Introduction

India is a developing country. Therefore, the significance of mass media in this country needs no exaggeration. It can have great impact. The Government of India has been taking several steps in educating the masses and bringing awareness through modern media. A majority of our population is living in rural areas.

The mass media technologies are increasing day by day all over the world. Today there is scarcely a country which is not utilizing media with a view to achieving its cultural, social, political and economic development, media gives information by broadcasting and transmitting programmes through space/satellites to and for people all over the world. Sociologist often views media as the great instrument of persuasion and the most powerful weapon for social change. It was considered as luxuries in the past, have become sheer necessities today. Media is treated as their constant companion by people in advanced countries. This indicates the tremendous mark it has made on world civilization (Klapper 1965, Davison, 1976). A unique combination of commercial, political, academic and cultural programmes is the main characteristic feature of media. The scope of media programmes can be broadly visualized from three angles, i.e. information, education and entertainment. With media communication technologies the task of realizing its basic function has become much easier and the purpose more effective.

Many advanced countries in the world have tried to fully utilize the potentialities of media for their political and socio-economic development. Extensive research has been conducted to assess the impact of media on the minds of the people (Barleer: 1978, Agee: 1970). In the light of these studies; many countries have realized the need for a sophisticated technology in media which could bring revolutionary changes especially among illiterate masses. Presently many countries are utilizing the satellite facility for living telecasts. Satellite communication system is effectively binding the world with its threads of sight and sound. Today, one can sit at home and simultaneously watch the events that are taking place even in very remote corners of the world. Applying space technology in the communication system is one of the world’s recent developments. It strengthens the social, political and economic fabric of the world.
More invention of technology will not accomplish the task of effective communication. It value is decided on the way it utilized. In spite of technological development a major portion of the population in underdeveloped countries is not fully aware of the events that are taking place and are also deprived of effective enjoyment of their right to information. For example, a poor rural population knows little or nothing about his counterpart in a foreign country. Unless this gap is bridged, development of any sort is not possible. These facts have lead to the idea of using satellites for the purpose of broadcasting. Mass communication technology accelerates the interaction among various cultures of the world. Especially in countries with high population, the majority of which being illiterates, this technology can bring about certain radical and imperative changes.

Population illiteracy, social justice, health and poverty are the major problems faced by people in India today. Media which has shown a tremendous result in advanced countries. These can be used as a major instrument in solving these problems and bring about changes in the long run. The mass media that act as social instruments or organizations shaping social life through their repetitive appeals to different sections of society, wide popularity and pervasiveness are perhaps exerting more influence than other social institutions. Virtually every section of society is influenced to some degree by the messages disseminated on a regular basis through professionally produced and technically perfected programmes. Fast changing aspects of Indian society are brought to the attention of media users who are in turn influenced by the messages.

Influential political and economic groups are trying to spread ideas through the mass media (mainly newspapers, radio, television, films, and audio tapes) for their own particular ends. Various issues, for example, elections to various democratic institutions, nation issues such as the erosion of secular values in public life, persecution of minorities and women, communal and caste conflicts, violence against vulnerable sections of society, terrorism in the country and the world, decisions of the world trade organization and their effects on trade and agriculture in poor countries, revival of religious fundamentalism, pseudo-religion and superstitions, gender inequality, unequal access to primary and secondary education, unemployment’s and lack of attention to the generation of employment, etc., can be brought to the attention of people through the mass media.
There is practically no section of society whose important socioeconomic, political and cultural life that is not dealt with in media reports, features, editorials, letters to the editor, magazine materials, video clips and programmes including films, telefilms, interviews and talks, through media may not find it practical to present everything that individual media users find interesting, useful or necessary. The massages reaching the audience through various channels are likely to influence different sections of society differently but, in general, those who watch or listen to particular programmes or read certain kinds of material in print media are likely to develop a soft corner for the ideas expressed in those media.

Changes are taking place in the whole array of communication, and not just in mass communication, and in most societies of Asia the so-called mass media are still the virtual monopoly of the privileged few- the rich and the urban, and thus they many better be called class media as long as they do not reach out to the masses in rural and remote areas. Undoubtedly, they deserve the adjective ‘mass’ in context of the developed world. They may also qualify for this anticipatory appellation in view of their potential to reach the masses in the developing countries upon the creation of necessary prerequisites.

But, at present, such prerequisites do not exist in several cases. Thus, illiteracy continues to be a handicap for the promotion of print media even when geographical barriers of distance and topography are broken down. Prior to the arrival of the transistor, the reach of the radio was limited by the non-availability of electricity. Television is currently outdistanced by the same hurdle, added with poor transmitters and unaffordable cost of the receiving set. In the case of computers, the additional obstacle is incomputercy - the newer form of illiteracy from which most of us, otherwise literate- the urban and affluent, also suffer, not to mention the poor villager who is not even aware of the arrival of the memory miracle, the epitome of artificial intelligence.

