CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF MASS COMMUNICATION THEORIES

3.1 Introduction
Mass communication is a very complex system and has come a very long way over the years. Various communication researchers have developed different theories while exploring the relationship between mass media and media audience. Newbold (2002) opined that throughout the history of media research, a prevailing concern has been about media’s influence upon knowledge, beliefs and behavior of individuals. Baran (2002) stated that different mass communication theories explains and predicts social phenomena in relation with communication process. These theories try to relate mass communication to different aspects of individuals which includes personal and cultural lives or social systems in which they are living. While explaining the importance of theories, Newsman and Newsman (1986) mentioned that theories are systems of concepts that provide a framework for organizing and interpreting observations. Through theories, it is possible to identify theorderly relationships linked with varied events.

Therefore, an attempt has also been made in this chapter to give a brief historical overview of media effects theories emphasizing on various communication developments which took place in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Although many theories have been developed over the period of time but there is no single theory which can be universally accepted. Most of the communication researchers have tried to observe the effects on masses keeping in consideration the social and psychological changes that occur on mass media audience. While understanding different types of media effects, investigators observed that media messages have several effects on masses.

As opined by Beryant (2008) in the Figure 3.1, media effects are often classified into five categories: Behavioral, Attitudinal, Cognitive, Emotional and Physiological effects. The author argues that different media messages leads to different media effects on masses such as Behavioral effects could result in some kind of action, Attitudinal effect might change the beliefs and attitude of audience, Cognitive effects brings change in their thinking process and Physiological or Emotional effects may cause some kind of feeling or physical body reactions.
Figure 3.1 Media Effects on Audience

(Source: Beryant, 2008)

The author has also taken into consideration various other media effects such as immediate vs. long-term, beneficial vs. detrimental, intentional vs. accidental while exploring impact of media messages on large, heterogeneous audience.

The sociological approach to mass communication theories is based on the assumption that there exists a definite relationship between media usage and individuals. Therefore, various theories of Mass Communication like Hypodermic Needle Theory, Attitude Change Theory, Two Step Flow Theory, Cultivation theory, and Dependency theory, Uses and Gratification Theory and Agenda Setting Theory have been discussed in this chapter to lay a theoretical foundation of mass media theories.

Given that this study aims to understand the nutritional status of adolescents’ vis-à-vis changing media technologies, the historical progression of theories reflects the powerful/
minimal and cumulative media effects which were taken into consideration. The theories discussed in the chapter have together provided a theoretical structure to investigate the relationship between adolescents and changing media technologies. The following developments provide the brief descriptions of the most important concepts and ideas of various theories.

3.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES

Over the years, with the widespread reach and popularity in the communication technologies various communications researchers have brought forward different beliefs in terms of media effects.

According to McQuail (2010) argued that the study of mass communication is based on the postulation that the media have effects on masses. Different communication scholars have categorized effects of mass media in different ways depending upon the nature and purpose of media messages. There are many ways in which media influences people, for example, we dress for the weather as per forecast by the satellite and news given in media, go for shopping, movie after seeing advertisements in media and so on. Many people copy the acts of violence and our minds are full of information as enthused by media portrayals.

Another well known communication researcher Ball-Rokeach (1984) has moved the chart of communication starting with the phase of signs and signals to age of speech and language to the period of print media and writing. All the phases are over the span of many years of advancement in the area of communication. The age of mass communication was ushered in with the wide reach of print media especially newspapers in the 19th century; popularity and expansion of motion pictures in the 20th century; by the discovery of radio and its usage in various households from 1920s through 1940s, by the innovation of television in 1950s and 1960s and by the sudden increase of internet from 1990s onwards. During that duration of time, circulation of newspaper was increased and reached to well-known audience, motion pictures and other media were extensively used for national, social and propaganda purposes and the use of radio have reached its peak in America and was daily used by Americans.
The impact of media on the masses is broadly divided into three main categories. They are as follows:

- Powerful effects,
- Minimum effects,
- Cumulative effects.

3.2.1 Powerful-Effects Paradigm

The study of media effects began intensely somewhere in the 1920s and 1930s. The hypodermic needle theory is considered as one of the first general theories which tried to explain the effects of media on masses. This theory was propounded by Harold Lasswell in 1920. The hypodermic theory is known by different names by different scholars for e.g the “bullet theory”, (Schramm, 1971, p.253), the “hypodermic- needle” theory (Berlo, 1960, p.27), or the “Stimulus- response” theory (DeFleur and Ball - Rokeach, 1989, p.161).

