

Block

**4****MEDIA AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES-II**

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## EXPERTS COMMITTEE

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Prof. B.P.Sanjay Former VC, CUTN; PVC, Univ. of Hyderabad, Hyderabad	Prof. J.S. Yadav Former Director, IIMC New Delhi	Prof. B.K. Kuthiala Former VC, MLCRPV Bhopal
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**PROGRAMME COORDINATORS: DR. KIRON BANSAL, MA (JMC)  
DR. SHIKHA RAI (PGJMC)**

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**COURSE COORDINATOR: DR. KIRON BANSAL**

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## BLOCK PREPARATION TEAM

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Unit 14	Prof. Sunetra Sen Narayan IIMC, New Delhi	<b>Block Editor</b> Dr. Kiron Bansal, Associate Professor SOJNMS, New Delhi
Unit 15	Prof. Anubhuti Yadav IIMC, New Delhi	
Unit 16 & 17	Dr. Deeksha Chamola ICSSR Post Doctoral Research Fellow Affiliating SNDT Women's University, Mumbai	<b>Content Editor:</b> Dr. Archana Kumar, Associate Professor, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi, New Delhi

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## PRODUCTION TEAM

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Mr. K.N. Mohanan Asst. Registrar (Publication) MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi	Mr. Sumati Nair Section Officer (Publication) MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi
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## **BLOCK INTRODUCTION: MEDIA AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES-2**

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This last Block of Course MJM-024 Media and Society introduces you to the larger context and issues relating to Media and Society. Rapid technological advances are bringing about profound changes in all aspects of communication, requiring a deeper understanding of their current nature and impact.

**Unit 14: International and Intercultural Communication** introduces you to the growing relevance of the field of International and Intercultural communications. It explores salient issues in this area to explain the linkages between international relations and international communications. With the help of select case studies, it highlights the connections between foreign policy, communications flows and public opinion.

**Unit 15: Technological Revolution** explores the technological revolutions that have taken place in the field of communication which have resulted in the emergence of new mediums of communication. It traces the journey from Printing to Digital along with corresponding technological advancements. The evolution of each medium and the changes in communications systems and their impact on society, have been deliberated upon.

**Unit 16: Globalisation and Media** takes an overview of globalisation and how it was initiated. It examines how the emergence of global media organisations has impacted the flow of communications. It discusses the effects of globalisation on media and the emergence of global media structure as well as some recent trends having bearing on the future narrative of globalisation.

**Unit 17: Alternative Media** explains how the concept of alternative media differs from mainstream media. It examines different forms of alternative media and their relevance in the present context. It also discusses new media and social media as alternative discourse platforms and issues of their content credibility. It analyses the future of alternative media in view of technological advancements which can change the alternative media discourse.

While writing the units, efforts has been made to provide multifaceted holistic insights of issues to enable you to better understand the linkages between theory and its applications to global events.



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# UNIT 14 INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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## 14.0 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous units you have been exposed to the concept, types and various forms of communication and that communication is integral to our lives. International and intercultural communications are sub-sets of the larger area of communications in general. International communication is linked to the notion of a nation state. While studies of International communication initially concentrated on government–centric communication flows, later day studies increasingly examine the role of the communication activities of international non-governmental organisations, corporations, and trans-national media groups.

These processes have occurred due to changes in communication technologies, as well as liberalisation and privatisation in the media and telecom sectors. The field has got more attention of late because of the globalisation of communications which has raised issues relating to global and local media and the response of the state to these changes. Increased migrations and mobility for both business and pleasure over the last few decades have led to increased cross- cultural contacts.

Since this area is getting more attention of late, it is important to have a clear understanding of the major issues in this field. What is international communication? Why is it important? What are the major areas of study within

this field? What is intercultural communication? These are some of the questions that we will be grappling with here. This will help up in understanding the processes involved in international communication and also in identifying the elements that make international communication effective.

Different issues have been important at different time periods. For example, in the period of the Second World War it was propaganda. In the decades of the 1950s and 1960s propaganda continued to be on the international agenda, but development also emerged as an important issue. In the 1970s and 1980, development and propaganda continued to be important because of the Cold War and decolonisation witnessed in many countries. However, technological issues and economic issues relating to the neo-liberal agenda, i.e. privatisation, liberalisation and deregulation also gained importance in the field of international communications in the 1980s. 1990s onwards, the collapse of the Soviet Union implied new issues gained ascendance in international communications.

This unit is designed to introduce to you the fundamentals of International and Intercultural communications. Salient issues in this area will also be identified. The study of various aspects of international communications will help you to understand the linkages between international relations and international communications. It will also highlight the connections between foreign policy, communications flows and public opinion.

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## 14.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the importance of international communication and intercultural communication;
- discuss propaganda techniques with respect to specific techniques and cases; and
- describe development as an issue in International communications.

### Activity – 1

Before you start reading this unit, try to recall the communications related activities you have undertaken in the past week. This may include reading, listening and watching news in the newspaper, radio, television or online. This may also include sending or receiving e-mails or using social media to receive or share information. Reflect on these and try to determine which of these (if any) different communications involved International communications.

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## 14.2 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION & INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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The terms international and intercultural communications relate to particular forms of communication. Some of the more common definitions of communication include conveying meaning or sharing experiences. When we add international or intercultural as a prefix to communication, we narrow down the area to communication, which flows across borders or across cultures. Thus

we may define **International communication** as communication that takes place across international borders. In other words it is inextricably linked to the notion of the nation state. This sub-discipline came of age in the period following the Second World War. It flowered during the Cold War, and continues to be of interest today, although the focus may have shifted towards globalisation in the latter decades.

International communication is concerned with how nations communicate with each other. This could be in the form of diplomacy, propaganda, activities of transnational media corporations, and so on. The political scenario after the Second World War where bi-polarity emerged with the major power blocs being the US and the USSR coloured the perspective of international communications. A lot of the studies concentrated on propaganda during the 50s, 60s and 70s.

However, **Intercultural communication**, on the other hand, can be defined as communication flows or exchanges of information across cultural boundaries. It is sometimes also referred to as cross-cultural communication. Intercultural communication is derived from fields in the social sciences such as anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, communication and others. Its basic purpose is to explore and explain how different cultures communicate with each other. In order to get a perspective on intercultural communication, one must first understand the concept of culture itself.

Culture in simple terms can be understood to be the way of life of the people. As the eminent anthropologist Clifford Geertz tried to theorise about culture in his 'thick description' where a study of human behaviour would not only explain the behaviour, but also the context in a manner that is meaningful. Geertz's concept of culture is a semiotic one, where man is enmeshed in webs of significance created by him. Culture is that web. Thus the study of culture is an interpretive one, in search of meaning.

According to Hall there is no aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture. How people express themselves and their emotions, the way they think, how they move, what they have conflict about, how they solve problems, how their communities are structured, how economic and government systems function are a function of culture. It is influenced by the whole gamut of communications, including language, non-verbal communication, customs, perceived values, as well as the concepts of time and space.

People from different cultures encode and decode messages differently, depending on their value system. Therefore context and meaning are important. Changes in communication technology as well as transportation have increased contact between nations and cultures, hence the importance of this field is growing.

### **14.2.1 Salient Issues in International Communication**

You have read some basic definitions of international and intercultural communication. Since there are very few individuals and communities that exist today without external influences, it is worth spending some time on the processes of international and intercultural communication and also to look at it in a historical context.

Based on communication scholar Hamid Mowlana's work (1997), we can list four major approaches to international communications: idealistic-humanistic, prosleytisation, economic and political.

When looking at the field historically, it is also possible to see that International communication during the period 1800-1950 was dominated by Britain, perhaps as a result of the importance of the English empire both politically and economically. After the Second World War, power shifted away from England and a bi-polar world order emerged, with the US and USSR being superpowers. Many International communications studies were carried out exploring the growing influence of America in other parts of the world.

In subsequent decades, different issues have dominated the field of international communications at different points in time. During World War I, World War II and subsequent decades of the Cold War, propaganda was a major issue in international communications. In the 1950s, 60s and 70s, development rose in importance as an issue. During the 1970s and 1980s, technological issues and issues pertaining to post-colonial imbalances in communications surfaced. In the 1980s, economic issues such as privatisation, liberalisation came to the forefront. From 1990 onwards, the post cold war period saw a restructuring of international relations with globalisation emerging as an important issue.

### 14.2.2 Globalisation and Intercultural Communication

Globalisation that started as a mechanism for economic progress has led to rapid socio-economic, political and technological changes and the transformation of the world into a unified entity. A multifaceted phenomenon, it has led to the creation of social networks and the intensification and proliferation of social exchanges and activities that transcend cultural and geographical boundaries. Bringing societies and cultures closer, globalisation has led to blurring of boundaries, enabling a flow of information that is not restricted in time and space, similar to McLuhans notions of a "global village".

All of these developments have exacerbated the significance and efficacy of cross-cultural communication. Understanding how cultural differences influence our ability to communicate with others can help individuals, corporations and other organisations to manage their cross-cultural behaviour for enhancing their productivity, effective decision making, managing conflicts and satisfying stakeholder needs.

#### Activity-2

Read and analyse the news relating to international issues in a newspaper or television channel of your choice, for a week. See whether they are related to economics, development, political, socio-cultural, technological issues. You may also look into the qualitative aspects such as type of stories, bias in coverage etc.

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## 14.3 PROPAGANDA AND PERSUASION

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Propaganda has existed since times immemorial and even cave paintings and Ashoka edicts were considered as forms of propaganda. However, whenever we hear the word nowadays, we immediately associate it with something that is untrustworthy or lies. So what is propaganda?



### 14.3.1 Concept and Definition

The word propaganda comes from Latin, meaning to propagate, disseminate or spread ideas. Propaganda can affect public opinion. It serves a different function in war and in peacetime. Propaganda has been associated with terms such as lies, brain-washing, manipulation, information, psychological warfare, spin-doctoring and so on. The terms disinformation and misinformation have also been associated with propaganda.

Scholar, Jacques Ellul concentrated on propaganda as a technique of psychological manipulation in a technologically oriented society. Later day scholars such as Jowett and O'Donnell offer a more rigorous definition. In their words, "propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist." It is important to note that propaganda is deliberate and systematic as opposed to random or ad hoc. Secondly, it is concerned with attitude and behaviour change. The motive of the propagandist is important in the communication process, since the end result desired is attitude and behaviour change.

Perceptions can be affected through language, images, music etc. hence the importance of slogans, mottos, symbols, posters, and film. Perceptions can be shaped, leading to changed beliefs or attitudes. Ultimately specific attitude or behaviour change is the goal of the propagandist.

It is interesting to note that commercial advertising has also been considered to be a kind of propaganda. While the motive here is economic rather than political, nevertheless, the communication processes involved is similar to classic political propaganda.

### 14.3.2 History of Propaganda

If we look at history down the ages, we find the concept of propaganda as pertaining to propagation or dissemination of ideas has always existed. This may have taken the form of cave-paintings, Ashokan edicts, religious or political literature. For example Chanakya's Arthshastra written over two millennia ago has detailed references to propaganda and its applications in war.

Later, propaganda became more closely identified with the propagation of religious ideas. In the 17th century, Pope Gregory XVth established a missionary body called the Sacra Congregation de Propaganda Fide. As the name suggests, it was a sacred congregation for propagating Roman Catholicism, both among non-Christians as well as opposing Protestantism. Thus the word propaganda became non-neutral and acquired religious overtones in this period.

