CHAPTER—II
MASS COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES : A STUDY IN INTERACTION
Mass communication is a discipline which is not properly understood by the academicians as well as by others. Its place in the universe of knowledge differs from one expert to another. Some call it a science, others call it social science and yet others consider it as an art. There is no single opinion in the universe of knowledge about the place of mass communication as a discipline. A layman thinks that radio, television, press, etc. are what is called mass communication. Whereas Wilbur Schramm and others find it in social science. They compare it with the information requirements of the public and the liability of the government towards them. It is then necessary to know more about this discipline.

WHAT IS MASS COMMUNICATION?: The word 'Mass' is synonymous to a large audience or gathering and even a large group of population. 'Communication' is an established link between two individuals. Therefore, when two individuals through some medium or even without any medium interact with each other, communication is said to be taking place. The quantity of communication depends on the size of the group. For two individuals, on telephone, or a wireless set is 'interpersonal communication'. The interaction of an individual with a group of people is 'group communication'. Communication between an individual and a large section of people's audience is 'mass communication'. Literally speaking,
Communication is a process of transmitting meaning between individuals. For human beings the process is both fundamental and vital. It is fundamental insofar as all human society primitive or modern is found on man's capacity to transmit his intentions, desires, feelings, knowledge and experience from person to person, says Charles R. Wright in his book on mass communication.²

One more definition of mass communication is found in the same book. It deals with the technical aspect of mass communication. It says, "Mass communication is directed towards a relatively large, heterogeneous and anonymous audience hence, messages addressed to specific individuals are not customarily regarded as mass communication."³

With the interpretation of the above two definitions a difference is made between communication and mass communication. A communication may be between a child and its mother or between a doctor and his patient, but it cannot be called mass communication. A classroom lecture by a teacher to his students does not fall in the category of mass communication since the students are 'specific individuals', according to Charles R. Wright. But an election speech by a leader to the voters is mass communication. Though it is also a public meeting but the message is not to individuals but to all the people who are the voters. Therefore, it amounts to mass communication. Mass communication
can never be scattered. It is always organised communication. Therefore, it needs organisation. For organisation of mass communication certain requirements have to be fulfilled. These essential requirements are also known as the channels of mass communication.

CHANNELS OF MASS COMMUNICATION:
The channels of communication are:
- Communicator: one who is responsible for the message or who wants to communicate the message to the public;
- Medium: the techniques through which the message will reach the public; and
- Message: the matter to be communicated, i.e., the purpose of communication;
- Receiver: the public or the large group of population which is requiring the message.

This channel of communication is always integrated. Any break in it will not be possible for mass communication. Therefore, all the above four essential requirements of mass communication are to be there at one place and united for mass communication.

The channel also covers feedback as an important part as shown in the sketch in the next page.
CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

MASS COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATOR

MESSAGE

TELEVISION
BOOKS
TELEVISION
NEWS PAPERS
OFTHERS

MEDIUM

RECEIVER

REATION

0 kg---—_

TELEVISION
BOOKS
~ 4 FILMS
NEWS PAPERS
'1 OTHERS

• v ^ V  N s
N ' s» , V XMESSAGE
m a
RADIO

COMMUNICATOR

MASS COMMUNICATION
Here A is the communicator, B is the message, C is the receiver and D is the reaction.

The channel of communication is so much integrated that without the help of any one of them, mass communication is just impossible. The elements depend on each other and in some cases they are qualifier of each other. The success and failure of communication depends on the effectiveness and coordination of these channels. There will be a total disaster if coordination breaks down. Each one of them is very essential and plays key role in the determination of communication. Let us see now these are influencing each other in mass communication.

Communicator: Communicator plays the prime role in mass communication. From the days of primitive media of communication, e.g., drum beating, smokes, seals, impression, cries, shankdhwani, fairs, etc., the persons who deal in these areas are called communicators. A drum beater at the top of his voice announces in the streets the message given by the king or the head of the village to the public. In this case a drum beater is a communicator for a layman even though the message has come from the king. With the emergence of electronic media, the role of the communicator has undergone changes. The communicator has now direct access to the electronic media to meet the public and deliver the message or information.