3.2.1.1 Core Assumption

Harold has tried to expose the media effects and the thinking of individuals living in that era. He observed that in 1920s and 1930s the media had powerful, direct and immediate effects. He believed that audience is passive and vulnerable. Using the metaphor as a reference Harold explained the tenets of the theory by comparing the medium with bullet. He stated that just like the bullet is fired from the gun, in the same way messages from media are shot in the minds of the masses, hitting directly the target audience with desired effects. The tenets of the theory argued that media has effects on masses. These effects are direct, immediate and powerful effects. The study of media effects that developed during the 1920s and 1930s was one of the powerful effects. Mass media messages act as a bullet or as a needle, shooting directly in the thoughts of the individuals and consequently changing the behaviour of the public.
As mentioned by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) in the figure above that though the individuals are isolated people living in society but they represent masses and the effects of media messages on them are uniform, direct and immediate. Harold has used the words ‘Bullet’ and ‘Needle’ to explain the tenets of the theory. He asserted that messages from the media is injected directly but uniformly in the minds of the heterogeneous audience just like a injection is injected or bullets are fired into the body of a person in order to have direct and immediate results.

Several developments during that period supported the powerful influence of media on behaviour change of the masses, the use of media by advertisers in Europe and propagandists in Russia and then the chain of Payne Fund studies was conducted in the United States in the beginning of 1930s. The application of Magic Bullet was also seen in 1938, when the ‘War of the Worlds’ broadcast became ‘Panic Broadcast’. The effects of Panic Broadcast made history in the area of powerful media effects leading theorists to consider it as the standard example of the Magic Bullet Theory.

Two more communication researchers, Walter Lippmann and Harold Lasswell also supported the beliefs of the theory. Walter believed that society sees the world in the manner formed mostly by the media and Harold Lasswell has emphasized on the ‘effect’ while explaining the communication process.

3.2.1.2 Scope and Application

This theory was referred by the researcher in the present study also at different levels of analysis. The researcher has formulated the following hypotheses in the Introduction chapter.
• Changing media technologies are having significant impact on adolescent’s health.
• Exposure to various media significantly influences body image, attitude, behaviour and decision making of adolescents.

The researcher has also taken into consideration the hypothesis of Hypodermic Needle Theory that media has strong, direct and powerful effects and the tenet of the theory could be very fruitful in media literacy programmers’ and also in health campaigns. Such messages could act as mass educators especially in health campaigns while creating awareness to eradicate health diseases such as polio, smoking etc.

3.2.2 Limited-Effects Paradigm

3.2.2.1 Individual Difference theory/Attitude Change Theory

However, in the middle of the 20th century, mass communication researchers soon began to discover the psychological approach of individuals to understand the communication effects. The concept of the powerful effects of media on powerless audience by the magic bullet theory did not hold influence for long. The stimulus – response (S-R) model which focused an immediate and direct effect resulting in the change of attitude, belief or behaviour was replaced by S-O-R model in the 20th century taking into consideration that various factors causes selective influence on the behaviour of the individuals. Lowery (1983) also believed that the notion about powerful, immediate, uniform and direct did not have influence in the 20th century. Therefore, strong effects paradigm was replaced and an era of limited effects was ushered in.

3.2.2.2 Core Assumption

Attitude Change Research argues that although same messages are delivered to masses by media but each individual receives and interprets the media messages in a different way. The findings of American researcher Carl Hovland emphasised that media audiences are very selective by nature. Media audiences are heterogeneous in nature and follow the selectivity process i.e. selective exposure, attention, perception and retention. Attitude change researchers disagreed with the concept of Magic Bullet that audience is powerless and media have uniform effects on masses. These researchers are of the view that masses are heterogeneous audience and have different media needs. Therefore, audiences react differently on the same message and different socio economic background and these different personality variables serve as barriers between media and the audience.
The theories of individual selectivity have laid emphasis on the different aspects of selectivity. They have also tried to depict the role of selectivity while explaining the communication process. The theories of individual selectivity believes that individuals would expose, perceive and retain only those messages which support their beliefs and attitudes thus rejecting the powerful effects of media on audience.