Over a period of time, the word propaganda has acquired political and negative connotations. In fact it ceased to be neutral and came to be viewed as deceit. Propaganda has been used extensively in the last century. It was prominent in its use during the two World Wars as well as the Cold War. In peacetime it has been used by the government, targeting domestic populations, for example in the USSR.

### 14.3.3 Types of Propaganda

Any study of propaganda attempts to categorise it according to some criteria. While it is possible to categorise propaganda according to the media used, for example newspapers, radio, pamphlets etc, this is not very meaningful and does not add much to our understanding. Yet another way to categorise propaganda is agitative, which attempts to persuade the audience to think or behave in a particular fashion, leading to change or integrative, which attempts to induce passivity and acceptance in the audience.

A better way to classify propaganda would be by examining the content of the message and seeing whether it is the truth or lies, and also whether the message is originating from a known or unknown source. When we examine propaganda in this manner, we can classify propaganda as being **black, white or grey**.

**Black** propaganda is concerned with the spread of lies or falsehoods. In addition the source is concealed or it is credited to a false source. The term disinformation has also been used synonymously with black propaganda. Black propaganda has been used extensively in Wartime. One of the major examples of this kind of propaganda is that used by the Nazis during the Second World War. False radio stations run by the Germans pretending to be British and targeting British audiences were used to reduce morale. Depictions of the enemy in print, cartoons or film that demonise or dehumanise are also examples of black propaganda. For example after Pearl Harbour, many newspapers or cartoons in the US depicted the Japanese as apes or chimpanzees.

**White** propaganda is that which utilises information, which is mostly accurate or true. Secondly it comes from a clearly identified source. The national celebration such as the Republic Day Parade which is carried on India's national network Doordarshan every year is an example of white propaganda. The purpose of white propaganda is to build a relationship with the audience based on credibility and trust, to convince the audience that their viewpoint is right. Even international sporting events can be covered in the media as white propaganda. For example coverage of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships also showcases "Western" values and the "English way of life".

**Grey** propaganda, as the term implies is mid-way on the continuum between black and white propaganda - it is neither wholly accurate, nor complete falsehood. It could be a mixture. Secondly the source may or may not be identified correctly. The propaganda used by the US and the USSR during the Cold War was largely of this kind. An example of grey propaganda is during the period 1966-67, Radio Free Europe that targeted audiences behind the Iron Curtain was funded and run by the CIA, but this fact was publicly denied. Grey propaganda is not limited to political uses or wartime; it can also be used in the commercial area such as misleading advertising etc.

Thus we have seen that propaganda is a complex concept. It can be the truth, it can be falsehood, it can come from a known or unknown source. However, one thing in common to all kinds of propaganda is the fact that it is connected to the ideology and motives of the propagandist.

## Check Your Progress 1

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- 1) Study the following kinds of communication and classify them according to whether they are black, white or grey propaganda.
  - a) The advertisement of a pharmaceutical company suggesting that its new drug can cure HIV/ AIDS. ....
  - b) CIA funded Radio Liberty, which targeted the Soviet Union during the Cold War. ....
  - c) Voice of America .....
  - d) The national coverage of Republic Day parade on Doordarshan. ....
  - e) Nazi films and print literature depicting the Jews prior to and during the Second World War. ....

### 14.3.4 Techniques and Efficacy of Propaganda

Propaganda serves different functions in times of war and peace. In war, propaganda can be used to mobilise the domestic population, demoralise the enemy and influence neutral countries or international public opinion. Peace implies propaganda could be used for a number of purposes ranging from getting a political party elected to selling a particular commercial product.

While propaganda can be practiced in the form of leaflets, news articles, news reports, government reports, books, posters, film, web sites etc, there are some techniques which have been proven to make propaganda more effective historically. Some of these are outlined below:

#### Repetition

The endless repetition of an idea, in the form of symbolism, mottos, slogans and other methods can be believed as truth. The Nazis used this effectively both before and during the Second World War. It is easier to use this tactic when the propagandist controls the major media outlets and there are no alternative media sources.

#### Authority Appeals

The message may cite important persons, to support their views. In general most propagandists couch their arguments in moral/ethical terms. They want to create the impression that they are in the right, and their arguments or course of action is morally superior and supported by prominent figures or 'legitimate' sources.

#### Fear Appeals

The propagandist attempts to build consensus or support by creating a climate of fear or panic among the people. This tactic is used in wartime to convince people to fight or support their leaders, otherwise they could be exterminated. For example, after Germany invaded the Soviet Union during the Second World War, German newsreels appealed to fear in order to maintain morale.

### **Appeal to existing values/ prejudice**

A classic example to propaganda which built on prejudice is the anti-communist and anti postwar settlement as well as support for a strong leader, all sentiments expressed by the Nazis in the lead up to the Second World War. A resonance was created with existing prejudices among the German people that the Marxists are not to be trusted etc.

### **Dualism**

Sometimes the propagandist oversimplifies an issue so as to present it in the form of two choices either black or white. The complexity of the issue is ignored and the audience is forced to take a view out of the two presented. For example anti-terrorism initiatives by many Western governments are framed in this manner - “you are either with us, or you are against us.”

### **Demonising the enemy**

A classic propaganda tactic is to make the enemy appear sub-human, and thus justify action taken against them. For example George Bush Sr. described Saddam Hussain in terms that indicated that he was a cruel dictator, bereft of human attributes.

### **Bandwagon effect**

This is a psychological technique wherein the audience is persuaded to hold a certain belief or take a course of action since that path is inevitable, or everybody else is already taking that path. For example, in political campaigning, people are told to vote for a certain party, because the majority is voting for them and it is inevitable that they should win.

### **General slogans**

These are emotional appeals, which generally stress the “feel-good factor”. In other words they have a positive association with the audience, but do not have a basic argument or premise. For example President Obama’s election campaign “Yes we can!”

There are many other techniques; these are some of the more popular ones outlined above. When we discuss the overall **efficacy** of propaganda, it is worth going over some basic facts.

### **Share of media voice**

In general it is easier for the propagandists to get their message across if they control the majority of the media outlets, for example, the case of Nazi Germany during the Second World War or the case of Stalinist Russia during the 1930s.

### **Type of Government**

It is generally considered easier for a propagandist to function in a totalitarian state than in a democracy. This is because in a totalitarian regime, the propagandist under the aegis of the state can exercise complete control. Again, the examples of the Nazis and Stalin can be cited. A democracy on the other hand is characterised by freedom of expression and diverse viewpoints.

### Climate of uncertainty

It has been observed historically that propaganda is more effective in a period of uncertainty, whether economically or politically. Thus propaganda has potential in wartime because of the inherent uncertainty that people experience at such times.

### Message construction

As outlined above, the propagandist employs many techniques in message construction. However, in order for the propaganda to be effective, the propagandist should know the targeted audience well. This includes attributes such as demographics - age, gender and literacy. It also includes an understanding of the media habits of the audience, as well as their values, prejudices and aspirations. As part of the general framing of the propaganda message, an attempt is made to rationalise it on the grounds that it is morally superior viewpoint.

Above discussion will enable you to understand why certain kinds of propaganda are effective. In order to further understand these principles, we shall look at some historical examples in sub-section 14.4.

### 4.3.5 Public Diplomacy vs Propaganda

At this point exploring the notion of Public diplomacy along with propaganda provides interesting perspectives. Public diplomacy, or people's diplomacy, include a variety of activities, usually government-sponsored efforts, aimed at communicating directly with foreign publics and influence their ideas and opinions. It is of two types - first is cultural communication or branding, in which the government tries to improve its overall image and general perceptions and does not involve directly seek support for any proximate policy or programme. Cultural communication foster a better image of themselves produces general goodwill and enables cooperation across a range of issues. It also helps to build and maintain alliances and relations as well as undermine antagonist propaganda. The second type of public diplomacy is called political advocacy that unlike cultural communications involves strategies for obtaining quick results, like garnering support for immediate policy objectives; support or oppose the leaders of other states.

Thus propaganda and public diplomacy essentially stem from the same core, involving communication activities of one country that target audiences in another with the objective of creating a more favorable political environment. The term public diplomacy originated because of the 'negative' / 'destructive' connotations of propaganda, which was something 'good' 'well intentioned' countries did not want to be associated with. Thus, public diplomacy and propaganda are supposedly different things; countries have cleverly used them in various contexts for influencing the mindset of foreign public.

### Check Your Progress 2

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

Identify the particular technique used in the propaganda examples listed below.

1) A political party's election motto, "you can do it!" .....

- 2) The Allied depiction of Japanese as apes or chimpanzees during the Second World War. ....
- 3) The Nazis usage of symbols such as the swastika and the eagle, and banners during 1935-45. ....
- 4) An anti-smoking public service message which shows damaged lungs and cancer. ....
- 5) Anti-Soviet rhetoric in early James Bond, Hollywood films which shows the characters as either “good guys” or “bad guys.” .....

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## 14.4 SELECT CASE STUDIES

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When we look at the period 1940-1960, some of the examples of propaganda that come to mind are Nazi Germany, the Allied effort and the Cold War.

### 14.4.1 Nazi Germany

In the build up to the Second World War, the Nazis sought to establish control over the media, which was free prior to this. During the 1930s, the Nazis banned communist newspapers, instituted official press conferences to convey the government’s views and removed editorial independence. The press, posters, radio and film were essentially the mass media used by the Nazis for propaganda. The Nazi symbols of the Swastika and the Eagle were used extensively. Feature films, documentary film formats and newsreels were also used to convey messages to the people. One example of black propaganda used by the Nazis is the pseudo documentary film called *The Eternal Jew*, which purported to show typical Jewish characteristics. The official body responsible for the production of propaganda was the Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda. Joseph Goebbels headed this Ministry from 1933 onwards.

The Nazis did not view propaganda negatively as is evident from the fact that the word propaganda figured in the official name of the ministry. For the Nazis, a systematic and large-scale effort was used to disseminate propaganda over the mass media. The methods relied on simple messages, powerful imagery and a lot of repetition. Adolf Hitler himself believed in the power of propaganda and discussed it in his political manifesto *Mein Kampf*. The Nazi view of propaganda was that it was necessary to mobilise the people and engender support for the Nazi ideology, thus establishing control over society. While it is generally acknowledged that Nazi propaganda was highly effective, it is important to remember that it occurred in the context of a totalitarian state, which utilised widespread repression and terror to accomplish its aims.

### 14.4.2 Allied Efforts during the Second World War

Propaganda was also systematically practiced by democracies such as in Britain and the United States during the Second World War. However, as compared to the blatant and direct propaganda practiced by the Nazis, democracies believed in practicing more indirect and subtle propaganda, often largely based on truth. The exception was the Allied propaganda relating to the war with Japan.

The respective propaganda agencies included the Office of War Information (OWI) in the US and the Ministry of Information (MOI) in Britain. It is interesting

to note that though totalitarian regimes had no aversion to including the word propaganda in their official agencies, in democracies this word was replaced with the more neutral 'information' during the Second World War.

While totalitarian governments can practice propaganda fairly openly, democracies have to rely on more indirect means such as censorship, regulation and other forms of threat or reward in order to ensure compliance from the media.

