Chapter 2

Communication: Concept and Evolution
Society is a highly intricate network of partial or complete understandings between the members of organisational units of every degree of size and complexity. It is being reanimated or creatively reaffirmed from day to day by the ensemble of acts of communication in it. Every cultural pattern and every single act of social behaviour involves communication in either explicit or implicit sense.

Communication is talking to one another; it is television: it is spreading information: it is hairstyle or attire, and also it is literary criticism. The list could be endless. Talking itself could be by means of language, sound, sign, gesture, colour and so on. Similarly, information could be spread through mass media, a web of computer network (internet) and other such means.

One could take communication as an interaction between two individuals, an individual speaking to a hundred persons in a hall or to hundreds of thousands spread over far-flung areas by means of radio, television, newspaper or internet. To some, communication has to do with telephone, video compact disc, cable radio/television or Morse code. Communication also means the sign language of the hearing impaired, a bill board promoting a particular brand of shoes or a signboard calling the drivers not to blow their horns in the vicinity of a hospital or a school.

Communication has come to include means of transportation, the system of sending messages from one point to the other and receiving the same (the feedback), and also the system of moving troops and supply.

Indeed, it is easier to use the concept than to define the term communication. The notion of a bond is at the very base of communication that leads to commonness. Commonness is attained by the act of imparting, conferring or delivering samples of phenomena from one person to another.
Some of the more functional definitions of communication describe it as "the transfer of meaning," "the transmission of social values," "the sharing of experience," or "social interaction through messages."

Communication is all these. But it is more than even the sum of them. Perhaps it would be appropriate to think of communication as a series of actions or operations, always in motion, directed toward a particular goal; not a static entity fixed in time and space but a dynamic process used to transfer of meaning, transmission of social values and sharing of experiences.

**Participatory communication:** White has defined the participatory process as “a person’s active involvement in interaction, dialogue, sharing, consensual decision making and action-taking.” Communication is the foundation of this process. Keeping in view the definition of communication arrived at in the previous paragraph, participatory communication could be understood as the process by which people communicating with each other help each other draw meaning in the light of their individual as well as collective social values and shared experiences. Participatory communication transforms people from objects of communication, learning, and research into active subjects who are shaping their life space, through knowledge and action.

**2.1. Approaches to study of communication:**

There are broadly two schools in the study of communication. The first sees communication as the transmission of messages while the second takes it as the production and exchange of meaning. The transmission or the process school, as the first one is known, tends to address itself to acts of communication, while the second, known as semiotic or ritual school, tends to address itself to works of communication.

**2.1.1. The transmission school:** The transmission school sees communication as a process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/or organisations so that an understanding response results. In the simplest way we can say that this
"understanding response" from a fellow human being is received as feedback. Communication is an endless current passing through us — changed, to be sure, by our interpretation, our habits, our abilities and capabilities, but the input still being reflected in the output.4

The transmission approach to communication has three basic elements: (1) a source of communication that sends (2) message to a (3) receiver. The source could be a radio commentator, giving ball by ball account of a cricket game, a story in a newspaper, or a social worker diffusing an innovation in a community in a remote area. Message could be a sign or a symbol, appeal to a particular mode of cultivation, a given seed and fertilizer. The receiver of the message from the source could be an individual listener, reader or a group of people. Of course, that listener or reader could be a member of the group.

Ever since Wilbur Schramm put together the first set of papers on mass communication research some 50 years ago many scholars have tarried at the academic crossroad communication has developed into.

Each scholar has added to the pool of knowledge and this is evident from the trend of the definitions and explanations given above. The result was Transmitter, Channel, Destination, Noise source got added to the three basic elements — source, message and receiver — discussed above. The conceptual domain was narrower when Schramm5 put together The Science of Human Communication in 1963 or Berlo6 penned The Process of Communication in 1960. Communication was then conceived of as a linear process in which sources encode messages, send them through channels to be decoded and acted upon by reviewers. The authors were preoccupied with the

(...) persuasive uses of communication within the context of either mass media or interpersonal situations. The study of communication was largely the study of persuasion.7
Today the limitations of communication as a linear concept are realised universally. The accent on persuasive impact has given way to such concerns as the ways people use media and how they define social relationships and contribute to the reproduction of culture. Explanations of the communication process in the light of social context and in which construction of meaning, its production and exchange have taken the centrestage. This approach, as we shall see in the following pages, has broken away from the conceptualisation of communication as a way to change others' attitudes and action or a tool to elicit a certain predetermined set of action. There is much more to communication than "who says what in which channel to whom with what effect," as Laswell put it.8

2.1.1.a. Types of Communication and Communication Theories: From verbal to non-verbal, mediated and non-mediated, participatory and non-participatory, communication has been classified into several types. Kewal Kumar9 says that the typologies are attempt at coming to grips with the apparently simple but really complex phenomenon of communication. A common typology relates to the size of a group involved in sharing of meaning through exchange of information. They are (i) Intrapersonal communication, (ii) Interpersonal communication, (iii) Group communication, (iv) Mass communication, (iv) Mass-line communication, and (v) Interactive communication.

Intrapersonal communication is individual communicating to her/himself. It is individual reflection, contemplation and meditation.