**Figure 3.3: Individual Selectivity**

- **Selective Exposure Theory**: observes that people tend to expose themselves selectively only to those messages which are in accordance with their beliefs and attitudes and they have a tendency to ignore those messages which seem to challenge their beliefs.
- **Selective Perception Theory**: observes that people perceive same message differently. The theory notes that audience is heterogeneous audience i.e. they belong to different socio-economic strata. The messages delivered by media are perceived differently according to the audience disposition.
- **Selective Retention Theory**: believes that individuals would retain only those messages which support their beliefs and attitudes. The messages which are not consistent with their views are not retained by individuals.

Therefore, selective exposure and selective perception, selective retention also rejects the powerful effects of media on masses.

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) have identified three types of processes that have replaced the assumption of powerful effects of Magic Bullet Theory in the middle of the 20th century.
The above Figure depicts that there are various factors that may occur between media and masses. For instance, the individual differences factor argues that identical mass media messages might influence heterogeneous audience in a different way as they belong to different socio-income background. It was further stated that individuals belong to different cultures and have different social relationships with other members in the culture. Therefore, the selection of messages also depends on their social differentiation.

### 3.2.2.3 Scope and Application

The concept of this theory has been applied in the present study also and the researcher has tried to analyze and depict the following hypotheses.

- Adolescents belonging to different socio-economic backgrounds have different media need. Occupation, income and educational qualifications of parents of government and private school going adolescents affect their media habits.
- Adolescents belonging to various socio-economic strata of society have different media needs.

In application, the theory has a tremendous potential and scope in the field of health education. It could be a valuable tool for health seekers in developing and disseminating health information to adolescents belonging to different economic strata. The theory could be used constructively in defining selection processes of the individuals. It would also help the policy maker to design the media message according to the selection process of individual.
Therefore, it is very essential for health policy makers, as well as parents and teachers to recognize the role of selectivity in communication while formatting the messages so as to generate more awareness about health education among adolescents.

### 3.2.3 Cognitive Social Learning Theory

Stimulus–Response Theory led behaviourists to ponder whether there exist some mediating factors between Stimulus and response that affects behaviour of the audience. Such arguments and assumptions lead to the foundation of Cognitive Social Learning Theory. This theory evolves under the umbrella of behaviourism of individuals.

#### 3.2.3.1 Core Assumption

Albert Bandura has postulated the social learning theory. The theory focuses on the behaviour of individuals and argues that persons learn social behaviours through the observation. The basic tenets of the theory are that audience work cognitively on different social experiences. The social experiences occurring in the life of individuals could be personal as well as environmental factors. Both these factors influence the behaviour and development of human beings.

As mentioned by Bandura (1977) the Social Cognitive Theory is concerned with behavioural effects i.e. how behaviours are learned. Cognitive Social Learning theory, states that people will imitate behaviours of others.

![Figure: 3.5 Cognitive Social Learning Theory](http://www.emory.edu/EDUCATION/mfp/eff.htm)

The above figure 3.5 depicts how audience develops behavioural patterns due to the combination of various personal and environmental factors. The behavioural change in an individual is a continuous process which depends upon the three factors i.e. environment factors, personal factors and behaviors. A person’s behavior is affected by cognitive, affective and biological actions and different environment factors such as social and physical.

### 3.2.3.2 Scope and Application

Adolescents are the most vulnerable community and are targeted especially by advertisers. Adolescents observe and copy the models. Some of them even force their parents to buy the product. Therefore, while considering Social Learning Theory the researcher has tried to analyze adolescence exposure to media/advertisements/video games influencing their attitudes, behaviours and eating habits. The efforts made by Bandura have encouraged many researches to study the learning behaviour of individuals and their findings also support the tenets of Social Learning Theory. Field (2001) did a survey on adolescents. The findings of the survey reported that reading magazines changed the perception about their physical appearance of 60% female adolescents and 47% of the females reported that reading magazines created desire to loose weight by way of dieting so as to get the same figure as portrayed in media as ideal body. On the other hand males wanted to gain weight and have muscular body by adding food supplements in their daily meals.

Adolescents, especially girls, often get disappointed with their physical appearance when they compare themselves with pencil thin models shown in all kinds of media. Levine and Smolak (2002) mentioned that female adolescents during early years of adolescence when read magazines or watch advertisements develop body dissatisfaction as they want to have figure which is being portrayed in media as ideal body or perfect figure. However males tend to move in a opposite direction than females. They follow a regime which would lead to muscularity.

