

**Institute of Distance and Open Learning
Gauhati University**

**Master of
Communication & Journalism**

**Paper IX
Development Communication
& Communication Research**

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Contributor :

Dr. Abhijit Bora
(Unit 1 & 2)

Associate Professor,
Dept. of Mass Communication
& Journalism,
Tezpur University

Ankuran Dutta
(Unit 3 & 4)

Academic Consultant,
KKHSOU, Guwahati

Course Co-ordination & Format Editing :

Dr. Kandarpa Das

Director,
IDOL, GU

Subhashini Dinesh

Prof. in Journalism,
&
Faculty, Asian College of
Journalism, Chennai

Prasenjit Das

Editor,
Study Materials
IDOL, GU

Cover Page Design :

Kaushik Sarma

Graphic Designer
CET, IITG

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Unit 1

Introduction to Development Communication

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1.1 Introduction :

Development Communication or Dev. Comm. is a system

of communication which is utilised for the upliftment of human society. This discipline enables us to process information received from mass media and helps distribute it among the masses for their benefit.

There is an increasing emphasis across the world to handle socio-economic issues like global warming and the thinning of the Antarctic ice zone, poverty eradication and gender equality. Research scholars have said Dev. Comm., if explored effectively, has enormous potential to address these issues that are challenging mankind across the spectrum.

1.2 Objectives :

By the time you finish reading this unit you will be able to

- *acquaint* yourself with the basics of Development Communication
- *discuss* how communication and mass communication affect our personal and social life
- *grasp* the significance of mass communication in the global human society
- *know* the idea of democratic decentralization
- *explore* how communication can foster rural development

1.3 Concept of Development Communication :

The term 'development' means 'positive change' or 'change for the better'. Such a change is expected to enrich our life, elevate our lifestyle to modern, scientific and hygienic level.

Let us consider a few examples. The north-eastern region is home to several agricultural universities and veterinary colleges which carry out research to improve variety of

seeds, better farming techniques and to enrich productivity of poultry and livestock. But the real purpose of such research will be served only when it reaches the target audience. The aim of the research is to educate the farming community about the innovations to help them get better yields.

Several years back, an association of about a hundred Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Assam's Morigaon district collectively took loans of several lakh of rupees from a nationalized bank. The SHGs repaid the loan even before the stipulated time. The bank officials were so impressed with their punctuality that they offered more such loans to the SHGs.

This information has to be made accessible to other SHGs and the small and marginal farmers' groups so that it will encourage them to toe this line and improve their living standard. This is the motto of development communication.

For many decades, there have been elaborate discussions in the global fora about how to measure development of a nation, a society and of an individual. Several theories and standards have been propounded by different groups of experts, which have been tested for their comprehensiveness at various points of time.

The concepts of Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the measurement of a country's development have been universally acknowledged. However, critics of these concepts pointed out several drawbacks and came up with alternative theories to measure development with the amount of 'steel consumption', 'gross electricity consumption' or 'per head consumption and availability of electrical power'.

The reach and access to information is vital for society in

this 'information age'. Extending the services of meaningful information to masses at their doorsteps is the business of development communication. At this point, it will be appropriate to say that 'information is power' because the world is almost entirely dependent on this tool.

Therefore, information can be taken as a measurement of a nation's progress.

1.3.1 Theories of Development Communication :

Dominant Paradigm :

In the aftermath of the country's Independence, the government laid emphasis on physical infrastructure. The policy-makers and scholars felt infrastructural development were important to establish a base for future development.

Though different types of paradigms were being practiced in various parts of the world, the Indian policymakers felt the Dominant Paradigm of infrastructural development to be most suitable. This was due to the colonial legacy of the British development model which emphasized the country's materialistic progress.

This paradigm emphasised the country's economic growth through industrialization, leaving aside other aspects of society. This had led to large-scale dependence on financial assistance from the developed nations.

A major lacuna in this approach was the compromise on other necessities. But a major advantage of this paradigm's development was that policy planners, political leaders and others involved in the development understood the potential of mass media that was capable of effecting social change.

Search for an Alternate Model of Development :

A major problem in this paradigm was to calculate the contribution of every section of society in the country's economic progress. For example, GDP mainly accounts for visible and countable production. This paradigm did not account for the contribution of women, housewives, people engaged in agriculture through disguised employment and urban poor residents. The dominant paradigm, therefore, came under criticism in the early 1970s.

Human Development Paradigm :

Policy makers and scholars developed a new paradigm because of the drawbacks in the dominant paradigm. The new paradigm emphasized on developing capabilities and mental faculties of the country's human resources to help them improve their lifestyle in the real sense of the term. It was based on the principle that if human beings were provided with opportunities for optimum development of his or her personality and mental faculties, they would maximize their own productivity. In the process, the state, the economy, the policymakers and the masses will stand to gain.

Basic Needs Paradigm :

Fresh directions have been added to the new paradigm with the advancement of literacy and other aspects in society. The Basic Needs Model was propagated, which was in a way an extension of the new alternative paradigm of stressing on maximum development of human resources. The prime goal of this new model was to facilitate eradication of poverty in developing nations by incorporating ideas like providing adequate food, clean drinking water, shelter, education, security of livelihood, transport and communication, facilitating mass participation in decision-making and instilling self-respect.

More Emerging Areas of Development :

The Eighties brought in issues like gender justice, human rights, empowerment of disadvantaged masses and participatory governance into the fold of development and development communication. These developments visualised optimum progress of people, and thereby society as a whole. The growing literacy made people aware of many facets of academic researches as well as real life situations. This was so in the developing nations which were incorporated into the paradigms of development over the years.

1.4 Strategies for Development Communication :

A strategy is a well-planned scheme for implementing a certain idea over a period so that it can comprehensively yield the desired benefits in due course of time. These strategies take care of every relevant aspect of the process. This begins from conceiving an idea to implementing it successfully as well as collecting and assessing feedback for a critical understanding of the situation. This is expected to help in future facilitation of the activity.

Several strategies in Dev. Comm. have been experimented with for achieving the set aims and objectives. Let us discuss them here for a better understanding of their concepts.

1.4.1 Social Marketing Development Communication :

This approach has been successful since its launch. It has caused attitudinal changes in the minds of the target audience wherever it has been implemented at different points of time. This approach is known by names like non-product advertising, social advertising and public service advertising. This strategy has the following characteristics —

- it does not promote any product
- it promotes or advertises a specific issue or concern of society, usually a negative aspect, about which it tries to make the masses aware through its messages
- in most of the cases, well-wishers sponsor the space used for advertising and publicity in print, electronic and outdoor media. This is done out of a philanthropic consideration or social responsibility

Let us look into the background of this strategy. An advertising campaign tries to promote a product or service among the masses for maximizing its sales. In the process of achieving its goal, the campaign tends to focus on issues of social concern like spreading awareness about the bad effects of tobacco consumption and the need to refrain from it, prevention of female infanticide, child marriage and prevention of dowry practices.

The underlying fact is that it is a kind of publicity strategy, but with a difference. It employs all aspects of marketing a commercial product or service for marketing a non-commercial product, with an aim to spread awareness about a social evil. This is called 'social marketing' — marketing of a social cause.

'Marketing' entails planning and implementing a strategy for releasing a commercial product or service in the market. This includes designing and producing the concept that begins with conceiving the idea to preparing a strategy for its release in the market for people to take notice of it. Social marketing, too, involves the same process.

This is the 'social marketing' strategy of development communication which has been in practice for a long time.

Development communication is an objective-oriented activity which approaches issues in a planned manner. The first task is to identify the target audiences. This is

followed by selecting a suitable media, preparing messages with care to ensure optimum effectiveness, releasing the campaign and taking feedback for assessing the project's success.

1.4.2 Participatory Rural Appraisal :

This strategy requires communicators from the agencies, which implement the schemes, approach the target groups and communities and make them understand the benefits of the cause they espouse like adopting a new system of farming or abstaining from social evils like tobacco-consumption, child marriage and dowry.

A student of mass communication must understand that in development communication, the human communicators are deemed more influential and effective than the mass media, which is an 'impersonal medium'. This is because a face-to-face interpersonal communication is more influential than an impersonal one. Therefore, the implementing agencies of health, agriculture and other development sectors are employing 'extension workers' at the grassroots level in the rural areas.

1.4.3 Participatory Media :

A major function of the media is to provide entertainment in the form of information. Voluntary agencies, associations and the government often employ different forms of media which offer scope for participation by the target audiences. Street drama is one such form of performing arts and media which allows the masses to watch the show at close quarters. The dramatic efforts of the actors deeply influence the audiences, making the messages very effective.

In traditional and folk media, too, the masses feel being part of the performers. This is because the specific folk or

traditional art form used in the performance belongs to that area and the people can identify with it.

1.4.4 Efforts of the Union Government of India :

The Union Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB), through its publicity units, has been trying to implement development communication schemes for a long time. The Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) organises exhibitions of documentaries, publicity films and newsreels in the country's remote areas. The purpose is to make the masses aware of developments taking place in different sectors of society.

A few years back, the Ministry had undertaken a comprehensive plan called Bharat Nirman scheme to make people aware of development schemes adopted and implemented by the government. Under this scheme, officials from the Ministry's publicity units move to rural and semi-rural areas and inform people about the schemes through various media.

