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Unit I

Mass Communication - Origin and Development

Introduction

Communication is the process of sending and receiving information. It is the vehicle through which we develop, maintain and improve human relationships. At times it becomes the tool through which human relationships are undermined or even destroyed. Communication word is drawn from communis (Latin derivation) which means common, the idea of commonality is frequently stressed in talking about communication. Denis McQuail defines, communication is a process which increases commonality, but also requires elements of commonality for it to occur at all.

communication is : transmission of information to elicit a response; coordinating favourable response between a person and an audience, sharing information, an idea or an attitude, or "a meeting of minds, a bringing about of a common set of symbols in the minds of the participants — in short, an understanding".' Communication maintains and **animates life**. It creates a common pool of ideas. Strengthens the feeling of togetherness through exchange of messages and translates thought into action. Reflecting every emotion; and need from the humblest tasks of human survival to supreme manifestations of creativity - or destruction.

Communication presupposes a shared environment, a social relationship between those who ho participate when man communicates. He shares his own knowledge. Attitudes and skills with others in the form of gestures. Spoken or written messages. Man has to decide how to send his message. Human beings can Only receive messages through one or more or their five senses of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and touching. In nutshell communication can be described as an act of transmission of ideas_ thoughts, beliefs, knowledge and opinion. etc I he purpose of communication is to establish commonness.To communicate effectively the sender's words and meanings must mean the same thing to the receiver that may do, to the sender.

NEED FOR COMMUNICATION

Man's need for communication is as strong and as basic as his need to ear sleep and love. Communication involves interaction with our environment physical, biological and social. Deprived of this interaction we would not be aware of whether we are safe or in

danger. whether hated or loved. This basic need for communication can perhaps be traced to the process of man's evolution.

Functional Requirements of Society :

A System of Communication : A system through which people could exchange symbols and thus propagate learning at a much accelerated rate.

A System of Production : To create goods and services both for their needs and for barter and exchange.

System of Defence : To protect their domain against intruders.

System of Member Replacement : Sufficient to counteract disease and other elements of member destruction

System of Social Control : To maintain order in the society.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

a) Electronic Communication

Just as the twentieth century dawned, radio was invented by which electromagnetic impulses could be sent through the air without wires, carrying voice transmission over long distances. For the first time in civilization, people had a medium of mass communication. In the same century the ability to capture moving visual images with the camera was perfected. People also discovered ways of capturing movement as well as sound on film to produce the motion picture and the electronic system called Videotape. Scientists and technologists, in deciding how these motion pictures could be transmitted over wires, and subsequently without wires, created a new medium called Television.

b) Satellite Communication

Satellite is a space vehicle that relays electromagnetic signals from one or more transmitters to one or more receiving stations, usually at long distances. These are being used for telecommunication, both direct and indirect.

c) Intra-personal Communication

Intra-personal communication is communication within ourselves. Even early man used his senses to help understand his world and thus to perceive, to judge and to act accordingly. He learnt that on a hot, raining day. He should go outside the cave to cool off. When it was cold, they should build a fire all were the result of communication taking place within the individual. This is the electrochemical action of the body taking part in the process of intra-personal communication. Intra-personal communication is the basis of all other forms of human communication. Without an effective system of intra-personal communication, an organism is unable to function in its environment.

d) Inter-personal Communication

It is a face to face communication. It is a communication between two persons. Wilmot suggests, the uniqueness of two-person communication hinges on the high degree of potential intimacy and involvement between the participants. This type of communication includes most of the informal, everyday exchanges that we engage in from the time we get up until we go to bed. Such activities can also be thought of as transactions. Inter-personal

communication is the kind of communication we experience most frequently. It tends to have three following basic characteristics :

One, both parties are in close proximity.

Or

Two, both parties send and receive messages.

Or

Three, these messages include both verbal and non-verbal stimuli.

e) Group Communication

Group communication is distinct in that it occurs between three or more persons who perceive themselves as belonging to, or being identified with, a group. Interaction and intimacy depends upon the size of group. The larger the group the less personal and intimate is the possibility of exchange.

Shaw (1976) has identified six ways in which a group may be defined

1. Perceptions: Do members make an impression on other members? .1binnicion: Is membership in the group rewarding?

3. Goals: Do group members work together for a purpose?

4. Organcomor Does each member have a specialized role like moderator_ note-taker and so on?

5. bilerdepciidency: Is each member somewhat dependent on the other'

Interaction: Is the group small enough to allow face to face communication between members?

Types of groups

Primary groups : This is the basic social unit to which we belong e.g. family.

Casual or social groups : It is in the company of adult friends, neighbours and others with whom we socialize. While these relationships may be relatively short lived, their influence on our thinking and behaviour is often considerable.