Keeping in mind the behaviour change which media brings Social Learning Theory is very relevant in the present study and also in health communication. Somasundaram (2005) also supports the view that theory first of all understands the behavioural change which includes cognitive and emotional aspects and then the tenets of the theory provide various ways for new behavioural study in health education.

Therefore, Social Learning Theory can further be applied for designing various adolescent health campaigns and health behaviour programs so as to bring behavioural and social change.
among adolescent’s vis-à-vis changing media technologies. The theory can be exceptionally fruitful in developing techniques which can promote positive behaviour change among adolescents while living in the digital world.

3.2.4 Two Step Flow Theory/ Personal Influence Theory

3.2.4.1 The limited–Effects Model

The newer research of the limited effect model/Personal Influence Theory ushered in a new perspective about media effects. Lazarsfeld renowned name in the history of media effects observed that media has limited and indirect effects on masses. The tenets of this theory about media effects was contrary to the views of Bullet theory which assumed that media has powerful and direct effects.

3.2.4.2 Core Assumption

Paul Lazarsfeld’s contributions in the field of communication research were many and varied: The most well-known study which resulted in the scholarly era of the minimal effects of media was the study done in the 1940’s. Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) during the Presidential election in the United States wanted to find out the impact of media i.e. radio and print in the Erie Country (Ohio) on the voting behaviour of masses. They found that the mass media had small direct effects on the voting behaviour of the masses. The results of the study were published in the book in 1944, named, The People’s Choice. The book highlighted that people’s choices in voting behaviour were influenced more by interpersonal communication than mass media.

Another well-known study conducted by Lazarsfeld was the Decatur (Illinios) study which further sought understanding of the Two Step Flow of communication. In 1955, Lazarsfeld and his colleague Elihu Katz published the work in a book named, Personal Influence. The book illustrated the importance and role of opinion leaders in disseminating the information from mass media to masses. The author has emphasized the fact that opinion leaders through interpersonal communication influence the opinion of the masses more than mass media communication.
The theory, therefore, ushered a new perspective about media effects. The theory asserts that information from the media moves to masses in two steps.

- **Step One**

  In the first step, individuals commonly known as opinion leaders expose themselves and give more attention to media messages than masses.

- **Stage Two**

  The information received from media is interpreted by the opinion leaders. The opinion leaders through interpersonal communication pass on the interpreted information to different individuals living in society. The audience at this stage gets more influenced with the information given by opinion leaders in an informal manner in face to face situation than the formal, impersonal information from mass media. As stated by Katz, (1973a) media audience have lot of trust in opinion leaders. The messages delivered by opinion leaders through interpersonal communication to masses in the second level of two step flow theory would change their thinking and decisions.

*Figure: 3.6: Two Step Flow Theory*

*(Source: Katz & Lazarsfeld 1955)*
However, the above figure 3.6 depicts that the effect of media messages on masses is not direct. Opinion leaders who are considered respected and experienced people of the society expose themselves more to mass media messages than masses. Masses constitute audience who are heterogeneous in nature and live in various groups. Opinion leaders through interpersonal communication come in contact with different audience and disseminate the media messages. The term personal influence was used in the theory so as to explain how media messages are interpreted by opinion leaders. The interpreted messages through interpersonal communication influence the decision making of masses more than mass communication. In comparison to formal, impersonal, structured and indirect messages of mass media, the messages of interpersonal communication causes more behavioural change as they are more personal and informal (Katz 1973a).

3.2.4.3 Scope and Application

Lazarsfeld findings were very useful during that period and remains so today. The canons of two step flow theory have been able to remain relevant over the years, despite the development which has taken place in the field of communication technologies.

Therefore, the tenets of the theory have been applied to the present study also. The researcher has also tried to find out the role of opinion leaders i.e. teachers, parents, dieticians and doctors in schools. The researcher has also tried to analyze and compare whether any efforts were made by the opinion leaders to create health awareness among adolescents in governments and private schools.

However, due to widespread reach and change in communication technologies, it is neither feasible nor possible that the opinion leaders would replace media but they can definitely play a positive role in spreading media literacy and creating health awareness among adolescents, especially in suburban areas of the country. Therefore, the tenets of Two Step Flow Theory support the perspective of the researcher that in order to promote health and well being among adolescents, a multi-faceted approach of media literacy programs should be adopted at various levels by opinion leaders.

