on all individuals.
- Lack of trust and jealousy: These may also be the reasons why a message may not have the desired effect on the audience.
- Information filtering: The receivers have a tendency to accept only those messages that they find are of interest to them or reinforce the notions and beliefs that they already have. They filter such information and leave out the rest thereby becoming another psychological barrier.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: 1) Use the spaces given below for your answers.

2) Check your answer with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Describe the process of communication.

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2) Explain the barriers to communication.

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18.3 DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION MEDIA

When there were less communication and communication channels in the society, people lived on the basis of equality as there was no hierarchy among people.

Later, those who controlled the channels of communication emerged stronger while the others were weak. With changing times and technology, the communications media developed as people realised the subtle though strong effect media could have in influencing public opinion. In the earlier societies, it was the number of women a man had that determined his status in the society. Later, the number of cattle one owned was indicative of one's status. Even later, it was how much land one had that determined it and then it was the riches that counted most. These stages of societal development on the basis of economic development are identified as:

- **Pre agricultural societies:** There were small communities that existed with mostly spoken words as their means of communication and comprised of hunters and food gatherers.
- **Agricultural societies:** People practiced agriculture to earn their living, writing came into being and these were more developed societies with a complex social structure. But a huge chunk of the population still remained illiterate.
- **Industrial societies:** This was the machine age and was marked by the publication of Gutenberg's Bible in as early as 1455. This drastically improved the speed of book printing that was earlier copied by hand, by the use of movable metal type. Mass production became the mantra and industrial production was centered in cities which led to huge migration of people from rural to urban areas. Jobs in these industries became more important than farming.
- **Information society:** The second half of 1900s saw the emergence of information societies primarily in the United States. But from the second half of the century till its end, most economies of the world had drifted towards it because of which media became much more important than before. One important invention of the time was computers that became the main tool to handle information, its creation, processing and distribution.

Today information is power. Those who have better sources of information are more resourceful and stronger in society; they are the opinion leaders and are listened to while others do not wield such a control. The information society has also seen different conventional media forms merging together into one, thus becoming cheaper, more accessible and faster. The conventional media forms that comprised different communication technologies merged together into a computer readable digital form. The earlier technologies were analogous or linear in nature while digital technologies could be stored and used in any format and were easy to use. This process of merging of technologies to give better output of more than one conventional media technology is called 'convergence'. For example, a mobile phone serves the purpose of a phone as well as a computer as emails can be accessed on it and the internet can be browsed. Also, a computer acts as television as channels can be accessed on it. Television and computers on the other hand have made DVD players outdated. All these examples show how the output of more than one technology can be had from a more compact and cheaper technology. Also these technologies are interactive which makes feedback an inclusive process of communication. It enables the improvement of messages. This fast exchange of information through cyber networks has led to coining of the term information superhighway irrespective of the communication objective which may be social networking, e commerce, e governance or professional communication.

Before we delve further into this discussion of the twenty-first century technology, let us take a view of the characteristic features of conventional media that dominated the communication media scene for long and the new media that has lately emerged.

- **Newspapers:** The ancestors of newspapers were called Corantos which were news sheets that were published as long back as 1620s in England and Holland with irregular periodicity. Later, around 1640s, Diurnals appeared in England that were dailies publishing reports on domestic events. They were the actual ancestors of the newspapers we see today. At present, we have two formats in which newspapers appear: broadsheets (for example, The Indian Express, The Times of India) and tabloids (for example Mail Today and Mint). Broadsheets are the morningers that carry hard news and opinions based on them while most tabloids are evenings or evening papers that are more of news magazines or feature newspapers. While broadsheets come up with fresh news, tabloids carry features and detailed stories based on them. While the advantage of newspapers is that they sell cheap, they can reach out only to the literate section of the population. Over the last six to seven years, a lot of experimentation has been done in Indian newspapers from reducing their sizes in order to make them portable to dividing them into as many sections as can be covered in order to cater to maximum number of readers. Innovations are also brought out to market them as a product and as a viewpoint. While their circulation is dying out in the West, in India, they are soaring high.

