UNIT 26 MODES OF COMMUNICATION

Structure

26.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Unit, you have studied the role of mass media in national development. In this Unit, we shall describe various means of mass communication in their historical perspective and also the role that technology has played in making media available to the vast masses of our country. We shall also discuss the impact of information technology on culture; as well as in the social and economic spheres.

Information plays a very important role in international relations. With proper communication between peoples of different countries, information can be an instrument of understanding and sharing of knowledge. However, the collection and dissemination of information is, today, in the hands of a few international firms, leading to unequal sharing of information. Hence, the need for a New World Information and Communication Order, which would make it possible to have a balanced and equitable sharing of information between the developed and the developing countries. Taking note of the relevance of the 'New Order' in our own context, we would discuss how we could improve our national communication order, leading to better understanding between different groups and sections of people, and to the emergence of a composite culture.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to :

- understand the historical perspective in which these media grew and their role and effectiveness in the Indian context,
- describe the role of technology in mass communication,
- appreciate the impact of information technology in socio-economic and cultural spheres,
- realise the importance of balanced and equitable sharing of information and the relevance of New World Information and Communication Order.

26.2 MASS COMMUNICATION

The well-known exponent of the role of mass media in development, Dr. Wilbur Schramm, who headed a team of experts to advise the development of infrastructure of information in

India and the establishment of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication had a meeting with our first Prime Minister, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, in 1962. Later, Schramm described the meeting in these words: *"This was on an afternoon when Mr. Nehru was relaxed, happy. He asked me, By the way what is this mass communication? I do not think I understand it very well' and I said 'But Mr. Prime Minister, you are the chief mass communicator of India'. I mentioned the crowds of hundreds of thousands, books and broadcasting. He threw back his head and laughed, 'Oh that' and said, 'I guess I do know something about it'. Nehru poked fun at the electronic system, the loud-speakers that would not work or go out of order before half of his long speeches were over. Then he said something that I never forgot. He said, "This will help us to talk together"*

Wilbur Schramm, later, underlined the words—*'this will help us to talk together'*. The words are important, because they bring out the meaning of inter-personal communication in Indian society and indicate the emergence of mass communication, i.e., communicating with a large number of people.

As you perhaps know, mass communication in India began without the use of electronic media, like radio and television. The beginning can be traced back to communication within a social group. For example, a village panchayat has been and continues to be a centre. Similarly, religious gatherings, whether at a place of worship or when organised on special occasions have, from time immemorial, functioned as centres of communication. Then, there are any number of fairs and melas where people in large numbers gather together to communicate on a variety of subjects (see fig. 26.1).

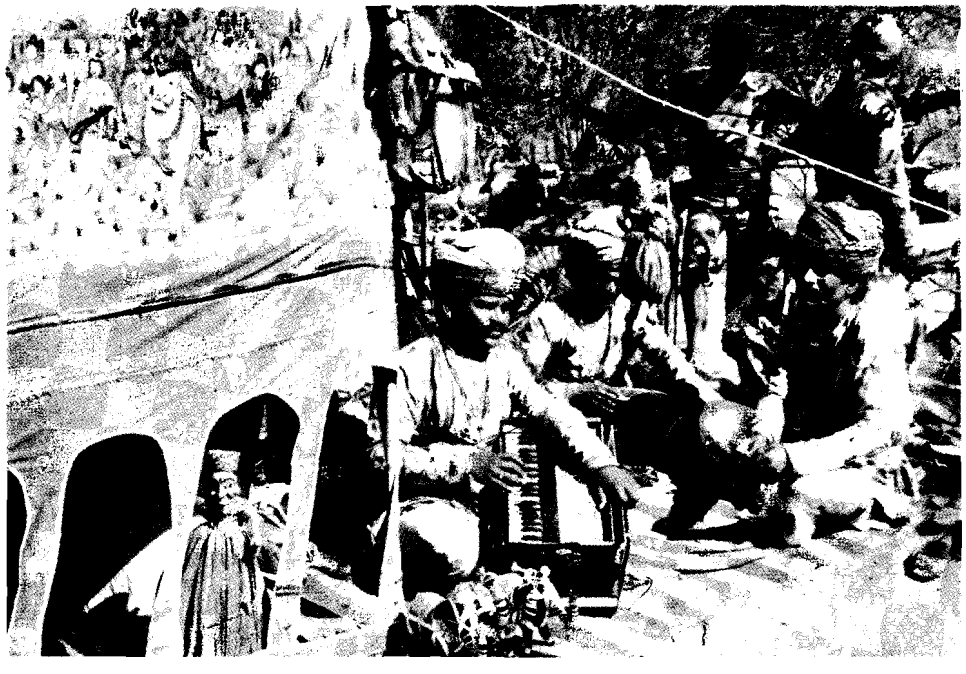

Fig. 26.1. A puppet show—traditional means of communication.

26.2.1 A Historical Perspective

Role of communication during our freedom struggle has been briefly discussed in the previous Unit. But it must be said here, that Gandhiji was the greatest communicator the country has produced. Those of us, who were there to attend some of his prayer meetings, will recall the influence his addresses at these meetings exercised on the minds of the people. He was not an impressive public speaker, in the conventional sense. He did not indulge in rhetorics, but used popular language. His language and idiom were the same, as of the ordinary people of India. He shared his thinking with his audience; he did not appear to impose his ideas. Above all, he spoke with conviction and with genuine concern for the welfare of all human beings. Sincerity and simplicity characterised his communication with the people. Gandhiji's message reached the length and breadth of the country. It may be recalled that during his **satyagraha**, Gandhiji was able to involve ordinary men and women from all walks of life. Take the 'Salt Satyagraha' in 1930. Salt is consumed in every home. When Gandhiji decided to launch a satyagraha against the tax on salt and to make salt from sea-water, it was a unique strategy in communication, of which there are few parallels in the world. The peoples' boycott of the British goods brought into sharp focus the economic and political aspirations of the people and strengthened their resolve to fight against the foreign rule.