In the case of the US, during the Second World War, media were in private hands and there was no public service broadcaster as in Britain. However, press, radio and film had high penetration rates in the US by the 1940s. The OWI was responsible for mobilising domestic support for the war, as well as projecting a positive image of America abroad. Since the American film industry was very well developed at the time, it was used extensively in order to convey propaganda messages.

The American film industry, which was dominated by private film studios contributed to the war effort. This was largely because they would have alienated their audiences, if they had not supported the Allied cause. There were other pressures exerted by the US government on the film industry. The US military offered help in the form of equipment and other facilities to studios producing suitable war-themed movies. The OWI also exerted influence with the Office of Censorship, which granted export licenses for films. Thus it paid to fall in with the OWI's wishes since exports were a major source of revenue for the film studios. The OWI also issued guidelines on how to present the war and reviewed film scripts.

The large film studios also produced newsreels and assisted the government agencies in the production of propaganda films. Some famous film directors such as John Huston and Frank Capra enrolled in the Army and produced propaganda films thereafter.

In **Great Britain**, media coverage of the Second World War stressed the "strategy of truth." In fact leaving aside the coverage of the Japanese and the Pacific conflict, it was more white propaganda than black. In fact in the first phase of the war, the media were unusually reticent and the principle that no news is good news was followed. The Ministry of Information, early in the war, recognised the importance of news in the propaganda effort. Censorship was also practiced in a subtle form by controlling information at the point of generation. The strategy of emphasising the truth and subtle censorship was very successful and the press and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) acquired the reputation of free and fair reporting during this time. Thus the propaganda practiced was subtle, yet effective because the credibility of the source was preserved in the eyes of the audience.

These arguments do not hold in the context of the Allied war with Japan. In fact Allied propaganda relating to the Japanese was often black propaganda, demonising the Japanese. There were definitely racist overtones present in this propaganda.

### 14.4.3 The Cold War

After the Second World War ended, the international relations paradigm that emerged was one of bi-polarity with the US and USSR leading two major power

blocks. Propaganda continued to be an important issue in International communications. Both major power blocs practiced it extensively. The nature of the conflict during the Cold War was such that it represented a clash of ideologies that of capitalism as opposed to Communism. So propaganda was employed to convince audiences as a part of ‘psychological warfare.’

Soviet propaganda was often targeted at the Eastern bloc and the developing countries. Soviet propaganda emphasised Marxist values and the class struggle between capitalists and the workers. The TASS news agency was an important propaganda organ during the Cold War. During the 40’s and 50’s, the Soviet Union had a large propaganda effort targeting other socialist countries, such as Yugoslavia, and Hungary, which were attempting to rebel against the communist yoke. Moscow Radio also emerged as a large international broadcaster by the late 1960’s. Soviet broadcasting aimed at establishing its own agenda amongst the communist countries, as well as countering Western propaganda. While the broadcast network was extensive within the communist world, it was limited outside it. Secondly it was heavy-handed, stressed ideology and repetition of simple ideas and had limited impact in the Western world, and indeed even among developing nations as the Non-Aligned movement drew in many developing countries by the 1960’s.

Broadcasting was used extensively for propaganda by the US during the Cold War. The Voice of America, Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Europe used extensively for broadcast were all state-funded. The Voice of America highlighted American values and the American way of life, as expressed in mass culture. Propaganda was also disseminated via press releases, conferences, books, films and cultural and educational exchanges.

While the Voice of America was the official broadcasting arm of the US, Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe were covert operations targeting European communist countries. They were largely funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. They started broadcasting in the early 1950’s and blatantly attacked communist governments, encouraging the people to revolt, as in Hungary.

US propaganda was not limited to broadcasting and the Press, but also included films. The McCarthy era in the late 1940s implied that capitalist ideologies were stressed, and communism within Hollywood was condemned. Themes that showed the negative aspects of American society were frowned upon. As during the Second World War, the studios cooperated with the government to see that films with questionable content were not exported.

While everything from psychological warfare to cultural diplomacy was used to win over the minds of people during Cold War, radio played a central role as a purveyor of propaganda. Thus propaganda itself remained a central issue in international communications during the Cold War.

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## **14.5 DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

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You have read about the concept and theories of development in detail in Unit 5 of this course and in this section we shall link development with International communication. As you are aware, the idea of development is as old the history



of mankind. In the Stone Age and the subsequent Ages, development could probably be understood in the context of better techniques of hunting, gathering and provision of basics. In the Middle Ages, development came to be associated with the word progress. The classical sociologists such as Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies understood development to be a change from folk to modern society.

In the last century, development emerged as an important idea in the aftermath of the Second World War. This period saw the emergence of the major power blocs headed by the US and the USSR, the 'First' and 'Second' worlds, the concept of the "Third World" or developing countries outside these power blocs also emerged. Decolonisation had occurred in countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America. Many of these countries while newly free were pre-occupied with development and the international communications of the time reflected the importance of this issue. Subsequent movements such as the Non-Aligned Movement also helped to put development on the international agenda.

In the period following the Second World War, development became salient internationally because of a number of reasons. Some of these were: firstly, the large-scale destruction witnessed during the Second World War; this was followed by reconstruction in Europe. Secondly, the political division of the world into two camps after the Second World War, made development an important issue in international communications. Thirdly, this period also saw the establishment of the United Nations organisations, with their emphasis on humanitarian issues. There were also economic reasons for developed nations to have links with developing countries.

### **Paradigms of Development**

The ideas about development have been dominated by those of the developed countries and have undergone changes from economic growth in the 1950's and 1960's to social change in subsequent periods. Under their influence, developing countries have received guidance, aid and support that have hence influenced communication flow and efforts from the developed world. There have been three major paradigms of development. These are Dominant, Dependency and Participatory. In the period 1945-1965 Dominant paradigm held sway. During 1965-75 it was dependency. From the 1970's onwards it has been the participatory paradigm.

To briefly recapitulate, the **dominant** paradigm is associated with the Liberal, Modernisation theories that links the idea of development to industrialisation, capital intensive projects and economic growth. The role of media, in the dominant paradigm, saw top down communication, presumption of strong mass media effects and the primacy of hypodermic needle or bullet theories. The dominant paradigm was critiqued for the fact many poor countries that applied these ideas did not find that they had developed.

The dependency paradigm was an outgrowth of Imperialism, Colonialism. It was based on Marxist ideas structural inequality and economic relations in the global system. The role of media in the dependency paradigm was to challenge cultural and media imperialism and the agenda of the power elite. Top down flow of communication and presumption of strong media effects remained.

The current participatory paradigm of development puts people at the center of the development process. Makes them partners, rather than targets of development strategies and emphasise peoples empowerment and emancipation and seeks their involvement at all levels - decision-making, programme implementation, evaluation, monitoring and benefits. The role of media within this paradigm is one of the inputs. It stresses the importance of dialogue and sharing of knowledge and bottom-up flow of communication using community media as well as new media technologies which are interactive in nature.

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## 14.5 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit it was discussed that International communications and intercultural communications are important types of communications, which have been studied extensively during and after the Second World War. Different issues have dominated the field of international communications in different decades, for example the importance of propaganda during the Second World War and the Cold War.

We examined propaganda in its historical context. It was associated with religious movements in Seventeenth century Europe, and with political messages in the subsequent centuries. By the mid twentieth century, the word acquired strong negative connotations for democracies and was replaced in official bodies with the term information. Propaganda has been recognised to be systematic and aimed at serving the agenda of the propagandist. Propaganda has certain functions such as influencing domestic or foreign public opinion. In wartime it is used to demoralise the enemy. In fact propaganda is used along with conventional weapons as one more weapon in the arsenal of the propagandist.

It was further discussed that the study of propaganda has grown more nuanced over a period of time. Propaganda can be classified into black, white or grey depending on whether the message has a clearly identified source and also based on whether the message is lies or truth. Some of the factors which influence the effectiveness of propaganda are the type of government, uncertainty; construction of the message and so on. Further, propaganda relies on the use of particular techniques such as repetition, fear appeals, appeals to authority, demonising the enemy among others.

From above analysis you will be able to appreciate the need and relevance of international and intercultural communication in the present times. You will also be able to analyse how communication flow helps in shaping public opinion and foreign policy.

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## 14.7 FURTHER READINGS

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Gorman, Lyn and McLean, David, (2003), *Media and Society in the Twentieth Century, A Historical Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK.

Jowett, Garth S. and O'Donnell, Victoria (2006), *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 4th Edition, Sage, USA.

Mowlana, Hamid and Wilson, Laurie (1990), *The Passing of Modernity, Communication and the Transformation of Society*, Longman, Whiteplains, N.Y.

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## **14.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS**

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### **Check Your Progress 1**

- 1) Grey
- 2) Grey
- 3) White
- 4) White
- 5) Black

### **Check Your Progress 2**

- 1) General slogans
- 2) Demonising the enemy
- 3) Repetition
- 4) Appeal to fear
- 5) Dualism

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## UNIT 15 TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

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### Structure

- 15.0 Introduction
- 15.1 Learning Outcomes
- 15.2 Technological Developments in Communication
- 15.3 Printing Revolution
- 15.4 Visual Revolution
  - 15.4.1 Photography
  - 15.4.2 Flexible Roll Film
  - 15.4.3 Cinema
- 15.5 Electronic Revolution
  - 15.5.1 Telegraph and Telephone
  - 15.5.2 Radio
  - 15.5.3 Television
- 15.6 Digital Revolution
  - 15.6.1 Web 1.0
  - 15.6.2 Web 2.0
  - 15.6.3 Web 3.0
- 15.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 15.8 Further Readings
- 15.9 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

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### 15.0 INTRODUCITON

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We are living in the information age in which information has become a commodity that is quickly and widely disseminated. We are surrounded by innumerable messages originating from wide variety of media and sources of information such as Newspapers, Magazines, TV, Radio, Books and Online media providing a variety of information. The messages are also in varied forms of text, audio, video, graphics, interactive stories, infographics; satiating the information needs of the people who prefer to consume media messages in different ways. This wide variety of media forms which we witness today is the result of continuous technological revolutions which are happening in the field of communication. Four major developments have taken place in the past which we can term as revolution in communication as with each revolution a new medium emerged offering new and improved ways of constructing as well as disseminating messages.

In this unit, we shall discuss the technological revolutions that have taken place in the field of communication which have resulted in the emergence of a medium. From Printing to Digital the entire journey will be traced, as the evolution of each medium is the result of some technological development. Since we are living in digital era, greater focus shall be placed on the emergence of online media and its impact on society.

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## 15.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- describe major technological revolutions that have taken place since 1430s; and
- link each technological revolution with the emergence of a specific medium such as print, radio, television and digital media.

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## 15.2 TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN COMMUNICATION

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The technological revolutions in Media and Communication have influenced the media industry as well as society as a whole and changed the way we consume media messages. A huge difference can be seen in the way our parents and grandparents used to consume media messages as compared to us. Till a few years back, listening to radio or watching television, used to be a social activity. When Radio and TV were at nascent stage, the privileged few owned radio and television sets. People used to get together at someone's place to watch or listen to popular programmes such as Humlog (1984), Ramayana (1986), Buniyad (1986) and Mahabharata (1988) as a form of community viewing.