1.5 Democratic Decentralization :

Our country enjoys the reputation of being the largest functional democracy with a good track record and having the second largest in population in the world. The goal of government is to work towards improving the socio-economic status of the masses as it is a reflection of the country's overall development. The five-year plans were, therefore, adopted to achieve a sustainable and balanced development of the nation.

Initially, there was a Top-Down model of development initiatives, in which the leadership in Delhi decided the priorities, instructions and goals. The system did not encourage involvement of grassroots level people. The result was illiterate and underprivileged people were not

in a position to decide their priorities. They were provided with 'hand holding' to guide them towards their goals and objectives. 'Democratic decentralization', was, therefore, evolved over the years to facilitate the people at the grassroots level to execute simple and ambitious plans for their development.

This provision came with two noticeable advantages :

1. The concept of local self-government arose from the premise that residents understand their development needs and how they want them to be executed.
2. The locals are the best judge of their priorities, the proper method to implement the programmes and share the responsibility on a collective basis.

1.5.1 Broadcasting :

This new concept is becoming accepted by the masses across the world. We can compare this concept to that of democratic decentralization because both work towards the same objective.

This term means disseminate information in the form of electronic waves to the maximum number of people possible. In other words, it means trying to spread the net of the electronic media to the broadest possible extent for covering as many people as possible.

In the early days of mass communication, the need of the hour was to cover the maximum number of people as communication till then was cumbersome and a difficult proposition. As time went by, this concept could be developed to enable it to cover almost the entire world with less effort.

1.5.2 Panchayati Raj (PR) Institutions :

The Panchayati Raj, as a concept, has an integral relationship with the cause of development communication. This concept is the chain of institutions meant for development of the masses in the village level. This is an ideal category of local self governments dedicated to self development of people.

Self development means people will democratically elect their own representatives for constituting a public body. This body, in turn, will be entrusted with the task of formulating, preparing and implementing development in their localities. This system is expected to promote impartiality, proper utilization of resources, identification of the important needs of the people and the best means of implementing the plans and policies.

This system can be transparent if the elected members are honest. This is because everything is handled by the local community through the body of elected representatives. The community can keep itself abreast of how the resources are being spent and whether they are being spent in the right manner. In case of any lacuna, the elected body can set it right by taking immediate action. In other words, monitoring of the work is smooth.

This system is relevant for development communication in our country because these elected bodies are carriers of development messages. It is their duty to make the local people aware of the government's development efforts and make them conscious about their requirements, availability of resources and their proper implementation.

1.5.3 A Brief Background of the PR system :

Village communities in the Indian sub-continent have been carrying out self-government over centuries. The earlier

councils or assemblies called Sabhas had a position of authority, which then assumed the form of Panchayats.

The Panchayats became the pivot of administration and the principal forum for dispensation of justice and resolution of local disputes. The British Colonial Administration referred to these village communities as "little republics".

Article 40 of our Constitution says, "The state shall take steps to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government."

In 1957, a historic breakthrough in establishing the Panchayati Raj (PR) came about through the report of the Team for the Study of Community Development Projects and National Extension Service headed by Balwantrai Mehta. It recommended that "public participation in community works should be organised through statutory representative bodies" called Sabha. Former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan on October 2, 1959, at Nagaur.

From 1959 to the 1980s, PR has made sporadic progress in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and West Bengal. But in most other states it was not going smooth.

PR got the constitutional mandate through the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Bill, which was passed by both Houses of Parliament in December 1992. The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992, came into force on April 24, 1993. The 73rd Amendment provides for the constitution of the Panchayats at the village, block and district levels with elections at five years' intervals.

Today, when most states and union territories have had three rounds of elections, there are more than 28 lakh

elected representations at the 3 levels of panchayats. Of these, over 10 lakh are women, 5.2 lakh belong to the Scheduled Castes and 3.3 lakh to the Scheduled Tribes.

The last 15 years have seen a silent revolution in the rural areas. This is because political representation available to women and marginalized groups has empowered them and improved their social and economic situation significantly.

Local self-government is a state subject. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment makes it mandatory for all states to hold regular elections to the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj system. It has brought in a third stratum of government to supplement the Union and the State Governments to reinforce the federal characteristics of our Constitution.

(Inputs from Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, New Delhi)

Key Objectives :

A key objective of PR is to ensure that the process of planning for development in the country follows a bottom-up approach and commences at the grassroots level. The core approach is that the village panchayat plans, which are prepared with people's participation, are integrated with those prepared by the Intermediate and District Panchayats. These are then consolidated by the District Planning Committees with the Municipal plans into the draft district development plan. Till now, 18 states in the country have constituted District Planning Committees, while the process is under way in the remaining ones where Part IX of the Constitution is applicable.

Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme :

The BRGF is designed to redress regional imbalances in

development. The fund provides financial resources in supplementing and converging existing development inflows into the identified 250 districts. The objective is to bridge critical gaps in local infrastructure and other development requirements that are not being adequately met through existing inflows. It is expected that the fund will help strengthen panchayat and municipal level governance with appropriate capacity building, facilitate participatory planning, decision making and implementation and monitor the locally-felt needs.

The fund will help provide professional support to local bodies. It is hoped that this will help improve the performance and delivery of critical functions assigned to panchayats. The substantially-untied grant is distributed among the districts with each district receiving a fixed minimum amount of Rs 10 crore per annum.

1.6 Agricultural Communication :

In an earlier unit we touched upon communication playing a meaningful role in the field of agriculture. Let us elaborate this point here.

Being an agriculture-based economy, the governments, both at the Centre and States, have been trying to carry out ambitious plans and strategies for development of agriculture since Independence. In fact, the first Five Year plan had agriculture as its focus. Though agriculture may not have been given the primary status in other Five Year plans, it has been accorded a major position in terms of developing it as a discipline.

So there are agriculture universities and veterinary colleges in almost every state and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in Delhi. These institutions, particularly the ICAR, have been spearheading all-round development and research strategy in this field for the last several decades.

These institutions and other related research organisations have been carrying out high profile researches into various aspects of agriculture and veterinary. These institutions are carrying out research on high-yielding variety of seeds and their ability to grow in adverse conditions, better-yielding livestock and poultry and greater production of milk and meat.

The next task is to make this 'knowledge' or 'information' available to the target audience to help them benefit by the research. This area is called applied research and it is expected to help a target audience, the farmers. Unless they derive an advantage from these findings, the research becomes futile.

1.6.1 Extension Communication :

The above section has given you an idea about agricultural communication. In the course curriculum of agricultural and related sciences, there is a component called Extension Education or Extension Communication. You may be familiar with this term from various sources. This is Development Communication in its specific form tuned to the practice of agriculture. In simple words, it can be seen as the effort and system to communicate the research findings and developments in agriculture studies to farmers — the target audiences for helping them to apply the same in their practice.

We know that all state governments have departments of agriculture and veterinary sciences. There is an agriculture or veterinary extension officer at the entry level in these departments. As the name suggests, this official is entrusted with the task of disseminating the new findings in agriculture and veterinary sciences to the farmers. The officer is also expected to demonstrate and train the farmers in the specific field and convince them to adopt the new practices.

Below this category of officials, there is another layer of field-level workers called *gram sevak* and *gram sevikas*. Their task is to practically demonstrate these new findings to the farmers in a hands-on manner. This is a specific form of development communication.

1.6.2 Rural Development :

In our country more than 70 per cent of people live in rural areas and their main occupation is agriculture and other related trade. The rural communities are characterised by a low or almost zero literacy level, lack of modern means of transport and communication and lack of innovativeness. These factors have pushed the rural areas into islands of underdevelopment.

The Government and 'societies' are trying to achieve a status of a developed nation. But we cannot think of taking the country forward if a major part of the population is illiterate and underprivileged. But it is also true that underdevelopment prevails in many Indian cities and towns. But the situation is better in towns and cities than the rural areas because there are a few agencies taking up development schemes there.

1.6.3 Media for Rural Development :

In a society we must carry out any developmental communication activity with all the resources (in our case — media) available with us for the purpose. But all forms of media may not be equally suitable and comfortable for carrying out development communication. We will have to look for a suitable media out of these and implement the task with a judicious 'media planning'.

What is media planning? It means preparing a finely-balanced mixture of different types of media for dissemination of the desired information to the target

audience. This planning is based on the findings on what type of media is available at that specific place, how many people have access to any particular type of media and what is the preference of a specific media agency by people from different age groups.

Let us consider these media to see how suitable they are for taking our development communication messages to the desired masses.

Print Media :

This medium enjoys the distinction of being the oldest in all mass media and has a special attachment with the masses, despite the advent of Television and Radio. The print medium has kept its presence felt in major way despite the rising popularity of Television and Radio. However, it remains mostly an urban medium and cannot be termed an ideal medium for rural and agricultural development.

Electronic Media :

Among the components of this media, which includes Radio, Television, Cinema and Cable Television, Radio is found to be most suitable for rural as well as agricultural target audiences. The major advantage of this media in relation to the print media is that its messages need not be carried physically to the doorstep of the target audience, but can be sent through the air. All the people need to possess is a radio set. This is why it is suitable for serving people almost 24 hours a day.