- At the Individual Level

An attempt should be made at home by parents as well as by adolescents to limit the amount of media use. Opportunities for physical activity should be sought in regular daily events such as walking to school and taking part in sports. Families should make efforts of eating meals together and having healthy conversations at meal times.
At the School Level

a. Teachers as Opinion Leaders to Adolescent: Adolescents spend a large amount of time in school and therefore teachers as opinion leaders can play a crucial role in adolescent’s decision making process. Through interpersonal communication, they can create awareness among adolescents about health and media issues. Therefore, teachers should be well aware of the impact of different media on adolescents. Beresin (1999) has also opined that teachers and school social workers can request material to conduct classroom activities regarding media messages.

b. Role of Ministry: The Ministry of Education should promote community based healthy eating campaign similar to those currently offered in support of literacy and health. Government and Non Government Organizations should act as catalytic agents to promote more and more quality oriented nutrition and media literacy programs so that adolescents become critical viewers as well as consumers.

At the Societal Level

Health care professionals such as doctors, dieticians and community organizations like NGO’s at the interpersonal level need to promote health and well being among adolescents by visiting schools regularly. They should clearly demonstrate the way in which adolescents spend their time with different media and its effects on their well being.

3.2.5 Cumulative-Effects Paradigm cultivation

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, due to increase in the popularity and usage of television by masses, concern of the researchers shifted to television and its effects on society. Media research moved backward and forward while exploring the impact of media on masses i.e. it moved from notions that media has immediate, direct and powerful effects to the notion that long exposure to media creates long term cumulative effects. One of the most well-known theories of long-term cumulative effect goes with the perspective of Cultivation Theory. This theory was propounded by George Gerbner.

3.2.5.1 Core Assumption

Gerbner conducted a survey named Cultural Indicators, in the mid 1960s. The research was carried out so as to observe how television affects viewers’ viewpoint about the world. The basic assumption which the cultivation research revealed was that long persistent exposure of
television gradually changes the common beliefs of individuals about the world and, eventually, for the culture and society as a whole. Gerbner and his colleagues argued that the messages of television do not portray reality about the world but repeated exposure of individuals leads to the development of particular beliefs about the world and the beliefs get reinforced once they are developed. Gerbner further states that television tends to spread those values which are present in the society before and long exposure to the media further binds these standards amongst other members of the culture.

![Cultivation Model](source: Hawkins and Pingree 1983, Televisions influence on social reality)

As depicted in the figure 3.7 the theory argues that the long persistent exposure to media, especially, television whether unintentionally or incidentally are constructed into compounded and significant effects on the masses which gradually act as a socializing agent in the society.

Gerbner (1980) has placed the television viewers into three categories, in the first category viewers who view television for less than two hours daily were considered light viewers, in the second category viewers were considered as medium viewers who watch television from two to four hours daily, and viewers watch television for more than four hours in a day fall in the category of heavy viewers. His did his research primarily on two type of viewers i.e. heavy and light viewers. He argued that heavy viewers generally form those opinions which are being portrayed on television rather than what they practice in the real life. He believed television virtually overpowers other sources of information and ideas mainly among heavy viewers. They start believing what is being portrayed in television.
A series of exemplar studies have been carried out and expanded beyond television viewing. The focus of these studies was to observe the long-term effects of media. Various researchers have tried to examine the cultivation effects of media on individuals with other aspects such as effects of exposure of advertisements on adolescents, cultivation effects in playing games on internet etc.

Numerous research projects conducted by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1996) have reported that adolescents who watch more television develop more unhealthy eating habits and pressurize their parents to buy food products which are advertised in television than those adolescents who watch little television.

Another study which supported this notion was conducted on young women in a sub-urban community in Fiji to investigate the impact of television. Harrison and Hefner (2006) argued that pre-adolescent girls often desire to have thin body and want to look like models when they attain maturity. Therefore this kind of notion in the mind of young girls causes disordered eating and unhealthy habits. Hence watching television is associated with unhealthy lifestyle and poor nutritional status.

Similarly, the tenet of cultivation theory has been taken as base to do the analysis in the present study also. The researcher has applied and extended this theory to other forms of media i.e. newspaper, radio, internet, mobile and iPod, while analyzing nutritional status of adolescent’s vis-à-vis changing media technologies.