With the developments in the communications field and
particularly with the democratic feelings, the role of the communicator has become very important. The basic question arises why do the people communicate or what is the need for communication? Is communication essential? These questions have to be answered before going further.

Why Communication is Essential: In democratic societies, the right to information and the right to know have been the burning topics for discussion among the intellectuals. In some of the countries like India, this right has been granted by the constitutional provisions, whereas in some countries, the right to information has been left at the mercy of the government. But practically it has been observed that the government, may it be of any type, wants to inform the people about what is being done in the state. A popular government shares maximum information with its people, whereas a military backed government would not permit access to information. Therefore, in both the cases the government would communicate whatever it likes to communicate to the public.

Due to the growing role of communication in society and its effectiveness, it has become one of the essential functions of society. Since mass communication plays a constructive role in the overall development of society, its importance cannot be ignored by the planners. The planners need information for better planning and its success. Information is an essential objective of mass communication. Therefore, there is no doubt that in
today's society, mass communication is essential.

Functions of the Communicator : Keeping in view the requirements of the public and the information policy of the government, the communicator selects the message from a vast variety of messages. After selecting a particular message, the communicator gives shape to the message that would suit the public. This shaping of the message is also called preparation of the message. The preparation includes factual checking, corrections, language modifications, quantity and soundness of the message and also the expected acceptance of the message and the reaction of the public. The job of the communicator is very difficult in society with many languages and religions. The multilingual and multireligious setup of a country presents a number of bottlenecks for shaping the message before the communicator.

After giving shape to the message keeping in view all limitations, ethics and problems in mind, the communicator decides the medium of the communication. The decision of the medium is taken, keeping in view the timeliness and importance of the message as well as the audience. The communicator makes choice of the medium, of the electronic, print or the traditional.

Who is a Communicator ? The selection, modification and approval of the message do not necessarily make any one as a communicator. A communicator is generally an authorised person by
statutory provisions. In the private sector, the communicator may go on changing on the basis of the interest of the sectors, but in the government, the communicator is a highly responsible person. Generally for every government, there is a 'spokesman' in the office of the foreign ministry. Down in the row, each department has its own spokesman. These spokesmen are communicators for their respective sections and governments. In medical institutions, where there are hundreds of doctors and specialists in their fields, they are not necessarily the communicator for the medical institution. The Public Relations Officer, or the Superintendent of the institute is a communicator.

The communicator differs from medium to medium and from place to place. In a newspaper establishment, an editor may be the communicator whereas if the newspaper is of a political party its president will be the communicator and not the editor.

Thus, the first essential element is communicator, whose job is to select the message and prepare it for the usefulness and acceptability by the public.

Medium: The second most important element of mass communication is the choice of the medium. A good message even by the best communicator will not be successful if it is transmitted through the wrong media. Therefore, the choice of the medium of communication is very important. The selection of the medium
depends on the importance of the message and the type of the receiver. A message by the Prime Minister for the public, on the eve of important events, or at the time of war, will be more effective if broadcast on radio and television. It can also be through the print medium where the reach of the electronic media is not possible.

For adult education and social education, the use of television and documentary films will be very useful. It will have no effect through radio and newspapers. Thus, the medium can mar the message. The media of mass communication are so many and these can be classified broadly in the following categories:

Print Medium: It is for those who can see, write and read the message. It includes books, pamphlets, maps, diaries, calenders, house journals, circulars, newspapers, periodicals, advertisements and other occassional publications.

Electronic Medium: It can be watched and listened to. It includes radio, television, video, tape recorder, teleprinter, photography, film, etc.

Traditional Medium: It is in use from centuries and is still in use. It includes puppets, dramas, theatre performance, folklore, folk dance, folk music, folk tales, drum-beating, fire, smoke, cry, light and signals.

Conventional Medium: It is accepted as the identical mark of a particular section of people or the country. It includes
signs, flags, stamps, impressions, exhibitions, fairs, festivals, gatherings, public meetings, and rallies, etc.

For quick and effective communication, electronic medium is accepted as the best, since it reaches out to the public in no time. But this is limited to those who can see and listen. This has limited effect on the people not covered by the reach of the electronic media. For communication with the tribal areas, particularly such tribes which have not yet joined the national stream, the choice of medium is very difficult. For them, traditional media are applicable. Through fairs, exhibitions, puppet shows and through dramatic performances, these people can understand the message. The print medium is a strong medium, but useful only to those who can read and write. In the developing countries where the literacy rate is very low, this medium is not applicable. But this medium is still mostly used in the international communication.