Radio's popularity among the masses in the rural areas as well as the towns and cities is reflected in the findings of the India Census 2001. This Census informs us that in Assam, of the 49 lakh households, at least 30 per cent own a radio set, while only 18 per cent own a television set. There are some variations in the number of radio and

television sets in the rural and urban categories of the population. In the urban category, television is owned by more than 55 per cent of the population, while 40 per cent have radio sets. On the other hand, in the rural areas of the state, 12 per cent of the household own television sets, while more than 28 per cent have radio sets.

The data also informs that in Assam, people in the 15-49 age group (divided into six categories of five years each) tunes into radio, compared to any other mass media.

(For both these data, please refer to the charts I and II given as ANNEXURES at the end of this Unit).

The remarkable fact is that despite the presence of so many avenues of entertainment and information gathering at the disposal of the people in urban and town areas, such a percentage of radio listenership is quite commendable. This proves that the utility of Radio as a suitable medium of development communication has remained important and intact till date.

Community Radio Stations :

This new concept is becoming popular in our country and has a high potential for being used for development communication. This concept requires a small-calibre FM radio station with a limited range used for local purposes for disseminating information. A major advantage of this idea is that being a localized radio centre, all issues of local importance gets priority. Further, these stations are maintained by volunteers and other workers elected or chosen by the local community. There is hardly any scope for outside interference and undue pressure for broadcasting something which may not be conducive for the local community. In simple terms, this is a system of radio broadcasting which is for the people, by the people and of the people.

This is an ideal tool for development communication because it enjoys the scope of broadcasting programmes in local languages using comprehensive content for the local masses and concerning itself with only those aspects which have a direct and indirect relevance to the local community.

So far, the concept has gained ground in several developing nations of the world, including Brazil and Nepal. It is a new concept for the Indian masses, but is fast gaining popularity due to its advantages and positive aspects.

Impressed by these features, the MIB in December, 2006, has allowed even NGOs and voluntary organisations with a good track record of service to apply for and operate community radio stations. The government is also encouraging established and reputed educational institutions to set up such stations and transfer the benefits to the local community.

The government is promoting this medium by taking up an ambitious plan of setting up 337 FM radio stations all over the country during the next few years. This medium is proving to be the most potential and emerging tool for furthering the cause of development communication in the country.

Role of Institutes of Rural Development :

The role of the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) in Hyderabad must be mentioned so that you can be familiar with its efforts in bringing about changes in the rural areas of the country. NIRD is engaged in extensive research, teaching and extension works all over the country as mandated by its charter of establishment. It has a Department for Rural Communication which specializes in devising proper ways and means for communicating development inputs for the rural

population. Similarly, most of the states have their own state-level institutes of rural development loosely based on the NIRD model. All of them are engaged in the business of researching as well as implementing schemes of rural development and devising better means of communicating innovations for the benefit of the rural population.

Folk and Traditional Media :

These media are potential tools for achieving the goals of development communication. This is suitable in a country like ours which is home to hundreds of communities living in harmony with distinct culture and language differences. However, we will discuss about them in a full-fledged separate chapter.

1.7 Let us Sum up :

In the simplest of terms, Development Communication can be termed as communication for development. Experts in the field of communication and other areas are thinking more in terms of applying and utilising the enormous potential of mass communication and media for delivering adequate and meaningful information to the masses at the grassroots level, mass media is an open informal university accessible to everyone with or without formal education, It is an open forum for discussing every issue. A paradigm of development is a theoretical concept, a model for planning and guiding the cause of development in a society or nation in any country.

The new paradigm in comparison to the dominant paradigm stressed on developing the general condition of the society's human resources. It advocated an ultimate and optimum development of human resources by providing a suitable and ideal situation for such a growth.

Some other concepts and issues like ensuring equality of males and females in every sector of livelihood and

contribution of housewives to the family's development which remain unaccounted for were also incorporated into the big broad field of development paradigms. The dominant paradigm which was adopted by many developing nations, including India, was found to have been leading to some unwanted situations like promoting excessive consumerism and corruption in politics and the state machinery. The new alternative development paradigm has also introduced the importance of utilizing the media's potential for development purposes.

In Development Communication, two main types of strategies are applied for implementation of the schemes, to make people aware of the developmental efforts for enriching their life: One is the 'Social Marketing Development Communication' strategy which utilizes all the modern aspects of marketing of a commercial product or service for popularising a socially-relevant and important cause, the second is the Participatory Rural Appraisal strategy which lays major emphasis on participation of members of the audiences in the scheme's implementation in which the targeted community's members are encouraged for receiving the messages from the sources through a 'human mediator'. Development of agricultural and rural sectors of India are of vital significance if we have to progress towards prosperity and advancement. To achieve this goal, there is no alternative except to utilise the services of media for development communication purposes.

1.8 Possible Questions :

1. Define Development Communication.
2. Why do we need a paradigm for development?
3. How do the two major paradigms differ in their approach to development?
4. What are the strategies for spreading development communication?

5. How would you define 'participatory' mass communication or mass media?
6. Why is Social Marketing Development Communication known by this name?
7. How can we say that development communication is relevant for a country like India?
8. What do you understand by the concept of democratic decentralization?
9. Describe the provision of Panchayati Raj institutions and their significance to the Indian context as a tool for development.
10. Why can't we look at agricultural and rural development as two completely different sectors of development with no connection between them?
11. What types of media are suitable for the cause of development communication for rural and agricultural development in India? Give examples.

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ANNEXURE :

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS OWNING EACH OF THE SPECIFIED ASSETS

STATE		Total no o Household	Availability of assets		PC of	
			Radio, Transistor	Television	Radio, Transistor	Television
ASSAM	Total	4,935,358	1,489,742	903,126	30.2	18.3
	Rural	4,220,173	1,207,270	508,212	28.6	12.0
	Urban	715,185	282,472	394,914	39.5	55.2

(Source India Census 2001)

EXPOSURE TO MASS MEDIA

Background characteristics	Reads a newspaper or magazine at least once a week	Watches television at least once a week	Listens to the radio at least once a week	Visits the cinema / theatre at least once a month	Not regularly exposed to any media	Number of women
Age Group						
15 - 19	11.6	21.9	36.1	9.8	52.1	320
20 - 24	16.0	25.1	39.8	5.8	49.2	611
25 - 29	19.0	30.3	42.2	6.5	45.5	673
30 - 34	17.2	27.9	42.9	5.8	45.7	657
35 - 39	16.9	32.0	38.0	5.7	49.6	475
40 - 44	18.0	34.5	44.8	3.1	42.7	361
45 - 49	13.6	29.5	39.7	1.4	48.3	343

(Source India Census 2001)

Unit 2

Diffusion of Innovation

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2.1 Introduction :

It is an established fact that it is not enough to have advanced technology in any society. It is important to adopt and develop those technologies to match the regional and local-level requirements, needs and situations.

We can explain it in this way—all over the world and in our country, innovative development in every field of science and technology is being carried out that are directly or indirectly relevant to our life. But only when these technologies are utilised for our development, will their worth be realised. Further, we will not be able to apply every one of these technologies to our problems because they may not have been researched and developed, in view of our local issues and problems.

This is why the aspect of 'diffusion of innovation' has come to be accepted widely by all the parties concerned with the issue of development communication.

2.2 Objectives :

A small innovation provides enormous potential for effecting changes in our day-to-day activities, resulting in convenience of performing that specific task and saving of money and time. In this Unit, we intend to introduce you to the various aspects of diffusion of innovation and development support communication. After completing the study of this unit you will be able to

- *familiarize* yourself with the concept of innovation
- *discuss* the diffusion of innovation and how it can be carried out
- *see* how development support communication works
- *explain* how a small innovation can lead to a high level of convenience among the masses
- *discuss* how these activities are being carried out in the Indian scenario

2.3 Diffusion of Innovation :

Let us look at both these terms separately :

The term 'Diffusion' means to spread, to disseminate, to

make it known to people as much as possible by using all available methods and media. The term fusion means a nice mixture of more than one culture or element in a certain product. And diffusion is the opposite of this. It means to spread something far and wide so that more and more masses can take advantage of it and thereby benefit from it.

The term 'Innovation' means devising new ways and means of doing a work. For example, Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press, which existed in its basic form for many years. After a few years, people like Gutenberg managed to find out possibilities of improving it. And, either by adding new features or by improving some devices, they managed to increase production and made the operation more convenient. This is innovation.

Let us take another example. Farmers and rural residents use hand-operated pumps to pump water from the ground for irrigation or drinking purposes. Though it is a norm to use hands for pumping, a few innovative and sharp-minded people have devised a water pump machine which could be operated by feet using a pair of pedals. This helps us keep our hands free. This is innovation.

Similarly, many decades ago, rice and wheat planting used to be done haphazardly without any specific pattern or rows. When the system of planting them in patterns of criss-crossing rows was introduced, it could be found that this resulted in better growth of the crops and increased production of the seeds. This is innovation.

As we have already discussed in the earlier unit, if the masses do not come to know about all such innovations, we will not be able to improve our life by utilizing or applying them in practice.

2.3.1 How is it carried out ?

This is a specialised job which requires skill, innovativeness in approach and empathy and perception for making the activity successful. The diffusion of the innovation approach of development communication progresses on the basis of the needs assessment of the target audiences, which is to be served. This approach follows a few steps towards achieving its goals. These are — creation of awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption.

Let us discuss these steps in the following way.