As stated by Gerbner et al. (1976) reflection of stereotypes and models and content in various media would unknowingly alter and change the attitudes and behaviours of adolescents. Similarly, taking into consideration the tenets of cultivation theory and number of studies done on the long term effects of media, the researcher has tried to analyze and interpret the following hypotheses:

- Over exposure to media has created problems like obesity, stress and sedentary habits etc among adolescents.
- The changing media technologies are having significant impact on adolescent’s health.
3.2.6 Dependency Theory

Dependency theory is another mass communication theory which explored the effects of media on audiences. Media dependency theory was developed by Ball-Rokeach et.al. (1976).

3.2.6.1 Core Assumption

Ball-Rokeach and others in the dependency model argued that masses are extremely dependent on media for various needs. One form of dependency on media is to get information about the world, another type of dependency on media is the need of individuals for knowledge so as to act meaningfully and effectively in the society, and thirdly audience are dependent on media for entertainment, to get relaxation from daily problems and tensions.

![Figure: 3.8: A Model of Media Dependency Relationships](Source: Ball-Rokeach, 1976)
The above figure 3.8 highlights the media dependency of individuals and their relationships at different levels. The different levels are Micro, Meso and Macro level. All these levels are interrelated to each other and to the needs of the individuals. Micro level is based on their individual characteristics, Meso level is based on interpersonal network of the individual and Macro level includes social environment which constitutes economic and political system. Ball-Rokeach et al. (1976) believed that the dependency on media results in various cognitive, affective and behavioural effects. The theory explores the relationship between media, society and the audiences. It argues that an individual living in urban areas is more dependent on media for information as it affects their day to day living than living in suburban area. This notion of the theory also supports one of the objectives and hypotheses of the present study that adolescents belonging to different socio economic background have different media needs. Ball-Rokeach et al. (1989) argued that the dependency theory deals with the relationship between media and individuals both at the micro level and also at a macro level such as media and social institution. Littlejohn (2002) believed that an individual are dependent on the media more when large number of their needs are satisfied than which would satisfy just a few. The belief of Littlejohn also supports the findings of the present study that adolescents are dependent more on television, internet and mobile than newspaper, radio or iPod.
The above model illustrates the elaborated and more specific effects of the dependency theory.

The above figure illustrates media usage by individuals in different steps. Firstly, the individual will select media based on selectivity process. After selecting the media, the author argued, greater the intensity of relevant media, the greater will be cognitive and affective arousal. The cognitive and affective arousal causes behavioural effects in individuals.
3.2.6.2 Scope and Application

Different studies have been carried out to explore media dependency, especially among adolescents. Littleton and Ollendick (2003) mentioned that female adolescents use print media, especially magazines for information purpose. Young teenage girls often read magazines to seek information how to look better physically. They read various messages and implement those messages in the daily regime so as to look beautiful and physically attractive. Ricciardelli et al. (2000) argued that youth are using media quite frequently they may often access media to find solutions or seek information regarding the changes and developments that take place in their bodies during adolescence.

Similarly, the researcher has applied the tenets of dependency theory in the present study also. The researcher has tried to analyze the entire study on the basis of three basic needs of adolescents i.e. entertainment, information and communication. The researcher has applied these needs to the other forms of media so as to critically analyze nutritional status of adolescent’s vis-à-vis media technologies.

3.2.7 Uses and Gratification Theory

Over the years, the researchers began to analyze why and what audience use media instead of what effects media has on audience. The uses and gratifications theory holds a significant position in the area of mass media effects research as it focuses on audience. As stated by Katz (1959) unlike other media-effect theories, which focused mainly on what media does to people, Uses and Gratification theory focuses on what do people do with media.

3.2.7.1 Core Assumption

The basic tenet of this theory argues that audiences are active audience and use media to fulfill their various needs and when their needs are fulfilled they get gratification. Uses and Gratifications theory tenets audience choose media to satisfy various needs. The theory argues that media choices are made by audience according to their needs.

The tenets of uses and gratification were different from the ideas of traditional theories of media. The theory believed that audiences are active audience. They are homogeneous in nature and use media as they get gratification. The focus of this theory was primarily on what people do with media than what media do to media audience (Katz, 1959).
Katz et al. (1973b) believed that mass media are the ways by which human beings connect or disconnect themselves with other individual living in the society. They propounded 35 needs; these needs were mainly taken from the literature of media. They had further classified these 35 needs and put them into five categories. The following are those five categories:

- **Cognitive Needs**: when an individual wants to enhance knowledge, information and understanding (West, et al. 2010).

