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MASS COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM

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RUDIMENTS OF COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The synergy of the physical and mental abilities of man has helped him create new processes, technologies, and gadgets with astonishing features. The ability of humans to contemplate has led them to the prosperous new millennium. We are those lucky humans who have witnessed the dawn of new era. In these times, which are uncertain, fast, and full of new hopes, mass communication has arrived as a new saviour. It has given jobs to millions and created corporate empires the world over. This volume is a tribute to the mass media and technologies related thereto. The tools of mass communication are not dedicated to malapropism, news coverage or raunchy statements of the Press and TV connoisseurs. Rather, it is a new ether that has helped unify the humans living at any time on this planet. The elements of this united edifice are many; politicians, entertainment, fine arts, societal concerns, environment, education, and health could be some of these elements that can be counted with absolute finesse. However, the influence of mass communication tools goes beyond these elements. These tools have created a new ethos and materialistic philosophies that would shape that destiny of the humankind on this blue-green planet.

The days of soliloquy are gone. This is the era of interactions with a large number of people, perhaps millions and billions of them. True, materialism does creep in when we wish to communicate with a large audience at one point of time. However, as the organs of various mass communication systems, humans unite to become a single powerful entity. That is what all the religious scriptures state—all the humans and living beings are the miniscule parts (*Atman*) of the greatest immortal entity, the Almighty (*Paramatman*). Hence, by communicating with a large audience at one time, our readers would be following the tenets defined by the Supreme Soul! They would tend to unify the world to convert it into a small perceiving organic entity that is closer to its Creator!

The *Fons et origo* of the media revolution was advent of the print media. During the nineteenth century, the earliest newspapers and magazines were published in the West. Then, radio, cinema, TV, and Internet followed suit, in that order. Today, WiFi, DTH, WAP, plasma theatre, and e-books are the essential components of the media jargon. The rapid growth of the mass media has made the audience apostatical; they make their audiences forget what they believe in and make them dance to the tunes of a new cultural renaissance. They thrill and enthrall the audiences and take vital energy out of their bodies and minds. Our readers can request a school-going child to stop watching TV and judge his attitude towards the media from his blunt answer (he would not let you switch off the TV set). **The media have created a quagmire that no one wants to avoid.** The fascination for sitcoms, popular serials, movies, news, dance shows and Internet web sites is so pre-eminent that humans cannot avoid being the salves of these sweet demons even if they know about the lurking dangers associated with them. “A willful suicide” is the appropriate phrasal synonym for this fatal attraction.

We may abhor or eulogise the media, but they are going to stay for much longer time than we do. It would be rational to study them and master their techniques. As already stated, commercial angle is just one of the many facets of media applications. We humans have to grow in societal, moral, spiritual, and environmental terms too. Hence, we can use the media to develop the innate intellectual faculties of the masses. Education, health, polity, environment, career building, economy (national and global) science and technology, space research, and many more fields of human endeavour depend upon the viaduct of the media to meet their respective pinnacles of perfection. The media rejuvenate, fascinate, educate, inform, entertain, and disturb humans. Yet, they are indispensable. We cannot imagine life without them. At times, they need to be tamed and at some others, they must be set free so that they could protect our broad interests.

In this chapter, we are describing the basic data about communication and journalism. This chapter is the foundation of the subsequent chapters, especially those dedicated to the media and journalism.

We are commencing this volume with the *Spolia opima* of communication and journalism.

1.1 DEFINING COMMUNICATION

We can define communication as the process of transfer of information from the sender to the receiver with the information being understood by both the sender and receiver.

According to Dr McFarland, “*Communication is the process of meaningful interactions among human beings. It is a process by which, meanings are perceived and understandings are reached among human beings.*”

According to Brown, “*Communication is a process of transmitting ideas or thoughts from one person to another for the purpose of creating an understanding in the thinking of the person receiving communication.*”

According to Kelly, “*Communication is a field of knowledge dealing with the systematic application of symbols to acquire common information regarding an object or event.*”

According to Luther, “*It is the transmission of commonly meaningful information. It is a process that involves the exchange of behaviours.*”

According to A Kumar, “*Communication is the process of making a message understood by satisfying the need sets and ego sets of a receiver.*”

According to Katz and Kahn, “*Communication—the exchange of information and the transmission of meaning—is the very essence of a social system or an organisation*”

According to MT Myers and GE Myers, “*Communication refers to a special kind of patterning, which is expressed in a symbolic form. For communication to take place between or among people, two requirements must be met: (a) a symbolic system must be shared by the people involved (we need to speak the same language or jargon or dialects); and (b) the associations between the symbols and their referents must be shared.*”