SAQ 1

Classify the following as personal communication (P) or as mass communication (M).

i) Your discussion with your friend regarding the performance of India in a cricket test match. ☐

ii) Indira Gandhi National Open University sending study materials to the students. ☐

iii) Gandhiji's address in the prayer meeting. ☐

iv) Editorial of a newspaper. ☐

26.2.2 Media of Mass Communication Today

Today, while the inter-personal communication continues to play an important role in our country, we have a developed media system. In the media of mass communication, we have All India Radio, Doordarshan, newspapers and journals and films in various languages. A brief reference to the role of each medium may be in order.

All India Radio

All India Radio has had a history of nearly 60 years. Today with 91 broadcasting stations and 167 transmitters, AIR broadcasts can reach nearly 95 per cent of India's population. What is called the transistor revolution in early 60's, was largely responsible for expanding the effectiveness of radio broadcasting, because it made receivers cheaper and really portable. The daily programme output from all the transmitters is more than 15.00 hours a day, in all national languages and in many dialects. Programmes for women and the rural listeners are carried by more than 60 stations. A large number of stations broadcast special programmes for youth, children and other special groups. Since there is no licensing of radio sets now, an exact figure of the number of radio sets in the country is difficult to give. Perhaps the total number of radio sets in the country is around 50 million. It has been claimed on behalf of All India Radio, that the number of people listening to radio programmes is over 200 million (see fig. 26.2). The radio sets are comparatively

Fig 26.2: Even today the radio is one of the most effective and popular medium of communication.

inexpensive and for their operation they do not have to depend upon the availability of household power supply, many of them work on dry cells. All these factors make All India Radio as the most extensive medium of mass communication in the country.

Doordarshan

Doordarshan began only in 1959, as a small experimental set-up. It used to have only two programmes in a week for one hour every day. Till 1972, the only TV centre in the country

was in New Delhi, with a coverage of about 60 km. radius around the station. TV centres in Bombay, Srinagar and Amritsar came in 1973 and 1974. But the year 1975 turned out to be a land mark in the development of TV in India. Centres were set-up in Calcutta, Madras and Lucknow. More importantly, during this year, the satellite mode of transmission of TV programmes was first used in India. The idea was to transmit a TV programme to a satellite which appeared stationary to an observer on the earth; it went round the earth in the same period of 24 hours as the earth took to turn on its axis. The satellite received these programmes and transmitted them back to the earth so that large areas could receive them. Since the programmes were educational in content the whole arrangement was called the **Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE).** The programmes could be received by special sets installed in six states in the country with approximately 400 sets in each state. The states were: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Orissa, Gujarat and Rajasthan. An interesting feature was that the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was made responsible for the transmitters as well as for the setting up and maintenance of the sets. Since the whole experiment was carefully monitored, like a scientific experiment, many important things about the language, the presentation and the content of the programmes were learnt.

The next milestone in the expansion of TV was the coverage of the Asian Games in November 1982. In order to provide opportunities to people in several parts of the country to view the games, 20 low power transmitters were installed. Again a satellite was used to enhance the coverage. In the same year, Doordarshan started colour transmission for the first time. India's own multi-purpose satellite, INSAT-1B, was launched in August 1983. At the time of launching of the satellite, the then Prime Minister, late Mrs. Indira Gandhi said: "We are launching our satellite and developing our television network to take advantage of TV to entertain and enlarge awareness. Radio and Television, particularly in a national network are both ideal media to reinforce national integration. At the same time, they have immense potential to put new life into regional art forms. Communication poses a major challenge and opportunity to us. We need people of imagination to take this up" This, in a way, sums up the role assigned to the TV medium, to inform, educate and entertain, besides creating national awareness.

The availability of INSAT-1B and the use of low-power transmitters and direct broadcast receivers in some places determined the future TV expansion. In July 1983, the Government of India sanctioned a gigantic scheme for the expansion of the network involving 680 million rupees. Before the scheme was launched, there were only 45 TV transmitters, potentially covering 28 per cent of the population. The expansion plan raised the number to 180, and a potential coverage to above 70 per cent. By the end of the seventh Five Year Plan (1990) the number of transmitters and coverage will be further enhanced.

Films

Films are an important medium for communication. We produce over 800 films every year and are, probably, the largest producers of films in the world. The Films Division of the Government of India produces news reels, news magazines and documentary films, while commercial films are produced in the private sector. Commercial films claim to have social themes, but, in fact, most of them are entertainment, and that too of not a very high standard. Themes dealing with violence and sex in pictorial presentation may attract the audiences for the moment but do not bring about "a social change" or awareness. This may be a controversial statement and you can have your own views on this subject. However, there is yet another constraint in the effectiveness of films as a medium of mass communication and that is the limited number of cinema houses in the country. The number is estimated to be only 12,000. For a population of 800 million this is, indeed, very small.