Interpersonal communication is direct face-to-face communication between two persons. As it is face-to-face, Interpersonal communication involves words, body language, body odour, clothes, and many more such personal attributes. Of course, all these attributes could be used to hide some information and send out wrong information. Interpersonal communication is marked by three stages: (i) Phatic stage, (ii) Personal stage, (iii) Intimate stage. Phatic stage is the initial exploratory stage of communication in which ritualised communication such as greetings like "Hello, how are you" or "good morning" take place. The second stage introduces a more personal element into the conversation. During this period we generally lower our social guard a little and are prepared to take
some risks in exposing ourselves and our feelings. The Intimate stage is reserved for close relationship such as friendship and social or sometimes professional relationship.

Group communication includes all these qualities, though in varying degrees. The larger the group, the less personal is the exchange. As the group increases in size, communication tends to become less participative. The theatre, religious services, dance performances, carnivals, Rama Lila, Raas Lila, Kumbh Mela and other folk events are examples of group communication.

Technology has extended group communication to mass communication. Mass communication is often identified with modern mass media like the press, the cinema, radio, television, video and the internet. Kumar reminds us that these media are processes and must not be mistaken for the phenomenon of communication itself.

Some scholars like Kusum Singh have differentiated between mass communication and "mass-line communication." Mao Zedong, who led the Chinese Cultural Revolution, used a type of communication to talk to the masses. He termed it "mass-line" communication. Mahatma Gandhi, too had employed a similar type of communication, the essence of which was personal example, respect for native knowledge and non-manipulative information.

Communication via the "new" media such as video, cable, videotext, teletext, CDs, DVDs, Internet, and such technology-enabled devices is usually termed "interactive communication." A major characteristic of interactive communication is "asynchronicity," that is, the sending and receiving of messages is at one's convenience. Audio and video recordings facilitates listening and viewing at a time later than the time of transmission. Voice mail, electronic mail and pager messages could be accessed at times convenient to communicators.

**Communication Theories:** Theory is the body of rules, ideas, principles, and techniques that applies to a particular subject, especially when seen as distinct from actual practice.
It is a set of facts, propositions, or scientific principles analysed in their relation to one another and used to explain phenomena. A theory develops through concepts and constructs.\textsuperscript{11}

**Scope of Communication Theories:** Study of communication and theory-building are social processes of constructing a world view or reality. A communication theory uses communication both as method and content. The function and scope of communication theory are:

# Communication is the process of co-creating and co-managing the social realities.
# Individuals have a system of rules for meaning and action. When there is juxtaposition of two or more intra-personal rules; the system produces an interpersonal rule system which in turn produces a logical force to control and constrain sequential actions.
# Human beings are enmeshed in multiple systems.

**Rise of Communication Theories:** The salient basic areas on which human communication theorists focus are:

(i) opinions, attitudes, behaviour and interaction;
(ii) they surmise that content of theory is interactions through verbal (language) and non-verbal cues;
(iii) content needs analysis, categorization, and universality to develop for a theory;
(iv) channels of communication both mass media and interpersonal became focus of communication theory. Thus mass media and interpersonal communication theories developed;
(v) communication theorists develop theories about five elements of communication – source, message, audience, channels and effects.

**Early Communication Theories:** Development of contemporary communication theories had influence of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century natural science, learning theories, behaviourism and attitude change theories.
By the 1950s, a number of theorists have explanatory accounts for phenomena directly associated with human communication. Among the first important conceptual scheme for human communication was the mathematical theory of communication (of Shannon and Weaver) and balance theory of attitude change.

In the 1960s, there were shortcomings in research and theory. In the 1970s, there were widespread efforts to critically evaluate philosophical assumptions guiding research and theory and reorient research practices into more productive direction (application and theories). In the 1970s, theories were integrated to develop specific communication theories. These specific theories focused on attitude and behaviour change through creating awareness, information, motivations and persuasion. Such theories were persuasion and propaganda theories, diffusion, modernity theories, trickle down theories.

In later decades, efforts were made to develop special theories such as development communication theories, international communication, intercultural communication, information communication technology and globalisation theories. In these decades, theories based on communication and processes were also being developed such as communication effects theories, message-content and audience theories.

**Contemporary Communication Theories:** Among the contemporary theories are Modernity Theory and Trickle Down Theory. Both advocated mass media exposure for communication gains. Two-Step Flow Theory, Diffusion Theory and Opinion Leadership Theory advocated that both mass media exposure and interpersonal communication coexist and are used supporting each other to deliver communication gains. In the 1960s and '70s, the focus of communication was development through industrialisation and modernisation. These five theories focused on that. New Social Theory said creating social reality and communication is the process of co-creating and managing social reality.
Innis Theory of Technology determinism is a significant theory. It contended that media technology prevailing in a society at a given point of time influences how people in that society think, communicate and behave. From this perspective, the most important characteristics of the audience that media encounter are the technological receptivity. McLuhan elaborated Innis' thesis and said that "medium is the message."