Learning or educational groups : When we come together to teach or learn something about a given subject e.g. seminars and conferences, etc.

Work groups : Such types of groups have specific goals to achieve, often within the context of a job. Membership may be required by virtue of employment in an organization rather than owing to individual interest in the group. Group members may have little in common except that their jobs require them to interact. The consequences of not participating in a work group may be severe.

Therapeutic groups : These are groups whose members come together to learn about themselves and to improve their interpersonal relationships.

f) Public Communication

Public communication tends to occur within a more formal and structured setting. It is different from small group communication. In public communication, however, one person is designated the speaker. and the rest are cast in the complementary role of listeners, or

audience members. Participants are face to face and are still sending and receiving communicative stimuli.

Public communication occurs in "public" rather than "private" places—that is in classrooms, auditoriums, conferences, seminars, rather than in homes, offices, etc. Public communication is a "pronounced social occasion" as opposed to a relatively informal, unstructured occasion. Usually the event is planned in advance. There is an agenda. Some people are designated to perform certain functions.

g) Mass Communication

It is the process of delivering information, ideas and attitudes to a sizable and diversified audience through use of media developed for that purpose. The art of mass communication is much more difficult than that of face to face communication. The communicator who is addressing thousands of different personalities at the same time cannot adjust an appeal to meet their individual reactions. An approach that convinces one part of the audience may alienate another part. The successful communicator is one who finds the right method of expression to establish empathy with the largest possible number of individuals in the audience.

Characteristics of Mass Communication

Mass Medium : A mass medium makes it possible for the message to reach far beyond the immediate proximity of the sender. A few hundred feet may be all the distance the human voice can project to a crowd without the aid of public address system. A mass medium can take that same message around the world.

Limited Sensory Channels : The presence of a mass medium also limits the number of sensory channels upon which we can draw. When we sat in the auditorium and listened to the politician, all of our senses could take part in the communication process. For example, after the speech we might have shaken hands with the politician. With mass communication we might only be able to hear and see the politician.

Impersonal Communication : In inter-personal communication the first meeting may be impersonal but as the relationship grows, the communication becomes more and more personal. But in mass communication, it is impersonal.

Gatekeeper : A gatekeeper is a person who, by selecting, changing and rejecting messages, can influence the flow of information to a receiver or group of receivers. A gatekeeper can be a news editor who edits the reporter's copy, a film producer, who cuts a scene from the original script and so on. There are three functions of the gatekeeper (i) to limit the information we receive by editing this information before it is disseminated to us; (ii) to expand the information we receive by giving us additional facts or view; and (iii) to reorganize or reinterpret the information.

Delayed Feedback : The feedback in mass communication is not as immediate or complete as it is in face to face communication. And since mass communication usually involves a chain or network of individuals, **the feedback intended for** one person in the chain is likely to reach a **different member of the** chain. Moreover, it is sometimes **impossible for the source in** mass communication to respond to make **public all the feedback that** is received

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

According to **Wilbur Schramm**, **communication requires at least three** elements (a) the source. (b) the message and (c) the destination. The sources may be individual speaking, or gesturing, etc., or a communication organizations **like** the newspaper, movie, etc. The message may be in the form of sound waves in the air, or a wave of the hand, **or some ink on the paper**, or impulses in an electric current, the important thing **is** that it is something which can be interpreted meaningfully by somebody else. The destination may be an individual who is listening, or reading. on watching, or it may be a group **of** people who are listening to a lecture. or notching a movie.

In 1948. political scientist Harold Lasswell suggested **a convenient way to describe an act of communication is to answer the following questions'**?

Who - The communicator

With What Purpose – The Objective

To Whom – The Audience

In Which Channel(s)

Says What – Message

With what effect –The Impact

Barriers of Communication

There are a number of barriers, which prevent the achievement of the desired results. Some of these are : lack of communication environment or a common frame of reference, noise, badly coded messages, disturbance in the transmission channels, mistrust between the sender and the receiver, different perception of reality and vagueness about the objectives achieved.

Some other barriers to effective communication are no perceived benefit to audience. variation in language and listening skills, personal biases, etc. It is, therefore, essential that a communicator must continue to adjust and adapt his approach to communication with others- those of different cultures, different attitudes and having different expectations of communication. It is equally imperative that, in order to remove all barriers or blocks to effective communication. a communicator will have to be sensitive to the signals reflected by the audience. They will always be need to re-tune our approach to communication-in order to get across our message effectively.

The 7 C's of Communication

Credibility : Communication starts with a climate of belief. This climate is built by performance on the part of the communicator. The performance reflects an earnest desire to serve the receiver. The receiver must have confidence m the sender. He must have a high regard for the source's competence on the object.