Newspapers and Journals

Newspapers and journals have an important role in our communication system. The number of newspapers and periodicals in various languages was about 22 thousand in 1984 and their total circulation was about 6 million. However, there are two points to be considered in assessing the effectiveness of newspapers in communication. First, only the literate population can take advantage of the newspapers, even though in certain situations, the literate persons also share information with others. And, secondly, the reach of newspapers in distant and remote areas is restrained by problems of transportation etc. Circulation of newspapers is still largely confined to metropolitan towns and other urban centres. However, the credibility of the printed word in our society is very strong. People are more gullible than discerning in this respect. Also, the newspapers and journals are mostly free from government control and claim better acceptance by the people. This statement, can be

challenged because a number of newspapers indulge in sensational news and views which may attract the readers, but may not help them to understand news and views in a larger perspective. The essence of the matter is that whether it is radio listening, or TV viewing or newspaper reading, the receiver of the message, that is people in this case, has to have a critical judgement of its own.

SAQ 2

Choose any two media of mass communication described in the text. Discuss their advantages, and limitations.

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UNESCO stands for United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

26.2.3 Effective Media in the Indian Context

What then is the most effective and suitable system of information and communication in India? Perhaps a simple answer is that each medium should expand evenly to reach even more vast audiences, and besides providing entertainment, should have social relevance.

The view is important, because in the present spread of media, there are imbalances and inequalities. Certain regions are served better than the others. States like Bihar and Orissa, which are economically backward are also inadequately served by the media. There is a noticeable variation between the urban and the rural population. The media of mass communication are centred primarily in the urban areas. The number of radio and TV sets, newspapers and the films, all have a high concentration in towns. The rural population, i.e., 70 per cent of the population of India, have much less share in all these media. This is also the reason for an urban bias in the approach and content. A much higher percentage of programmes, writings and themes concern the urban population.

If we go by our experience, the ideal system of communication may be a combination between the media of mass communication and what has been referred to as inter-personal communication. Let us cite an example. AIR had launched a UNESCO sponsored experiment of Radio Rural Forum in the State of Maharashtra in 1956. Under this experiment, groups were organised in a number of villages. The groups or forums, as they were called, brought together some enterprising farmers to listen to the radio programmes especially designed for them by AIR, Pune. The participants discussed the contents and interacted among themselves. They sent their reactions to the broadcasting station. According to a study report, the most significant aspect of the experiment was *"the stirrings it aroused in the minds of the people and the ring of sincerity and the note of inquiry it lent to their voice"*. Organised group discussions, on an equal footing for all participants, were an entirely novel experience for these villagers. It was only after first two or three meetings, that the age-old convention was broken off, allowing only the elders and the so-called respectable persons to participate in discussions.

The stimulating atmosphere of group listening enabled the participants to assert their rights. The hundreds of decisions taken, the wells dug, the pure-bred bulls and Leghorns bought, the marketing societies and balwadis established, all bear witness to the effective role of the radio community forum.

The radio programmes were supported by discussions, as well as printed and visual materials on the same theme. The experiment was a great success. The conclusion, that a modern medium, supported by inter-personal communication and other aids like posters, slides etc., can be most effective, clearly stands out.

SAQ 3

Name two important factors which should be considered while choosing effective media of mass communication in our country.

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26.3 TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES IN MASS COMMUNICATION

Technology has contributed to major advances in mass communication. Let us see what was the state of communication in the past and what are the possibilities today.

26.3.1 State of Communication in the Past

Those of us who have experience of life in remote villages, far away from urban centres, are familiar with such features as poor roads which often become impassable during the rainy season,unreliable and irregular postal services, non-existence of telephone facilities and a very small number of individuals who can read and write. What could possibly be the communication links for such a village with the outside world? The answer would perhaps be, the radio and visits of extension workers. The radio is also not available in every household. In such a situation, it is not surprising, if the people turn inwards and become apathetic or even fatalistic about their economic and social life. Clearly, for a developing country like ours, this is not a very happy situation. Does this situation exist even now?

The scenario is undergoing change. Most of our villages have their own institutions like Panchayats and schools which sometimes function as community centres. A number of them may have the facility of a telephone connection and if they are electrified, they may have a TV set at the community centre or even in a few households. Even so, the traditional forms of communication like folk music or folk drama, and communication from person to person still dominate the communication system. These traditional media can also be utilised for economic development and social awakening.

26.3.2 Communication Revolution

It is in this background, that communication revolution is being ushered in our country. In the recent years, the rural people who have access to TV viewing, might have seen on the TV screen, Doordarshan's coverage of landing of man on the Moon. They are all too familiar with the Doordarshan's simultaneous transmission of national events like the Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations, i.e., they are watching the programme, at the same time, as the events are taking place in the national capital. But the viewers are scarcely aware of the transmission mode through satellite which makes such a thing possible.