It is normal human tendency that we do not like to accept and adopt anything new unless we are convinced of its benefits and its positive effects. This happens more with the masses, who are illiterate and underprivileged with low income levels. This is because lack of education is linked with an absence of innovation and an adoptive and progressive mind.

Thus, this first step is important as it prepares the ground for making people accept innovations in any field of life. The masses have to become aware of an idea, product or service for them to develop an interest in that product or service. It becomes easier to convince a person about an idea once he or she is aware of it from any source — whether mass media or human media.

The next stage is to create an interest among the masses about that particular product or service for adopting it to suit their life's requirements. Once the interest is aroused in the minds of the masses about that particular product, it becomes convenient to instill into them the need for adopting and applying them in their life.

The steps of trial and evaluation follow the other two steps

in a logical sequence. Thus, we finally arrive at a situation in which the masses as a whole are ready to adopt and practice that idea.

2.3.2 Media for Diffusion of Innovations :

The various media which are suitable for development communication purposes will also stand good in this context. For example—depending upon the product or the process on which innovations were done and the characteristics of the target audience of these innovations, different media will have to be employed for reaching them. One medium may not be suitable for everyone. So, depending upon the overall nature of the target audiences, situation and special requirements of a particular locality, the approach will have to be different with every issue and problem in consideration.

In this regard, we need to take help of a cross section of media—ranging from mass media, folk and traditional media to human media or communicators. Only a right mixture of all these media can deliver the desired goals to us in the long run.

The factor of human media is highly important because the target audiences in development communication are usually residents of rural areas with illiteracy and poverty as accompanying pre-conditions. Besides, the situation is aggravated by the lack of exposure to modern mass media instruments like Television, newspapers and magazines. Radio is the most effective, easily-accessible and standard medium for reaching out to this target audience.

Hence, human communication is important for effecting the changes in the minds of the masses. This is because of the better convincing capacity of face-to-face human communication, which is a 'personal' communication compared with the 'impersonal' communication of the mass

media. As the majority of our population is illiterate and underprivileged and residents of the rural areas, who are devoid of exposure to modern mass media tools, this approach is the most effective with huge potential benefits.

National Innovation Foundation :

The National Innovation Foundation (NIF) is an autonomous organisation promoted by the Government of India to identify and promote innovative activities of people across the country. It has been working actively throughout the country in close coordination with reputed technical education institutions like the IITs and the National Institutes of Technologies for this purpose. During the last several years, it has managed to spot and identify quite a few such people who have made innovations in the ordinary day-to-day work and are being developed for further research.

In the first step, NIF gets information from its spotting centres about innovative measures by a person. The NIF experts then evaluate the innovative process. If they find they are worth encouraging, the NIF invites that person to their offices and provides financial and technical support for further research. The NIF takes the responsibility on behalf of the innovator to file applications for patent registration and tie up with companies, laboratories and research institutions for improvising the same.

2.4 Development Support Communication (DSC) :

This is another approach of development communication which is based on the concept of the communicator acting as the mediator of messages in a two-way communication process.

Let us elaborate this issue. This specific type of development communication takes over the responsibilities

of disseminating messages of development from the researchers and research institutions to the targeted masses for achieving the ultimate goal of society's progress.

We have cited quite a few examples of high quality research work being carried out in different organisations by researchers involved in various fields of innovations. The findings of these research activities and efforts have to be converted into easily-understandable and convenient messages, preferably in a local language of the locality for the target audience. The DSC has the task of selecting a suitable and effective media plan to reach the maximum number of masses in the limited time frame, converting the masses' attitudes into adopting the new innovations and practicing them. The DSC approach also involves taking proper stock of evaluation of its effectiveness, feedback and looking at future possibilities.

This particular form of development communication envisages use of small media like video, folk and traditional media and slides for taking the messages to the rural masses. You must have already realized that the small media like those mentioned here have more utility in carrying out the desired job than the big corporate mass media. Here again the concept of Narrowcasting compared to Broadcasting comes into active consideration.

Broadcasting means spreading the net of information and communication to a broadest possible extent. While communicating something through broadcasting, the meaning of the messages may get diluted by the time it reaches the masses. Further, as it covers a wide area of jurisdiction and masses, it is difficult to cater to any specific group or community's interests in fulfilling their information requirements.

On the other hand Narrowcasting means the opposite of this. The broadcasting concept is broken into smaller, low

caliber mass media units for serving fewer people with more attention and care. For example, if a radio or television station has to take care of the coverage of one crore people at any given area, it will be practically impossible to take care of differing interests of these people. However, if this station is broken up into smaller, low caliber stations, with each taking care of a few lakhs of people, this will be a better option. It will allow the stations to communicate with the masses in a better and effective manner than broadcasting. This is because you have to cater to fewer people who are within a manageable range and they develop a feeling about it like someone of their own. Hence, this mode of communication is preferable in case of development communication as a whole and particularly in case of DSC.

2.4.1 Government Efforts in Development Communication :

Development communication is a priority area in the field of communication and is accorded great significance by all the global agencies dedicated towards development. The 1960s and 1970s have seen the concept coming to the fore in mass media forums across the third world nations, supported by UNSECO and other organisations.

Initially, it was perceived that economic development was at the core of all dimensions of progress and, thereby, a lot of emphasis was laid on training a special breed of economists for pushing the cause. In the 1970s, these governments realized that development journalism was a potential means for giving a boost to development communication efforts.

In our country, the 2nd Five Year Plan (FYP) sought the participation of people in the development process. The Panchayati Raj (PR) was introduced for making the administration more responsive to peoples' needs as well

as development. The 3rd FYP stressed on providing adequate access to information for the masses and cause behavioral changes among the people for improving their standard of living. This is the period in which Television was introduced basically as an educational medium in addition to the existing medium of radio. There was emphasis on using folk media also for the purpose of development communication.

The 4th FYP stressed on making the masses adopt new innovations and developments that were also popularised by the media. This FYP was followed by the next one which emphasised the formulation of a national communication policy and developmental awareness. It was characterized by major nationwide media campaigns for spreading the messages on various positive aspects of the emerging new developments in every field of life.

The 6th FYP saw the development of the satellite communication systems and emphasis was put on efforts to eradicate social evils like poverty, illiteracy and unemployment.

The 7th plan emphasized on the basic needs model of development, sustainable development and development of indigenous technology etc.

The 8th FYP saw the promotion of aspects like human development paradigm, improvement of women's health, nutritional programmes and employment generation. The involvement of NGOs in development efforts was ushered in during this plan period.

In the subsequent FYPs, efforts on various modes for promoting development communication are being emphasized for giving a boost to the cause.

In December 2006, the MIB of the Government of India

has made an important decision to allow NGOs with a good track record to apply for and operate a community radio station for disseminating meaningful information for the masses.

2.5 Writing of Development Messages for Rural, Urban Audience :

You must be aware of some ongoing development efforts, activities and experiments near and in distant places. But being aware of these developments is not enough. The goals of development communication will be adequately served only when these happenings are reported in the media. This will ensure that innumerable number of people or masses come to know about them. At this moment you should remember that media is a magic multiplier or force multiplier which multiplies all our efforts — whether negative or positive.

Let us illustrate this with an example. You have come across an example of how a group of marginal ginger farmers were united to form a cooperative marketing agency in a district of Assam. The objective has been to bypass the exploitation of middlemen in the buying and selling process of ginger in the market. This scheme was effectively implemented with active supervision of the deputy commissioner of the district and it benefitted the farmers. They were able to improve their living standard from those monetary gains and achieve confidence of being able to achieve something really positive.

Now, only when this news item or story is known to the masses, will it yield a broader result. It is a good sign that a specific group of farmers have been able to achieve such a feat in a remote place of the country. It will be a good exercise to communicate this story to more underprivileged and illiterate sections of society. If more people come to know about it, they will feel encouraged and develop a certain kind of confidence to try and enact

a similar experiment with such a project and gain desirable benefits.

There is another example of a group of about a hundred self-help groups (SHGs) uniting themselves under an umbrella organisation and taking a loan from a nationalized bank's branch in a district of Assam. These SHGs were so punctual in repaying their loan amounts, that the bank management was impressed and offered loans to the groups even without their asking.

A few years back, there was a news item in the media that the village panchayat in Kerala had suspended the licence of a major cold drink bottling company. This was because the company's daily consumption of water resources was more than it was actually allowed to consume. The company had to give an undertaking that it would not exploit the groundwater more than what it was allowed to do.

This major achievement of the village populace against a multinational company is encouraging for anyone else fighting such a problem in any other place. This is development news and such stories should be focused more than the routine stories or news items. News items on developmental experiments illustrated with examples should be repeated in the media for the greater benefit of the larger masses of society.

Present Trends :

Media personnel, voluntary associations or agencies engaged in the field of journalism and media are concerned with the activity of development communication or reporting. Yet the cause of development reporting has not been served in an ideal manner so far.

In our society, majority of newspapers, magazines, television and radio channels or other media tools are in

the jurisdiction of the private sector. The primary goal of all private enterprises is in maximizing profits. This explains the lack of interest in this type of news items or stories in our media.

There are a few dedicated media organizations in the government and voluntary agencies which are promoting the cause of development reporting.

In the mainstream commercial media, development reporting is not a priority for obvious reasons. Such stories being focused is usually an exception, not a routine. This is because such stories are not sensational and, therefore, not very popular, thereby lacking the attributes to attract more people.