When TV and Radio became part of individual houses the community viewing was replaced by family viewing. As soon as television entered the home, it acquired a central place in the architecture of the home and in the organisation of daily life (Lotz, 2009). Programmes on Radio and TV became gathering point for families. Debates, discussion and gossips after watching a programme was one of the endearing family activity. This collective activity in some households gradually became isolated and individualised primarily because of the availability of more than one TV and Radio sets in a household and also because of the availability of more channels and programmes. This meant watching or listening to the programmes of one's own interest rather than 'collectively selected' one programme that suited the entertainment or information needs of all the family members, regardless of their age and interests. Now one could surf channels and tune in to different frequencies to watch or listen to their favourite programme. This trend amplified with the emergence of multiple screens especially with the advent of hand held screens in the form of smart phones.

Availability of the internet enabled phones and laptops not only means every individual has access to the medium but it also means that they have access to every medium; as on internet every medium is integrated. This led to the emergence of another trend - Media hopping. The reason for this trend is the availability of various media formats on one device and also people's need to consume media messages differently. Many of us these days, in the process of obtaining information and for entertainment, move from one medium to another. This movement from one medium to another in search of relevant and good content is termed as 'media hopping'. The concept is similar to channel surfing which is also known as, 'channel hopping' and 'channel zapping'. This term, however, is associated with television or radio. As viewers have hundreds of TV channels or radio frequencies, they scan them quickly and frequently to

find something interesting. While in ‘media surfing’ the movement is within the medium, in media hopping the movement is complex as it is from one medium to another and also from one content to another within a specific medium.

In his book *Revolutions in Communication: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age*, veteran journalist, teacher and historian Bill Kovaricka, explored four major epochs of the mass media history through the technologies that characterised their development - printing, imaging, broadcasting and digital media. According to him, the historical narrative of media revolves around technological changes - a common thread that unites global media history.

Let us trace the technological revolution taken place in the field of communication and how it has impacted the way we consume, create and disseminate media messages.

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### 15.3 PRINTING REVOLUTION

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“He who first shortened the labor of copyists by device of movable types was disbanding hired armies, and cashiering most kings and senates, and creating a whole new democratic world: he had invented the art of printing” (Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, 1833).

Johannes Guttenberg by introducing the mechanical movable type printing to the world in 1439 laid the foundation for the knowledge based economy. This first technological revolution in the field of communication i.e. the Printing revolution democratised the process of knowledge generation as well as consumption. Spread of learning to the masses was made possible by this most important technological revolution in the field of communication. The invention of printing had a huge impact on the lives of the people of Europe initially and then eventually the entire world. Until the invention of printing, only a few had control over knowledge. The Monks used to write books which used to take years to complete, hence the books available were very expensive and out of the reach of common people.

Printing Revolution was the result of growing expectations of Renaissance, cultural and intellectual movements that spanned from 14th to 16th century in Europe. Acting as a catalyst for the Renaissance, printing facilitated it to spread as it enabled new ideas to reach larger audience. Printing removed the barriers to communication that existed in medieval society and contributed to dialogue and debate that was the essence of Renaissance.

“Although few had books before John Gutenberg gave us our art, not until printing could come learning, yes and wisdom also, knocking at every man’s door”. (Latin of Cardelius, 1546).

Printing was not new and most of the technologies involved in printing were already known and being employed in various ways when the printing revolution took place in the 1450s.

“Stamps in soft clay had been used as part of the ancient Babylonian accounting system, and metal seals were often impressed into wax to validate official documents in classical Rome. Wood block printing was widely used in China from the sixth century onward for sacred Buddhist scrolls. Impressions on textiles were known in Europe as early as the 1100s, and the first known woodcuts on

paper appeared in Europe around 1400 (Hind, 1963). Presses had been used on farms for centuries to make olive oil and to press grapes into wine” (History of Revolutions).

Thus Gutenberg invented a technology that resulted in Printing Revolution by adapting existing technologies. He used multiple processes like the making impressions, presses, ink which existed earlier and combined them to develop hand-moulded metal printing matrices, and produced a movable type-based printing press system.

**Check Your Progress 1**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this unit.

1) What does the term ‘Media hopping’ mean? How is it different from channel surfing/channel hopping?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

2) What impact printing revolution had on Renaissance?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

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**15.4 VISUAL REVOLUTION**

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Printing revolution was followed by Visual revolution. While visuals existed before the invention of photography but they were the result of wood art printing, engraving, and etching lithography. What impressed the world was images of real life, the way we see with our eyes, which were more accurate than paintings and as British Library explains, ‘allowed members of the public to feel they were viewing these people in the flesh.’

**15.4.1 Photography**

Photography is a combination of two Greek words “photos” (light) and “graphe” in (to draw). The word was first used by the scientist Sir John F.W. Herschel in 1839. It is a method of recording images by the action of light, or related radiation, on a sensitive material. Joseph Nicephore Niepce made the first photographic image with a camera obscura in 1827. Joseph Nicephore Niepce’s heliographs or sun prints as they were called were the prototype for the modern photograph, by letting light draw the picture. Since 1827, many developments took place and a number of people contributed to the art of photography, as we see today. Following is the list of some major technological development in the field of photography

**Daguerreotype Method:** The process that created lasting image was developed by Louis Daguerre in 1839.

**Negative to Positive Process** The inventor of the first negative from which multiple positive prints were made was Henry Fox Talbot, an English botanist

and mathematician and a contemporary of Daguerre. In 1841, he perfected this paper-negative process and called it a “collotype”, Greek for beautiful picture.

**Tintypes**, patented in 1856 by Hamilton Smith, were another medium that heralded the birth of photography. A thin sheet of iron was used to provide a base for light-sensitive material, yielding a positive image.

**Wet plate Negatives:** In 1851, Frederick Scoff Archer, an English sculptor, invented the wet plate negative. Using a viscous solution of collusion, he coated glass with light-sensitive silver salts. Because it was glass and not paper, this wet plate created a more stable and detailed negative.

**Dry Plate Negatives and hand held Cameras:** In 1879, the dry plate was invented, a glass negative plate with a dried gelat in emulsion. Dry plates could be stored for a period of time. Photographers no longer needed portable darkrooms and could now hire technicians to develop their photographs. Dry processes absorbed light quickly so rapidly that the hand-held camera was now possible.

### 15.4.2 Flexible Roll Film

In 1889, George Eastman invented film with a base that was flexible, unbreakable, and could be rolled. Emulsions coated on a cellulose nitrate film base, such as Eastman’s, made the mass-produced box camera a reality. Images have a lot of power and it is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words. A picture can document history, explain a process, visualise an abstract, depicts a story, capture nature and can speak a volume on relationships. The growing culture of ‘selfie’ has also made capturing self possible and it does not only reflect how that physical self has been beautifully captured but also reveals one’s inner self.

Photographs have a huge impact on us as individuals and as a society. There have been many movements started in the past just because one photograph was so impactful that it stirred the conscience of people and motivated them to stand up and take action. There have been some photographs which appear time and gain due to the story behind them as well as their impact.

**Activity – 1**  
Search the web for the ‘most popular photographs or images’ and find the photographer and the story behind the photograph. Write the same in your own words.  
Photographer .....  
Story .....

### 15.4.3 Cinema

The idea to work on motion picture camera came from the technology that was invented earlier. In October 1888 Thomas Edison, sometimes called the father of motion pictures, wrote, “I am experimenting upon an instrument which does for the Eye what the phonograph does for the Ear” Actually, “motion” pictures only seem to move. A modern movie camera takes still pictures like a regular camera does. However, it takes 24 of these pictures, or *frames*, per second. When you show these pictures at a very fast rate, they appear as if they are moving.

Auguste Lumiere and Louis Jean – known as Lumière Brothers were the first filmmakers in the history. They invented **motion**-picture camera and projector



called the Cinema to graphe and patented the same in 1895. “Cinema” is derived from this name. It was an improved version of what Thomas Edison invented as it allowed simultaneous viewing by multiple parties. Even Lumeire Brothers did not know that cinema will be such a flourishing business one day as Auguste Lumiere said, “My invention (the motion picture camera), can be exploited...as a scientific curiosity, but apart from that it has no commercial value whatsoever”.

A number of technological developments took place in the last hundred years which made watching cinema a ‘pleasurable experience’. Indian Film industry too embraced technology advancements across its value chain. Today digital technologies are used extensively in production, marketing and distribution. Since people prefer to watch movies on digital platforms, many filmmakers are exploring the option of releasing their movies on digital platforms at the same time when it is released in theatres. The filmmakers are considering different models for distribution like Subscription Video on Demand which allows the audience to access a wide range of content by paying subscription fees or offering them an option of off line VOD, which can be the future of viewing content. This is an additional feature that allows end users to watch high quality HD video content even when they are not connected to the internet.

Digital offers many opportunities in production, distribution and marketing, but it also offers challenges - the biggest one is piracy. Cam-cording is one of the common ways of piracy where people illegally record movies and upload it on web or make DVDs. Such content is released within the day of the release of a movie. There is a need for increased cooperation between the government and industry to tackle this problem of piracy.

In recent years the Netflix model is offering a new alternative of watching cinema by online streaming of a library of films and television programmes, including those produced in-house. A subscription-based OTT (Over The Top) service directly reaching viewers over the Internet, circumvents traditional cinema and broadcast television platforms that control or are distributors of such content.

Many changes have occurred in the ways films are produced, marketed and distributed because of technological advancements but one thing that remains unchanged is its impact on society. It works in both the directions. It reflects what is happening in the society and at the same time it has a potential to influence people with its content.

### Activity – 3

Mention the major societal problems discussed in the following Indian movies:

Sl No.	Name of the film	Major problem
1)	Peepli Live	
2)	Achhoot Kanya	
3)	Mother India	
4)	Roza	
5)	Manthan	
6)	No One Killed Jessica	
7)	Zanjeer	

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## 15.5 ELECTRONIC REVOLUTION

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Three major developments took place as part of the Electronic Revolution; these were the invention of Telegraph and telephone; Radio and Television.

The need to transmit messages at a fast speed was felt by many people. There have been many instances where the delay in sending and receiving messages caused problems. One such example was the delay in news of peace treaty signed by the United States and Britain to the Armies. When the United States and Britain fought the battle on January 8, 1815, the armies in the field could not have known that a peace treaty had been signed before Christmas of 1814. It took seven weeks for the fastest sailboat to carry the message from London to Louisiana resulting in loss of lives on both sides. Telegraph and telephone solved this problem.

### 15.5.1 Telegraph and Telephone

Telegraph and telephone are usually considered one-to-one communications devices, both also have an important place in the mass media. Major newspapers in 19th and 20th centuries were linked by telegraph. Telephone system (based on radio signals) also played a key role in establishing centralised broadcasting system.

Telegraph system was developed in the 1830s and 1840s by Samuel Morse (1791-1872) and other inventors. In this system, electrical signals were transmitted over a wire laid between stations. Morse said, “this mode of instantaneous communication must inevitably become an instrument of immense power, to be wielded for good or for evil” (Samuel Morse, 1838). Alexander Graham Bell was awarded the first U.S. patent for the invention of telephone in 1876. Telegraph was one-to-one text based communication; telephone was one-to-one voice based communication. Both Telegraph and Telephone revolutionised long-distance communication.

### 15.5.2 Radio

Dissatisfaction with the old technology paved the way for the emergence of new technology. Solar flares of 1859 sparked the interest in electromagnetic spectrum.