Satellite

Satellite transmission is one important symbol of revolution in communication technology. Besides transmitting picture and sound over long distances, it has revolutionised telecommunication, telephone, telegraph etc. (Fig. 26.3). Already, from a number of towns in India, we can make long distance telephone calls not only to other towns within the country but also to several towns in other countries through direct dialling, i.e., without the help of a telephone operator. In fact, for remote places like Leh, Port-Blair and Aizwal

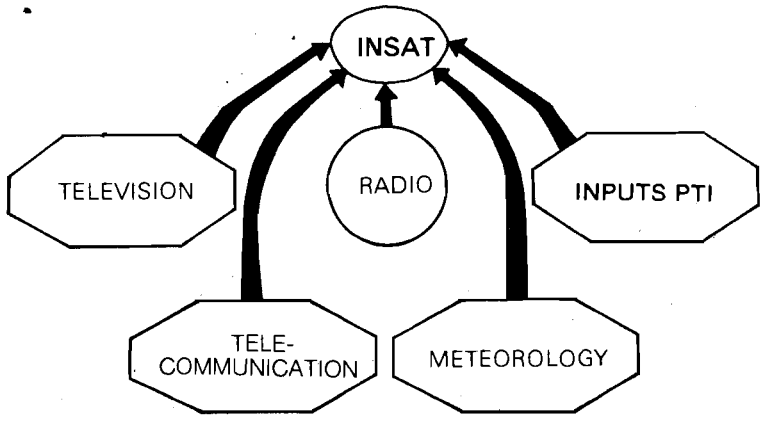

Fig. 26.3: INSAT-1 System Utilisation

which are separated by sea or difficult terrain, satellite transmission offers the only viable and feasible means of linkage. The Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) conducted in our country during 1975-76 was possible only with the help of an American satellite, but in 1978, Government of India decided to launch its own programme of

multi-purpose satellites for expanding the communication network in the entire country. INSAT-1A was launched in 1982, but it developed technical snags. INSAT-1B was then launched in 1983, and INSAT-1C in 1988. These satellites have been providing widespread coverage to the media, in addition to many other services like in the fields of meteorology, resource surveys, telecommunication, and research etc. (Fig. 26.4; 26.5)

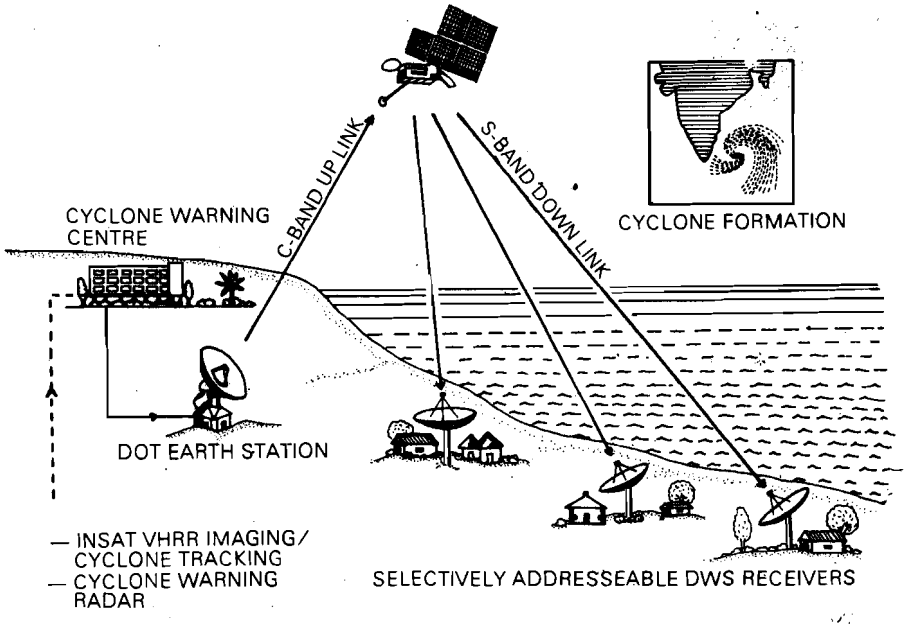

Fig. 26.4: Disaster Warning System Concept.

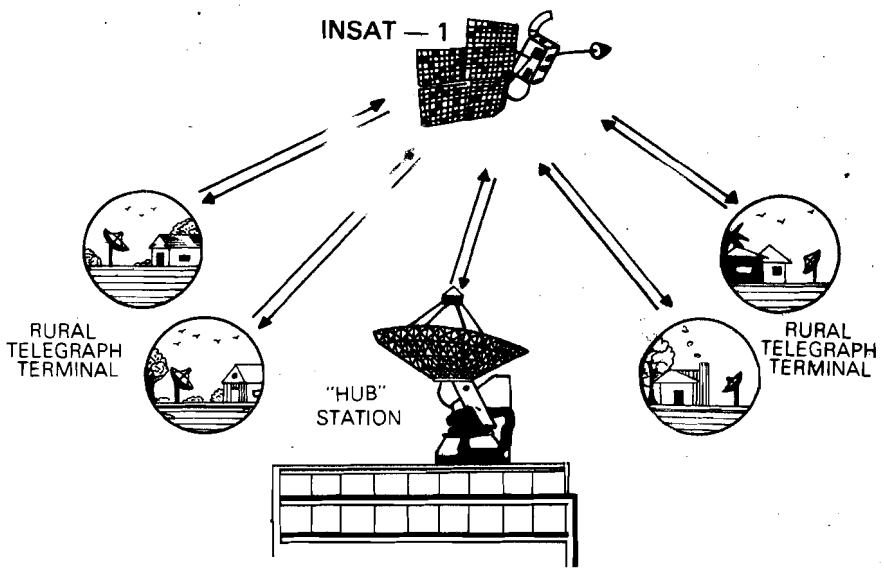

Fig. 26.5: Satellite Based Rural Telegraph Network (SBRTN).