- **Magazines:** The earliest magazine was published in England in the 1730s. Though they primarily focused on politics, they were then called

miscellanies as they carried a wide variety of contents. In the later part of the 1800s, magazines made efforts for popularising magazine reading. And there was a widespread growth due to increase in literacy, reduced costs to ensure greater sales and because in that era of industrialisation, more and more businesses wanted a platform to put forth their advertisements and publicity messages. Today, magazines are generally classified into general interest and special interest magazines. The first category is of those magazines that cover a number of subjects to cater to wider masses (for example, India Today, Outlook) and the second category is the one that caters to a niche audience (for example, Better Photography, National Geographic and Business World). Most newspaper groups own the magazines that one generally sees on the newsstands. The reason that when the ad flow increases the newspaper's capacity to publish also increases. Newspaper groups come up with sister concerns in the form of magazines that have longer shelf life and hence make advertisement publication a costlier affair.

- **Radio:** Radio was first invented by an Italian named Marconi in the 1890s. He is called the 'Father of Radio'. Broadcasting, or transmitting voices and music to a geographically separated large audience had begun through the telephone itself which was invented by Alexander Graham Bell before the advent of radio. That is when radio became a mass medium. In India, the first license for transmitting a broadcast was given in February 1922 while the AIR was formed in June 1936. The most important time in the history of radio was during the Second World War when this medium of addressing the masses became immensely significant. This was because the Nazis in Germany used it for propaganda and by playing German music which would give an impression that they had conquered the areas where the music was played, they could damage the morale of their rival forces. FM broadcasts first started in Chennai (then Madras) in 1977 and in Jalandhar (Punjab) in 1992. Private players came into the picture only in 1993. Radio later developed into a youth medium. Today, radio's approach is more local in nature, right from giving traffic updates to playing popular music. The advantage of this medium is that it is mobile, does not require reading ability and can be enjoyed without demanding sole attention on the medium itself (unlike television). These days, the emergence of community radio is seen in large numbers which makes more specialized programmes for a niche audience.

- **Television**: Television first started developing in the 1920s and 1930s. After the printing press, television is considered to be the most important communication invention. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, television had become a part of life in most of the developed countries. In India, television was introduced with the objective of bringing about development in the year 1959. By 1970, the content on TV included news, information and entertainment programmes including 'Krishi Darshan' which began in January 1967 for farmers in 80 villages. Commercials were first telecast in January 1976. Today, the number of television channels in India outnumber the time one can afford to spend

watching them even once a week. The race for TRPs (Television Rating Points) which decide the popularity of a TV show or a channel is of prime importance as it directly affects the ad revenue that the channel earns. In fact, for the very reason, channels do not mind compromising on work ethics or building an agenda for public discussion for their vested interests. 24 hour news channels have become a reality with no sanctity of what should be called news. In fact, television creates reality that may sometimes not be real. For example, the portrayal of superwomen in Indian media- one who can single handedly carry out all tasks in personal, professional and social life without faltering at any point of time is the one who is termed the ideal Indian modern woman.

- **Cinema:** The earliest cinema was a portrayal of real event shots in motion without any sound, story line or plot. They were just black and white larger than life size silent scenes that first came up as early as 1896. The first Indian movie is said to be 'Raja Harishchandra' which too was a silent movie made in the year 1913 by one of the pioneers of Indian cinema, Dadasaheb Phalke. The first talkie (film that could talk) in India was Alam Ara made in 1931. In the years to come, regional cinema also flourished. Contemporary films have not just remained a form of art for its lovers to delight in, they have also started taking up contemporary issues which makes for both entertainment and food for thought. The relationship of cinema with society is very complex. It has been found to have an effect on the psychology of the audience while the degree of audience acceptability has varied from one film to another looking at their experimental nature and low investments over the past four to five years. While romance, comedy and depiction of real life situations click with the audience most of the time while horror films are much less accepted. The Central Board of Film Certification in India looks into matters of what can go to the larger masses and what may disturb their sensibilities. Following a certain 'Code of Ethics,' they either allow or censor objectionable scenes in a film. Also, based on whether they can affect the minds of the more impressionable section of the society, the films are certified as 'U' or universal (meant for all age groups) and 'A' or adult (meant for people only above 18 years of age).

- **Folk media:** This medium has been alive in our society since ancient times and has been used for conveying political, social and moral messages. The advantage of such a medium is that it is personalised (members of the same community perform it) and is used where the audience fully accepts it which makes the communication effective. It relates to all age groups of people and is inexpensive. Mainly confined to rural India, this is special in every part of the country. For example, Tamasha and Pawala in Maharashtra, Yakshagana in Karnataka, Jatra in Bengal, Bhavai in Gujarat and Nautanki, Ramlila and Raslila in the northern states of India. They may be satirical or sharp in their messages sometimes but are efficient tools of communication. Many NGOs also make use of these forms considering how powerful a medium it is. Government bodies in rural areas also make use of folk media to pass on health or agriculture or any other development issue related messages

that are smartly imbibed in traditional folk songs, dances and mythological stories. That is what makes it a powerful tool of development communication.