For example, how many of you would be interested in reading details about the development of an aircraft model by the government-supported organization, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) or the development of the Main Battle Tank, Arjun, completely as an Indian effort. On the other hand, you must have seen and realised how much media coverage is given to celebrity news items like the incidents before and after the marriage of two famous Bollywood actors sometimes back, or, may be the news items tracking the life the Crown Prince of United Kingdom and his girlfriend.

Nevertheless, few newspapers, magazines and electronic media channels are trying to promote development reporting to popularise it among the masses for achieving long-term goals. The coverage of the ginger farmers in Karbi Anglong district of Assam was published in *The Frontline*. Not only this, most of the issues of this magazine publish interesting development stories for the target audiences. Similarly, *The Indian Express* carries development news items regularly in its issues. In fact, the publishers of this newspaper have instituted a special award for best grassroots reporting efforts.

But the language of the magazine and the newspaper is English, and is, therefore, beyond the reach of the masses for whom the knowledge is required. However, these people, who are in real need of this information, will be able to reach and access it if it is broadcast in radio. The other option is any voluntary organisation disseminating it to the masses through a human mediator or communicator.

In this regard, the pioneer voluntary organization, Press Institute of India (PII), based in Chennai (formerly in Delhi) has been regularly publishing a journal, titled *Grassroots*. This journal is promoting news items from the field of development which are deemed capable of encouraging other people to think in similar ways.

Further, a few universities of the country are offering courses in Rural Journalism and Rural Development, in which development reporting is a major prerequisite. The institute of Agriculture Management and Development in Hyderabad, established under the Central Government, offers a diploma course in agriculture journalism. These are welcome developments as they will lead towards promoting development communication.

The Mass Communication Research Centre (MCRC) of Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi has been conducting a comprehensive diploma course in Development Communication. The Indian Institute of Mass Communication in New Delhi has also been conducting a four-month-long diploma course in this subject for practicing journalists, NGO workers and government officials from India and abroad. These courses are proving to be popular over the years and are contributing to uplift the people in all fields of life.

The National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC) of the Ministry of Science and

Technology has been promoting communication of scientific findings and developments to the masses. It is publishing a journal called *Indian Journal of Science Communication* for creating awareness about the theme among the people.

On the other hand, there are a few NGOs and voluntary communication organisations which provide training on the handling of audio-video equipments to their volunteers or workers for programme production on developmental issues. These are broadcast in the local community radio or shown at smaller, closer gatherings to instruct the members of the target audiences.

Though these members or workers never had any exposure to such equipment and activities, they are doing their job well with a little bit of training. This is a welcome step. Members of the underprivileged communities who may be illiterates would be better as development communicators as they are privy to the ground situation. The community will also accept them as being members of the extended family, and, thereby the communication will be more effective in nature. These communicators can perform a dual role. First, as a reporter or media person finding out the problems and other issues of the community and reporting them in the media; second, as communicators of development messages to be disseminated to the community members. So, this two-way process has been proving successful in many pockets of the country initiated by some NGOs and voluntary organizations, engaged in development and development reporting.

Such efforts also help the masses in another way. The findings and the experiences of the field can be utilised by other like-minded organisations involved in similar fields of activities. So, the experiences gathered by one of them can be circulated among all similar organisations to help everyone benefit from these exercises.

But in general, the scenario of development reporting is not that encouraging till date.

Efforts in Development Reporting :

There are a few organisations and agencies in the private and voluntary sectors that are trying to promote development reporting. These organisations offer fellowships to interested journalists and activists in different development fields. The idea is to help them prepare and publish well-researched and studied features, essays and articles in various media forums in foreign countries and in Indian journals.

A few of them encourage media personalities to produce and direct documentary programmes and films focusing on any particular theme of development. All these efforts are aimed at promotion of development reporting across all fields of life.

The Centre for Media Studies of Delhi organises a documentary film festival on a regular basis on environmental awareness for encouraging participation from media persons, interested in extending to the masses the positive developments in any field of society.

2.5 Specific Requirements of Media Writing with Special Reference to Radio and TV :

We have already come to know that the audio-visual media and audio and visual media both taken together or independently are more effective in influencing people at any level, more so at the grassroots level, which constitutes the majority of our target audiences.

Writing for these two media requires a different orientation. In case of radio, a person has to be attracted just with the power of sound, while for Television, one has the advantage of combining both sound and picture.

The topics for broadcasting must be selected in a suitable manner so that appropriate issues are taken up and expert comments delivered to the people in the right context. The language must also be such that it appeals to the listeners and is understandable.

The agriculture-related programmes in radio and the *Kalyani* programme on Doordarshan are a few examples of effective writings in this regard. The language and presentation of *Kalyani* is more comprehensive to the target audience.

2.7 Advantages of Folk and Traditional Media :

Now let us quickly glance over the advantages of these forms of media over the conventional mass media. This will make you realise why these two are preferred media for majority of communicators or media persons involved with development communication across the world.

Intimacy with the Masses :

We know that every community or ethnic group has its own folk and traditional media which are close to their hearts. This is because it is in their person or, simply speaking, it runs in their blood. Hence, whenever it is performed or enacted by anyone in a society or place, most of the people feel like joining it and enjoying it to the maximum.

It is physically close to the people :

You must have seen that most of the folk and traditional media are performed in a close range of public gathering. Those of you from Assam and others who live here will know that *bihu* dances are performed in close proximity with the peoples' gathering. Thus, its effects on the masses are greater than that of mass media.

These are personal media :

While reading about the characteristics of communication as well as mass communication, you must have found that the latter is a highly 'impersonal' medium. This is because the communicator is communicating with the masses through a mechanical device or medium. That is why the effects of the personal warmth, which is found in folk and traditional media, lack in mass media. This is true for Television, radio, newspaper or a magazine. The personal charisma, which can move the masses, is absent in mass media.

Scope for repeat performances :

In these two types of media, there is scope for repeating a performance if the masses watching it like it. And the audiences can also take part in it by becoming a part of the performing team. This scope is not there in mass media, where programmes are broadcast simultaneously and only once. In other words, in folk and traditional media, programmes and events can be repeatedly performed if people like them. But in mass media, this is not possible as programmes are broadcast at the same time for a wide variety of people across a huge area.

Regional / local level variations are important :

Folk and traditional media performances can be carried out with adequate scope with regional or local variations in different places of the country. For example, the *bihu* performances in some areas of Sivasagar district will be different from the performances in Dibrugarh, Golaghat or Jorhat districts. Same is the case with other forms of folk and traditional media. However, in case of mass media, the same kind of performance has to be watched or listened to by people everywhere with hardly any scope for regional or local variations.

Scope for using body language or non-verbal language is adequately available in folk and traditional media :

You must have realised the importance of non-verbal language in the field of communication. In folk and traditional media, non-verbal or body-language plays an important role in enhancing the meaning of the messages being exchanged among participants. So, the scope for using voice modulations, facial gestures and overall body movement make these two types of media more effective than mass media, where the scope is less. Of course, you can say that television, films and documentaries have this scope in a good measure. But this cannot be as effective as a live performance by any person. Besides, you can realise that compared to this aspect, print media is stale in case of sending across the meanings of its information and messages. Even though exclamation signs are used in written languages, it does not carry the same kind of emotional strength and effect as one can get in case of radio and television due to voice modulation.

Use of local language and costumes :

Every type of folk and traditional media has to be essentially based upon local ethos, culture and other aspects. Thus, the costumes, language used and the settings and background must invariably bear the stamp of that locality and general culture of the area. Otherwise, it will not be able to carry the same effects and meanings for the masses.

Performance-oriented :

Another important point in this regard is that most of the folk and traditional media are performance-oriented. It signifies that majority of these two media are a finely-balanced combination of performance of music and dances. This aspect provides more effectiveness over its target audiences.

Limited reach :

A major drawback in folk and traditional media is its limited reach. That means a folk and traditional media performance is done for a group of a hundred or at the most few hundreds or thousands of people. Their capacity or utility is not adequate to reach millions of people. It is at best a localised medium. We can address the problems, issues or other aspects of a certain area in the locality's own language, culture and ethos.

Now, due to all these factors, folk and traditional media enjoy more effectiveness and influence over the masses of whom they are a part of.

2.7.1 Interface between Folk, Traditional Media and Mass Media :

Many of you may feel that mass media is hampering the growth and popularity of folk and traditional media in any society around the world. The aggressive advent of mass media throughout the world has pushed our folk and traditional media to negligence. They are unable to prosper and become popular among the masses.

Masses in modern societies, specially the younger generation, are attracted by the colourful audio-visual presentations of modern mass media compared to our own media forms.

If we look at it from a different angle, we will find that there is ample scope for a combined or fusion development between both these formats.

While mass media is impersonal, folk and traditional media are highly personal. We can devise a suitable way of focusing the attention of the masses on the folk media by broadcasting their performances on television or radio or

publishing about them in the print media. This will serve two major purposes: First, the specific folk media will receive a major boost in terms of popularity; and second, maximum number of people will come to know about it through mass media.

We know that because of its close proximity to the masses and the use of local language, ethos and costumes, folk media is dearer to people from rural areas. This intense personal-level rapport with the audiences or the masses can be exploited or utilised very effectively by big mass media organizations by extending the scope of popularising information on development communication to the masses.