Computer

The other most important component of communication technology is the computer. The computer, which started as a "calculation machine", is today called the "electronic brain". The area of its utilisation had been vastly extended. Simply put, a computer receives, stores and analyses almost any kind of data, and in vast quantities. It can process information with incredible speed. Computers can accept or reject messages, reduce or expand them, file them, index them or answer back with their own messages. In fact, the computer has transformed man's access to and use of information on any subject. The price of computers has come down due to new technologies of manufacture, and they are already finding places in offices and homes.

Broadly, it is the convergence and integration of telecommunication technology, computers and satellites which have brought about a revolution in communication systems. The three together have transformed broadcasting, telephone system, business operations and even the social and personal life of individuals.

Future Communication Techniques

Some of the novel services which are being introduced in countries like the United States and Japan, but which may be used on a wider scale in the next decade or so are as follows :

- Videophones for talking on phone, where picture will be carried in addition to the sound.
- Home computers which would help in buying all necessities sitting at home after the assessment of prices and availability in shops, transferring funds, buying and selling shares, knowing all the latest information of weather, transportation, schedules of airlines, trains, etc.; hotel reservations and so on.
- Teletex which is the enhanced telex services at high eeds, transferring whole texts using both upper and lower case letters.
- Videotext which is the two-way interactive computerised data retrieval service using slightly modified television receiver and telephone line (Fig. 26.6).

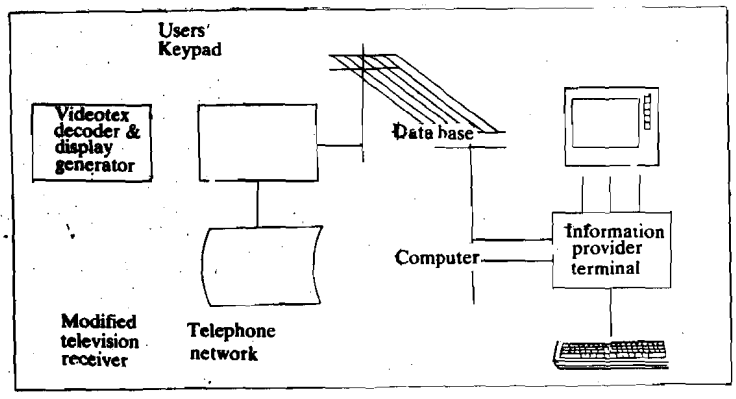

Fig. 26.6: Videotext is a two-way system allowing subscribers to get information via telephone cables, cable TV, or a combination of the two. Subscribers can also respond via a home computer.

Teletext which is a one way system used for the transmission of limited number of pages by television stations, receivable or ordinary television sets, with a suitable plug-in adaptor (Fig. 26.7).

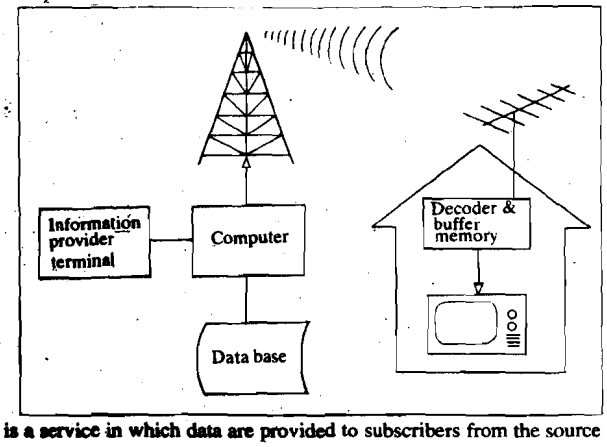

Fig. 26.7: Teletext is a service in which data are provided to subscribers from the source via television signals. The subscribers receive the data on their television sets.

- Telefax which is an electronic mail service used to transmit documents from one facsimile (picture) system to another via the telephone network.
- Datafax which is a digital high speed facsimile service over the public data networks. This includes error correction and automatic operation.

These are all the possibilities within reach in some of the developed countries. It will be quite sometime before developing countries can think of using these techniques. However, some like the teletext, is being used on a limited scale in India.

SAQ 4

a) Name two ways in which INSAT-1B has enabled you to get information which would not have been possible otherwise.

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b) Which of the future communication techniques would be most useful in the Indian context and why?

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26.4 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MODERN COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Quite obviously a society which will utilise advanced communication technology in the ways mentioned above, would develop an entirely different social and economic system. It would be a transformed society with an entirely different life style. Besides the impact on industry, administration, public institutions and social services, even family life would undergo change. Using new technology, newspapers are already being published simultaneously from many cities, railway and airline bookings are being made by computers that carry booking information updated every moment, doctors in one country can treat patients in another, conferences can be held with people sitting in their own offices; these are wonderful developments. We have mentioned, in Block 3, how communication and remote control of devices have made it possible to land a craft on the moon and to fly it back with a sample of moon soil, entirely automatically. Entire factories are being run automatically, by robots in the advanced countries. All this communication revolution is there, but the main question, however, is whether the advance communication technology will, in fact, benefit all countries equally and all sections of our people equally. There is already reason to believe that the advanced countries not only have a monopoly of technology of communication, but also the power to distort and display information in the way they like. Moreover in any one country, those who already have greater access to information are likely to benefit more than the others—probably making the rich-poor divide sharper. A simple example is advertising on TV or other media, which can create a demand for things we do not need, or promote a culture of superficial westernisation. Of course, it allows the bigger firms to beat smaller ones which cannot spend equally on advertisement.