“The Solar storm of 1859 - known as the Carrington Event - was a powerful geomagnetic solar storm during solar cycle 10 (1855–1867). Telegraph systems worldwide went haywire. Spark discharges shocked telegraph operators and set the telegraph paper on fire. Even when telegraphers disconnected the batteries powering the lines, aurora-induced electric currents in the wires still allowed messages to be transmitted” (NASA).

The damage caused to the entire telegraph system due to the solar fires, made many to think about wireless telegraphy. Wireless telegraphy and broadcasting was not the invention of one but it was made possible by a combination of discoveries by scientists from different countries. Though many people contributed to the invention of Radio including Nikolai Tesla who demonstrated a wireless radio in St. Louis, Missouri in 1893; it was Guglielmo Marconi who is often credited as the father and inventor of the radio and for this reason he was given the first wireless telegraphy patent in 1896 in England.

It was the transmission of signals on Dec 12, 1901 across the Atlantic Ocean that earned him a very respectable position in history. So powerful was the medium that at one point of time it created mass panic in America. “The War of the Worlds” aired over the Columbia Broadcasting System on Sunday, October 30, 1938 created mass panic as it suggested alien invasion by Martians. The episode was adaptation of H.G. Wells’ novel - The War of the Worlds which of course was a drama, but the way it was presented by filmmaker Orson Welles, people took it as a reality and there was a mass hysteria.

“Huge flaming object” had struck a farm near Grover’s Mill, New Jersey. A “newscaster” described seeing an alien crawl out of a spacecraft. “Good heavens—something’s wriggling out of the shadow,” he reported. “It glistens like wet leather. But that face—it ... it is indescribable.”

In India, this power of Radio has been exploited for behaviour change. One such example of using radio as a medium to bring about change in the behaviour of people was the 104 episode radio serial drama (1996-1997) produced by AIR in partnership with Population Communications International (PCI), Tinka Tinka Sukh. The programme received excellent feedback and the letters received from the audience showed the impact of radio medium.

The radio Industry has also grown manifold in India. The reach of All India Radio is 92 percent of the country’s area and 99.19 percent of the population. In addition to Public Service Broadcasting system comprising of AIR operating in the FM, AM and SW frequencies, there are private FM station running in 86 cities and there are more than 200 community radio stations.

Digital radio is the emerging trend. Keeping in view the increase in the internet penetration and growth of smartphone segments in India; traditional broadcasts radio channels have taken their stations online and there are companies that run internet based radio services.

### 15.5.3 Television

It is said that television was invented in 1926 but at that time it was not known as TV but was called ‘televisor’ or mechanical television. It was created by John Logie Baird, who is generally regarded as the father of television. TV as we see today is the result of the experiments on two distinct technologies - first the attempts to build mechanical television system based on the rotating discs and second was to build an electronic TV using Cathode Ray Tube. Electronic television systems worked better and eventually replaced mechanical systems. Russian inventor, Vladimir Zworykin invented an improved cathode-ray tube called the kinescope in 1929. The kinescope tube was sorely needed for television. Zworykin was one of the first to demonstrate a television system with all the features of modern picture tubes.

In India, television broadcast started on 15th September 1959 as an experiment. There were only two one-hour programmes a week, each of one hour duration. Imagine a television set working for only two hours a week! All India Radio handled these initial broadcasts. The early programmes on these experimental broadcasts were generally educational programmes for school children and farmers. Several community television sets were set up in Delhi’s rural areas and schools around Delhi for the dissemination of these programmes.

By the 1970s, television centers were set-up in other parts of the country. In 1976, Doordarshan, which was All India Radio's television arm until then; became a separate department. Several community television sets were distributed as a part of one of the important landmarks in the history of Indian television, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) was conducted between August 1975 and July 1976. Under this programme, the Indian government used the American satellite ATS-6 to broadcast educational programmes. Six states were selected for this experiment and television sets were distributed in these states. SITE was an important step taken by India to use television for development.

The programmes were mainly produced by Doordarshan which was then a part of AIR. The telecasts happened twice a day, in the morning and evening. Apart from agricultural information, health and family planning were the other important topics dealt with in these programmes. Entertainment was also included in the telecasts in the form of dance, music, drama, folk and rural art forms. From one programme a week to 24x7 programming and from one channel to hundreds of channel, TV industry has grown manifold since then.

With the increase in internet connectivity and availability of cheap smartphones, there is explosion of online videos. Anyone who has access to technology and internet enabled phone also has the opportunity to create and disseminate videos. One can also do something which was unheard of till a few years back, they can create their own channel. Depending on the interest, YouTube is full of channels on DIYs, politics, news, entertainment, travel, food etc. The reach of some of these channels is much more than that of a traditional TV channel. The last few years witnessed huge increase in the number of videos created and uploaded. In addition to internet connectivity and cheap smartphones, this was made possible by new digital tools that allow creating and editing videos on the go.

Most of the social networking websites such as Facebook, Snapchapp, Twitter integrated these tools so that anyone create and disseminate these videos for the high percentage of the world population that is connected with internet. Some of the emerging trends we are witnessing now a days are immersive story telling (360 degree videos), video selfies etc.

Online news platforms such as The Quint roped in senior journalists during 2017 state elections (UP) for new media journalism and used selfie videos, Facebook live extensively to cover the elections. The New York Times also announced its launch on Snapchat discover forum to reach out to the youth population in the US who are using Snapchat extensively.

The examples of The Quint and The New York Times reveal how new technology is shaping the way media messages are constructed. TV no longer has the monopoly over videos, even online newspapers host videos on their portal.

### Check Your Progress 2

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Check your answers with the Feedback to Check Your Progress Questions given at the end of this unit.

1) Discuss an example where the delay in sending and receiving messages caused lot of problems.

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.....

2) Name the event that sparked the interest in electromagnetic spectrum.

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3) Discuss the incident related to radio that caused mass panic in America in 1938.

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4) TV is the result of the experiments on which technologies?

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## 15.6 DIGITAL REVOLUTION

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According to International Telecommunication Union, the rapid growth of Information and Communication Technologies and innovation in digital systems represent a revolution that has fundamentally changed the way people think, behave, communicate, work and earn their livelihood. This so-called digital revolution has forged new ways to create knowledge, educate people and disseminate information. It has restructured the way the world conducts economic and business practices, runs governments and engages politically. It has provided for the speedy delivery of humanitarian aid and healthcare, and a new vision for environmental protection. It has even created new avenues for entertainment and leisure. As access to information and knowledge is a prerequisite to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs – it has the capacity to improve living standards for millions of people around the world. Moreover, better communication between people helps resolve conflicts and attain world peace.

Two technological factors that led to the digital revolution are personal computer and the Internet. This technological revolution began in the 1960s when the foundation for modern internet was laid by the Department of Defense through its ARPANET programme.

The first personal computers were introduced in the early 1970s. A number of technological innovations happened in the past and are still taking place and shaping the Digital world every day. Each innovation triggered another and continuous developments are emerging in the field of Information and communication technologies.

To understand how web evolved over the years, it has been divided in to three versions Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0.

### 15.6.1 Web 1.0

The development of one technology inspires the development of others. Tim Berners-Lee the creator of Web 1.0 the first generation of web said, *“I made some electronic gadgets to control the trains. Then I ended up getting more interested in electronics than trains. Later on, when I was in college I made a computer out of an old television set.”*

According to him, Web 1.0 was the read only web as it allowed people to search for information and read - interaction and creation of content was not possible for the users. The purpose was to develop websites so that the information can be disseminated more on line with any other mass media.

The purpose for creating web was to share information. According to him *“In those days, there was different information on different computers, but you had to log on to different computers to get at it. Also, sometimes you had to learn a different program on each computer. Often it was just easier to go and ask people when they were having coffee....”*

According to him this could have been solved by exploiting hypertext technology. He in 1989 submitted a proposal “Information Management: A Proposal” to his boss at CERN, Mike Sendall, who did not accept the proposal initially and wrote, “vague but exciting”. Eventually Tim was given time to work on this project in September 1990.

By 1990, Tim had written the three fundamental technologies that remain the foundation of today’s Web

- HTML: Hyper Text Mark-up Language. The mark-up (formatting) language for the Web.
- URI: Uniform Resource Identifier. A kind of “address” that is unique and used to identify to each resource on the Web. It is also commonly called a URL.
- HTTP: Hypertext Transfer Protocol. Allows for the retrieval of linked resources from across the Web.

By the end of 1990, the first Web page was made available on the open Internet and in 1991, public was invited to join this new Web community.

### 15.6.2 Web 2.0

As the Web began to grow, Tim realised that its true potential would only be unleashed if anyone, anywhere could use it without paying a fee or having to ask for permission.

He explains: *“Had the technology been proprietary, and in my total control, it would probably not have taken off. You can’t propose that something be a universal space and at the same time keep control of it.”*

So, Tim and others advocated to ensure that CERN would agree to make the underlying code available on a royalty-free basis, for ever. This decision was announced in April 1993, and sparked a global wave of creativity, collaboration and innovation never seen before. These innovations led to the development of Web 2.0.

The term “Web 2.0” was first used in January 1999 by Darcy DiNucci, an information architecture consultant. In her article, “Fragmented Future”, DiNucci writes:

*“The Web we know now, which loads into a browser window in essentially static screenfuls, is only an embryo of the Web to come. The first glimmerings of Web 2.0 are beginning to appear, and we are just starting to see how that embryo might develop. The Web will be understood not as screenfuls of text and graphics but as a transport mechanism, the ether through which interactivity happens. It will appear on your computer screen, on your TV set, on your car dashboard, on your cell phone, on hand-held game machines and maybe even your microwave oven.”*

The term was popularised by Tim O’Reilly and Dale Dougherty at the O’Reilly Media Web 2.0 Conference in late 2004. A Web 2.0 website may allow users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators of user-generated content in a virtual community, in contrast to the first generation of Web 1.0 era websites where people were limited to the passive viewing of content. In contrast to Web 1.0 era websites, in which the text was often unlinked, users of Web 2.0 websites can often “click” on words in the text to access additional content on the website or be linked to an external website. Examples of Web 2.0 include social networking sites and social media sites. Whether Web 2.0 is substantively different from prior Web technologies has been challenged by World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee, who describes the term as jargon. His original vision of the Web was “a collaborative medium, a place where we [could] all meet and read and write”.

### 15.6.3 Web 3.0

Web 3.0, many believe is the era of personalisation. The computer will remember and keep record of your previous searches and will offer you the results that are personalised for you. It is an extension of the 2.0 and has a lot of the qualities. However, this Web is where you do not do the work; the computer does it for you. The Web is going to simplify your search for you. This third generation of web is also called semantic web.

*“I have a dream for the Web [in which computers] become capable of analysing all the data on the Web – the content, links, and transactions between people and computers. A “Semantic Web”, which makes this possible, has yet to emerge, but when it does, the day-to-day mechanisms of trade, bureaucracy and our daily lives will be handled by machines talking to machines. The “intelligent agents” people have touted for ages will finally materialise”. (Tim Berners Lee)*

The basic idea of Web 3.0 is to define structure data and link them in order to more effective discovery, automation, integration, and reuse across various applications.

### Check Your Progress 3

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this unit

Fill in the blanks

- 1) Two technological factors that lead to the digital revolution were ..... and .....
- 2) The foundation for modern internet was laid by .....
- 3) According to Tim Berners Lee Web 1.0 was the ..... web.
- 4) The three fundamental technologies written by Tim Berners Lee that remain the foundation of today's Web are ....., ..... and .....
- 5) The term "Web 2.0" was first used by ..... in her article .....
- 6) Web 3.0 is also called .....