So far we discussed the conventional media; the new media is the internet. Let's see how it has revolutionised the world.

- **Internet:** The first calculator, 'abacus' was the predecessor of the computer which was first used by Egyptians in 460 B.C. Some scholars also mention the Chinese abacus. Charles Babbage, an Englishman is called the father of computer who first produced designs for a computer that could make calculations based on stored memory. The internet as we know it today has fast developed to replace and merge most communication devices and technologies. Today, they are used in educational institutions, commercial and business organisations, government departments, international organisations and the defence sector. But these are the major sectors, it has made its inroads even into the lives of most individuals and made them have an internet identity. Virtual reality has almost become literal with the kind of involvement it has in our day to day lives. It has most evident advantages but also perils that stand out from the rest. While social networking has helped in building interpersonal connections in far and distant lands for personal and professional reasons without spending as much as a penny, it has also led to anti-social and aggressive behavior on the net. For example, writing hate mails about personalities, organisations and religions, defaming and harassing people by posting morphed photographs or posting nasty things by hacking their accounts and different kinds of cyber crimes like hacking bank accounts and even child molesters contacting children through chat rooms. Whatever its dangers, the internet has taken the world by storm and there is no stopping it. Moreover, as referred to earlier, each individual conventional medium has computer related technology to operate it. As all TV and radio has turned to digital from analogous, printing has become cheaper by the aid of computers in the form of desktop printing. Newspapers and magazines use computers for designing and editing, there are e books and e music available at the click of a mouse and films and videos use this technology too.

  So far, we have understood what mass communication means, how mass media developed and what are the special features and characteristics of different media forms, both conventional and new media. Now let us analyse the conventional and contemporary views of mass media.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: 1) Use the spaces given below for your answers.

2) Check your answer with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) What are the different types of communication?

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2) Information is power-elaborate.

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3) Identify the different media categories.

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18.4 ROLE OF MEDIA AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Media were earlier instrumental in creating public opinion the way they desired and continue to influence it in contemporary times as well. Media cannot be counted as less powerful even now. There are certain changes that media bring about in a subtle manner which the audience does not consciously realise until the society where these media operate is high on the media literacy scale. Unfortunately for India, this is not the case. There are a number of reasons for this such as varying demographics, cultures, religions, buying capacities, exposure levels, et al. But before that, let us try and understand what social construction of reality means and how the media create it.

Social construction of reality is the portrayal of reality presented to the audience as the media see it. It is a kind of distorted reality presented by the media with a certain agenda to promote, be it in terms of profit making through sensationalism, certain portrayal of a given section of the society or stereotyping modern women by some pre-defined moral and cultural societal values and norms. To understand this better, consider a few examples. A number of advertisements on the Indian television channels talk about fairness creams and their measurable effectiveness for both men and women in order to help them look attractive. Unconsciously, fairness has become one of the parameters of beauty in India. Media have promoted it and people have, due to the subtle influence that message reinforcement creates over the years, accepted it for generations now. Let us look at some more examples. A modern Indian woman is pictured in the media as one who is more of a

superwoman – one who handles the responsibilities of the family and profession successfully and errorless, she cooks well, dresses well and wins over in board meetings, she is morally upright, and she is a loving mom and a dutiful housewife and never falters in any role. Such a portrayal is never practically possible but Indian media depicts her as a blend of traditionalism and modernity and this is how a modern Indian woman is perceived by the public at large. This perceived reality through which the media give role models to society or create images of different realities is the social construction of reality. We call it 'social' construction because we as a culture believe it to be true. That is why media theorists believe that 'reality is not what is real, reality is what is perceived.' Communication consists of signs and symbols. Communication scientists believe that while objective meanings are attached to symbols, for example, a red light at a traffic signal means the same to everyone, signs are more complex to comprehend as they may mean differently to different people. They have subjective meanings.

Media Literacy

In order to understand the construction of reality by media, people need to understand the concept and process of Media Literacy.