2.1.1.b. A Critique of the Transmission Approach: A careful look at all the communication models of transmission approach makes it clear that the explanation of communication process has been component-oriented. Despite appearance to the contrary the world does not consist of independently existing objects, whose concrete features can be perceived clearly and individually and whose nature can be classified accordingly. In fact, every perceiver's method of perceiving can be shown to contain an inherent bias that affects what is perceived to a significant degree. A wholly objective perception of individual entities is, therefore, not possible: any observer is bound to create something of what he observes. Accordingly, the relationship between observer and observed achieves a kind of primacy. It becomes the only thing that can be observed. It becomes the stuff of reality. In consequence, the true nature of things may be said to lie not in things themselves, but in the relationships that we construct, and then perceive between them.

As against this, Shannon and Weaver talked about source, transmitter, signal, receiver and destination. These were the chief building blocks of the process that they intended to characterise in mathematical terms. Lasswell propounded his famous formula of "who said what in which channel to whom with what effect" and Schramm explained the process through source, encoder, signal, decoder and destination. He also introduced the concept of "field of experience."

Katz and Lazarsfeld came out with the two-step flow in which the masses got the message through the opinion leaders. Westley and MacLean's and Berlo's models portray communication mostly as a process. The Westley-MacLean model, in particular, recognised the contribution of non-purposive in communication process.
These are but the descriptive analysis of human communication. The functional analysis of human communication stresses the importance of symbol. Human being is not the only animal to study his/her environment and use language but it alone has the capacity to invent, accumulate and attach meanings through symbols to his environment and himself/herself.

The study of communication system is, therefore, logically understood as the study of the role of symbols, symbolization, and symbol internalization in the creation, maintenance and, change of all human individual and multi-individual organization.\(^13\)

Ruben analyses the communication process at two levels: personal and social. The first refers to one's sensing, making sense of and acting towards the objects and the fellow beings in one's own environment, while the second, he says, is the process underlying intersubjectivisation, a phenomenon which occurs as a consequence of public symbolization and symbol utilization and diffusion.

The human social system is more complicated than the structures such as technology created by humans. Westley and MacLean\(^14\) have diagrammatically demonstrated these complications. The process school or the source-receiver (S-R) models of communication have endeavoured to acknowledge the social complexity by introducing the feedback element as well as noise, field of experience and so on. From Shannon and Weaver to Westley and MacLean all have taken care to include feedback in their scheme of communication process. But as Thomas puts it:

Unfortunately, the 'complexity' is not so simple a matter as to be accounted for by an extra arrow here, a feedback loop there.\(^15\)

Transmission itself comes to be regarded as the transference or passage of information from a sender to a receiver. Consequently communication becomes a linear model with a
beginning and an end in which transmission involves behaviour of A (the source, the sender) and B (the destination, the receiver) in that order.

Let us assume that A introduces A' data and B responds with B' data. While in a technologically-engineered system, eg, a computer, A when programmed properly can be relied upon to respond in A' fashion regardless of a change in system input, human behaviour is not so context free.

(...) what S-R models (even with feedback) fail to achieve is the understanding of an empirical reality in which A and B are part of an environment which regulates their interaction.\textsuperscript{16}

Indeed the transmission view of communication is the most common in our culture. The hierarchy of sender and receiver (read rulers and the ruled or the elite who control media and the laity) that this view reinforces has something to do with its popularity. Drawing on John Dewey's works, Carey writes:

The transmission view of communication is the commonest in our culture -- perhaps in all industrial cultures.... It is defined by terms such as 'imparting,' 'sending,' 'transmitting,' or 'giving information to other.' it is formed from a metaphor of geography or transportation. In the nineteenth century but to a lesser extent today, the movement of goods or people and the movement of information were seen as essentially identical processes.... The centre to this idea of communication is the transmission of signals or messages over distance for the purpose of control.\textsuperscript{17}

Besides, much of the problem arises from the fact that the process school tends to see social events isomorphic. It tends to believe that a given model can be replicated in varied social processes which is not so. As Thomas points out:
The stumbling block, of course, in these applications and extensions has much to do with the assumption of isomorphy -- that the processes of one type of event are congruent with those of another.\textsuperscript{18}

The limitations of the transmission approach can be explained by discussing the Shannon and Weaver's model. They identify three levels\textsuperscript{19} of problems in the study of communication. These are:

**Level A:** How accurately can the symbols of communication be transmitted? (Technical problems),

**Level B:** How precisely do the transmitted symbols convey the desired meaning? (Semantic problems),

**Level C:** How effectively does the received meaning affect conduct in the desired way? (Effectiveness problems).

While the transmission models can help the communicator to improve his/her communication skills and enable to impose himself/herself on the world around more effectively, it sees communication as a determinant and improving communication as way of increasing social control. The limitation of the process approach can be summarised as follows:

(I) It sets up a hierarchy of sender and receiver, where the senders are seen as all knowing and receivers as passive and lacking in appropriate knowledge/attitudes/practices/ values. The direction of change is one way. The only purpose that feedback serves is to modify the message to improve the efficiency of communication. Feedback does not really serve as a process of dialogue.

(II) It sees the media as transmitters of fixed and intended meanings. There is no recognition of the possibility of differing interpretative frameworks or ways of seeing.
The media are regarded merely as vehicles of predetermined meanings and not as structured system of meanings.

**III** It tends to ignore the social context within which communication occurs. Communication is always mediated by factors such as class, gender, ethnic groups and such social divisions that this model does not adequately take into account.

It is indeed surprising that despite these limitations the transmission approach to communication came to be widely accepted in developing countries. There could be several reasons for this. To begin with in the late '50s and '60s there were high hopes for the role of mass communication in fostering development in the developing countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa which had just been freed from the colonial yoke. Lerner's The Passing of the Traditional Societies20, Schramm's Mass Media and National Development21 and Rao22 influenced the thinking of planners. Media were talked in terms of "magic multipliers" and "prime movers." Based that these writings were on the effects and functions of orientation of mass media, wide acceptance of the mission approach of communication was natural.

However, this approach came to be questioned soon. Schramm and Lerner23 assessed the situation about a decade and a half later and found the results to be dismal.

The effects orientation and the functions orientation have been two of the major US communication research schemes. Nevertheless they were criticized and discredited way back in the early '70s.24

According to Beltran,25 (a) adoption of western parameters of development, and (b) the lack of conceptual framework on part of the researchers (as concluded at the first general meeting of Latin American communication researchers) were the two main reasons for the wide acceptance of the transmission approach.


Besides, certain general assumptions were made in and for the situation of highly
developed countries (such as the US) and then uncritically applied to the different
conditions of Latin America and other countries. For example, one basic assumption of
the diffusion approach is that communication by itself can generate development
regardless of socio-economic and political conditions.

Another assumption is that increased production and consumption of goods and services
constitute the essence of development and that a fair distribution of income and
opportunities will necessarily derive in due time. Yet another assumption is that the key
to increased productivity is technological innovation, regardless of whom it may benefit
and whom it may harm.

All these had to be enforced on underdeveloped countries so that they could follow the
footprints left behind by the developed countries on the path of evolution; hence the
predominance of the transmission approach to communication where control was the key
concept.

Of course, today all these assumptions stand rejected. New frontiers are being explored
in the role of communication in development. And this is one more reason to question the
utility and validity of the transmission approach to communication.

2.1.2. Semiotic Approach: As was seen above the transmission approach eludes a range
of social issues in the communication process such as the space the media occupy in the
wider social context, the role they play in the construction of meanings in society and the
reproduction of culture.

The semiotic or the ritual approach addresses itself to these concerns. It sees
communication as the production and exchange of meanings. It is concerned with how
messages, or texts, interact with people in order to produce meanings; that is, it is
concerned with the role of texts in our culture. Misunderstanding is not necessarily
treated as an evidence of communication failure in this approach. It believes that the
cultural differences between sender and receiver may give rise to misunderstanding. So the focus is on the study of text and culture in this school with the main method of study being semiotics (the science of signs and meanings).

The process and semiotic schools interpret the definition of communication as "social interaction through messages" in their own ways. While the transmission school defines social interaction as the process by which one person relates himself/herself to others or affects the behaviour, state of mind or emotional response of another and vice versa, semiotics defines social interaction as a process which constitutes an individual as a member of his or her culture or society. For instance, a person knows that he/she responds to the budgetary speech of the country's finance minister or a Satyajit Ray film in broadly the same way as members of his/her culture. He or she also becomes aware of cultural differences if he/she finds a rural youth unable to relate meaningfully to either of the two. One expresses one's commonality with other members of the society by responding "normally" to a given setting.

The two schools also differ in their understanding of what constitutes a message. For the followers of the transmission school a message is that which is intentionally transmitted by the communication process.

What constitutes the message for semiotics could best be understood by taking up the example of the account of an event printed in different newspapers. Each newspaper reports the same event differently which also reflects the understanding each newspaper shares with its readers. Readers with different social background may find different meanings in the same text. While the process school may see this as an evidence of communication failure, semiotics will not. For semiotics

(...) the message is a construction of signs which through interacting with the receivers produces meanings. The sender, defined as transmitter of the message, declines in importance. The emphasis shifts to the text and how it is 'read.' And reading is the process of discovering meanings that occurs
when the reader interacts or negotiates with the text. This negotiation takes place as the reader brings aspects of his cultural experience to bear upon the codes and signs which make up the text. It also involves some shared understanding of what the text is about.28.

The message, then for semiotics, is not something sent from a person to another, but an element in a structured relationship in which other elements include external reality (the cultural/ideological system) and the producer/reader. Producing and reading become parallel processes as they occupy the same place in this structured relationship. Fiske represents this model as a triangle. There is a constant interaction among the message/text, referent and producer/reader which constitute the three ends of the triangle with a view to constituting meanings which is placed at the centre of the triangle.

2. Communication, Meaning and Signs:

Social practices signify something and hence they are articulated like a language.30 Every speech-act includes the transmission of messages through the "languages" of gesture, posture, clothing, hairstyle, social context and even at cross purposes with what words actually say. Under the circumstances, human beings are communicating, always through signs.
Communication through signs is a radically different approach. Here the accent is on communication as generation of meaning, not as a process of transmission. For communication to take place a person has to create a message out of signs. The more the persons communicating with each other share the same codes, the more they use the same sign system, the closer will be the "meanings" the message holds for them.

The two most influential models of meaning have been given by Peirce and Saussure. But before we discuss these two models, let us see how sign has been defined. According to Fiske, a sign is something physical, perceivable by our senses; it refers to something other than itself; and it depends upon the recognition by its users that it is a sign.