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## 15.7 LET US SUMUP

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Technological revolution is a continuous process and one innovation leads to another. Similarly, the invention of one technology leads to the invention of another and there is no single person responsible for one invention; it is the result of hard work and continuous efforts of many. The emergence of Print, Television, Radio and New Media is the result of a series of technological developments. These technological developments resulted from the knowledge and experience acquired on working on a particular technology and also from the need for better and improved versions. Technological developments have huge impact on cultural, political and economic aspects in the society. Karl Marx explained this with the example of how a feudal society that used a hand mill slowly changed into an industrial capitalist society with the introduction of the steam mill.

Technology according to "technological determinism" defines its nature. The term was coined by Thorstein Veblen. According to him technology is the driving force of culture in a society and it determines its course of history. Hence to understand society, it is important to understand technology and technological developments that are taking place and that had happened in the past.

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## 15.8 FURTHER READINGS

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Bill Kovarick, *Revolutions in Communication: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age*

Michael M.A. Mirabi to Barbara L. Morgenstern, *The New Communication Technologies; Applications, Policy, and Impact*, Focal Press (2004)

John Vince and Rae Earnshaw, *Digital Convergence: The Information Revolution*, Springer (1999)

Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, *The New Digital age, Reshaping the future of people, nations and Business*, John Murray (2013)



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## 15.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The movement of individuals from one medium to another in search of relevant and good content is termed as Media hopping. The concept is similar to channel surfing or channel hopping/channel zapping associated with television or Radio in which the movement is within the medium. In media hopping the movement is from one medium to another and also from one content to another within a specific medium.
- 2) Renaissance was the cultural and intellectual movement that started in 14th century and lasted up to 16th century in Europe. Printing revolution acted as a catalyst for Renaissance as printing removed the barriers to communication that existed in medieval society and contributed to dialogue and debate that was the essence of Renaissance.

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The delay in news of peace treaty signed by United States and Britain to the Armies. When the United States and Britain fought the battle on January 8, 1815, the armies in the field could not have known that a peace treaty had been signed before Christmas of 1814. It took seven weeks for the fastest sailboat to carry the message from London to Louisiana. This resulted in loss of lives on both sides.
- 2) Solar flares of 1859 sparked the interest in electromagnetic spectrum.
- 3) “The War of the Worlds” on Sunday, October 30, 1938 aired over the Columbia Broadcasting System created mass panic as it suggested alien invasion by Martians. The episode was adaptation of H.G. wells’ novel ‘The War of the Worlds’ which was a drama, but the way it was presented by filmmaker Orson Welles, people took it as a reality and there was mass hysteria.
- 4) TV as we see today is the result of the experiments on two distinct technologies - mechanical television system based on the rotating discs and electronic TV using Cathode Ray Tube.

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Personal computer and the Internet
- 2) ARPANET
- 3) Read-only web
- 4) HTML, URL, HTTP
- 5) Darcy DiNucci in article Fragmented Future
- 6) Semantic Web

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# UNIT 16 GLOBALISATION AND MEDIA

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## Structure

- 16.0 Introduction
- 16.1 Learning Outcomes
- 16.2 Globalisation: Concept and Factors
- 16.3 Globalisation in India
- 16.4 Global Media Structure
- 16.5 Media Globalisation
  - 16.5.1 Origin of Media Globalisation
  - 16.5.2 Second phase of Media Globalisation
  - 16.5.3 Global Media Organisations
- 16.6 Effects of Media Globalisation
  - 16.6.1 Imbalance in News Flow
  - 16.6.2 Cultural Imperialism
  - 16.6.3 Positive Aspects
  - 16.6.4 Emerging Trends
- 16.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 16.9 Further Readings
- 16.10 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

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## 16.0 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous unit, you have read about various technological innovations which are taking place in the field of communication. Media globalisation is directly related to the technological advancement and economic resources. The countries that are economically robust and possess most advance technology are able to dominate the world communication order. In this unit, we will examine how globalisation was initiated and how some global media organisations have emerged as moguls and promoted one-way flow of communication. Later in the unit, we will analyse various effects of globalisation on media and the emergence of global media structure. At the end, some recent trends on globalisation will be discussed having bearing on the future narrative of globalisation.

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## 16.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After reading through this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the concept and factors of globalisation;
- describe the global media structure;
- explain the concept of media globalisation;
- examine the issues related to cultural imperialism; and
- analyse the effects of media globalisation in India.

## 16.2 GLOBALISATION: CONCEPT AND FACTORS

The Oxford English dictionary defines globalisation as “the process by which business start or operate on a global scale”. If you go into the history of the world trade, you will find that countries were trading with each other since ancient times. The colonial era provides the evidence of the global trade, exploitation of resources and huge migration of people. Thus, it can be argued that globalisation is not a new phenomenon – it has been there since a long time.

Thomas Friedman (1999) in his popular book ‘The Lexus and the Olive Tree’ refuted the similarity between the two eras and questioned – “to all those who say that this era of globalisation is no different from the previous one, I would simply ask: Was your great-grandmother playing bridge with Frenchman on the Internet in 1900? I don’t think so”. It is evident that Friedman has compared the two eras in terms of technologies. He argues that globalisation can be related to two phases in the history - the first between World War I until the end of Cold War - roughly 75 years. With the fall of Berlin Wall, it was replaced with a new era of globalisation, which we are in presently.

Some other scholars like Held et al. (1996) also believe that there has been long history of global movement of people, media, and economic systems. They further differentiate the globalisation after the Cold War with past eras in terms of global movement of people, products, media, information, production and finance. It is true that all this existed since ages but technology has reduced time and distance, tremendously.

Besides technological advancement, Friedman stresses on the change in political scenario of the world while differentiating the new globalisation era (after the Cold War) with the old one. International political system changed majorly with the rise of USA as one of the power blocks ending the long reign of the Britain after the WW II and second time, after the collapse of the Soviet communism (bipolar world) and dawn of USA hegemony (unipolar world) in early 1990’s. Disintegration of USSR gave USA an edge and a chance to dominate the world at its own terms and conditions. In the new era of globalisation, despite developed and developing countries participating in the global exchange that was not possible in the earlier era, economic, military and cultural dominance of the western continues. This is known as ‘neo-colonialism’.

Giddens (1990) observes that globalisation is a continuation of modernity rather than a break from it. He says that modern societies and industrialisation have led to globalisation. For Albrow (1996) and Bauman (1998), the global age is the period that comes after modernity. Roland Robertson (1992) contradicts and argues that globalisation has been there before modernity and capitalism. However, he supports the fact that modernisation gives pace to globalisation. Held et al. (1999) categorise globalisation into four phases: the pre modern (before 1500), the early modern (1500-1850), modern globalisation (1850-1945) and contemporary globalisation.

Some scholars emphasise the ‘interconnectedness’ feature of globalisation while others on Time-space compression and recognition of action happening at far distance as a key features of globalisation which were not prevalent in the earlier eras. Held et al. (1999) advocate four distinct features of contemporary

globalisation – extensity (reach of networks)), intensity (density of networks), velocity (speed) and impact (wider effect).

“Globalisation can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens,1990).

### **Reasons of Globalisation**

Explaining the reasons of globalisation, Thomas Friedman (2000) mentions that “the Berlin wall was not the only wall that had fallen, but similar walls had trembled across the world which paved the path of integration henceforth the era of globalisation began...” He identifies three fundamental changes that helped to usher in change– the way we communicate (technology), the way we invest (finance) and the way we learn about the world (communication).

The desire for change was growing during the cold war in 1980’s with unrest among the masses, especially in the communist countries. The continuous growth and development in the capitalist West attracted people and created distrust in their statehood. The USSR and several communist countries were politically, economically and culturally shattered and disintegrated. Hard and soft power hegemony of USA stood victorious after the cold war. The failure of communism and victory of capitalism forced many countries to re-look at their economic policies. India being economically dependent and otherwise inclined towards USSR during the cold war was also impacted despite not being aligned with either of the power blocks. Even during 1980’s, Rajiv Gandhi government was planning the structural/economic reforms albeit the government was unable to carry them out.

According to author Guru Charan Das, “Globalisation does not mean imposing homogenous solutions in pluralistic world. It means having a global vision and strategy, but it also means cultivating roots and individual identities. It means nourishing local insights, but it also means reemploying communicable ideas in new geographies around” (www.hbr.org).

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## **16.3 GLOBALISATION IN INDIA**

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Globalisation formally entered Indian market in 1991. During that time India was facing multiple crises, our reserves were dry; fiscal deficit was very high and the Gulf war led to soaring oil prices and crunch in foreign exchange reserves. The Indian Government hence turned to IMF for a bailout, which demanded that the Indian economy be liberalised and open its gates for foreign players. In response to IMF’s demand the then Prime Minister, Late P.V. Narshimha Rao, introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP).

Within five years of introduction of the New Economic Policy; the Indian economy revived and exhibited a steep growth. Annual imports had more than doubled, exports had more than tripled, and foreign capital investment had more than quintupled (Shummer-Smith, 2000). Gurucharan Das (2002) mentions in his book Indian Unbound that “the central government’s fiscal deficit came down from 8.4 percent of GDP in 1990-91 to 5.7 percent in 1992-93. Foreign exchange reserves shot up to \$20 billion from \$1 billion in July 1991. Inflation came down to 6 percent from 13 percent by mid-1993. Foreign investments began to double

each year, and it rose from \$150 million to \$ 3 billion by 1997". The credit went not only to the opening up of the economy but also to the end of license raj days that led to less intervention of bureaucracy and red-tapism.

Some authors argue that the reforms were fast paced during 1991-1993, later on when the crisis receded the reforms slowed down. The P.V. Narasimha Rao government was defeated in the next general election and the successive governments in power were coalition governments who had to keep the other parties' ideology in mind before implementing further reforms. Therefore, though India had undergone structural reforms by opening its economy, new industrial policy, tax reforms, insurance reforms, bank reforms etc. but still it was not upfront about further reforms. In this entire restructuring, middle class received the maximum benefits which in 1980's comprised only 10 percent of the total population but tripled during 1990's.

### Check Your Progress 1

**Notes:** 1) Use the space below for your answer.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1) Define globalisation.

.....

.....

.....

2) What were the reasons of globalisation in India?

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## 16.4 GLOBAL MEDIA STRUCTURE

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Globalisation led to the emergence of new media structures of ownership and control. According to Bagdikian (2004) and Curran (2003) the key trends were emergence of global conglomerations; Horizontal and Vertical integration and diversification, synergy and technological convergence.

Two types of media ownership patterns became more visible at the global level – vertical and horizontal. In Vertical ownership a media house which is already in the business in any media vertical ventures into other media verticals. For instance, we can say that Bennett Coleman, which own Times of India, ventured into radio industry with Radio Mirchi then into TV industry with Times Now etc. Vertical ownership is also known as chain ownership pattern, where there is a logical relationship to the media industry, some way or the other.

The vertical ownership pattern has many positives as under one flagship they have the control of many media platforms, are able to reach out to a wider audience and can actually be with their audience 24X7. In such ownership pattern, since the audience base is high, the media house is also able to provide the advertisers with more outreach opportunities.