It was mentioned earlier that no serious communicator for development communication can ignore the power of folk and traditional media for disseminating the messages to the grassroots level people. So, we must find suitable means for combining the advantages of both these formats for gaining maximum mileage.

Folk Media Reflects Social Changes :

A major advantage and characteristic of folk and traditional media is that it is dynamic. It changes with the times, embracing new elements. This is why its contents change from time to time.

Its dynamic nature is reflected in the responsiveness of the folk and traditional media to major events in society. For example, if you will look at *bihu* songs over the years, you will find that they also address popular and major issues of different periods of time. The songs depict stories about our freedom struggle against the colonial rulers, the anti-foreigners' agitation of the 1980s, floods and many other socio-economic problems.

Again, maybe all of you are familiar with the folk culture of *Ojapali* of Assam. Interestingly, this form of folk culture is aimed at creating awareness among the masses through a judiciously-combined dance and scriptures sequences. It is active even today and continues to create awareness about various social issues among the masses in the respective areas where they are performed.

In some parts of lower Assam, there is a folk tradition called *mohoho* festival or the mosquito-repelling festival as 'moh' in Assamese means mosquito. In this folk culture, people of a village form a group and visit all the neighbouring families to alert them about the need for repelling mosquitoes. However, this activity also doubles up as a visit of the families to seek the blessings of village elders and staying in touch among themselves.

Thus, most of folk and traditional culture in our society can be transformed into carriers of developmental communication — messages aimed at the masses at grassroot level. This will ensure a higher scale of success to our efforts in this particular field of communication aimed at the rural underprivileged and illiterate masses.

2.8 Let us Sum up :

The activity of development reporting which is a major part of development communication has not been encouraging in our country yet. Of late, people are becoming conscious of the utility and importance of this particular medium for making the masses aware of the developments in various fields. So, more such efforts are being taken up for promoting this aspect. The Community Radio System (CRS) is fast becoming popular among the masses in this connection. With the help of the CRS, people who are otherwise illiterate and underprivileged are being trained to acting as rural communicators in two ways first, as a reporter or journalist for the community radio stations or

the local newspapers, published by an NGO for developmental purposes. And secondly, to carry the messages of development to the masses as a human communicator, who is not familiar with the use of a sophisticated camera or any audio-visual instrument. The Government of India had initiated two very successful and effective development communication projects — Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) and Kheda Communication Project (KCP) in the mid-1970s.

2.9 Possible Questions :

1. Give a brief description of development reporting scenario in the country.
2. Is there any relevance of the SITE and KCP projects for the country's situation today? How?
3. Suggest some ways for promoting a better development reporting activity by our country's media in future.
4. Give a brief description of development reporting scenario in the country.
5. What is Diffusion of Innovation? Why is it important for society's development?

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Unit 3

Introduction to Communication Research

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- 3.4 Elements of Journalism Research**
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3.1 Introduction :

Research is a process of investigation. It is an examination of a subject from different points of view. It is not just a trip to the library to pick up a stack of materials, or copy down the first five hits from a computer search. Research is a hunt for truth. It is getting to know a subject by reading on it, reflecting, playing with ideas, choosing the areas that interest us and following up on them. Research is, therefore, a method of educating ourselves.

By now, you must have been acquainted with the various concepts of mass communication and media system. In this age of challenge and competition, research has assumed a lot of importance in all fields, be it the business

this age of challenge and competition, research has assumed a lot of importance in all fields, be it the business world, corporate world or the communication world. So, in this part of this paper we are going to discuss the various aspects of communication 'research'.

3.2 Objectives :

In this unit we will introduce you to the basics of communication research, definition and meaning. After going through this unit you must be able to -

- *explain* the basic concepts on research and communication research
- *discuss* various elements of communication research
- *enumerate* different types of research methods
- *name* the tools used for data collection.

3.3 Communication Research: Meaning and Definition :

Meaning of Research :

The word 'research' stands for re-search. It is defined as search for knowledge, in which there is a systematic process of investigating, collecting and analysing information to increase our understanding of the phenomenon under study. The key function of a researcher is to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon, examine it from different points of view and communicate that understanding to others. Research is the way you educate yourself.

The *Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* lays down the meaning of research as "a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge." *The Random House Dictionary* of the English language defines the term as a diligent, systematic

inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover or revise facts, theories and applications. According to the meaning in this dictionary, research involves acquisition of knowledge and getting nearer to truth. Truth means the quality of being in agreement with reality or facts. Research is the pursuit of truth with the help of study, observation, comparison and experimentation. In other words, the search for knowledge through objective and systematic method of finding solution to a problem or answer to a question is research. There is no guarantee that the researcher will always come out with a solution or answer. We can mention here a statement of Karl Pearson. He says "there is no shortcut to truth.....no way to gain knowledge of the universe except through the gateway of scientific method".

Definition of Research :

C.R. Kothari in his book, *Research Methodology*, defines that this inquisitiveness is the mother of all knowledge and the method men employ to obtain the knowledge is termed as research. Research is an academic activity and, as such, the term should be used in a technical sense.

Let us discuss some definitions of research :-

"A careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge"-Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English.

"Research is a systematised effort to gain new knowledge" - L.V. Redman and A.V.H. Mory

"Research is a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic" - C.R. Kothari.

Communication Research :

In this age of challenge and competition, research has assumed importance in business, corporate or the communication world. It has occupied the realm of human understanding in some form or the other. The thirst for new areas of knowledge and the human urge to find solutions to problems have developed a faculty for search and research.

The influence of research goes beyond the media to embrace every section of the society. In mass media, it is especially important because it is a tool that enables us to predict and explain human behaviour under certain practical or assumed circumstances. And, based upon such predictions, the media can take necessary steps for providing what the audiences actually want.

Zeam Folkerts and Stephen Lacy in their book, "The Media in your Life- An Introduction to Mass Communication", has defined the mass communication research as: "Mass communication research involves the systematic study of media content, the forces that shape its creation, how and why people use media, and the impact of media content and media institutions on individuals and society". At a broader level, communication experts and theorists engage themselves in research to find out certain behavioural patterns of human beings and the relationship between the people and society. This is to see how the effects of one on the other can be studied for betterment of the communication efforts and the processes in future.

Mass communication research is an art of scientific investigation or an in-depth academic activity that lays stress on the various aspects of mass communication. It includes not only an in-depth investigation of theoretical aspects of mass communication but wide ranging inter-

disciplines such as television, radio, newspaper, folk and traditional communication forms, advertising, public relations campaign, effectiveness of programmes and audience behaviour.

3.4 Elements of Communication Research :

Wimmer and Dominic in their book, '*Mass Media Research*', said that there are four basic elements of communication research:

1. **Concept and Constructs** : A concept is an abstract idea found by generalising from particulars and summarising related observations. Concepts are important in a communication research because they simplify the research process by combining particular characteristics, objects or people into more general categories. Secondly, it simplifies communication among those who have a shared understanding of them.

2. **Measurement** : Measurements are everywhere if a researcher assigns numerals to objects, events or properties according to certain rules. Numerals have no implicit quantitative meaning. The mass media research is measured with indicators of the properties of individuals or objects.

3. **Variables** : Variables are classified in terms of their relationship with one another. Independent variable and dependent variable are two major types of variables. Dependent variables are what the researcher wishes to explain. The researcher systematically varies the independent variables.

4. **Scale** : According to Wimmer and Dominic, measurement scale is the last basic element of communication research. A scale represents a composite measure of the variable. It is based on more than one

item. Rating scales are common in mass media research. Some other scales such as Thurston scale, Guttman scale, Likert scale and Cematic differential scales are used in media research.

Here, we want to acquaint you with some other important elements which are popular among the communication researchers. Feedback and feed forward are commonly used for communication researches.

Feedback plays an important role in a communication process. Feedback is needed to know how the communication processes or efforts are influencing the persons or parties that have been targeted. Audience feedback is required for all the media houses. Therefore, many media houses conduct audience feedback surveys to improve the quality of their programmes. On the other hand, feed forward means the response about a certain event or activity being carried out which is acquired in advance by utilising different methods.

3.5 Research Design :

The research design is the conceptual structure within which the research is conducted. In the book "*Research methods in social sciences*" Claire Selltitz said that "a research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevant to the research purpose with economy in procedure." In the words of Fred N Kerlinger, it is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to the research questions and control variance.

We can say that it is a scientific and systematic plan that indicates in what way the researcher should collect primary as well as secondary data and the directions regarding the evaluation and analysis of the collected data.

The contents of the research design are listed out in the following :

1. Need for the study
2. Review of previous studies/literature.
3. Statement of the problem.
4. Objectives of the study.
5. Formulation of hypothesis.
6. Operational definitions.
7. Scope of the study.
8. Sources of data.
9. Methods of collection of data.
10. Tools and technique.
11. Sample design.
12. Data analysis.
13. Presentation of the results of the study.
14. Time estimate.
15. Financial Budget.
16. Administration of the enquiry.

C. R. Kothari states that "A good design is often characterised by adjectives like 'flexible', 'appropriate', 'efficient' and 'economical'. The design, which minimises bias and maximises the reliability of the data collected and analysed, is considered a good design. The design, which gives the smallest experimental error, is supposed to be the best design. Similarly, a design yields maximal information and provides an opportunity for considering an appropriate and efficient design in respect of many research problems. Thus, the question of good design is related to the purpose or objectives of the research and also with the nature of the problem to be studied'.