The impact of information technology on our traditional communication system has also to be considered. In other words, what impact will the new communication technology have on our traditions and culture? In our country, traditional forms of communication have been used for such purposes as dispelling superstition, outmoded perceptions and unscientific attitudes. These have been found effective and acceptable to the people because people are familiar with them. Practitioners of the traditional media use a subtle form of persuasion by presenting the message in artistic and yet all too familiar forms. Examples abound where song, drama, dance groups and the like are used to campaign against social evils or for advance in farming, health, nutrition and family welfare.

The task before our communication system is to use the traditional media whether they are local folklores, ballads and story telling or even such proverbs which have their origin in our mythology. Jatra in West Bengal, Burrakatha in Andhra Pradesh, Villuppatu in Tamil Nadu, Tamasha in Maharashtra or Alha and Qawwali in Utter Pradesh, all have the capability of being used for eradicating social evils and for encouraging peoples' participation in development programmes. Some of these forms were effectively used in our freedom struggle to awaken national consciousness.

We have to examine the implications of the effect of sophisticated communication technology on these forms which, besides their effectiveness, are an integral part of our cultural and social life.

SAQ 5

What are the other functions of traditional media apart from entertaining the masses?

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26.5 NEW WORLD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER

It is quite obvious that information plays an important role in international relations. As a means of communication between the peoples of different countries, information can be an instrument of understanding and sharing of knowledge. It can bring about amity through appreciation of problems of the people living in different societies. To perform this role, information dissemination should be multi-directional, multi-dimensional and equitable. In other words, information through mass media like radio, television, newspapers, journals, books and films should have a free and balanced flow around the world, between countries and between one region and another.

But, if only a few international firms, or transnational organisations are in control of collecting and disseminating information, or a few powerful radio and television networks in the world control flow and choice of information, the flow of information can neither be balanced nor equitable. It will then tend to serve the interests of those who control the channels.

26.5.1 The Old Order

Let us look at the present position. Almost 80 per cent of the world news-flow emanates from the major transnational news agencies like the Reuters, Associated Press, United Press International and Agence-France-Press. These agencies which are based in UK, USA and France devote no more than 20 per cent of news coverage to the developing countries where two-thirds of the people of the world live. Moreover they distribute news as seen by American, British or French eyes! The imbalance in other information resources is equally flagrant. In the distribution of the radio frequency spectrum between the few developed countries and the many developing ones, the situation has been equally disturbing. The developed countries control nearly 90 per cent of the radio spectrum. The countries which arrived late in utilising radio thus discover that the ground is already occupied by those who arrived early! In television software, the western domination is reflected in yet another way. A number of developing countries still do not have the capacity to produce television programmes of their own, and they are obliged to broadcast a large number of western programmes which are culturally discordant. In book publishing too, the picture is similar. Even in a country which has great material and intellectual resources, most of the books and journals which are used in universities are in English and naturally represent a particular manner of understanding and interpreting reality. If you think merely changing over to Indian languages will help, you should think again. What really needs to be done is top class thinking and research on our problems, our society and environment. Only then suitable books can be written in our own languages.

26.5.2 How the Concept of the New Order Developed?

This realisation of western media domination, and a growing sensitivity to the way the Third World countries are projected in the western media, have together formed the basis of a call for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

The call for the 'New Order' gathered momentum during the 1970's even though its beginning can be traced back to the origin of what may be called the "Third Worldism". The dissolution of the old colonial empires after World War II, was also the beginning of a new awareness in the Third World countries. The **Bandung Conference** in 1956 was the first forum at which information and cultural imperialism practised by a few western big powers was questioned by many participating countries. At this conference, it was surmised that the western media, which were powerful and pervasive, were highly biased against the interests and needs of the people living in the developing countries whether independent or still struggling against the colonial rule. It was strongly felt that the reporting in the western media was negative and unsympathetic to the aspirations of all these people. There was

Bandung is a city in Indonesia. The conference which is famous for enunciating the five principles of co-existence "The Panchsheel" was held at the initiative of leaders of five countries : Nehru (India), Sukarno (Indonesia), Nasser (Egypt), Chou En Lai (China), and Tito (Yugoslavia).

resentment against the western media which were and continue to be privately-owned. These media were used both to support the commercial interests of the media organisations and the global political and economic interests of the big powers.

In 1973, the Non-aligned Summit Conference at Algiers, for the first time, called for co-operation in the reorganisation of communication systems with a view to establishing direct and fast communication between the non-aligned countries. The Summit suggested mutual exchange and dissemination of information through national and regional channels which would remove or at least reduce the reliance on the transnational agencies. This was rather a mild expression of an otherwise deeply felt resentment against the domination of the western media. Therefore, at that time, the western powers and media controllers chose to ignore it.

Over the years, however, this stand of the non-aligned countries was further amplified. A more specific concept of cooperation was developed and the non-aligned countries decided to set up an institution for exchanging of news among themselves. In 1976, the first ever conference of the information ministers and representatives of news agencies of the non-aligned countries, was held in New Delhi. The Conference expressed its determination to rectify the imbalance and concretise arrangements for effective cooperation in all fields of information, mass media, social and cultural information. *Also, for the first time, a linkage between political and economic dependence on the one hand and the information monopoly on the other, was sought to be established.* The demand for a new International Information Order, through collective endeavours, *to safeguard their political and economic* independence was thus set forth. The Colombo Summit, that followed, ratified the recommendation of the New Delhi Conference. The Summit also gave a call to all non-aligned and developing countries to co-ordinate their activities in this regard in the United Nations and other international forums.