Second type of ownership pattern is horizontal ownership; here any company with any profile owns one or many media vertical(s), also known as cross media ownership. Let us try to understand with an example. If a company is into power sector and runs a daily newspaper too where there is no relationship between the two industries, such type of ownership pattern are called horizontal ownership. Here there is lack of logical relation with the media industry. For instance, Aditya Birla Group is into many businesses as retail, telecommunication etc. also owns Hindustan Times. The same is the case with Reliance which apart from businesses like petroleum, retail, telecommunication etc. also owns Reliance Adlabs and CNN-IBN.

Such type of ownership has given boost to the commercialisation of the media industry too; these corporate govern the media houses as they govern their other business. However, media cannot be sold as other products and it has certain social responsibilities as well. The same business model for media will surely generate profit but may not be good for media and ruin it in the long run. Today, there is hardly any big Indian company that does not own a media outlet. On other hand, such ownership pattern has increased the competition among the media houses tremendously but the stiff competition has failed to improve the quality of content.

Both the types of media structures export and import content. In global media structure a center-peripheral pattern exists (Mowlana, 1985; McQuail, 2010). The core position is occupied by those countries which are rich, self-reliant, large in population and have most developed media. The peripheral positions are occupied by those countries that are not rich, have not so much developed media and are less in population. There are intermediaries positions too in between. Core countries export great media content whereas peripheral countries do not export but their capacity to import is also limited since they have limited resources.

According to McQuail, during cold war, from 1960's the global media structure was dominated by USA (mainly Hollywood and news agencies) and was counter balanced by core country - Soviet Union along with China and other communist countries. Third world provided a large set of peripheral countries with some variations. Post-cold war with the demise of Soviet Union and emergence of America as the only super power, global media structure changed tremendously. America still dominates the global media structure but the Asian countries where majority of population lives like China, India. Japan and others like Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia, and Nigeria have become self-sufficient in media. They might not be big media exporters but they are big media producers. McQuail further identifies three global media structures:

- a) "National – where foreign (not home-produced) content is distributed in national television system. All the content is distributed by the home media only some of the content (news, film, TV shows) will be of foreign origin.
- b) Bilateral–where content originating in and intended for one country received directly in a neighboring country. For instance USA and Canada, Britain and Ireland, Netherlands and Belgium. They generally have language and culture in common.
- c) Multilateral –where content is produced or disseminated without a specific national audience in mind. For instance MTV and CNN”.

With respect to the Indian sub-continent; bilateral can be Indian media exported by Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Srilanka and others, but now a days reverse bilateral is also visible wherein a small country like Pakistan exports its music and TV soaps (In 2014, Pakistan soaps were telecast in India by Zindgi channel of Zee group). In case of reverse bilateral, the media content produced by the small neighbour should be exemplary only then it gets imported.

### Activity 1

Explore the ownership structure of the following media organisations:

CNN    Zee Media    Disney    Sun Group    BCCL    BBC

## 16.5 MEDIA GLOBALISATION

Lyons (2005) suggests that multinational corporations are the primary vehicle of media globalisation, and these corporations control global mass-media content and distribution. The process of media consolidation has led to the emergence of ‘media oligopoly’ or the control of the marketplace by a few firms who eliminate their competitors through various processes and maintain their monopoly to dominate the media industry.

### 16.5.1 Origin of Media Globalisation

According to Dennis McQuail (2010), books and printing had international character as it belonged to an era when nation states did not exist. At its foremost stage every medium is locally produced and consumed. When films came into existence they were unable to cross national frontiers. However, later films from Hollywood became first ever “transnational mass media”. Similarly, radio had outgrown its national identity and was meticulously used as international information medium since Second World War.

Another medium which got global acceptance was popular music (album and Hollywood film), especially Americanised music. USA was not an imperialist power until Second World War but due to the decline of Great Britain after the Second World War, USA emerged as the super power that turned it into a major producer of global mass media. Later with the advent of Cable and Satellite television, American television started exporting high quality TV shows to the global audience. TV shows catered to a rich global audience who were already acquainted to American culture through its Hollywood films and music industry. Other reasons of their popularity were English language, dubbed TV shows, and TV shown with subtitles. Also western music and films were popular amongst a niche segment. In India, during this time, BBC was very much present and was regarded as the most credible source of information.

### 16.5.2 Second phase of Media Globalisation

Globalisation reached its peak in 1990’s. One of the reasons cited for the disintegration of Soviet Union is the soft power hegemony used by USA. They tried to influence the communist nation’s culture by introducing them to their inspirational culture of denim jeans and Michael Jackson music that created discontent among the communist followers and forced them to aspire for capitalist regime. Thus, by capturing markets for its cultural commodities and by shaping

popular consciousness; US established its soft power hegemony also termed as 'cultural imperialism'.

After 1991, the scenario changed completely as it was not only the foreign media which entered Indian territory but Indian private media also emerged as one of the competitive media. Cable and Satellite (C&S) television revived the Indian television industry. It not only brought private players and competition but also killed the monopoly of the state owned television media and forced the later to generate content that is more appealing. CNN brought Gulf War Live to every C&S household; Rupert Murdoch through his News Corporation gave a new dimension to the Indian television media and a generation of Indians grew up watching Baywatch, Friends, Jurassic Park and Madonna.

Within a short span of time CNN, MTV, BBC, HBO, Star plus, ESPN, Cartoon Network, and Disney etc. became household names. Later on foreign cable and satellite channels started producing local content with global appeal. MTV and STAR network are the classic examples of adapting their global programming content as per the local culture and taste of viewers, known as 'glocals'. MTV Europe did the same by 'glocalising' its content so that it can appeal to different language states of Europe. This helped the foreign channels to have a strong foothold in various territories that prefer local content to western. But this did not discourage the indigenous television networks to spread their wings. Networks like Zee which was the first Indian cable and satellite channel gave a tough fight to the foreign networks and is broadcast as a global channel in many countries. Many other countries like Brazil, Mexico Hong Kong etc. had started developing their own local channels. "India and Korea produced about 92% of their televised programming, and 99% of Indian daily viewing was of home-produced content".

Foreign movies that were difficult to watch were now being released in India easily; even some were dubbed in Hindi or were released with subtitles. In addition, the Indian movies produced in 90's focused on the NRIs and the western culture. In order to attract viewers some movies deliberately used song-dance sequences shot in foreign locations or depicted the central character aspiring to study or work in a foreign country. Steve Darn in his book 'Globalisation on the Ground' writes that "in 1991, while none of the men whom I had interviewed had seen cable television or Hollywood films, by 2001 more than two-thirds of them sought out global media".

TV producers, however, later understood that the television programmes that promote distant cultures which people were not familiar with, were less popular among the global masses. Audience prefer content that is culturally and geographically closer to them; and programmes which were loaded with local slangs specific political issues, or focus more on local personalities or events are not much appreciated by the global audience. For example, The Simpsons is an American animated sitcom and International studios in South Korea undertake its animation work but the Korean animators complain that they do not understand the jokes. Whereas, the programmes that focus on action, violence and sex are well accepted by the audience across all the frontiers since these have universal appeal. In 25 years, all American programmes have carved its own foreign audience, and after watching American culture closely, a section of the Indian audience easily understands their jokes and colloquial communication.



Media globalisation flow is not only from the more developed state to less developed one but vice versa too, albeit in less proportion. According to McQuail, rich countries have always borrowed images, identities, design, cuisine and much more from their “colonies, trade partners and dependencies”. Even the immigrant groups had also carried their culture when they migrated to the developed nation. Presence of Indian motifs in American fashion like bindi (vermillion) and nose-ring are some such examples (Moorti, 2003; McQuail, 2010). Moorti calls this ‘symbolic cannibalism’; McQuail regards this as ‘postmodern pastiche’. However, DayaThussu regards this east to west communication flow as ‘contra flow in global media’. He further highlights the “Brazilian television giant TV *Globo*... exports its *telenovelas* to more than 100 countries, while Indian film industry is an example of a non-Western production center making its presence felt in global cultural context”.

Bollywood cinema is viewed by South Asians living across the globe. Moore points out that Australia despite being a great importer has become a significant exporter to UK by the success of its TV programmes ‘Neighbors’ and ‘Home and Away’. Giddens (1999) terms this phenomenon as “reverse colonisation” and points out the popularity of South American *telenovelas* in USA and several European countries.

### Media Revolution

In 2016, Global Citizen Festival came to India; it is a classic case of how global platforms are created for action. According to its website, Global citizen platform started in 2012 is a “social action platform for global generation that wants to solve the world’s biggest challenges”. It aims to eradicate poverty by 2030; it organises “massive global campaigns to amplify the actions of global citizens around the world”. In November 2016, British musical band Cold Play as part of this festival came to Mumbai in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi also addressed the audience via video conference. They performed in front of 80,000 plus audience and received \$ 5.93 billion through which they committed to influence the lives of 503 million people.

Internet has drastically changed the global media scenario - not only everyone is connected across globe but also people are producing and owning content like never before. Earlier internet was used to be websites and E-mail only but with the advent of social media like blogs, video sharing, content sharing, and curator sites; audience across the world are reading, sharing and liking the content being generated by amateurs also. Anyone with minimal investment can run media blogs and websites successfully to reach out to a wider audience, like never before. This new media has also helped independent filmmakers a great deal who used to run from pillar to post for financiers and distributors. They can now easily shoot films with less expensive camera, edit them with numerous open source software and distribute them online to large heterogeneous audience. Here too, the developed world has an edge in terms of technology and production and have been the forerunner in new media services.

Though new media promises to be a boon for many but it has severely hurt the print media business. In USA and in many European countries the readership of print media has declined tremendously during the past decade. Many leading print dailies had to shut because of diminishing demand and high internet penetration. People now prefer to read e-paper, follow news websites, subscribe

to news apps etc. They have no time to scan the newspaper daily which contains the news of a day before. In India, newspaper industry has not witnessed such a set back, as much as general magazines and periodicals, whose readership has hit an all-time low facing stiff competition from not only newspaper but also 24X7 news channels, internet and mobile applications. However, Business-to-Business magazines and niche magazines are growing since India allows 100 percent investment (which has attracted many foreign players) as this magazine genre was still largely untapped.

To summarise, media globalisation leads to global media ownership, audience gets ample media choice, however, fewer diverse viewpoints are likely to be found in the media. Cultural homogenisation and westernisation surges, technology allows free flow of communication, similar media products are found everywhere, increasing similar media systems all over the world (McQuail, 2010).

Denis McQuail (2010) highlights the following reasons for Media globalisation:

- More powerful technologies for long-distance transmission
- Commercialisation
- Colonisation and imperialism past and present
- Economic dependency
- Geopolitical Imbalances
- Advertising
- Expansion of tele-communication

### 16.5.3 Global Media Organisations

According to Jan Mirza (2009) there are a handful of global media organisations that dominate the international media scenario. In 2009, the six largest were “AOL, Time Warner (U.S.), Disney (U.S.), Vivendi-Universal (French), Bertelsmann (German), Viacom (U.S.), and Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation (Australian)1. The other four main global firms are AT&T (U.S.), Microsoft (U.S.), and two media groups that are part of larger industrial corporations: General Electric/NBC (U.S.) and Sony/Columbia/ TriStar (Japanese). Of the top 10 global media firms, then, six are American which mostly produce, distribute, and regulate almost all media outlets”.

According to a report in Business Insider (2016), top five global media conglomerate are Alphabet, The Walt Disney Company, Comcast, 21st Century Fox and Facebook.