3.6 Research Methods :

Research methods are categories of terminologies, strategies and techniques that are used to conduct research. The researcher has to provide answer to the questions raised in the beginning of the study. For this purpose, the researcher has to investigate and gather the relevant data and information as the basis or evidence. The procedures adopted for obtaining the same are described in the literature as methods of research.

The following are some important research methods which are used for collection of data :

Survey method : Survey is a popular branch of social science research. It can be defined as "specification of procedures for gathering information about a larger number of people by collecting information from a few of them" (Black and Champion). Survey research is the study of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour of people and their settings through questionnaires administered by mail, handouts, personal and, telephone interviews, and the Internet; ranging from one question polls to large-scale studies; sometimes employing panels and time.

Observation methods : This method may be defined as "a systematic viewing of a specific phenomenon in its proper setting for the purpose of gathering information for the specific study". It is a method of scientific enquiry. Observation is a research technique in which the behaviour of research subjects is watched and recorded.

Case methods : It is borrowed from medical sciences. Just like a patient, the case is intensively studied, diagnosed and prescribed a remedy. According to PV Young, "a comprehensive study of a social unit, be that of a person, a group, a social institution, a district, (a media organization) or community, is called a case study". It is a popular research method in social sciences.

Experimental methods : Experimentation is the basic tool of pure and physical sciences. However, it is now used in social sciences. Experimentation is a research process used to observing the cause and effect relationship under controlled conditions.

Historical methods : When research is conducted on the basis of historical data, the researcher is said to follow the historical approach. It is a critical investigation of events, development, experiences of the past, the careful weighing of the validity of the sources of information of the past and the interpretation of the weighed evidence.

Comparative methods : It is also known as evolutionary or genetic methods. Though it is a popular research method used in pure sciences, it is now used in the social sciences as well. It is based on comparison.

Content analysis : Content analysis is an important research method in communication and media. It is a methodology to study the content of communication. Earl Babbie defines it as "the study of recorded human communications such as books, websites, paintings and laws." It is most commonly used by researchers in the social sciences to analyse recorded transcripts of interviews with participants. Harold Lasswell formulated the core questions of content analysis: "Who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect?" Ole Holsti offers a broad definition of content analysis as "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages." It is a specific research used frequently in all areas of the media. This method is popular with mass media research because it provides an efficient way to investigate the content of the media such as the number and types of commercials or advertisement in broadcast media as well as print media.

3.7 Data Collection Tools :

Data is the heart and soul of a research. The information which is collected from various sources and which can be expressed in quantitative form for a specific purpose is called data. To find out a solution of a research problem or to formulate policy making, the input must be appropriate.

The data may be classified as *primary* and *secondary* data. The primary data are the first hand information collected for a specific purpose.

Primary data is the original data. There are several ways of collecting the appropriate data which differ considerably. Primary data is collected by the researcher from his/her own observations and experiences. For example, if the researcher conducts a survey for the collection of data, it is known as primary data. Primary data are collected by taking a sample, representing a population. It is not a published data. When primary data is published by researcher, it becomes secondary data for everybody, other than the researcher.

Secondary data are those, which are published. It may be useful for many other people than the researcher who has published it. There are various sources of secondary data collection.

Four main sources are Government sources, Commercial sources, Organisational sources and Miscellaneous sources.

Let us discuss the several methods of collecting primary data.

Observation : The Oxford dictionary defines 'observation' as accurate watching and noting of phenomena as

they occur with regard to cause and effect or mutual relations. Observation defines a scientific tool and the method of data collection for the researcher. It is systematically planned, recorded and is solicited to checks and controls on validity and reliability. The main advantage of this method is that subjective bias is eliminated. A researcher should understand what to observe, how to record the observations and how to ensure their accuracy.

Interview Method : Interview is a powerful and widely used tool in primary data collection. This method is a particular form of conversation which a researcher conducts with individuals to obtain information on his subject. This method is widely used not only in communication research, but also in every aspect of mass communication and journalism. A communicator must use this method to prepare a report for the heterogeneous public. Various types of interviews can be conducted for data collection, such as Personal interview, Structural interview, Unstructured interview, Focused interview, Clinical interview and Non directed interview.

Questionnaire Method : This method is one of the popular methods of primary data collection. It is mainly used in case of enquiries. A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms. The questionnaire is mailed to respondents who are expected to read and understand the questions and write down the reply in the space meant for the purpose in the questionnaire. When the questionnaires are posted to the respondent or informant, it is known as mail questionnaire. It is desirable to send the questionnaire with a self-addressed envelope to ensure high rate of response.

Specimen Questionnaire :

The following is a specimen questionnaire -

1. Name
2. Sex
3. Age
4. Educational Qualification
5. Profession
6. Address
7. Have you completed higher education?
Yes No
8. If Yes, what degree you have obtained ?
Bachelor Degree
Master Degree
Diploma
Post Graduate Diploma
B. Ed
9. Are you interested to pursue a course?
Yes No
10. Do you know about open and distance learning system?
Yes Little bit No
11. Have you heard about IDOL ?
Yes No

Case Study Method : A case study is based on in-depth investigation of an individual, group, or event to explore causes of events. Rather than using samples and following

a rigid protocol to examine limited number of variables, case study methods involve in-depth, longitudinal (over a long period of time) examination of a single instance or event: a case. They provide a systematic way of looking at events, collecting data, analysing information and reporting the results. As a result, the researcher may gain a sharpened understanding of why the instance happened as it did, and what might become important to look at in future research. Case studies lend themselves to both generating and testing hypotheses.

Secondary Data Collection : Let us now discuss how to collect the secondary data. As we have discussed earlier, secondary data means the data that are already available. They refer to the data which have already been collected and analysed. Now we are going to discuss the various sources from where one can get secondary data.

Paper Sources of Data : It is also known as the documentary source. The main sources of this data can broadly be divided into two categories :

- (a) Published sources
- (b) Unpublished publication

Electronic sources : The secondary sources are available through the electronic media such as Audio cassettes/ CDs, films and documentaries.

Secondary data is more economical to collect than primary data. A researcher need not spend time and money to collect secondary data as it does not really involve fieldwork.

3.8 Let us Sum up :

Research has become an integral part of all fields of academic discipline. It is an endeavour to discover

answers to the problems of intellectual and practical nature through the application of scientific and systematic approach.

Mass communication research is an art of scientific investigation or in-depth academic activity that stresses on various aspects of mass communication. It includes an in-depth investigation of the theoretical aspects of mass communication and a wide ranging inter-discipline. It involves the systematic study of the media content, the forces that shape its creation, how and why people use media, and the impact of media content and media institutions on individuals and society.

The research design includes everything the investigator will do, from writing the hypothesis and their operational implications to the final analysis of data. The research process cannot be pursued without data.

3.9 Possible Questions :

1. What do you mean by research? Discuss some definitions of research.
2. What do you mean by communication research? Explain with suitable examples.
3. Discuss the elements of communication research.
4. 'The research design includes everything the investigator will do' - explain. Name the contents of a research design.
5. What do you mean by data? Enumerate the various types of data with suitable examples.
6. What are the various methods of primary data collection? Discuss the different categories of observations.

3.10 References / Suggested Readings :

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Research Methods by Ram Anuja

Introduction to the Methods of Social Research – by Jean Louis Loubet and Bayle.

Mass Media Research by C.D. Wimmer and J.R. Dominick
SLM of KKHSOU and IGNOU

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Unit 4
Communication Research

Contents :

- 4.1 Introduction**
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- 4.3 Evaluation : Feedback, Feed forward**
- 4.4 Public Opinion Surveys**
- 4.5 Report Preparation**
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4.1 Introduction :

Research is an art of scientific investigation. In the earlier unit, we discussed the meaning and definition of research with special reference to communication research. We introduced you to elements of research, research design and various tools of data collection.

Research studies on elections and efforts at predicting the outcome has been generating a lot of interest among the masses. The Scientific Study of Elections, commonly known as psephology, has been made popular by the mass

media, making it a part of our election system all over the world. We will now undertake important aspects of communication research like opinion surveys.

4.2 Objectives :

We will discuss Evaluation, Public Opinion Surveys, Report Preparation and Media Research. After going through this unit you must be able to -

- *explain* the concepts on research evaluation;
- *discuss* the areas of media research;
- *enumerate* different types of public opinion surveys; and
- *explain* how to prepare the reports

4.3 Evaluation : Feedback, Feed forward :

Feedback : Feedback is an important element of communication process. It means responses received following communication efforts and its importance in communication studies. When a sender encodes a message to the receiver and the receiver does not send back any response to the sender, meaning the receiver does not send a feedback to the sender, the communication process is not considered complete. It refers to information sent back to the source of the message. The source can then adjust messages by strengthening, de-emphasising or changing its content. Feedback helps us find out how the communication processes are influencing the target audience and determine if any improvements or changes are required to ensure smooth process.

In today's highly-competitive world, feedback has become a major component to carry out research. All media houses conduct audience feedback surveys to improve the quality of their programmes.

Feed Forward : Technically 'feed forward' is a term describing an element or pathway within a control system when it passes a controlling signal from a source in the control system's external operator to a load elsewhere in its external environment. This is an interesting concept, which we can discuss with an example. A media organisation, planning the launch of a newspaper, may conduct a survey on the kind of news the target audience wants to read. After analysing the data collected from the survey, the media organisation prepares the programmes or news sections based on this feed forward mechanism. It is widely used to determine the nature of programmes/news.