- **Affective Needs**: are linked with emotion, pleasure and feelings

- **Personal Integrative Needs**: are connected to credibility, stability and status of the individuals

- **Social Integrative Needs**: are related to family and friends

- **Tension Release Needs**: when an individual wants to escape or needs diversion

This theory has inferred the notion that media competes against other sources which provide gratification to its users (Katz, et al. 1973a). (Tankard, 2000 and Mc Quail, 2010) has also exposed that Uses and Gratification discusses how users intentionally choose media that would satisfy their needs and would help them to become more knowledgeable and get relaxation by diversion and social interactions.
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<th>GRATIFICATION CATEGORY</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
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| Information                   | → Finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world  
                                  → Seeking advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choices  
                                  → Satisfying curiosity and general interest  
                                  → Learning self-education  
                                  → Gaining a sense of security through knowledge  |
| Personal identity             | → Finding reinforcement for personal values  
                                  → Finding models of behavior  
                                  → Identifying with valued others (in the media)  
                                  → Gaining insight into one’s self  |
| Integration and Social Interaction | → Gaining insight into circumstances of others: Social empathy  
                                  → Identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging  
                                  → Finding a basis for conversation and social interaction  
                                  → Having a substitute for real life companionship  
                                  → Helping to carry out social rules  
                                  → Enabling one to connect with family, friends and society  |
| Entertainment                 | → Escaping or being diverted from problems  
                                  → Relaxing  
                                  → Getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic employment  
                                  → Filling time  
                                  → Emotional release  
                                  → Sexual arousal  |

Figure: 3.10: Typology of gratification sought and obtained from the media,  
(Source: McQuail, 1983)

The above Figure 3.10 gives a detailed typology of different gratification sought by individuals using media. (Tankard 2000 and Katz et al. 1973a) have stated that media compete with other information sources for need gratification. Individuals have different social and psychological needs, which create difference of opinion to different media messages and exposure. Such media exposure causes need gratifications and other unintentional effects.
3.2.7.2 Scope and Application

The Uses and Gratification theory is used by various researchers at different situations. The multimedia environment allows the adolescents to use new technologies actively and therefore supports the perspective of Uses and Gratification theory. It also argues that people intentionally choose particular medium to satisfy their needs. There are various reasons for making different media choices and mass media audiences can very well recognize those reasons (Katz, et al.1974b).

Right from its inception Uses and Gratifications theory has provided researcher with wider understanding to explore the use and impact of changing communication technologies. Its approach can be well documented from the time of print, electronic media and now with modern media. Ruggiero (2000) argued on the fact that why uses and gratifications theory is still been applied in the todays era. The major strength of the Uses and Gratification theory is that it has the ability to further refine its strengths with changing times. The capacity of the theory to grow and change with the continuous development of modern media, various studies have been carried out by different researchers to find out the relationship between adolescents and modern media use.

In comparison to traditional media, new media provides human beings with variety of media platforms and content. Therefore, Uses and Gratification theory is considered as one of the most suitable perspectives for finding out why individuals choose different media (Larose, et al. 2001). The basic assumption of Uses and Gratification is that audience use media to satisfy different needs. Moreover, interactivity, one of the major attributes of changing communication technologies which is not commonly associated with traditional media further strengthen the basic core of Uses and Gratifications theory that media audiences are active audience and therefore is very much applicable in today’s scenario. Similarly, the theory has been applied to the present study also. The entire analysis of the study is based on the assumption that adolescents use different media for various needs such as communication, entertainment and information.
3.2.8 Agenda Setting Theory

The idea of Agenda Setting has been around since the early 1970s. The term *agenda setting* was coined by McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1976.

3.2.8.1 Core Assumption

Agenda setting argues that the mass media have an effect on masses indirectly by choosing certain issues and neglecting others. People tend to pay more attention to those issues according to the order of priority set by media. Therefore, it is the media who sets agenda for masses, which helps individuals in bringing cognitive change in individuals i.e. it tells people what to think about.