Context : The context must confirm, not contradict the message. It must provide for participation and playback

Content : The content determines the audience. Hence, the message must have meaning for the receiver, and it must be compatible with his value system. It must have relevance for him.

Clarity : The message must be put in simple terms. Words must mean the same thing to the receiver as they do to the sender. Complex issues must be compressed into theme slogans that have simplicity and clarity. The farther a message has to travel, the simpler it should be.

Continuity and Consistency : Communication is an unending process. It requires repetition to achieve penetration. The story must be consistent.

Channels : Only the established channels of communication should be used-channels that the receiver uses and respects, creating new ones is difficult. Different channels have different effects and serve effectively in different stages of the diffusion process.

Capability of Audience : Communication must take into account the capability of the audience. Communications are most effective when they require the least effort on the part of the recipient. This includes factors of availability, habit reading ability and receiver's knowledge.

FUNCTIONS AND USES OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Lasswell (1948) presented a summary statement of the basic communication functions in the following manner :

- (a) Surveillance of the environment.
- (b) Correlation of the parts of the society in responding **to its** environment.
- (c) The transmission of the cultural heritage.

Denis McQuail (1987) added one more function that is mobilizing function of media. Nearly everywhere, the media are expected to advance national interests and promote certain key values and behaviour patterns.

The following set of basic ideas about media purpose in society has been taken from Denis McQuail's book 'Mass Communication theory.'

I Information

- providing information about events and conditions in society and the world.
- indicating relations of power.
- facilitating innovation, adaptation and progress.

II. Correlation

- explaining, interpreting and commenting on the meaning of events and information.
- providing support for established authority and norms.
- socializing.
- co-ordinating separate activities.
- consensus building.
- setting orders of priority and signalling relative status.

III. Continuity

expressing the dominant culture and recognizing sub-cultures and new cultural developments.

forging and maintaining commonality of values.

IV. Entertainment

providing amusement. diversion, the means of relaxation.

reducing social tension.

V. Mobilization

campaigning for societal objectives in the sphere of politics. war, economic development. work and sometimes religion.

Dominick (1990) in his book 'The Dynamics of Mass Communication' has described the main functions of media-surveillance. interpretation. linkage, transmission of values and entertainment.

Surveillance

Of all the media functions, surveillance is apparently an important function and the degree of audience dependence on the media for news supports this observation. Surveillance refers to what we popularly call the news and information role of the media.

Warning Surveillance

Instrumental Surveillance

Interpretation

The mass media do not supply just facts and date. They also provide information on the ultimate meaning and significance of those events. Not all the happenings are included in the newspapers or in a TV or radio newscast. Only those items or events are selected by the media organizations which are of prime importance. Those stories which are given page-one space and eight-column headings are obviously judged to be more important than those which are given one or two paragraphs in inside pages. In a Tv or radio newscast, those stories that are given two minutes at the beginning of the show are deemed more newsworthy than the item that gets two minutes toward the end. Stories that ultimately make it into the paper or the newscast have been judged by various gatekeepers sitting in the media organizations. The most obvious example of this function can be found on the editorial pages of a newspaper. Interpretation, comment and opinion are provided for the reader so that he or she gains an added perspective on the news stories carried on the other pages.

Interpretation can take various forms. Critics are employed by the various media organizations to review books, films and to rate different kinds of programmes. The consequences of the interpretation function of the mass media can be that the individual is exposed to large number of different points of view, probably far more than he or she could conic in contact with through personal channels.

Linkage

Closely with surveillance function is the linkage function. It is the ability of the mass media to join different elements of society that are not directly connected by interpersonal

channels For example, mass attempts to link the needs of the buyers with the products of sellers.

Transmission of values

The transmission of values is a subtle but nonetheless important function of the mass media. It has also been called the socialization function. Socialization refers to the ways in which an individual comes to adopt the behaviour and values of a group. The mass media present portrayals of our society and by watching, listening and reading we learn how people supposed to act and what values are important.

Entertainment

The most obvious of all media functions is that of entertainment. The newspapers devote much space to cover the events of the day, gossip, humour, comics, sports, share prices, horoscopes, puzzles and general entertainment features. Whereas television is primarily devoted to entertainment. The entertainment content of radio varies widely according to station format.

In the past, the entertainment function was fulfilled by interpersonal communication : storytelling, folk songs, folk dances, nautankies. puppet shows, folk theatres and magicians.

the media can make entertainment available to a large number of people at relatively low cost. This helps make leisure and recreational time more enjoyable. Entertainment that is carried by the mass media appeals to mass audience.