A media organisation or a person involved in the media might have thought out a potentially-popular idea about a new programme. But it carried a pilot survey to ensure its acceptance by the target audiences. Feed forward, therefore, is the mechanism of an organisation to find out the effectiveness of a programme in advance.

4.4 Public Opinion Surveys :

Public opinion is the aggregate of individual attitudes or beliefs. Public opinion can also be defined as the complex collection of opinions of different people and the sum of all their views. Public opinion surveys are conducted by media houses. An opinion poll is a survey of public opinion from a particular sample. Opinion polls are designed to represent the opinions of a population by conducting a series of questions and then extrapolating generalities in ratio or within confidence intervals.

Newspaper, radio and television are the mass media which conduct public opinion surveys to examine people's perception or to look into a variety of issues. The journalists, after conducting such a survey, analyse the collected data and interpret the findings. Finally,

depending on the interpretation of the finding, they prepare reports or news for their concerned media. Television journalists can go one step more while utilising this public opinion poll. They can use bytes and interviews in their news stories. Vox Populi or Vox Pop is widely used in these types of stories.

This kind of opinion poll was started in the first half of the 19th century. In 1824, the Harrisburg Penn Sylvaniaian conducted an opinion Poll showing Andrew Jackson leading John Quincy Adams by 335 votes in the contest for the United States presidency. After that opinion Poll, the survey was recognized as one of the popular methods and it has spread to most democracies of the world. In Iraq, these types of survey were conducted after the 2003 War to gauge the feelings of Iraqi citizens towards their dictator, Saddam Hussain, the presence of the US army and the post war conditions in Iraq.

Pre-election and Exit Poll Survey :

The pre-election poll has been made popular by the mass media. In the last Lok Sabha elections, some news channels and newspapers had pursued pre-election surveys. A poll carried out by Star News channel and Nielson had predicted the Congress party-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) would get 257 seats in the general election, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led alliance 184 seats, followed by the Third Front of regional and communist parties, who would get 96 seats.

On the other hand, an election exit poll is a survey on the voters taken immediately after they leave the polling station. The difference between an opinion poll and exit poll is that an opinion poll asks the voters whom they will vote for, but the exit poll asks to whom the voter has voted for. If a similar poll is conducted before the actual voters have voted, it is known as entrance polls. The pollsters

conduct exit polls for the newspapers and electronic media to gain an early indication of election results.

4.5 Report Preparation :

Data Analysis :

Data analysis is an important task of a research. After the editing of the collected data, a researcher goes into data interpretation. An interpretation stands for the test of drawing inferences from the collected facts after an analytical or experimental study. It is a search for broad meaning of research. C. William Emory says that interpretation is concerned with relationships within the collected data, its partially overlapping analysis. Interpretation also extends beyond the data of the study to include results of other research, theory and hypothesis. Interpretation is an integral part of a research. The following are the reasons, by which interpretation becomes a basic component of a research process.

1. If we present some collected numerical data, it will not be possible to make a person understand it. It may be confusing even for a researcher, making it imperative to help him understand the findings of the research through interpretation.
2. Interpretation is explanation and description. So, the interpretation of a research can serve as a guide to future studies, and it opens avenues of intellectual adventure.
3. Interpretation can help a researcher make others understand the real significance of the research findings.

Report Writing :

Report is the final outcome of the research. After the

interpretation of the edited data, a researcher has to prepare the final report incorporating the findings of the research. The research remains incomplete till the report is written or presented. Report writing is the final stage in research study and it should be accomplished by the researcher with utmost care. The following are the main steps involved in writing report-

1. The first step of report writing is logical analysis of the subject matter, which is primarily concerned with the development of a subject. A researcher can develop his subject either logically or chronologically.
2. The next step is preparation of the final outline. Elliott Gather and Francesco Comdisco define that the outlines are the framework upon which long written works are constructed. They are aids to the logical organisation of the material and reminder of the points to stress in the reports.
3. After final outlines, a researcher has to prepare the rough draft. He has to write down the procedure adopted by him in collecting the material for his study along with various limitations, technique of analysis, broad findings and generalisations and the various suggestions he wants to offer regarding the research problem.
4. The researcher has then to polish the report. This step requires more time than the writing of the rough draft. Elliott Gather and Francesco Cordasco have given the suggestion that a researcher should see whether or not the material, as it is presented, has unity and cohesion, whether the reports stand up right and firm and exhibit a definite pattern like a marble arch or does it resemble an old wall of smouldering cement and loose brick. The researcher should also check the grammar, spelling and usage of the final writings.

5. A researcher should acknowledge the secondary materials he has used in report writing. So preparation of the bibliography, incorporating the books, journals and literature he has referred, is very important.

6. The writing of the final draft is the next step. It should be written in a concise and objective style and in simple language avoiding vague expressions and technical jargons. Illustrations and examples based on common experiences must be incorporated in the final draft as they are most effective in communicating the research findings to others.

7. The last part is the presentation. A researcher has to prepare the layout as per the rules of report layout and bring out the report in a printed form. The printed materials must be ready for binding.

4.6 Media Research :

Media stands for the tools or channels of communication. We have different types of media such as traditional forms, print and electronic. The main purpose of the media is to provide education, information and entertainment to the target audience. Research is important for media of mass communications to know the requirements of the target audience. Almost all media organisations are owned by private organisations, with profit making being their guiding principle. For offering content to a heterogeneous audience, the media organisations lay stress on innovative ideas and improvised ways for providing better programmes. Research plays an important role from determining the topics and issues for reporting in the print media, selection of scoops from the electronic news bouquet, treatment of stories of a film, use of public relations tools, preparation and campaigning of an advertisement and markets survey in all the fields of mass communication.

Research of Print Media : The various forms of mass media are very powerful instruments for carrying messages to common masses. The Print media is one of the oldest forms of mass media in the world. Its credibility and popularity are not dwindling despite stiff competition from the audio-visual and new media. Being a portable medium, we can take the newspaper anywhere to read at our convenience. Print media communicates directly through the written language and thereby creates the desired impact on the masses.

Research of Electronic Media : We can divide the electronic media research mainly into two categories. One is rating research and other is the non-rating research.

Wimmer and Daminick mentioned that there are so many controversies in the rating research. TV viewers complain that good programmes are cancelled; radio listeners complain that their favourite station's format is changed; producers, actors and other artistes complain against the artistic quality of a programmes. Radio and television station owners and operators complain that the results are not reliable. If further refinements are not made, ratings, as they currently exist, will remain as the primary decision making tool in programming and advertising.

The best known method of gathering rating data from a sample is by means of an electronic rating which was introduced as the "audiometer" in 1936. The second, major technique is the record in diaries. Third technique is the telephonic data collection. A people meter is the fourth meter of rating which was started in the mid 1980's. All these techniques or methods have their own advantages and disadvantages.

Research of Advertising : Advertising research is specialized form of market research conducted to improve the efficacy of advertising. It may focus on a specific ad or campaign, or may be directed at a more general understanding of how advertising works or how consumers use information from advertising.

Importance of Media Research :

A democratic government cannot take any decision in a large scale or formulate policies and programmes without conducting a research. Because, the result of the policies may affect the masses. Likewise, as it is popularly known as the fourth pillar of democracy, media cannot bring the attention of an audience to a specific issue without conducting a research on the target audience. For an investigative report a reporter must pursue a research on the issue. For development journalism also, the media organizations must conduct some research. The relationship between public opinion and mass media on the one hand, and the democratic Government on the other, should be such that the unrepresented and underrepresented people or issues are brought to the attention of the government or of the society, so that they can be addressed properly.

In his book on media research Dr. Uma Joshi talks about the importance of media research in the following way.

- It tells us about possible positive and negative effects of the media
- It develops an understanding regarding how communication through various media takes place and how it influences people
- It provides us a necessary statistical and theoretical

base for solving the practical problems in utilizing media for education and development.

- It helps us to understand the potential of various media for educational, developmental and entertainment purposes
- It shows how media shape public opinion and societal values

Therefore, without media research, it will not be possible to analyse the perception of the audience and to make media the most powerful instrument of social change and development.

4.7 Let us Sum up :

'Feedback' is an important element of a communication process. Feedback means the responses received by the communication efforts as well as its importance in the field of communication studies. Technically, 'feed forward' is a term which describes an element or pathway within a control system when it passes a controlling signal from a source in the control system's external operator to a load elsewhere in its external environment.

An opinion poll is a survey of public opinion from a particular sample. Opinion polls are usually designed to represent the opinions of a population by conducting a series of questions and then extrapolating generalities in ratio or within confidence intervals.

Report is the final outcome of the research. After the interpretation of the edited data a researcher has to prepare the final report incorporating the findings of the research. Research report is considered a major component of the research study because the research

remains incomplete until the report has been presented or written.

Without media research, it will not be possible to analyse the perception of the audience and to make the media the most powerful instrument of social change and development.

4.8 Possible Questions :

1. Write an essay on the importance of research in media studies.
2. Discuss the advantages and the disadvantages of media research.
3. Define public opinion survey. Do you think it is important in media research?
4. What are the important aspects of advertising campaign research?
5. Explain the main steps involved in report writing.

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