Not only are illiterates learning through the radio and the television, sidetracking the stringencies of reading and writing, even the literates are losing the habits of reading. We are told that that the circulation of dailies, in terms of their proportion to the population is declining, and the number of dailies is more or less constant even in the developed world. The editors have begun to realize that people turn to radio or television for the news and therefore they have to remodel the format
of the newspapers. That is the reason that the newspapers have shifted their focus from presentation of news to in-depth analyses and detailed commentaries. It will not be wrong to say that the reading public is transforming into a viewing audience. Rather than turning the pages of a book, and memorizing its key points and arguments, people are developing skills in switching the buttons of a television set and, that too, through a remote control. Our nostrils are losing the olfactory power of appreciating the distinctive smell of a book, our eyes are moving away from the printed word to pictorial presentations on a tube, and our memory faculties are hibernating because memorizing can easily and efficiently be done by the computer, which is at our call with the press of a buttons.

While the publishing industry is growing, as is evident from the increase in the consumption of paper and burgeoning list of new titles of published material, there is a justifiable fear that readership is declining. It is the libraries to which the publishers turn to for the sale of their merchandise. The neo-literates, in many instances, lapse into illiteracy. The legendary 3 R's have no longer remained indicators of literacy; the traditionally defined ‘illiterates’ are learning through the visual media. One wonders whether the new communication revolution is making literacy redundant; whether pen and ink are destined to become museum specimens.

Something similar is happening to the cinema, after the arrival, first of television, and now of video. Not that the interest in watching movies has declined, only the venue has been changed: from big halls accommodating large audiences to the comforts of a drawing room. The invasion of video- which first arrived in the homes of the rich transformed the drawing room into miniature cinema halls, minus the atmosphere, with audiences drawn from the neighbourhood and from the video-owner’s kin group. Some small entrepreneurs have converted their tiny stalls and shops into functional equivalents of a cinema theatre to run regularly three shows a day, and sometimes even more, to facilitate public viewing of pirated video cassettes. Cinema took the people out for entertainment and offered opportunities to them not only to watch their favorite stars on the silver screen but also to gaze at other well-dressed people and attractive faces in the audience. The cinema compound had its own culture: queues at the ticket window, the mighty of the street prying on innocent victims, black-marketing of tickets, hawkers in the theatre during intervals, strings of restaurants, snack bars and souvenir shops, and the car parks
and taxi stands. All this may become a thing of the past as television and video have brought people back home. Of course, it is likely that people may still visit the cinema to perpetuate the nostalgia, or that the demography of the cinemagoers may change. It is understandable that the young feel suffocated by being in the drawing room all the time, and in the company of the old; cinema provides them a pretext to go out, and enjoy the company of their peers, while watching a movie of their choice. Cinema may also continue to attract the poor who cannot afford a video; this may even lead to the relocation of these theatres in small towns and big villages. Similarly, television serials are challenging the monopoly of the cinema; they have given birth to new starlings- adorable and alluring new faces, talented, and yet not that expensive as big films stars.

**Communication: Concept and process**

The structure of a particular society will influence the nature of communication in it. If the Society is not a free society, but one that it dominated by certain groups, the content and media of communication will be so organized that the messages will perpetuate the dominance of interested groups. Communication in such a society will negate the very meaning of communication, which implies sharing, a community of interests and social cohesion based on social justice.

There are three varieties of communication: intrapersonal (taking place in the brain and physiological systems within the individual); interpersonal (between individuals, groups, etc.); and mass. Mass communication has gained immense social significance because of mass media, which touch the lives of millions of people all over the world. Naturally, this raises the important distinction between communication and mass communication.

In oral communication, air and language are the two media. In non-verbal communication, message is conveyed through signs, symbols and gestures; there is no speech involved. In certain situations, sound conveys meanings; for example, a cry signifies pain. But even for the sound to be heard, air is essential, since a vacuum will not convey sound. Although usually taken for granted, air is essential as a medium to convey sound; and words, after all, are representations of sound. However, non-verbal communication is highly significant because it conveys
meaning to others without the help of words. A smile is a universally recognized sign of goodwill, welcome and acceptance, not an indication of hatred, ill-will or non-acceptance, certainly not of suspicion. And a cry expresses pain, sorrow or fear.

Communication, whether interpersonal or mass, will be based on five components: communicator, communicate (the person who receives the communication), medium (channel), message, and feedback. Of these, feedback is the factor that distinguishes interpersonal communication from mass communication. In the latter, there is very little feedback, except in the case of print media such as newspapers and magazines which publish letters to the editor. There is also a negative factor, namely noise, which may be technical or sociological. When there is disruption caused by various reasons, the process of communication becomes incomplete. The sociological noise is generated by the pronounced status difference between the communicator and the communicate. It can be created by the barrier of language too. Whatever creates an obstruction between the sender and the receiver of the message is a noise.