O'Sullivan, et al, have given three essential characteristics of a sign: it must have a physical form, it must refer to something other than itself, and it must be used and recognised by people as a sign. For example, a rose is normally just a flower, but if a young man presents it to his girl friend it becomes a sign, for it refers to his romantic passion, and she recognises that it is so.

Signs, and the ways they are organised into codes and languages, form the basis of any study of communication. They can have a variety of forms, such as words, gestures, photographs or architectural features. Semiotics is concerned with establishing the essential features of sign and the ways they work in social life.

3.1. Saussure's model: Saussure, a Swiss linguist, was interested in meaning and he found it in the structural relationship of signs, people and objects. His basic model differs in emphasis from Peirce's and he was more concerned with the way signs referred to other signs than the way they were related to Peirce's object. According to Saussure, a sign is a combination of concept and a sound image that cannot be separated.

Saussure used the word sign (signe) to designate the whole and to replace concept and sound-image respectively by signified (signifie) and signifier (significant); the last two
terms have the advantage of indicating the opposition that separates them from each other and from the whole of which they are parts.\textsuperscript{35}

The relationship between the signifier and signified, and this is crucial, is arbitrary, unmotivated, unnatural. There is no logical connection between a word and a concept or a signifier and signified, a point that makes finding meaning interesting and problematic.

The difference between a sign and a symbol, Saussure\textsuperscript{36} suggests, is that a symbol has a signifier that is never wholly arbitrary: it is not empty, for there is a rudiment of a natural bond between the signifier and signified. The symbol of justice, a pair of scales, could not be replaced by just another symbol, such as a cart.

If the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary, the meaning these signifiers hold must be learned somehow, which implies that there are certain structured associations, or codes, we pick up that help us interpret signs. All of this is based on associations we learn and then carry around with us. Anyone who communicates uses these associations between signifiers and signifieds all the time. Since in real life the relationships are arbitrary and change rapidly, one must be on one's toes all the time. Signifiers can become dated and change their significance all too quickly. In a sense, then, we are all practising semiologists who pay a great deal of attention to signs -- signifiers and signifieds -- even though we may never have heard these terms before.

To explain how signs work, Berger\textsuperscript{37} gives the example of the television programme Star Trek. He says that the programme could be looked upon as speech that is intelligible to its audience because the audience knows the language, that is, it knows the signs and what they signify, it knows the conventions of the genre or what is acceptable and unacceptable. In short, the audience knows the codes.

Sometimes there is confusion and the code of the creator of a programme is not the code of the member of the audience. In such cases, Berger says, there is "bad communication." What makes things complicated is the fact that, generally speaking, people are not
consciously aware of the rules and codes and cannot articulate them, though they respond to them. A scene in a programme that is meant to be sad but which evokes laughter is an example of this kind of mix-up.

Peirce and Ogden and Richards, too, have propounded models to explain the relationship between sign, signifier and signified. In fact, there are a couple of similarities between these models.

Fiske visualises Saussure's model as follows:

\[\text{Sign} \quad \text{Composed of} \quad \text{Signification} \quad \text{External reality or meaning} \]
\[\text{Signifier} \quad \text{Plus} \quad \text{Signified} \]
\[\text{(Physical existence of the sign)} \quad \text{(mental concept)} \]

(Source: Fiske, 1982)

Saussure stresses that a sign can be understood only in relation to other signs in the same code or system: its meaning is determined partly by other signs which it is not. The sign BOY is understood as not-MAN or not-GIRL, and MAN as not-ANIMAL, or not-GOD. As a linguist Saussure is primarily interested in the relationship of signifier to signified within a sign. He is less interested in the relationship of a sign to its referential reality (which he calls signification).
Peirce, on the other hand, gives this relationship at least as much emphasis as others. He, like his followers Ogden and Richards, takes the viewpoint of a philosopher, and believes that a sign can be studied only in relationship to two other elements which we can simplify as terms 'mind' and may call them 'referential reality.' His terms for them are, respectively, the interpretant and the object: Ogden and Richards' terms are the reference and the referent.

As people attempt to share meaning by means of communication, symbols become their tools of communication. Because symbols have a degree of ambiguity in their representation of sensory experiences, people may "bargain" over the symbols and begin to reach commonalities or shared views, of a particular topic under discussion.

Faules and Alexander have explained the process:

(Source Faules & Alexander, 1978)

When two people come together in communication the linkage between the two is the symbols that both employ. The bonds leading from the symbols to meaning are the strongest ones. Symbols become arousers of meaning in individuals who then will attempt to relate the meaning to their particular reality of the world. When the symbol, meaning and reality do not seem correlated, a person will offer symbols back to the other person in an attempt to arouse more of a correlated meaning. Faules and Alexander make it clear that though the explanation offered sounds sequential, communication is not a linear sequence. Both communicators are continually interpreting and representing
themselves to the other. Moreover, no single element shown in the figure above causes the linkage to become active.