According to Fortune, “*...it is the procedure whereby one mind affects another.*”

According to Fearing, “*It is a two-way process which cannot be adequately understood in terms of simple engineering or mechanical analogies. It is uniquely a human relationship from which, emerge all civilisations and culture without which, man as we know him, could not survive.*”

According to Anderson, “*Communication is a dynamic process in which, man consciously or unconsciously affects the cognition of another through materials or agencies used in symbolic ways.*”

In the view of Sanborn, “*Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages.*”

According to Fauconnier, “*Communicatyon is nevertheless an attempt at making common the basic condition for the origin, the existence, and the development of every social relationship.*”

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION

1.2.1 OBJECTIVES IN THE SOCIETAL CONTEXT

The following objectives are crucial:—

- (A) **Gives Commercial Information:** Communication informs the targeted audience about new products, services, and concepts that they can buy or use. These products, services, and concepts can be old or new for the targeted receivers. Thus, communication informs the new targeted audience about old products, services, and concepts. It also informs the targeted audience about new products, services, and concepts with equal finesse. **Example:** Ads of clearance sales.
- (B) **Educates:** It has to educate the members of the society through various media tools. **Example:** Books are used to study and enhance knowledge levels.
- (C) **Ensures Socio-political Enlightenemnt:** It has to keep the society abreast of the news, views, and concepts that are relevant to its immediate neighbourhood, other societies, the nation, and world. Hence, the onus of responsibility of making enlightened and elite individuals in a society lies mass communication. **Example:** News about a scamster is telecast on TV and our masses learn how he has duped the public.
- (D) **Disseminates General/Civic Information:** It has to provide vital daily-use data through TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, videotext, teletext etc that could be used by the members of the society to carry on the daily routines of their lives. **Example:** Teletext services provide information about the arrival and departure of trains.
- (E) **Entertains:** It has to entertain the members of a society through some mass media tools to make them relaxed and prepared for their next bouts of tough life. **Example:** A child plays Internet games in a Net parlour.
- (F) **Helps in Decision Making:** It has to inform the society about various phenomena or events so that its members could take situation-specific decisions for avoiding, using or facilitating such phenomena. **Example:** People cast their votes when the media urge them to do so; hence, they keep the democratic traditions of a country alive and morally upright.

- (G) **Persuades:** Communication motivates people take some actions in their own interest or in the interests of the place, society, nation, or the world.
- (H) **Reinforces:** It continuously impinges upon the minds of the audience and tells them about various products, services, concepts. These concepts need not be of a commercial nature. Certain communication exercises are executed to keep the audience informed and make them take certain actions. Such actions or behaviour patterns develop the audience and/or preserve the social, political, environmental, or intellectual norms in which these audiences thrive.
- (I) **Transforms:** Through its wide reach, communication transforms the society. It gives information to the elements of the society; such sets of information could be related to local polity, economy, health, sports, entertainment, global polity, the sciences, IT etc. Hence, it changes their thought processes and makes them modern human beings. In this context, its powers are incredible! Mass communication has the capability of transforming traditional non-participant societies into modern participant societies.
- (J) **Dissuades:** Communication acts, in the societal context, to dissuade the masses from doing such things, or buying such products or services as are harmful to their health or to the society in general.

1.2.2 OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION IN AN ORGANISATION

The basic objective of communication in an enterprise is to influence the actions of people towards well-defined goals or actions. It is essential at *two* levels, as follows:—

1.2.2.1 OBJECTIVES IN THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT OF AN ORGANISATION

Communication is essential for the internal operations of the organisation because it integrates various activities of that organisation. Communication helps the management of a firm manage most effectively. All the three levels of management—strategic, tactical and operational—depend upon finely designed (and transferred) messages that, in turn, deliver concrete results in the organisational context. Today's corporate world is *Tout a fait* dedicated to the art and science of effective communications. Every manager must learn how to communicate with the members of the external and internal environments of his firm, lest his firm should pay the price of his ineptness in its operational gamut. Read A Kumar, 2002, *Effective Business Communication*, Khanna Book Publishing Co Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, ISBN 818752299-2.

The goals at this level are primary and secondary. The primary goals are as follows:—

- (A) **Informs about Goals:** It establishes and informs the members of the organisation about its goals.
- (B) **Helps Make Plans:** It develops plans for the achievement of such goals.
- (C) **Effective Leadership Tool:** It is used to lead, direct, and motivate people. It helps the top brass create a climate in which, people may like to contribute with zeal and elan. Its aim is to ensure that status and authority of every employee is accepted.
- (D) **Powerful Control Tool:** It monitors the performances of the employees at all the levels. It also controls the working of employees by monitoring their performances and taking corrective actions.
- (F) **Ensures Job Satisfaction:** It develops an attitude among the employees that is necessary for motivation, co-operation, and job satisfaction.

- (G) **Prepares Employees for Changes:** It prepares workers for organisational changes, which are likely to be implemented in the organisation in the future.
- (H) **Ensures Feedback to Superiors:** It encourages suggestions from subordinates in work conditions.
- (I) **Improves Productivity:** It helps in reduction of costs, proper use of materials, time management, work study, time study, and identification of deviations from predefined norms. Thus, it ensures that the productivity of the firm improves.
- (I) **Improves Labour-management Relations:** It improves labour-management relations by keeping both in contact with each other.
- (J) **Creates a Fraternity:** It satisfies the needs of employees for recognition and a sense of belonging.

The secondary goals are as follows:—

- (A) **Checks Rumours and Grapevine:** Communication helps the managers of a firm stop or check gossips, rumours, and grapevine.
- (B) **Elicits Suggestions:** It elicits suggestions from subordinates for improvement of work conditions and environment within the firm.
- (C) **Satisfies Employees:** It satisfies the needs of employees of a sense of belonging to the firm. It also helps the management improve the Quality of Work Life (QWL). Hence, the employees feel that they are loved by the firm.
- (D) **Performs Auxiliary Functions:** It maintains intra-organisational relations through informal communication channels.
- (E) **Entertains:** It entertains employees, though on rare occasions, through informal get-togethers, parties, and festival celebrations.

1.2.2.2 OBJECTIVES IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT OF AN ORGANISATION

The objectives in the context of the external environment are as follows:—

- (A) **Promotes:** It advertises the products, services, and policies of the firm for the sake of knowledge of the customers of the firm.
- (B) **Informs about Changes:** It informs customers about changes in a product or product lines.
- (C) **Builds Image:** It builds a healthy image of the company in the media so that shareholders maintain their faith in the company and new investors are attracted to invest in it. It also creates a clean image of the company in the government and bureaucratic corridors so that financial and legal hassles are minimal for the company.
- (E) **Informs about the Social Responsibilities of Business:** It informs the society, concerned government institutions, and NGOs about the social work, charity work, and environmental issues handled by the company so that a clean and humanity-oriented image could be formed in the minds of masses and the officials of the government.
- (F) **Manipulates the Publics, the State Organs, and NGOs:** It uses propaganda, PR, and publicity for achieving the long-term and short-term goals of the firm. These goals can be achieved if it wins the publics, various ministries and/or departments of the government, and NGOs in its favour. It uses propaganda, PR, and publicity to do so; this is the latest trend in the realm of communication and seems irreversible at least for now.

1.3 COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS

1.3.1 FUNCTIONS IN THE ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Communication is one of the most basic functions of management. In fact, a manager is only communicating while he is getting work done from people. Therefore, it forms a basic framework for getting things done. It forms a bedrock foundation for management by objectives, long range strategic goal setting, strategic planning, Organisational Development (OD), organisational effectiveness, decision making, and formation of information links within and outside the firm. All the managers communicate the goals and *modus operandi* of actions (to achieve such goals) to their subordinates. They also indulge in communication of various types to control the activities of their juniors to achieve the desired results for the firm. The quality of information transferred would dictate whether the manager could get things done or not.

In the organisational context, the communication function is the mode by which, an organised activity is unified. If an organisation has to operate as an integrated unit, it is important for the top management to keep the lower-level supervisors and employees informed about the ultimate objectives of the organisation. The expectations from individuals for the realisation of those objectives should also be delineated in an explicit manner.

By exchanging information freely, the management takes employees into confidence, prepares them for changes, avoids misunderstanding and removes it if it develops. It also makes them knowledgeable about the policies of the enterprise and the problems being faced by it.

Let us study the following facets of communication in the organisations of the new century:—

- (A) **Assists in Decision Making:** Within an organisation, communication helps its executives take various types of decisions. The executives of the organisation also take decisions, through effective communications, to interact with the dynamic external environments.
- (B) **An Essential Tool for Direction:** When a manager manages his subordinates, his only tool is the transfer of certain sets of information; his effectiveness depends upon his ability to communicate such sets of information.
- (C) **Keeps the Employees Enlightened:** It fulfils desires of the workers for awareness of those variables that affect them.
- (D) **Informs the Employees Informed About Their Obligations:** It serves to make the employee aware of his obligations towards the organisation.
- (E) **Directs with Finesse:** Direction is one of the basic functions of management. Communication is used to give directions to people working in an organisation; such an organisation could be a government department, small trading house, corporate firm, social service group or an NGO. Direction cannot be done without an effective and finely designed communication system. An order can either be a direct command or an implied directive. In the present age, ego clashes among subordinates as well as those between superiors and their subordinates are increasing in terms of number and intensity of conflict. Hence, if the goals of an organisation or individual are to be achieved, superiors must order their junior without hurting their egos. Participative management is the key to success in the direction function. Communication helps the superior get work out of his junior without disturbing his ego set. MBO is another technique that helps superiors give orders and inspections in a way that is not deemed offensive by their juniors. Today's communication is soft, clear, direct, tactful. Giving orders to a junior has no longer the allusion of a domineering character of the boss. Rather, it represents his friendly attitude

toward his junior who, in turn, performs his duty due to his inner motivation, sans any rancour for his boss. The 'bosses' of yesterday have been replaced by the friendly, empathetic, and helpful 'seniors' of today, thanks to developments in the field of communication.

- (F) **Co-ordinates Employee's Actions:** Communication of messages helps senior managers relate the activities of workers so that their efforts compliment one another rather than oppose one another.
- (G) **Promotes Leadership Effectiveness:** Leaders are managers and executives. They would be outstanding only if they were in the possession of the abilities to communicate ideas and information sets clearly to their juniors.
- (H) **Builds Good Employer-Employee Relations:** Communication helps in developing healthy employee-employer relations. It may cement an organisation or disrupt it. It is a mechanism through which, the organisation delivers outputs. Although communication is not visible, its impact and spirit are discursively visible when the organisation acquires a reputation on account of good communication abilities of its members. The effectiveness of an organisation depends upon the effectiveness of its communication patterns.
- (I) **Facilitates the Basic Management Process:** Good communication is the foundation of sound management practices. The management succeeds in establishing links between different management functions—planning, organising, staffing, directing, and controlling—through a neatly defined communication system.
- (J) **Interacts with the Members of the External Environment:** The communication system should also be defined while dealing with the members of the external environment. Most of the organisations, especially those working under the aegis of the State, tend to ignore this vital rudiment.
- (K) **Gives Feedback of the Lower Cadres:** Communication encourages making suggestions and implementing them whenever it is feasible to do so. Grievances and complaints are heard and necessary actions are taken to eliminate the same.
- (L) **Acts as a Basis for MBO:** Communication helps in setting of departmental goals, productivity norms and individual goals in an organisation. Without effective communication in a department, the goals of juniors cannot be set by a superior (because the junior himself sets such goals in the MBO process).
- (M) **Evaluates Performances for Control:** Within an organisation, communication helps the senior manager evaluate the performances of his juniors. For this purpose, he uses reports—verbal and written—submitted by his juniors. Hence, it is a tool for appraising the contribution of an individual to an organisation. Outside an organisation, evaluation is done through mass media research activities. Gallup polls, TRPs (of television serials), studies to calculate reach of various media, and print media circulation are some of the activities that determine how successful a particular communication exercise has been. Naturally, the targeted audiences are required to give their responses and preferences when they are contacted by media researchers. These procedures require the tenets of communication. Individual and group interviews are also communication tools. These are carried out to evaluate the eligibility of candidates for various jobs. Effective communication ensures that there are no delays, bottlenecks, and misunderstandings in

relation to work reports, sales reports, and suggestions submitted by the employees to their bosses. Thus, it acts as a tool for controlling the performances of the employees of a firm.

- (N) **Builds a Corporate Image:** David Ogilvy's Brand Image Theory has miraculously transformed the corporate scenario. Today, people do not buy products and services; they buy brands and images associated with them. New brands are created and carefully established in the markets. These brands help their promoters effect sales. Thus, these firms grow due to their reputed brands. Communication helps the firm build its brand. TV and the print media have taken a lead in this multi-trillion Dollar race. The advertisements for building brand image need not sell the products/services related to those brands. Rather, the managers of the firm wait until such communication exercises have built brand images in the targeted market niches. They are not in a hurry to generate sales volumes after just one ad campaign. Once, they establish brand image, they reap rich harvests in terms of sales revenues (and profit). Further, brand image of the firm is also important. Special methodologies are used to inform the targeted customers about the presence, "fine quality" and 'credibility' of the brand names previously created by the campaigns of the past. That is why, the advertising expenditures (Ad Spend) of reputed firms and MNCs are spiraling. Image building is a continuous function and communication strategies are different for different types of products and services in this context.
- (O) **Makes and Implements the Policies of the Top Brass:** Good communication in upward, lateral and downward directions is essential at all the authority levels for formulating, interpreting, and implementing the policies of the top brass of the firm.