Thus, the choice of the medium depends on the size of the audience and the depthness and soundness of the message. Only the right medium makes it a success.

**Message**: Message or information is the main objective of mass communication. The right message to the right person at the right time through the right medium is the guarantee of the success of the message. A slight delay in the message can cause severe damage to society. A message is the thought content, of the
intention of the communicator. In other words, it is the projection of the direction of the thinking of the communicator. Thus a message is that information which is to be communicated to the public. As already said, the communicator prepares the message. A good message is one which has clarity, soundness, depthness, application, quantity and acceptance as its essential features. The message should be very clear without any ambiguity. It should have a proper language which is easily understandable by the public. The message should be sound and should have depthness, i.e., full information should be given and no further questions should be left to be asked. In other words, the message should be complete. The message should be in the peoples' language. Every effort should be made to ensure that the message does not have its negative effect on the public.

In emergencies, disasters, and war time, the message should be such that it gives relief to the public. The details should be communicated to the public along with the message. A message is to take people into confidence. Therefore, the message should contain all possible answers relevant to the message. In war time, the message should also specify what measures have been taken by the government for the civilian defence and for essential commodities.

Receiver: The last element of the channels of communication is the receiver. Receiver is one for which this whole preparation is done. Ultimately the public remains the receiver in mass
communication. Receivers differ from medium to medium and from country to country. Sometimes it differ from others because of the type of the message. In the newspaper, the communicator is the editor and the readers of the newspaper are the receiver. Those who read the newspaper are the receiver of the message. For radio and television all the listeners and the viewers are the receivers. The ultimate object of the communication is that message should reach the receiver. The success of the communication depends on the acceptability of the message by the receiver. If the message is digested by the receiver, it shows that the message is accepted. Sharp reaction to the message shows the negative part of the message. That means the message has been neglected by the receiver.

'Ramayana', a television serial on Indian television, after running for more than twenty months, was stopped declaring that the story of the serial came to an end. But the public knew that it was incomplete. The public not only sharply reacted but through strikes, agitations, dharnas and meetings, persuaded the Doordarshan authorities to change its stand. Ramayana was later telecast as 'Uttar Ramayana', complete story. On the other hand, another famous serial 'Mahabharat' did not have such reaction from the public which shows that the public digested whatever was shown on the television and that the receiver can change the entire preparations of mass communication.
In mass communication all the preparations like communicator, receiver, message and mediums are made in order to facilitate the people to conceive their opinion about the performances of the government. The government wants to communicate the message but the contents of the message are not known to the public in advance. But these can be known once we know what the objectives of the communications are.

OBJECTIVES OF MASS COMMUNICATIONS: The basic objective of mass communication is to keep society informed about the activities and decisions of the government. The right to know is generally protected under the constitutional provisions in democratic countries. Therefore, it has become compulsory for the government to inform the public about the information generally useful. Secondly, each government comes to power with certain expectations and promises. Sometimes in order to control the nerves of society, the government from time to time is interested in disseminating the message. Moreover it is the public for which the government is functioning. It is obligatory on the part of the government to inform the public about every programme it is going to undertake.

It is not easy to set the objectives of mass communication in the prevailing situations. But mass communication as a discipline has certain objectives. These are (1) Information 2) Education and (3) Recreation.

These are the basic objectives of every type of government
for mass communication. These may change with the change of government in the country.

Information: As already discussed, the right to information is a basic right in democratic countries. Information is required by all everywhere, every time. Since information is an essential input for planning development programmes for the society, it is the duty of the planners to collect all information. This information is being generated by government agencies, and other media. Thus, through the existing medium, the government disseminates all type of information to the public except that which is classified as secret. The government, if it likes, can deny information to the public under the constitutional provisions, but there are certain areas like health, medicine, welfare activities, public services etc., where the government from its own side is interested in providing more and more information. Through news bulletins, publicity mediums, advertisements, and through notifications in gazette, a lot of information is disseminated by the government.