Schramm’s 42 "field of experience," achievement of "commonness" through it and introduction of feedback loop may mislead one to think that the transmission and the ritual approaches to communication are reconcilable and could be combined in application. While Thomas 43 rejection of feedback loop as an adequate condition to take care of social context has been referred to earlier, Carey gives further argument as to why the two cannot jell:

In a ritual definition, communication is linked to terms such as 'sharing,' 'participation,' 'association,' 'fellowship,' and 'the possession of a common faith' .... A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs. 44

The difference between the two approaches could be illustrated by the table on the next page:
Table 2.1
Approaches of Ritual and Transmission view of communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbolic-ritual view of communication</th>
<th>Mechanistic-transmission view of communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bias towards</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bias towards</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language, modes, forms</td>
<td>Channels, networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Means, technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaning and interpretation</td>
<td>Causes and effects</td>
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<td>Expressive use</td>
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<td>Interaction and exchange</td>
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<td>Sharing and participation</td>
<td>Control, management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ambiguity</td>
<td>Non-ambiguity</td>
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<tr>
<td>The static</td>
<td>The dynamic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lateral flow</td>
<td>Vertical flow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Descriptive method</td>
<td>Measurement and quantification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open system</td>
<td>Closed system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storage of information</td>
<td>Transmission of information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>The indexical</td>
<td>The cognitive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: McQuail, 1984)

The above table gives some ideas as to why the two schools are difficult to combine.

(...) they draw on different world views, involve different priorities and direct attention to various aspects of the potential field of enquiry as well as requiring different kinds of methods.
Clearly the ritual approach calls for adoption if a social campaign like abolition of dowry or spread of literacy is to be launched and carried out successfully in a democratic society. And there are reasons for this belief. Firstly, in the transmission approach only the senders of the message are active whereas the ritual view emphasises the receivers as acting in and on their symbolic environment.

Secondly, the process view emphasises the ways of communicating and has a place for communication of the indexical. Thus all forms of culture specific vocabulary and syntax get a place in the communication process that are not usually consciously employed for instrumental purposes.

Thirdly, the ritual view of the structure of the communication process gives more weight to the cultural context and setting and discontinuities and barriers which may nullify efforts at persuasive communication.

And finally, in respect of mass communication, as Carey has given the example of what the alternatives imply for news and, in general, a ritual view orients us much more to the messages and meanings than to effects; to the sub-cultural variations within the audience rather than their similarities.
Footnote


2. The modern approach to understand communication has taken it out from its old premises of religion and social norms, maintaining only order and stability in the society. It is now regarded as one of the tools of the package for bringing about social change and consequently promote development. The verb "to communicate" in normal usage refers to an action of sending a message about something to someone. In “Communication,” London, Longman, (1984) Dennis McQuail says that

   (...) the effort expended on defining communication is not simply a case of word-spinning for its own sake. There is a real complexity which defies covering by any single formula; a complexity stemming from several sources besides the mere quantity of elements and stages involved. (pp 3)

He refers to Dance's finding fifteen types of definitions. Each of these definitions stressed different aspect or component:

(I). Symbols, speech, language.

(II). Understanding -- thus the reception, rather than sending of messages.

(III). Interaction, relationship -- the active exchange and orientation.

(IV). Reduction of uncertainty -- the hypothesised basic desire which leads to a search for information in the interests of adjustment.

(V). Process -- the entire sequence of transmission.

(VI). Transfer, transmission -- connotating movement in space or time.

(VII). Linking, binding -- communication as connector, articulator.

(VIII). Commonality -- increase in what is shared or held in common.

(IX). Channel, carrier, route -- an extension of transfer, but with a primary reference to the path or the vehicle (sign system or technology).

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(X). Memory, storage — communication leads to accumulation of information and we can "communicate with such stores of information.

(XI). Discriminative response — an emphasis on the process of selective attention — giving and interpretation.

(XII). Stimuli — an emphasis on the message as a cause of response or reaction.

(XIII). Intention — stresses the purposeful nature of communication acts.

(XIV). Time and situation — attention to context of the communication acts.


Mackay in "Formal Analysis of Communication Process" in "Non-Verbal Communication," Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, has underlined the importance of intention in communication process by giving the example of rocks. He says that a geologist can gather a lot of information by studying a rock, but this does not mean that there is a communication between the geologist and the rock as there is no intention involved.


9. A very basic discussion on the types of communication could be found in Kumar, Kewal J (2005): Mass Communication in India, Jaico, New Delhi. pp8-16


12. This study has taken into consideration two major approaches to communication: (i) transmission approach and (ii) semiotic approach.

Transmission approach: The transmission model owes its origin to two major developments: the publication of Cybernetics by Norbert Wiener in 1948, describing the structure of information flow within and between systems and Shannon and Weaver's work on information theory. As these models addressed the problem of the transmission of information social scientists deemed it fit to apply their works to other spheres which involved flow of information.

The model sees communication as a process by which one person affects the behaviour or state of mind of another. Senders and receivers (S-R) are central to it and this approach, as will be seen in the discussion below, is concerned with how senders and receivers encode and decode and how transmitters use the channels and media of communication. If the effect is different from or smaller than that which was intended, this school terms it as communication failure and gets on to find out where the failure occurred. Let us take a few of the models falling in the purview of this school.

Laswell's model: Harold Laswell's celebrated formula in 1948 was a byproduct of his work in the area of propaganda. His view extended well beyond the realm of political science. According to him the communication process was

Laswell focused on verbal message and viewed communication as a one-way process. However, he included mass media along with verbal speech in the channel. He stressed the "goal" or "effect" of communication and suggested a variety of effects -- information, entertainment, persuasion and so on.