The word ‘communication’ has the Latin roots communes and communicate, mining sharing of meaning and understanding based on friendship, mutual respect, equality and a feeling of oneness. The basis of human communication is, and ought to be, sharing of love and understanding. It rests on the fundamental principle that all human beings are essentially the same, fed by the same nature and nurtured by the same creator. But a mere sending of messages from one end to another in a linear or circular fashion does not necessarily lead to communication. There should be sharing of ideas, meanings, thoughts, feelings - there are at the base of the communicative act or the communication process - and this sharing must lead to action. In this age of information, we have to look at the process from the perspective of information and communication. All ideas, meaning, thoughts and feeling are basically pieces of information. Thus it is not wrong to modify our definition of communication to ‘the exchange of information between and among human beings for the promotion of mutual and common understanding and desirable social action.

To have a clear understanding of the term ‘mass communication’, we should be clear about the word ‘mass’. Mass essentially means group - a large, heterogeneous, amorphous, undefined group of people or things. It has also led to the expression ‘the masses’, a shapeless, usually unruly or undisciplined group of
people, almost equivalent to a mob. The word masses mean common people. The masses live a life that is different from that of the middle class or the aristocrats. Elite versus masses is a common system of comparison. But the most common connotation of masses is the lower class, often the ignorant, illiterate, uneducated, unruly, irrational and even violent groups. With social revolutions succeeding in many countries, the term mass acquired the positive sense of ordinary people engaged in movements for political, economic and social equality, and for liberty. However, the dominant sense has been unflattering as it indicates amorphous, even faceless or anonymous groups of people. (Vilanilam, 2005)

Models of Mass Communication

Different communication specialists have different opinions regarding the system of flow of information from sources to the receivers in mass communication. A brief description of the and common important mass communication models are as follows:

(1) **Single - step flow of communication:** This model is based on the assumption that information reaches directly from the source to the receivers in mass communication. Troldahi (1967), on the basis of research findings proposed the model of the step of flow of mass communication. This step of communication is contrary earlier model of two step flow of communication. Single step model states that mass media channels communicate directly to the mass audience without the massage passing through the opinion leaders.

(2) **Two – step flow model:** Lazars – felid , Berelson and Gaudet (1948) proposed that influences stemming from the mass media first reach 'opinion leaders “who is turn pass on what they read and hear to their day associates who are influenced by them. Opinion leaders are more exposed to the mass media than those who they influence. This model implies that opinion leaders are active and followers are passive which is not true is every situation. There may be many non-leaders is direct contact with mass media.

(3) **Multi—step flow model:** It is not desirable to limit the flow of information to one or two steps. The number of steps Differ from situation and the flow of mass communication are far more complicated than two steps, as suggested
by Rogers and shoemaker (1971), the exact number of steps is the process depends on the intent of the source, the availability of media, the extent of audience exposure, the nature of the massage and its importance.

**History of Mass Media**

**Newspaper**

The printing press, however, arrived way back in 1550. It opened up a major avenue for mass communication. It published a catechism in 1557. In the years to come, printing technology developed rapidly and covered all major Indian languages. Printed matter in all these languages in the form of pamphlets, book, newspapers, and periodicals emerged as a new form of mass communication. William bolts brought out the first newspaper in 1776 from Calcutta, but it did not last long. Other efforts were made in 1780 when James Augustus hickey started Bengal Gazette, and mess ink and reed published India gazette, other attempts made by some of the more adventurous members of the European community experienced several obstacles, prominent among them was governmental control. The editors were required to submit the newspaper for inspection to the Chief Secretary of the government before publication. Heavy censorship by the government led to underground printing activity. In august 1818, however, the requirement of submission of proof sheets for approval was dispensed with.

In the late 1820s the number of dailies and the size of their circulation as unbelievably small. In a minute in September 1828, G. Stock well reported the following:

**English language newspapers:** two dailies (Bengal Harkaru and John Bull) with a circulation, respectively, of 155 and 204 copies daily; three bi-weeklies (India Gazette, government Gazette, Calcutta chronicle) with a circulation per issue of 280, 290, and 189 respectively; Persian papers: one weekly (presumably Jam-i- Jahan-Numa) with 26 copies per issue. A report by A. Sterling said that between 1824 and 1826 six Indian language newspapers were published in Calcutta (three Bengali, two Persian, and one Hindi) in addition to two newspapers, one in Persian and the other in Bengali, published by the Serampore missionaries. (R au, 1974: 41)
In 1830, sixteen newspapers and periodicals were published in Indian languages (Rau, 1974: 42). They included three dailies, one tri-weekly, two bi-weeklies, seven weeklies, three bi-monthlies, and one monthly. At this time, "the number of English dailies and periodicals published in Bengal was 33 and the total number of subscribers 2,205" (Rau, 1974: 42). The first daily newspaper in Hindi came out as late as 1854; published from Calcutta, it was named Samachar Sudhavarshan.