Education: The second main objective of mass communication is to educate the people through the available media. Education brings confidence among the people. The definition of democracy has some connotations like welfare state. Therefore, the welfare of the people through education is an essential responsibility of the government. The formal education is not possible for all. Mass
education or popular education through non-formal education techniques is being applied by most of the countries. Through mass communication these objectives are achieved. The Indian television and radio run such programmes which are related to the public education. The programmes on health like 'Jan Hai Jahan Hai' are for educational purpose. 'Krishi Darshan' is yet another programme of the Indian television which is meant to benefit and educate farmers. Even for students, UGC programmes are telecast everyday. Besides, social education, community health, child care, immunization, mother care, etc., are full of message for social education.

Recreation: The objective of mass communication is also to provide healthy recreation for the public. The traditional methods of recreation have become outdated or they have been discarded by the public. The choice of the new medium is for the modern means of mass communication. Through radio, television, films, exhibitions and festivals, a lot of recreation events are produced by the mass communication people. Film is a strong medium of mass communication. Therefore, most of the recreational programmes are film-based. Cartoon films and animation films help children in developing their mind through recreation. Mass communication is reaching the corners of the countries where only the traditional media of recreation are prevailing. Through recreational methods, the tribals are adopting new technologies.
CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

REFERENCE
CIRCULATION
PERIODICALS
SOCIAL EDUCATION
CHILDREN
BRAILLE
MOBILE
EXTENSION
REPROGRAPHY
DOCUMENTATION
OTHERS

LIBRARY
COLLECTION
READERS
REACTION
SERVICES
Mass communication is not the only way out for meeting the communication challenges. There are other agencies too. A study of all these factors will help in understanding the communication in society. One of such agencies is the Public Library. What is a public library? What are its objectives? How it fulfils its objectives? What are its techniques for achieving these objectives? Can it serve as one of the agencies of mass communication? These are some of the questions which are raised while comparing the public library with mass communication.

**PUBLIC LIBRARY**: The public library occupies a very respectable place in society. It is said that the culture of a country is seen not in the field and mountains of a country but in the libraries it has. It is true since a public library functions in diversified fields for the welfare of the people.

What is a Public Library?: Generally the public library is known by its services. The people know only that books are issued and returned in the libraries. It looks as if it is a storehouse of the useful and useless books. But the application of the public library in the social and cultural development of society can be understood by knowing and analysing its definitions. "Public library is a library by the public, for the public, and of the public". A public library, in the hands of private organizations cannot be termed a public library. The funds for the public library comes from the public that is why it is 'of' the public. It is open to all the people without any
consideration of caste and colour, sex or status. That is why it is 'for' the public.

The UNESCO manifesto for the public library defines it as, "A democratic institution for education, culture and information". The UNESCO while defining the public library also set its objectives. According to it, it is the democratic institution which meant that it has to serve all the people with equal intention. The public library is an organised activity. Though it can be scattered through mobile and extension libraries the concept of public library is always the organised one. In other words the public library is a system which has many sub-systems. Like mass communication, the public library can have many sub-systems but ultimately these are all parts of the system which is a public library.

Just like mass communication, the public library has the channels of communication. Here each section has become a sub-system. An analysis will help in understanding the channels of communication in the public library:

Channels of Communication in Public Library: The public library is an integrated and coordinated system of activities. It can be broken into different sub-systems as and when demand arises. The inseparable elements of the channels of communication in the public library are: (1) Library i.e., Communicator (2) Collection and the Potential of the Public Library i.e., Message (3) Service and Techniques i.e., Medium (4) Readers or Public i.e., Receiver.
The service channels in the public library are very much integrated and cannot be separated. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan has said that the public library is a team work where every element of public library has its own importance and effect.

LIBRARY, i.e., COMMUNICATOR: As already said, the public library is a team work and the librarian is the captain of the team. The librarian of a public library is responsible for planning and execution of all the functions. The librarian makes selection of the reading material (message). He does modifications in the collection through adding new books and discarding the old ones which are not in demand. He selects the materials (message) keeping in view the requirements of the readers (receiver). He shapes the collection (message) in order of suitability (acceptability) of the readers which is the public.