Shannon and Weaver's model: A year after Laswell made his views public, Claude Shannon published his research undertaken for Bell Telephone. This became the basis for the Shannon and Weaver's model. In their book "The Mathematical Theory of Communication" they gave a diagram basic to all discussion on communication, which applies to such diverse conditions as one person speaking to another in the same room or a telecast being made. It applies to ordinary language, to the use of artificial languages such as mathematics, as well as to the technicalities of telecommunications. For more details please see, Mares, Colin (1966): Communication, London, London University Press. (pp 14)

According to Shannon and Weaver, when two persons talk to each other, one's brain is the information source, the other's is the destination, one's vocal system is the transmitter, the other's ear the receiver.

The channel is the means by which information is physically carried. Noise is unwanted information. This model shows communication as a linear act.
Schramm's models: Schramm in "How Communication Works" in The Process and Effects of Mass Communication, (1954) Urbana, University of Illinois Press explains the dynamics of the communication process through several models. These models are more elaborate and include new elements like "encoding," "decoding" and, most importantly "feedback." He stresses the importance of the "field of experience" and achievement of "commonness" through it. He also suggests that source and receiver often interchange role in effective communication. Schramm elaborates Shannon and Weaver's model. According to him, source could be an individual (speaking, writing, gesturing) or an organisation (newspaper, television station). The message could be on paper, on air, impulses of current, a wave of the hand or any other signal capable of being interpreted meaningfully. The destination could be an individual listening, watching or reading, a member of group. This group itself could be an audience, a crowd or a mob, a mass audience such as the reader of a newspaper or a viewer of television.

He sees communication as an effort to establish a rapport or commonness between a source and receiver. He develops another model while introducing the concept of "field of experience" which according to him was essential if a message has to be received by the destination in the manner in which it was intended by the source.

In order to build up commonness with the intended receiver the source first encoded the message by putting it in a form that could be transmitted. The receiver decoded the message upon receiving it and interpreted it. Obviously without common fields of experience -- common languages or common background, there was little chance for message to be interpreted correctly.
To overcome the problem of noise as Shannon and Weaver had visualised, Schramm suggested the importance of "feedback." Feedback enables the source to know how messages are being interpreted. The source introduces changes in messages so as to maximise their impact. In this model the source and the receiver exchange their role when the latter is giving feedback. In other words, each individual is a receiver as well as the source. The communication process becomes circular and two-way as against the earlier model which viewed it as a linear process.

Katz and Lazarsfeld's model: The "two-step flow" concept of communication conceives of the process in terms of messages flowing from impersonal sources to opinion leaders. They, in turn, influence the others through interpersonal means. A communicator whose capacity to grasp is greater than others' obtains an idea and makes use of persuasive techniques to get across to groups (s)he is in contact with. Everyone may be exposed to the message but only among a few does the attitude change occur.
Bettinghaus (1980) has referred to a number of studies conducted over a wide range of topics that specifically attempted to test the two-stage flow notion. In each of these and other studies, the central hypotheses were confirmed. The process is not merely a two-stage flow but a multi-stage flow in which messages from the media are picked up by opinion leaders and constantly transmitted to others. Opinion leaders are not the same for messages regarding farm practices as they are for civil defence information and not the same for fashion news as for marketing news.

Westley and MacLean model: Bruce Westley and Malcolm MacLean, Jr (1957) were the first to trace the origin of the communication process beyond sources or senders of messages. According to them potential messages exist in a communicator's environment. These signals were referred to as "X" in their model. Signals may involve single or multiple modalities, such as hearing, touch and sight (X3m). Under given condition some of the many signals (Xs) in one's environment at any point of time are selected by an individual -- A -- and combined to form a new message (X') -- a news story, advertisement or speech. Person A was seen as passing along the new message (X') to a second person, C. If person C happened to be present in the circumstances to which A was referring, C would also have some first hand information about the situation (X3 and X4). And if he or she desired, C might question A on his or her account of the event. This questioning would be classified as feedback, designated in the model as (fbva).

If C opts to communicate to B, B might give a feedback to C or B might interact directly with A, if B has the access to A, that is. The Westley-MacLean model with all its lines and arrows is more complex than the earlier ones. It includes within its ambit interpersonal as well as mass communication. It elaborates the feedback process quite considerably. Most importantly, Westley and MacLean point out that communication begins with a communicator receiving messages rather sending them. Again as Ruben in the same book says,

> The Westley-MacLean model, by implication, suggested that not all messages that were important to the communication process were intentionally sent or necessarily the result of human activity. In their concept, a fire, a sneeze, a traffic accident ... even silence were messages to the extent that they were of significance to the people involved. (pp 50)

Finally, the model suggests that messages are transformed as they are transmitted from individual to individual. What begins as X1, X2, X3 or X3m or A is transmitted to C in a form once removed from the original event -- (X). And the message C sent to B is twice removed from the original event -- (x''). Burgoon in Human Communication (1978), New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, says

> The Westley-MacLean model encompasses several important concepts: feedback, the differences and similarities between interpersonal and mass
Berlo's model: In 1960 David Berlo came out with the S-M-C-R model in his book "The Process of Communication." Its basic elements are the same as those of the traditional models -- source, message, channel and receiver but for each of these he lists a number of controlling factors. Berlo highlights the importance of all five senses as potential information channels. These senses, he says, influence the receivers when they act as sources.