Indian newspapers have covered more than a century of their existence: "There are 16 centenarians of which eight are in English language, four in Gujarati, one each in Marathi, Tamil, and Portuguese, and one bi-lingual (English and Tamil). The oldest, the Bombay Samachar, a Gujarati daily, was 148 years in 1971" (Chatterjee, 1973: 47).

In 1972, the number of newspapers published in India was 11,926; they had a total circulation of 32 million. Of these, 793 were dailies, 64 tri-or bi-weeklies, 3,388 weeklies, and 7,486 had different periodicity. The largest number of newspaper was published in Hindi (3,083), followed by English (2,368). Among dailies, however, Tamil ranked second (102 dailies) to Hindi (225); Urdu came third (91) followed by English (73) and Marathi (72). The largest number of newspapers is brought out of by states of Maharashtra (1,742) and Uttar Pradesh (1,711); Delhi (1,345) and West Bengal (1,213) come next in that order. Tamil Nadu ranks third in the number of dailies published (108); Uttar Pradesh publishes 124, and Maharashtra 110. Printed media were very poorly developed in Mizoram, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Nagaland, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. In Arunachal Pradesh and in Lakshadweep there was no newspaper in 1972.

Radio

Broadcasting in India was introduced in 1927 by the Indian broadcasting company which set up a 1.5 kW. Medium Wave transmitter in Bombay. "In August of the same year Calcutta Station (1.5 kW. Medium Wave) was opened. Subsequent developments proceeded haltingly, and in 1930 the Indian broadcasting company went into liquidation. However, the same year, the government of India took over broadcasting and established the Indian state broadcasting service. In June 1936,
the name of the organization was changed to all India Radio’ (Chatterjee, 197: 65).
The government aimed at using this medium to reach the masses. From the very
beginning broadcasting for the rural areas was introduced, but in 1939 only 100
villages had community sets.

While there has been significant expansion of the mass media, they are still
inadequate for a country of 548 million people inhabiting a territory of 3.2 million
square kilometers. As on December 1972, the total number of broadcast receiver
licenses in force was 12.89 million, which included domestic, concessional,
commercial, and other types.

Television

A landmark in the history of mass communication of India came on 15
September 1959, when the first television centre, with a forty kilometer range, was
established in Delhi. In 1974, it covered a sixty kilometers range. Delhi television’s
programmes were viewed by 77 farm teleclubs and 163 urban teleclubs. In 560 Delhi
schools, television sets were installed so that Children could view the special
instructional programmes telecast for them during school hours.

Bombay television started functioning from 2 October 1972. It has a 10 kW.
Transmitters with a reception range of 95 kilometers. The relay transmitter at Poona
extended its range by 88 kilometers.

In January 1973 a television center was inaugurated at Srinagar. In the same
year, in September, the fourth television station at Amritsar was put into action.

There has been a steady increase in the production of television sets in the
country; the production climbed from 16,000 in 1970 to 70,000 in 1972 (40,000 in the
organized sector by three manufacturers and 30,000 in the small-scale sector by six
manufacturers).

At the end of 1972, licenses were issued for 84,114 television sets. ‘A
demand projection study made by AIR in 1969 indicated that 3.7 Lakh television sets
would be required by the end of the fourth plan. The government has sanctioned a
capacity of 1, 10,000 television sets in the organized sector (both public and private)
and of over 1, 70,000 sets in the small-scale sector’ (Government of India, 1974:113).

Cinema

Movies are extremely popular in India as a form of mass entertainment. This is evident by the increase in the output of films as well as by the rise in the number of cinema halls.

In 1956, there were 3,807 cinema halls (2,827 permanent and 980 moving from place to place); in 1960-61 this figure rose to 4,820 (3, 579 permanent and 1,241 of the other kind); in 1970-71 the total was 7,301; and in 1971-72 it rose to 7,538 (with 4,787 permanent and 2,301 touring cinemas). It is estimated that there were about seven to eight cinema seats per thousand people.

The output of feature films is also increasing. From 281 feature films in 1947, to 303 in 1961, to 433 in 1971 is certainly an impressive now they are available in fourteen different languages, as also in some dialects like Bhojpuri and Rajasthani. The three main South Indian languages – Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam – have attained an impressive figure in the production of films. Tamil and Telugu have crossed the mark seventy and Malayalam of fifty. The number of films in Bengali was 54 in 1956, but the average has now come down to 30. (Kumar, 1991).