![Figure: 3.11: Personal Experience & Interpersonal Communication](source: McQuail & Windahl 1993)

3.2.8.2 Scope and Application

Over the years, different scholars have given different perspective to agenda setting theory. As depicted in the above figure McQuail and Windahl (1993) stated that the personal experience and interpersonal communication of individuals is influenced by agenda created
by Media, Public and Policy makers. Therefore, in order to promote optimal nutritional status in the country, McQuail and Windahl views can be coined with public, media and health policy makers so as to bring cognitive change in the fast paced digital world. As stated by Brown (2002) media changes the thinking process of the people. It highlights certain issues and neglects other. People generally try to compare and change their thinking after receiving media messages from news and entertainment programmes (Iyengar, 1991). Agenda-Setting proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw is usually applied to media, especially advertisements targeting adolescents (Huebner, 2000). They motivate and persuade adolescents and make them purchase something they normally would not. Adolescents watch around 350,000 commercials by the age of 18 years and spend maximum amount of time on media for entertainment than doing any other activity except sleeping. Advertising is a pervasive influence on children and adolescents (Davis, 1993). It has been found that the problems like childhood and adolescent obesity, unhealthy dietary practices, and consumption of cigarette and alcohol is all due to the excessive exposure to commercial advertisements by the children (Strasburger, et al., 2010).

The basic tenet of this theory is that the media takes up an issue and puts that agenda to public by telling the people what to think about instead of telling what to think. Therefore, agenda setting theory also supports a structural perspective of media literacy. Through health campaigns, media can provide an excellent platform among adolescents on what to think about and create awareness about healthy life, especially when they are living in a media saturated environment.

Mass awareness campaigns developed in collaboration with the health sector to create awareness among the masses regarding health of adolescents has lead to a successful transition in the community by way of behavioural changes, for example, a country wide media campaign to push through pulse polio drive. Agenda setting played a major role in implementing Oral Polio Vaccine throughout the country by Mass media campaigns. The intense social mobilization used agenda setting by way of advertisements, internet, television, newspaper and radio to create awareness and influenced the public opinion.
3.3 Conclusion and Recommendations

3.3.1 Media Literacy Programs on Adolescents’ Health

Globalization and change in media technologies have brought changes not only in the process of communication but it has also changed the attitudes and behavior of masses, especially adolescents. Media literacy has become unavoidable in the era of digital communication. Semali (2001) has also stressed upon the concept of media literacy. He has stated that media literacy provides a platform to acquire important skills and abilities about new technologies and adolescents need to discuss those skills so that the selectivity process helps them to become a media literate person while living in a digital media society.

Media literacy programs would help adolescents to become competent and literate enough to critically control and interpret different media messages rather than letting media messages control their decisions and attitudes. It would also help them to develop necessary skills so that they are able to comprehend various functions of media and are able to enjoy good health while living in a digital world.

UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has a long and a strong footing in promoting media literacy programs all across the world. The organization has been conducting various conferences and doing strategic planning so that media literacy can be introduced as an important part in the lives of the masses. The recent conference in 2008 on UNESCO, Action For Media Education and Literacy emphasized on the fact that all the regions across the world should catalyze various processes so that media literacy could be introduced in the curricula of teacher training worldwide. Therefore, keeping in consideration two of UNESCO advocacies i.e. the human rights based approach to programming and the creation of Knowledge Societies various media education programmes can be contextualized in the teaching training curricula and also in various health education programmes so as to promote optimal nutrition in the country.

According to the Aspen Institute’s Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy, a media literate person would develop an ability to critically interpret and decode messages from various media. The fundamental objective of media literacy is to have self regulation to all media messages. The emphasis of media literacy training programs is to have competent and informed citizens (Aufderheide, 1993, p. 1).
In order to maintain optimal nutritional status in the country, it is important to give nutrition knowledge and media education to the masses, especially to children in the schools. Children spend quite a lot of time in schools, therefore it can provide excellent platform to motivate and influence students’ to have better health through media literacy programmes. Davis (1993) has also suggested that media literacy should introduce as a regular course of study for students. It has become imperative in educational system to prepare the students with the skills needed to become critical media consumers, particularly while watching advertising. He further emphasized the fact that the perfect time to teach them how to become critical consumers in the early years of adolescent’s life when they are studying in middle school (p. S 33).

Teaching media literacy can be a major paradigm shift for many teachers because it requires movement from a psychological model of education to a sociological one (Luke & Freebody, 1997). Therefore, media literacy programmes in schools would help adolescents as well as teachers to become critical consumers. This would help them to use media in a positive and right manner and become responsible media consumers.
3.4 REFERENCES