Berlo stresses the idea that "meanings are in people, not in words" -- another way of saying that the interpretation of a message depends mainly on the meaning of the words or gestures to the sender and receiver, rather than on the elements of the message in and of themselves.

Systemic model: Experts in the field have started to look at mass media as a system which includes all the ways that human beings receive and process information. Codifying thoughts, experiences, sending and receiving messages and the ways these functions relate to the socio-cultural context are all included in the systemic model. According to Gumpart and Cathcart in "The Interpersonal and Media Connection," in Inter/Media: Interpersonal Communication in Media World (1982), New York, Oxford University Press,

In a systems model mass communication cannot be viewed as an external force manipulating passive receivers, nor can interpersonal communication be examined apart from the mediated communication that surrounds and involves each individual in the social environment. A systems theory of human communication assumes that all message inputs ... affect the internal states of the individual and help shape the message outputs from the individuals to others (interpersonal behaviour) as well as the messages one sends to oneself (intrapersonal behaviour). (pp 26-27).


16. Ibid. pp 82.


19. Chaffee and Berger (1987) have forwarded four levels at which communication can be conceptualised and studied empirically. They correspond to intrapersonal, interpersonal, group and mass communication, but he has added certain qualifications: (i) the intraindividual level of processes that occur within the person in relation to communication activities; (ii) the interpersonal level where communicatory relationships involving two or a slightly larger number of persons are studied; (iii) the network or organizational level where larger sets of persons are studied in the context of a set of ongoing relationships; and (iv) the macroscopic societal level where the communication properties and activities of large social systems are studied.


26. Beltran: Ibid. Also see,


33. Faules and Alexander in (1978) have classified signs into natural and artificial. Natural signs are physical phenomena used to represent other phenomena, e.g., more hair on horses, early hibernation of animals, and deep folds in the jetstream are natural signs of a harsh winter. Artificial signs are phenomena that have been constructed. They are valid in representing the "thing" under consideration only if the participants agree that the signs are representations. They give the example of the word "ghoti." It is useless as a sign unless participants in communication are told what ghoti represents. However, if the
participants know that ghoti is George Bernard Shaw's optional spelling of "fish" ('gh' form enough, 'o' form women and 'ti' from nation) the "word" ghoti has become a sign.

Shannon and Weaver, Ogden and Richards and Berlo tend to use the word "symbol" in a broad sense as referring to any type of sign. O'Sullivan (1983: 234-235) says symbol is broadly a sign, object or act that stands for something other than itself by virtue of agreement among the members of the culture that uses it. However, Peirce uses the term to refer to a category of sign where there is no resemblance between it and its object. He contrasts it with his other types of sign -- icon and index. A word is a symbol, so is O meaning female. An icon is a sign which is determined by the nature of its object, thus in Saussurian terms it is highly motivated. Accordingly, a photograph or representational painting is iconic. An index is a sign that is connected to its object, either casually or existentially -- it appears to be a part of that to which it refers. Thus smoke is an index of fire and spots an index of measles. There are studies on the metonymical use of indices in films (see Monaco, J in How to Read a Film (1977), Oxford, Oxford University Press 1977).

Faules and Alexander (1978) use the modified version of Ogden and Richards' semantic triangle in which they use the broken line to show that the link between sign and thing is weak (not identical and not inclusive). The strong link exists between the thing and the image an individual has of it, as well as between the image held and the sign.


36. De Saussure: ibid, pp 68.


38. These similarities will be clear once we have an understanding of the other models -- Peirce's, and Ogden and Richards.'

Peirce's model: Peirce, an American logician and philosopher, saw the sign that to which it refers and its users as the three points of a triangle. Each is closely related to the other
two and can only be understood in terms of the others. Fiske in Introduction to Communication Studies (1982), New York, Methuen, explained Peirce's model:

A sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. The sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object." (pp 1982).

The three terms Peirce gave: sign, interpretant and object: can be modelled as below:

The double ended arrows underline the fact that each term can only be understood in terms of the others.

This model also brings out a significant difference between the semiotic and the process schools: the semiotic model does not make any distinction between encoder and decoder. The interpretant is the mental concept of the user of the sign whether he/she be speaker or listener, writer or reader, painter or viewer. Decoding is as active and creative as encoding.

Ogden and Richards' model: Ogden and Richards (see Fiske, 1982), two British workers in this area, gave triangular model of meaning similar to that given by Peirce. The terms they used were referent, reference and symbol where referent corresponds to Peirce's object, reference to his interpretant and symbol to his sign.
According to Ogden and Richards, referent and reference are directly connected, so too are symbol and reference, but the connection between symbol and referent is indirect or imputed. This shift away from the equilateral relationship of Peirce's model brings Ogden and Richards closer to Saussure.

We can see the similarities between Saussure's signifier and signified and Peirce's sign and interpretant. Saussure, however, is less concerned than Peirce with the relationship of those two elements with Peirce's 'object' or external meaning. When Saussure does turn to this he calls it signification.


40. Faules and Alexander (1978) (look for the book name)


43. Thomas: Op cited.


46. Ibid. pp 201.

47. Carey, Op cited.