For effective communication, in the public library, the librarian selects the head of the sections (communicator) keeping in view the importance of the collection (message). The librarian of a public library is a qualified person with sound knowledge and academic background. The success and failure of the service medium depends on the qualities of the librarian (communicator) of the public library. His duties include the planning, budget, book acquisition, processing, management of the collection and the publications of the public library.
Collection and the Potential of the Public Library, i.e., Message

The main purpose of the public library is to make the public aware of the collection of the library and its usefulness to the public. For fulfilling these objectives, the public library develops the collection. While acquiring the reading materials, precautions are taken about the likes and dislikes of the readers (receiver). If the collection is good, the readers will accept it and will like to come to the library, again and again. If the collection meets the information requirements of the readers, the collection can be considered as good.

Services and the Techniques, i.e., Medium: The public library is such a place where anyone can come and avail of the facilities. The readers may be illiterate, blind, physically handicapped, old, patient, lawyer, judge, intellectuals and others alike. Their requirements varies greatly. Their way of accepting the service and using the collection will naturally differ. An illiterate visitor can see and listen to radio, television and cultural programmes. A lawyer or a judge may not have enough time to see the catalogue for selecting the book, whereas a retired person would devote more time in the library. Thus in order to serve all of them, the librarian has to adopt certain techniques and mediums for the library. The option before the librarian is among these:

Print Medium: These include information bulletin about the library, programme schedules, current awareness service,
monthly additions of the books, and book catalogue etc;

Electronic Medium: These include tape recorders for the blind, radio and television for children, video for general public and films for illiterate persons;

Traditional Medium: It includes exhibition, display, drama and music activities, painting competitions, debates, seminar, and discussions, etc; and

Conventional Medium: It includes collection of national flags, coins, stamps, archival services, etc.

Readers i.e., Receiver: The public is the reader of the public library just like the public in mass communication. Any one can become a member of the public library, and even without being a member, one can avail of the benefits of the public library. The activities of the public library should match the reading taste of the readers. In other words, the services should meet the information requirements of the public. In absence of the matching, the usefulness and the very basic concept of the public library can be questioned. In order to know the likes and dislikes of the people, the public library conducts surveys and interviews. The public is also directly involved in its management by involving them in books selection, organising debates and discussions, etc. Thus, a link is established between the library and the readers which is an essential feature of mass communication.
The public library is a social and democratic institution engaged in education, information and recreation. The objectives are self-explanatory.

Objectives of the Public Library: The UNESCO manifesto for public libraries has clearly indicated the objectives of the public libraries. But a more clear indication has been given by Robert D. Leigh. He sets the objectives of the public library "To serve the community as a general centre for reliable information and provide opportunity and encouragement for people of all ages to educate themselves continuously."

Information: The public library provides information services through its reference section which is kept updated with reference books. Ready reference service and selective dissemination of information are purely for the information purpose. Documentation activities in the public libraries are for the specific information requirements. The readers are served with personalised services by establishing rapport between the reader and his required material. A Reference Librarian or an Information Officer in the public library is responsible for such services. Besides reference section, a lot of information is disseminated through displays, exhibitions, publications, circulars and inter-personal communication with readers.

Education: Educational role of the public library starts with entrance of an unknown person in the library. He is
acquainted with the library, reading material and other resources of the library. The public library supports the educational requirements of the students by providing them textbooks. It is a boon for the students of open schools and open universities. It educates the people through lectures on the contemporary issues. It plays the direct role of educator by providing tutors and running special courses for the people. It arranges classes for adult education and helps other organizations for social education. It has been named as a 'university in the air.'

Recreation: So far as the recreation part of the public library is concerned, it is supposed to provide reading materials for leisure time. The public library also organises recreational activities. Annual competitions of dance, music, and paintings, etc. are arranged by the public library which also provides radio, television and puppet shows for children. A lot of recreation is also created by organising cultural activities and by inviting visitors from other countries for interaction with the readers of the library. Comics and animation cartoons provide enough recreation for children.

Conclusion: Mass communication and the public library both are for the welfare of the public. Their objectives are education, information and recreation. Their media of communication are relatively the same. The difference lies only in the limitation techniques. In mass communication the public is spread over a
vast geographical area whereas the public of the library is limited. The basic approach and the philosophy of communication in both the systems is the same. If brought together, these two social organizations can bring about tremendous changes in society.

References as serially cited in the text:


