

# Mass Media and Communication

## Chapter at Glance

- A wide variety of forms, including television, newspapers, films, magazines, radio, advertisements, video games and CDs are referred to as 'mass' media because they reach mass audiences.
- It is obvious that there has been a phenomenal expansion of mass communication of all kinds in recent years.
- There are many aspects to this growth which is of great interest to us -
  - i. While we recognise the specificity of the current communication revolution, it is important to go back a little and sketch out the growth of modern mass media in the world and in India.
    - This helps us realise that like any other social institution the structure and content of mass media is shaped by changes in the economic, political and socio-cultural contexts.
    - For instance, we see how central the state and its vision of development influenced the media in the first decades after independence. And how in the post 1990 period of globalisation the market has a key role to play.
  - ii. This helps us better appreciate how the relationship between mass media and communication with society is dialectical. Both influence each other.
    - The nature and role of mass media is influenced by the society in which it is located. At the same time the far reaching influence of mass media on society cannot be over-emphasised.
  - iii. Mass communication is different from other means of communication as it requires a formal

structural organisation to meet large-scale capital, production and management demands.

- iv. There are sharp differences between how easily different sections of people can use mass media.

## The Beginnings Of Modern Mass Media

- The first modern mass media institution began with the development of the printing press.
- The first attempts at printing books using modern technologies began in Europe.
- This technique was first developed by Johann Gutenberg in 1440. Initial attempts at printing were restricted to religious books.
- With the Industrial Revolution, the print industry also grew.
- The first products of the press were restricted to an audience of literate elites.
- It was only in the mid 19th century, with further development in technologies, transportation and literacy that newspapers began to reach out to a mass audience.
- It made people feel connected and develop a sense of belonging or 'we feeling'.
- Scholar Benedict Anderson has thus argued that this helped the growth of nationalism, the feeling that people who did not even know of each other's existence feel like members of a family.
- Anderson thus suggested that we could think of the nation as an 'imagined community'

## Nationalism and Press in India

- The growth of Indian nationalism was closely linked to its struggle against colonialism. It emerged in the wake of the institutional changes brought about by British rule in India.
- Anti-colonial public opinion was nurtured and channelised by the nationalist press, which was

vocal in its opposition to the oppressive measures of the colonial state.

- This led the colonial government to clamp down on the nationalist press and impose censorship, for instance during the Ilbert Bill agitation in 1883.
- Association with the national movement led some of the nationalist newspapers like Kesari (Marathi), Mathrubhumi (Malayalam), Amrita Bazar Patrika (English) to suffer the displeasure of the colonial state.
- But that did not prevent them from advocating the nationalist cause and demand an end to colonial rule.
- Under British rule newspapers and magazines, films and radio comprised the range of mass media.
- Radio was wholly owned by the state. National views could not be, therefore, expressed. Newspapers and films though autonomous from the state were strictly monitored by the Raj.
- Newspapers and magazines either in English or vernacular were not very widely circulated as the literate public was limited.
- The print media carried a range of opinion, which expressed their ideas of a 'free India'. These variations were carried over to independent India.

### **Mass Media In Independent India**

- In independent India, the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, called upon the media to function as the watchdog of democracy.
- The media was expected to spread the spirit of self-reliance and national development among the people.
- The media was seen as a means to inform the people of the various developmental efforts.
- The media was also encouraged to fight against oppressive social practices like untouchability, child marriages, and ostracism of widows, as well as beliefs of witchcraft and faith healing.
- A rational, scientific ethos was to be promoted for the building of a modern industrial society.
- The Films Division of the government produced newsreels and documentaries.
- These were shown before the screening of films in every movie theatre, documenting the development process as directed by the state

### **Radio**

- Radio broadcasting which commenced in India through amateur 'ham' broadcasting clubs in Kolkata and Chennai in the 1920s matured into a public broadcasting system in the 1940s during

the World War II when it became a major instrument of propaganda for Allied forces in South-east Asia.

- At the time of independence there were only 6 radio stations located in the major cities catering primarily to an urban audience. By 1950 there were 5,46,200 radio licences all over India.
- Since the media was seen as an active partner in the development of the newly free nation, the AIR's programmes consisted mainly of news, current affairs, discussions on development.
- Apart from All India Radio (AIR) broadcasts news there was Vividh Bharati, a channel for entertainment that was primarily broadcasting Hindi film songs on listeners' request.
- In 1957 AIR acquired the hugely popular channel Vividh Bharati, which soon began to carry sponsored programmes and advertisements and grew to become a money-spinning channel for AIR.
- When India gained independence in 1947, All India Radio had an infrastructure of six radio stations, located in metropolitan cities.
- After independence the government gave priority to the expansion of the radio broadcasting infrastructure, especially in state capitals and in border areas.
- Over the years, AIR has developed a formidable infrastructure for radio broadcasting in India. It operates a three-tiered - national, regional, and local - service to cater to India's geographic, linguistic and cultural diversity.
- The major constraint for the popularisation of radio initially was the cost of the radio set.
- The transistor revolution in the 1960s made the radio more accessible by making it mobile as battery operated sets and reducing the unit price substantially.
- In 2000, around 110 million households (two-thirds of all Indian households) were listening to radio broadcasts in 24 languages and 146 dialects.
- More than a third of them were rural households.
- As of today, the AIR has grown to 480 stations and 681 transmitters covering 99% of the population spread over 92% area of the country.

### **Television**

- Television programming was introduced experimentally in India to promote rural development as early as 1959.
- Later, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) broadcasted directly to community viewers in the rural areas of six states between August 1975 and July 1976.

- Meanwhile, television stations were set up under Doordarshan in four cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Srinagar and Amritsar) by 1975.
- Three more stations in Kolkata, Chennai and Jalandhar were added within a year.
- Every broadcasting centre had its own mix of programmes, comprising news, children's and women's programmes, farmers' programmes, as well as, entertainment programmes.
- The advent of colour broadcasting during the 1982 Asian Games in Delhi and the rapid expansion of the national network led to rapid commercialisation of television broadcasting.
- During 1984-85 the number of television transmitters increased all over India, covering a large proportion of the population.
- It was also the time when indigenous soap operas, like Hum Log (1984-85) and Buniyaad (1986- 87) were aired.
- They were hugely popular and attracted substantial advertising revenue for Doordarshan as did the broadcasting of the epics-Ramayana (1987-88) and Mahabharata (1988-90).
- Today, the Annual Report released by TRAI for the year 2015-16 clearly stated that India has the world's second largest TV market after China.

### **Print Media**

- The beginnings of the print media and its role in both the spread of the social reform movement and the nationalist movement have been noted.
- After Independence, the print media continued to share the general approach of being a partner in the task of nation building by taking up developmental issues, as well as, giving voice to the widest section of people.
- The gravest challenge that the media faced was with the declaration of Emergency in 1975 and censorship of the media. Fortunately, the period ended and democracy was restored in 1977. India with its many problems can be justifiably proud of a free media.

### **Globalisation And The Media**

- The media have always had international dimensions - such as the gathering of new stories and the distribution of primarily western films overseas.
- The media industry was also differentiated into distinct sectors - for the most part, cinema, print media, radio and television broadcasting all operated independently of one another.

**The changes that globalisation has brought about on the print media (primarily newspapers and magazines), the electronic media (primarily television), and on the radio.**

### **Print Media**

- In India, we have seen the circulation of newspapers grow.
- New technologies have helped boost the production and circulation of newspapers. A large number of glossy magazines have also made their entry to the market.
- As is evident, the reasons for this amazing growth in Indian language newspapers are many.
  - i. First, there is a rise in the number of literate people who are migrating to cities.
  - ii. Second, the needs of the readers in the small towns and villages are different from that of the cities and the Indian language newspapers cater to those needs.
- Dominant Indian language newspapers such as Malayala Manorama and the Eenadu launched the concept of local news in a significant manner by introducing district and whenever necessary, block editions.
- Dina Thanthi, another leading Tamil newspaper, has always used simplified and colloquial language.
- Marketing strategies have also marked the Dainik Bhaskar group's growth as they carry out consumer contact programmes, door-to-door surveys, and research.
- While English newspapers, often called 'national dailies', circulate across regions, vernacular newspapers have vastly increased their circulation in the states and the rural hinterland.
- In order to compete with the electronic media, newspapers, especially English language newspapers have on the one hand reduced prices and on the other hand brought out editions from multiple centres.

### **Television**

- While Doordarshan was expanding rapidly in the 1980s, the cable television industry was mushrooming in major Indian cities.
- The VCR greatly multiplied entertainment options for Indian audiences, providing alternatives to Doordarshan's single channel programming.
- The coming in of transnational television companies like Star TV, MTV, Channel [V], Sony and others, worried some people on the likely impact on Indian youth and on the Indian cultural identity.

- The early strategy of Sony International was to broadcast 10 Hindi films a week, gradually decreasing the number as the station produced its own Hindi language content.
- The majority of the foreign networks have now introduced either a segment of Hindi language programming (MTV India), or an entire new Hindi language channel (STAR Plus).
- STAR Sports and ESPN have dual commentary or an audio sound track in Hindi. The larger players have launched specific regional channels in languages such as Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi and Gujarati.
- Most television channels are on throughout the day, 24X7.
- Television has fostered public debate and is expanding its reach every passing year.

### Radio

- In 2000, AIR's programmes could be heard in two-third of all Indian households in 24 languages and 146 dialects, over some 120 million radio sets.
- The advent of privately owned FM radio stations in 2002 provided a boost to entertainment programmes

over radio. In order to attract audiences these privately run radio stations sought to provide entertainment to its listeners.

- As privately run FM channels are not permitted to broadcast any political news bulletins, many of these channel specialise in 'particular kinds' of popular music to retain their audiences.
- Most of the FM channels which are popular among young urban professionals and students, often belong to media conglomerates. Like 'Radio Mirchi' belongs to the Times of India group, Red FM is owned by Living Media and Radio City by the Star Network.
- But independent radio stations engaged in public broadcastings like National Public Radio (USA) or BBC (UK) are missing from our broadcasting landscape.
- Further privatisation of radio stations and the emergence of community owned radio stations would lead to the growth of radio stations.
- The demand for local news is growing. The number of homes listening to FM in India has also reinforced the world wide trend of networks getting replaced by local radio

## Exercise

- Which of the following are forms of mass media?
  - CDs
  - Advertisements
  - Video games
  - I only
  - II and III
  - I and II
  - All of the above
- Choose the correct statements regarding mass media:
  - Mass media is shaped by changes in the economic, political and socio-cultural contexts.
  - The nature and role of mass media is influenced by the society in which it is located.
  - I only
  - II only
  - Both I and II
  - Neither I nor II
- The first attempts at printing books using modern technologies started in -
  - United States of America
  - Europe
  - Germany
  - France
- Printing press was first discovered by \_\_\_\_\_ and initially it was restricted to print \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Johann Gutenberg, religious books
  - Johann Gutenberg, Newspapers
  - Benedict Anderson, Political news
  - None of the above
- Which of the following statements are correct regarding printing press?
  - Printing press grew with the growth of Industrial Revolution.
  - The first products of the press were restricted to an audience of literate elites.
  - In the mid-19th century, with further development in technologies, transportation and literacy, newspapers reached out to a mass audience.
  - I and II
  - II and III
  - I and III
  - All of the above
- 'Imagined community' was suggested by Benedict Anderson in the context of -
  - Nationality
  - Nation
  - People
  - Castes

7. Ilbert Bill Agitation had been organized in India in the following year -  
 (a) 1773 (b) 1793  
 (c) 1883 (d) 1905
8. Mathrubhumi was a nationalist newspaper which used to be published in the following language:  
 (a) English (b) Hindi  
 (c) Marathi (d) Malayalam
9. Sambad Kaumudi and Mirat-ul-Akhbar was started by which of the following personality?  
 (a) Bankimchandra Chatterjee  
 (b) Raja Rammohun Roy  
 (c) Ishwarchand Vidyasagar  
 (d) M G Ranade
10. Bombay Samachar was started by ..... in the language .....  
 (a) Fardoonji Murzban, Gujarati  
 (b) Dadabhai Naoroji, Marathi  
 (c) Raja Rammohun Roy, English  
 (d) B G Tilak, Marathi
11. Which of the following is true regarding mass media in independent India?  
 I. It meant to inform the people of the various developmental efforts.  
 II. It encouraged fight against oppressive social practices like untouchability, child marriage, etc.  
 III. A rational, scientific ethos was to be promoted for the building of a modern industrial society.  
 (a) II and III (b) III only  
 (c) I and II (d) All of the above
12. A major countryside campaign on hybrid crops on a sustained day-to-day basis for over 10 years from 1967 was undertaken by the following?  
 (a) Vividh Bharti (b) All India Radio  
 (c) Doordarshan (d) Newspaper
13. The three tier operation of All India Radio was catered to the following -  
 I. Geographic diversity  
 II. Linguistic diversity  
 III. Cultural diversity  
 (a) I and II (b) II and III  
 (c) I and III (d) All of the above
14. SITE was used to reach to the rural area in the field of -  
 (a) Television (b) Radio  
 (c) Newspaper (d) Mobile
15. What position India holds in the TV market as per the Annual Report released by TRAI in 2015-16?  
 (a) First (b) Second  
 (c) Third (d) Fourth
16. A large number of glossy magazines have also made their entry to the market. This change took place due to  
 (a) Privatization of media  
 (b) Competitiveness in the market  
 (c) Globalization in the media  
 (d) None of the above
17. The Eenadu story also exemplifies the success of the Indian language press. Who was the founder of Eenadu?  
 (a) Ramoji Rao (b) Baji Rao  
 (c) B G Tilak (d) P Sriramalu
18. Malayala Manorama and Dina Thanthi are examples of -  
 (a) National Newspapers  
 (b) Regional news channels  
 (c) Local language newspapers  
 (d) Regional radio stations
19. National Public Radio belongs to which of the following country?  
 (a) United Kingdom  
 (b) United States of America  
 (c) China  
 (d) West Asia
20. **Assertion (A):** Further privatisation of radio stations and the emergence of community owned radio stations would lead to the growth of radio stations.  
**Reason (R):** The potential for using FM channels is enormous and number of homes listening to FM is increasing.  
 (a) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A  
 (b) Both A and R are true and R is not the correct explanation of A  
 (c) A is true and R is false  
 (d) A is false and R is true

### Answer Keys

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|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (d)  | 2. (c)  | 3. (b)  | 4. (a)  | 5. (d)  | 6. (b)  | 7. (c)  | 8. (d)  | 9. (b)  | 10. (a) |
| 11. (d) | 12. (b) | 13. (d) | 14. (a) | 15. (b) | 16. (c) | 17. (a) | 18. (c) | 19. (b) | 20. (b) |