Media Literacy refers to an analytical and informed understanding of the messages given by different forms of media – print, audio, video or any other – both at the surface-level and at the deeper-level. At the surface-level understanding, it focuses on the direct or 'obvious' messages the media is trying to give. When we discuss about deeper-level understanding of media, it focuses on the underlying meaning of the messages given, while taking into consideration who has constructed the message, with what intention, using which channel and for what effect.

Media Literacy focuses on recognizing the role that audiences play in deriving meaning from the messages given by media. It is important to note that Media Literacy is not about bashing the media or looking at the media from a single perspective. Rather, it promotes building a holistic perspective by examining the techniques, technologies, and institutions involved in media production.

Just like traditional literacy, it includes the ability to both read and write, i.e., the ability to comprehend which leads to the ability to create, design and produce. It moves from just understanding information to critically questioning, analyzing, and evaluating the information.

Center for Media Literacy, Los Angeles, USA describes three stages which can ultimately lead to media empowerment of a person. The stages describe the process of becoming media literate in order to comprehend the meaning of the messages shared by different forms of media. The stages are explained as follows:

- **Stage 1** - Becoming Aware of Media Choices: The process begins with people recognizing and understanding the kind of media they consume. In this stage, the person not only identifies the kind of media they consume, but the channel, the content and the source through which they

consume it. It further helps the person take a decision about which media should they consume more and which media should they not consume or consume less of.

- **Stage 2 -** Building Skills for Critical Thinking: Taking the process forward, people learn the process of analyzing the message and its construction, questioning the intention of the message design, what content has been included and most importantly, what content has been left out from the message given. These skills can be learnt best when people construct their own messages as well as when discussions are held with different people to understand their different perspectives.

- **Stage 3** - Analysing Deeper Issues: Further in the process, the third stage explores the deeper issues that may not be visible directly to the people who consume media. These include questioning the ownership of the organisations who construct media and the stakeholders involved in this decision. It focuses on who gains and losses from the way the media message has been presented. Using a socio-eco-political lens to analyse the media message helps people gain perspective about the wide range of impact that the media message can have on individuals, communities, society, the nation and the world at large.

Media Literacy essentially explains that all media messages are constructed to gain profit and/or power using a distinctive language with its own rules. Different people may experience the same messages differently. Media has embedded values and points of view. To unfold the reality it constructs for us, it is essential for people to be media literate. *The following key concepts are essential to adapt and internalize Media Literacy as a way of living in everyone's life:*

- **All media and its messages are constructed** – The messages we receive from any form of media is designed and developed by someone else. These media messages are constructed in a specific way for the purpose set by the media production team and owners. The construction of the message helps in setting a narrative of how the particular issue needs to be communicated to the public at large. Media Literacy builds skills in people to deconstruct these constructions by media, so as to understand the 'real' meaning behind the message.

- **Media constructs the reality we know –**The messages constructed by the media are further responsible for the narrative that is set in the public's eye regarding the issue at hand. The majority of the observations and experiences which help people in building a perspective about the world and how it works are highly derived from media. The concept of 'reality' is hugely dependent on media messages which are pre-constructed to have set attitudes, interpretations and conclusions. Media Literacy helps in realizing that there could be another 'reality' that exists and further encourages people to find different perspectives and the different 'realities' that come with it.

- **Consumers of media interpret their meaning from the media** –Media message and its construction pre-determines the interpretations and conclusions that audiences may draw from the message received. But, with this, the consumers or the audience in itself also derive meaning from the message received based on their own culture, identity and biases. The individual factors that can affect these decisions include personal needs, opinions, experiences, attitudes, family, cultural background and overall perspective in life. Media Literacy helps putting to perspective the biases that are pre-existing in people's minds as they consume and interpret a media message.

- **Media has commercial implications –**Messages given through various media do have commercial implications. Any kind of media production is a business with a clear objective of making a profit. The people who own these media are in control of what needs to be communicated, in which manner, through which channel, at what time, to whom and with what treatment. It is important to note that it is a relatively small number of individuals who control the content one consumes – through watching it, reading it or hearing it over any form of media. Media Literacy aims to make people aware about the influence of business ownership on the content, technique and distribution of the message.

- **Media has social and political implications –** As for commercial implications, similarly, media messages do have social and political implications. Media has a high influence on politics and on forming social change. On the other hand, control of political parties and certain social sections on the media leads to propagation of a one-sided or biased perspective of a situation, mostly what the people with power want the public to know. Here, media has a dual role of subversion – getting subverted itself or subverting the ones in the power. Media Literacy focuses on popularizing and deconstructing the role of politics and society in the way people perceive media and its messages.

- **Media includes ideology and value-based messages** –Media promotes certain ideologies or values, either directly or indirectly. The media messages received by people often have indirect ways of conveying ideological messages about varied social issues such as nature of a good life, role of women in society, gender variability, caste and class differences in society, etc. Media Literacy puts in focus the fact that people are constructing their own values and ideologies in life (apart from commercial, social and political implications) through their consumption of different forms of media.

- **Different treatments used to frame the same content** –Each medium has its own grammar and constructs the message keeping in mind their ideologies and loyalties. It is often seen that the same event is being reported in two completely different ways which further creates different impressions and perspectives, essentially creating different messages from the same event. Media Literacy helps build skills in understanding, identifying and analyzing these different perspectives and the reasons in the varying messages delivered by media.

- **Each media has a unique aesthetic form –** We have plenty of kinds of media available to us in order to consume content. Each of these media has a specific format, advantage, limitation and impact on the consumer. Thus, Media Literacy aims at making people understand why a particular media was chosen to deliver what kind of content.

  When we talk about communication, it is essential for public at large to understand how media works. People need to feel comfortable in asking questions about what they read, hear and see in and around them. They need to know and have a sense of who owns what and the kind of implications it has on how much we see as an audience; more importantly how much do we not see. Lastly, it ultimately helps people in becoming confident in using different media devices and channels for communicating different kind of content through media messages.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: 1) Use the spaces given below for your answers.

2) Check your answer with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) What do you understand by media convergence?

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2) How do you view the media construction of reality?

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3) What do you understand by the term 'Media Literacy'?

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18.5 LET US SUM UP

Media never promised to work for philanthropy though they were created to be socially responsible. It remained on us, the audience to stay aware of the kind of content that it was offering and select/ reject it collectively. Initially, the statesmen of the country wanted to see the media strong on both national

and regional levels as the objectives for which they were planned were different. But once this entity became powerful, it diverted its focus to suit its needs. Now the society looks for someone with whom the buck would rest. But, the truth is that nobody can/will solely shoulder the responsibility. Only the audience denouncing malpractices of the media and introducing synthetic value systems in Indian society can bring about a change in what is being served to the audience in the name of news, entertainment and role models. Change always takes long and is never easy. The future holds hope. What remains to be seen is whether or not our media with the people would be able to meet the challenge.

18.6 KEYWORDS

Communication: Exchange of information

Conventional media: Media like newspapers, magazines radio and television

Convergence: Combining of technologies to make it consumer-friendly in the media market

New media: Internet based media

Mediated reality: Media construction of reality that is different from what exists in the society

Media Literacy: analytical and informed understanding of the messages given by different forms of media

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18.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The sender sends the message to a receiver through a channel. When the receiver transmits his reaction to the sender it is called feedback. The communication can be verbal or non-verbal.

2) The barriers to effective communication are: Inconvenient timing, information overload, Technical issues in the form of physical noise, language- vocabulary and semantics and psychological noise in the form of perceptual differences, lack of trust, jealousy and information filtering.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The different types of communication are intra-personal, interpersonal, group and mass communication.

2) People who have better sources of information are more resourceful, rich and strong in any society for that matter. They wield power and control. Others respect them

3) The conventional media are newspapers and magazines, radio and television besides cinema and folk media. The new media are internet-based media platforms. The other classifications are: Print media- newspapers and magazines, electronic media- radio and television, in addition to folk media and new media. Often films fall into their own category.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Convergence means merging of technologies and producing more than one kind one different kind of output. It makes the media content use simple and the media market consumer friendly. The mobile phone can be your radio, TV and internet besides being a phone.

2) Social construction of reality means the portrayal of reality presented to the audience the way the media looks at it. It can be a distorted reality presented by the media with a certain agenda to promote. The agenda can be to make more profit through sensationalism or it can be stereotyping of certain classes of society.

3) Media Literacy refers to an analytical and informed understanding of the messages given by different forms of media – print, audio, video or any other – both at the surface-level and at the deeper-level. At the surface-level understanding, it focuses on the direct or 'obvious' messages the media is trying to give. When we discuss about deeper-level understanding of media, it focuses on the underlying meaning of the messages given, while taking into consideration who has constructed the message, with what intention, using which channel and for what effect.

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