1.3.2 FUNCTIONS IN THE INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT

The following functions are vital:—

- (A) **Gives Knowledge:** It provides knowledge to individuals so that they could be take actions in various spheres of their lives. Example: A candidate reads a book to get through the UGC examination and become a lecturer.
- (B) **Writes Commercial Success Stories:** It gives him information that can be used by him to grow in materialistic terms. Example: A businessman reads The Financial Times and uses the data given in it to earn millions on the bourses.
- (C) **Helps in Socialisation:** It gives data and information to the individual so that he could lead a fuller life in his family, peer group, firm, and society. Example: Young people use Net cafes for making e-pals.
- (D) **Enforces Behavioural Patterns:** It encourages the individual to perform the predefined tasks or exhibit certain behaviour patterns. Example: A woman buys pasteurised milk because she learns from a TV ad that this milk is good for the health of her children.
- (E) **Creates Legends:** It makes the individual a go-getter in career terms. **Example:** Abraham Lincoln was successful in life, though the initial years of his life were fraught with fiascoes and uncertainties. That was because he became a great communicator (orator) and later, the President of the USA.

1.3.3 FUNCTIONS IN THE CONTEXT SOCIETY AND MASS

Many authors have criticised the advent of communication boom and highlighted its ill effects on the masses and society. However, we consider communication as the amorous amigo of man

without which, he cannot cross the turbulent ocean of life. It has evolved from a primitive configuration (in which, traditional media had reigned supreme) into an avant-garde superstructure (in the age of IT and super-electronics). This force is affecting, or perhaps changing, all the spheres of human endeavour. Let us study its functions in the societal context. These are as follows:—

- (A) **Provides Information:** Communication informs the individuals or groups about some subject or topic that directly affects their operations or lives. It informs the masses about the products, services, thoughts, concepts, ideologies, and socially relevant issues. Messages are transmitted to targeted individuals or groups by an individual, a group or an organisation. The motive behind this exercise need not be earning money at all times.
- (B) **Educates:** Communication educates people and makes them erudite on various fronts. **Examples:** The Vidya Vahini Scheme of the Government of India is helping millions get education. In many organisations, on-the-job training is imparted through state-of-the-art techniques. In schools, colleges, universities, and other centres of learning, modern electronic communication modes are assisting students. These new gadgets help students get the advanced sets of knowledge through systematic *modus operandi*. The education boom is at its peak and the credit for its present status goes to communication.
- (C) **Motivates:** Communication motivates the targeted audience through various messages. It can:
 - (c1) persuade the targeted subjects to buy products and/or services;
 - (c2) generate enthusiasm in the minds of the targeted subjects to develop or modify views on particular issues; and
 - (c3) dissuade them from eschewing some habits, products or services that are harmful to them or to the society in general.
- (D) **Helps in Societal Transformation:** Communication changes the opinions of the targeted audiences regarding various social issues, dogmas, and taboos. It endeavours to break the shackles, which have stunted our growth as a society or nation. It addresses many vital issues through the print media, broadcast media (radio and TV), audiovisual media (cinema, slides with VO), visual media (hoardings, neon signs, banners, posters etc), and the Information Superhighway (Internet). Further, communication also helps the targeted audiences get vital data or sets of information related to global polity, music, arts and crafts, changing tastes and preferences, and terrorism. The messages transacted through various media vehicles develop our society and keep its components apprised of the latest trends in societal evolutions. This is primarily done through mediate communication.
- (E) **Performs Incidental Neutral Functions:** Communication also discharges several incidental and neutral functions. Many messages may not be connected with the achievement of the goals of an organisation. Communication sometimes contributes to these goals in an indirect manner. It also indirectly contributes to the satisfaction of individual needs, which are compatible with the goals of the organisation. **Examples:** Social contacts within the form and outside are the examples of these vital functions.
- (F) **Builds an Image:** We have explained this concept. Individuals and non-business organisations can also indulge in mass communication exercises to build image in the minds of the masses.

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