UNESCO's involvement in formulation of the *New World Information and Communication Order* needs to be viewed against this background. The General Conference of UNESCO, at its nineteenth session held in Nairobi in 1976, instructed the Director-General "to undertake review of all the problems of communication in the contemporary society, seen against the background of technological progress and recent developments in international relations, with due regard to their complexity and magnitude". In 1977, the Director-General, Mr. Amad-Mahtar M'Bow set up a "brain trust", the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems under the presidency of Mr. Sean MacBride. The MacBride report, as it came to be called, was sent to UNESCO Director-General in 1980, although its Interim Report had been submitted in 1978 to the twentieth session of UNESCO's General Conference. The Interim Report itself generated some controversy, but what brought UNESCO into focus was the Mass Media Declaration of 1978 — "On Fundamental Principles concerning the contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthen Peace and International Understanding. The Promotion of Human Rights and to Counter Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War".

Article VI of this Declaration says: "For the establishment of a new equilibrium and greater reciprocity in the flow of information, which will be conducive to the institution of a just and lasting peace and to the economic and political independence of the developing countries, it is necessary to correct the inequalities in the flow of information to and from developing countries and between those countries. To this end, it is essential that their mass media should have conditions and resources enabling them to gain strength and expand, and to cooperate both among themselves and with the mass media in developed countries."

Some of the Western countries expressed strong reservation about another resolution which recommended a direct involvement of UNESCO in international communication. However, the 1980 General Conference of UNESCO held in Belgrade approved the Final Report of the MacBride Commission. The Resolution on the New World Information and Communication Order, which was accepted after hard and protracted discussion covered a wide range of issues, such as:

- elimination of the imbalances in information flow,
- elimination of negative effects of monopolies,
- removal of internal and external obstacles to free and wider flow of information,
- freedom and responsibilities of journalists,
- improving the capacity of developing countries to improve their own infrastructures.

Besides, mention was made on protecting the cultural and social diversities and identities of world public. The point to be underlined is, that while the Resolution called for freedom for all professionals in the media, it reiterated that freedom is inseparable from responsibility.

SAQ 6

Give two reasons which led to the demand for a New World Information and Communication Order.

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26.5.3 Controversies Around the NWICO

The definition of the New World Information and Communication Order given above has been objected to by some of the Western countries. In the United States particularly, there has been a strong reaction against it. Their interpretation is that the Resolution imposes restrictions on the activities of journalists, that it hampers the "free flow" of information as it has come to be established and that it legitimises control of government on information. Hardliners have called it as "interfering with the fundamental right to be freely informed".

This interpretation, quite obviously, is not correct. The view of the Third World and Socialist countries is that the NWICO only challenges the monopoly enjoyed by the western media, and the projection of their political views, for example, on peace or cold war; biases, sometimes racist biases and propaganda, plus painting a negative and prejudiced picture of happenings such as floods, famines, political and social problems in the developing countries, without any regard to either the achievements or sensitivities of the people in these countries. On this point one may quote from Mrs. Indira Gandhi's address at the Namedia* Conference (1983). She said, "In the media of the West, or indeed in our own, there is hardly any news about the developing countries unless it be of disaster or disturbance. The stupendous task of development, the changes coming about in our villages, towns, amongst our women, might as well be non-existent. Editors and media managers seem attached to the Northcliffe formula that power, position, money and sex make the news and that virtue, normality, hardwork and humility don't. The meek may one day inherit the earth, but not the headlines".

Namedia was inaugurated by Mrs. Gandhi in 1983 at the time of non-aligned meet in Delhi. The organisation deals with problems of communication of the developing countries including India. It has undertaken different research projects and has discussed problems of communication both at national and international levels.

The controversy about NWICO became so sharp, that the US Government cited this as one of the three reasons for their decision to quit UNESCO in 1984. They held UNESCO responsible for pushing through the NWICO. Great Britain also withdrew from UNESCO, a year later, for the same reasons. The withdrawal by USA and UK has resulted in a combined loss of over 30 per cent of UNESCO's budget. But all this shows what a powerful instrument or weapon information is for progress and social change.

Progress in the implementation of NWICO has, indeed, been slow. UNESCO's capacity to provide help has been considerably reduced. Some of the other western countries continue to oppose it. On the other hand, there is some progress in improving channels of communication and mutual cooperation among the developing countries and there is realisation on the part of the western media, of the strong resentment in the third world against their style of reporting. This has brought about a slight change in their attitude.

26.5.4 Relevance of NWICO in Our National Context

If removing world imbalance in information flow is the primary objective of the New Order, we need to examine and improve the situation within our own country also. The conditions prevailing in India are in some ways typical and in varying degrees they are also shared by other developing countries. Nearly 75 per cent of our population lives in villages where the literacy rate is much lower than the national average of 38 per cent, and yet the media concentration is in the urban areas. The number of radio receivers may now be around 50 million, but three-fourth of the total number are located in urban areas. Distribution of TV sets would be even more imbalanced. Besides, a high percentage of Radio and TV programmes are meant for the urban population and taste. The same story is repeated in the circulation of newspapers and the availability of cinema houses for public exhibition. Newspapers and films also largely cater to the urban population.

To remove these imbalances and to make the media available to the entire population on an equitable basis, a new communication policy needs to be evolved. As a part of the policy, the media should cater to the needs of all sections particularly the sections which are underprivileged. Information relevant for them and useful for them ought to be made available in educative as well as entertaining programmes, with a high artistic sense. Removing ignorance, superstition and prejudice of all kinds ought to be a task of high priority. Programmes to motivate people to organise action in order to meet their multifarious requirements, rather than to depend on the Government for everything should be given priority. National objectives of socialism, secularism and democracy must be constantly presented in a great variety of formats, not crudely and directly but in subtle ways known to writers and artists. Thus, our own communication order would make a mighty contribution to India's resurgence.

26.6 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have :

- defined what mass communication is and described various means of mass communication.
- described the role technology has played in the communication system and stressed that the benefits of modern information technology should not remain confined to a small section of urban people, thus widening the gap between the rich and poor or the urban and the rural. Technology should also not damage our traditional forms of communication which are the symbols of our regional as well as national culture.
- discussed the need for balanced and equitable flow of information between the developed and the developing countries which has led to the demand for a New World Information and Communication Order; and the ways in which NWICO can help in mutual understanding at the national and international levels.

26.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1 How does modern information technology affect the life style of individuals and the society?

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2 What, in your opinion, are the rights and responsibilities of the communication system in our country at present?

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3 Why is it important to have a balanced and equitable flow of information? Why was the 'Old Order' not acceptable to developing countries?

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26.8 ANSWERS

Self-Assessment Questions

1 i) P ii) P iii) M iv) M

2 For example, if you choose newspaper as a medium of mass communication the advantage would be that it has circulation in different languages. It usually contains information not controlled by the government. So it is more acceptable to general masses, The disadvantages, however, are that it is useful for the literate people only. It may not reach remote areas. So the circulation is not as wide as some other medium would be.

3 a) The medium of communication should be able to reach all groups and sections of the society.

b) It should be cheap so that it is accessable to every one, for instance radio.

4 a) i) For example, live transmission of events to all parts of the country over television.

ii) Long distance calls without the use of operator

iii) Disaster warning systems.

b) Home computers or telefax could be very useful in my opinion, you could of course differ.

5 You could think of these functions.

Social awakening; campaigning against social evils; for adult education.

6 Because of western media domination and a growing sensitivity to the way the Third World Countries were projected in the western world.

Terminal Questions

1 **Hints:** The individual is better informed about his rights and privileges and opportunities that are available. For example, 'Employment News' publishes about job opportunities.

Better information about health care on radio & TV.

High profile advertising is affecting the life styles of rural and urban populations, creating demands on their home economy which might be difficult to meet.

2 **Hints:** Unbiased, free flow of information, helps in creating a new social order; helps in economic development.

3 Refer to section 26.5.

GLOSSARY

abra cadabra: magical words.

anaesthesia: artificially induced insensitivity to pain by some substance.

cadavers: corpse, or dead body.

charkha: spinning wheel.

cognition : the process of perceiving, learning, remembering, using language, solving problems, thinking.

cortex: outer part of an organ like brain, kidney, adrenals.

frontal: front view.

instinctive behaviour: unlearned patterned behaviour characteristic of a particular species.

interpersonal communication: direct interaction between communicators on a one to one basis or in small groups.

learning: a relatively permanent change in behaviour as a result of practice or experience.

learned reflex: learned or acquired response to a stimulus that normally did not produce the response originally.

mass communication: public communication transmitted by electronic or mechanical means to people who are widely dispersed.

medial: middle section.

medulla: central part of some organ.

object permanence: the understanding that objects or people continue to exist even if hidden from view.

operations: a set of rules for transforming or manipulating information.

receptor: a cell that responds to an environmental stimulus which may be chemical, sound, light etc.

response: behavioural result of stimulation in a person in the form of movement or secretion in a gland.

sensorimotor: the first of Piaget's stages in which cognitive development is acquired through exploration of the world through sensory perception and motor skills.

sense organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin.

stimulus: any situation or event that evokes a specific functional reaction.

union territories: Delhi, Chandigarh, Pondicherry, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadar Nagar Haveli, Daman Diu.

FURTHER READING

1 *Biology*—A Text book for class XI-XII, part one, NCERT, 1988.

2 *Child Psychology*—A Text book for class XII, NCERT.

3 *Psychology*: An Introduction to Human Behaviour—A Text book for class XI, NCERT

4 *'Text book of child Behaviour and Development'*, P. Kuppuswamy, Vani Educational Books (1984).

5 *'Communication Media Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow'*, P.N. Malhan, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt . of India (1985).

6 *'Communicating'*, A. Taylor, T. Rosegrant, A. Meyer, B. Thomas Samples, Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliff, N. Jersey, 07632 (1977).

COURSE CONTENTS

Audio/Video Programmes

Audio :

1) Science and Society (Block 1)
2) Astronomical Development in India (Block 3)
3) Measuring Astronomical Distances (Block 3)
4) Evolution of Man (Block 3)
5) The Forest Ecosystem (Block 4)
6) Population Pressure (Block 4)
7) Common Misconceptions about Health (Block 5)
8) Human Factors in Engineering (Block 6)
9) New Information Order (Block 6)
10) Technology and Self-Reliance (Block 7)
11) Nuclear Disarmament (Block 7)

Video :

1) Method of Science (Block 2)
2) A Window to the Universe (Block 3)
3) The Story of a River (Block 4)
4) Green Revolution (Block 5)
5) Infectious Diseases (Block 5)
6) Jean Piaget Development Stages of a Child (Block 6)
7) INSAT (Block 6)