*Unlike the empires of nineteenth century...these new empires are not ultimately based on coercion or military might. Their aim is not to subject alien populations to imperial dictates but to persuade consumer through...global electronic networks, to use their media or to buy products advertised (Thussu, 1998; Shaun, 2009).*

Japanese are not far behind in selling both hardware and software to the world. Sony’s major profit comes from overseas sales and America is its biggest foreign market. It is observed that these companies had unprecedented growth by the twenty first century outside their respective countries. They exported the content which was not only universal in appeal but also met local requirements.

Other media forms such as music has always united people across the globe. It is said music does not have any language - be it popular film music or professional albums of pioneer record companies, music finds its appreciators in every culture. “Major recording companies are based in Great Britain (Thorn), the Netherlands (Philips), Germany (Bertelsmann-BMG), and Japan (Sony). These companies have consolidated across borders” (Jan Mirza, 2009). According to McQuail (2010) “following the merger of Bertelsmann and Sony in 2004, there are four dominant companies: Sony, Warner, Universal, EMI” - “about a third of all worldwide recording sales are in American hands” (Turow, 2009; McQuail, 2010).

There have been many acquisitions, mergers and tie-ups of media globally. All this is possible because of globalisation and to survive the fragile and competitive media market. “The U.S. television industry recently saw two large-scale mergers formed by CBS and Viacom in 1999 and AOL and Time Warner in 2000” (Gal-Or, Dukes, 2006). In 2009, Bloomberg and UTV formed a joined venture; Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd had brought 9X, a general entertainment channel held by unlisted INX Media Pvt. Ltd. in a share-swap deal. In the same year, New Delhi Television Ltd sold stakes in its general entertainment channel NDTV Imagine to a unit of Time Warner and then eventually the channel went off air.

The FDI in media has let many Indian corporate houses to join hands with foreign media moguls but in long run a few corporates are able to stand the test of the wind. With globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation it has become easier to launch media outlet but Darwin’s survival for the fittest still holds water when it comes to sustenance in market. CNN-IBN is joint venture; Hindustan Times in 2009 became content partner with Washington Post. Recently Reliance group have acquired CNN-IBN and parts of Eanadu channel. In addition, many Hollywood production houses ventures in Indian market and produced Bollywood movies. Fox Star Studio – Slum Dog Millionaire, Bombay Velvet, Bang Bang; Warner Bros – Phas Gaye Re Obama, Chandni Chowk To China, Walt Disney Pictures – Haider, PK, Do Dooni Chaar. UTV Motion Pictures (Indian production house) is now owned by Walt Disney and UTV Software Communications.

Advertising is another arena where globalisation is very evident and the power is concentrated in few hands. “About six leading super-agencies have the lion’s share of the world’s advertising expenditure”. Advertising sells aspirations, values, beliefs, and images at times of a different culture. It creates an identity of a brand and at times MNCs carry single identity, globally. Advertising is done in two cases, firstly, to meet the demand and want of the consumer and secondly, to create that need which does not exist at first place. It generally aspire people towards a lifestyle and identity. Here global advertising agencies play a pivotal role in selling such novel identity and lifestyle.

### **Activity - 2**

Conduct a small survey in your area to examine the media consumption patterns of people. Compare and analyse how many people consume local, regional, national and international media.

## **16.6 EFFECTS OF MEDIA GLOBALISATION**

Media globalisation was an outcome of the communication technology revolution and was also a facilitator for other forms of globalisation. Media globalisation is

said to have the most crucial effect on the audience as media products are unique and are not consumed as other products. Media reflects the concerns and hopes of people, it shapes how people think and behave, thus it is a reflection of the society and culture.

### **16.6.1 Imbalance in News Flow**

The developing countries which did not align with any of the power blocs came to realise that the flow of information is not free and fair and that imbalances in news flow existed. These countries approached UNESCO and an international commission was established in 1977 under the leadership of Sean McBride, an Irish Diplomat. Commission tabled its report in 1980 titled as “Many Voices One World”, it is also known as “The MacBride Commission Report”. The Commission acknowledged the imbalances in the flow of communication and recommended the developed nations to foster exchanges of technical information, so that everyone has equal access to information. Promotions of adult literacy, democratisation of communication, fostering international cooperation were few other suggestions made by the commission.

The recommendations of the commission were rejected by most of the western countries. When the developing countries realised that they cannot ensure north–south (vertical) flow of balanced news, they started horizontal flow of news by establishing non-aligned new pool in 1975 which lasted until the mid of 1990s.

Many scholars have researched about the reasons behind the imbalance of news. Denis McQuail highlights the findings of scholars as: a) the flow of news is tilted towards the countries whom we are related economically and politically and also share geographical and cultural closeness b) “the flow of news is positively correlated with other forms of transactions between the countries” c) we need to know about those countries whom we do business and whom we are friendly and hostile with d) we like to know about countries which are powerful than us and how they will affect us e) “organisational” – what news is available to us f) “Genres” – what the audience like to read g) social-cultural – values system which had lead to the selection of news h) eliminate distant country news which is not dramatic enough and will not interest the news audience.

### **16.6.2 Cultural Imperialism**

There are a few global organisations that dominate the global media business, perhaps we can say that the cultural images of the few countries are sold to a worldwide audience. This gives way to cultural imperialism wherein the (technologically, economically) more advance country influences the culture of the backward country through their various media products. TV programmes, sitcoms, movies, music, news, websites all sell western culture to the developing countries. They enter these market aiming higher profits but culturally exploit these territories and adapt them to an alien culture. Even majority of the reality shows on Indian television are borrowed from the west and adapted to Indian tastes including Kaun Banega Crorepati, Indian Idol, Jhalak Dhiklaja, Big Boss etc.

According to Noam Chomsky, “Their first interest is profits, but broader than that, it’s to construct an audience of a particular type...one that is addicted to a certain life-style with artificial wants” (Chomsky, 1996). The audience is treated

as consumer and the media products as commodities, the social influence role of media takes a back seat and commercial interests are maneuvered by the corporates. Chomsky observes that their primary objective is to create an audience base who are homogenous, who either boast of certain life style or aspire to possess one and juggle between the unwanted things offered by the capitalists. These media products influence the audience for a luxurious lifestyle that indirectly fulfills the goals of the advertisers. Both - media house and the advertisers are in a win-win situation but the audience gets caught in the web created by them.

With media globalisation, we have plethora of media platforms available; big conglomerates fight with each other for their market share, the competition is stiff but the content diversity has not widened much. Media houses work on the principle of profit building, even the news now comes in a standard platform set by the advertisers leading to lowering of journalism standards. Earlier the aim of journalism was to create awareness, undertake social reforms, build national integration but now public service journalism has been replaced by hard core commercialisation. Advertisers influence the editorial and decide what the audience will consume; the undue thrust on commercial gains has led to various unethical trends as well. The alternative voices get muted in front of capitalist global media which will be the focus of our discussion in the last unit of this block.

### **16.6.3 Positive Aspects**

Media globalisation has some positive effects as well. Since global media has made it easier for people across the world to connect with each other, they can now generate their own content on internet, which has provided impetus to alternative media. With an innovative idea, anyone can now become an entrepreneur as global media provides immense opportunities for innovators and there is always something unexplored in technology. According to urban sociologist Manuel Castell (2010), communication technology has major role in the rise of networked society. Specialised doctors of other countries are now easily accessible, people can easily keep a check on the stock market, and online education has emerged as a boon for many students.

Technological determinists can be divided into two groups and both the groups believe in “power of technology to shape human life”. The first group comprises of scholars and writers who believe that technology is a boon to humankind and has transformed human race for good. However, the second group dreads the ill effects of technology and argues that humankind has turned into a slave of technology (Lule, 2012 ). Taking a balanced approach, Castell mentions that computer-mediated communication will not be accessible to all for a long time. Therefore, the cultural impact of computer-mediated communication will be the strengthening of culturally powerful social networks and social linkages which provide access to supportive resources and tools consequently leading to the proliferation in their cosmopolitanism and globalisation (Castell, 2010).

### **16.6.4 Emerging Trends**

Some recent developments are likely to have deep impact on globalisation. For example, Britain’s referendum to exit from the European Union will not only influence Britain, European Union but the global economy as well. The decision

to exit EU caught popular sentiments during 2008 economic crisis that had hit the European Union most badly. Even USA was able to recover in two years but due to its austerity measures it became difficult for EU to bounce back until 2012 and arguments against EU started to build up. In addition to the economic regulation and political sovereignty; large scale immigration from the less developed, poor European nations to Britain in search of jobs is also one of the causes of Brexit. In the last presidential elections in America, native’s sentiments played a huge role in the victory of Donald Trump whose protectionist policies were condemned by many countries. Thus, the policies of countries like Britain and America can change the pace and course of globalisation in future.

**Check Your Progress 2**

**Notes:** 1) Use the space below for your answer.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1) Give examples of popular global media in India.

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2) What is ‘cultural homogenisation’?

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3) Mention the impact of media globalisation.

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**16.8 LET US SUM UP**

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In this unit, we looked at the concept and factors of globalisation and analysed the emergence of globalisation in India. Some reasons of globalisation were stated as poor economy, excessive fiscal debts, balance of payment deficit, reduction in foreign exchange reserve and pressure from IMF among others. The emergence of media globalisation was traced in three phases: World War I to the end of cold war, then during 1990 to 2015 and a highly globalised and polarised world 2015 onwards. Some effects of globalisation such as imbalance of news flow, cultural imperialism and domination of powerful media groups were outlined. It was also discussed that global media has made it easier for people across the world to connect with each other. Some recent developments and the policies of countries like Britain and America can change the pace and course of globalisation in future were also briefly discussed.

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## 16.9 FURTHER READINGS

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Bagdikian, B. (2004). *The new media monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.

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Rantanen, T. (2004) *The Media and Globalisation* London: Sage Publications

Sparks, C. (2007). *Globalisation, Development and the Mass Media* London: Sage Publications.

Thussu, D. K. (1998). *Electronic empires: Global media and local resistance*. New York: Arnold.

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## 16.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Globalisation can be described as a process by which the peoples of the world are inter-connected and function together. This process is a combination of economic, technological, political and socio-cultural forces.
- 2) The reasons for globalisation in India were:
  - a) Excessive fiscal debts
  - b) Balance of payment deficit
  - c) Poor economy
  - d) Rise in prices
  - e) Reduction in foreign exchange reserve
  - f) Gulf crisis
  - g) Pressure from IMF for economic restructuring

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Viacom18 (USA), Eros International (India), WPP (UK), CNN (USA).
- 2) Communication networks of financially and technologically robust countries influence the culture of dependent countries by bombarding similar images over a period, it is known as cultural homogenisation.
- 3) Media globalisation leads to:
  - Global networks and global communication
  - Cosmopolitanism
  - Cultural Imperialism
  - Imbalance in news flow
  - Domination of powerful media groups
  - Increasing influence of advertising on editorial.

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## UNIT 17 ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

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### Structure

- 17.0 Introduction
- 17.1 Learning Outcomes
- 17.2 What is Alternative media?
- 17.3 Mainstream Media
- 17.4 Alternative Media in India
  - 17.4.1 Folk Media
  - 17.4.2 Small-Scale Newspapers
  - 17.4.3 Community Video
  - 17.4.4 Community Radio
  - 17.4.5 Citizen Journalism
- 17.5 New Media and Alternative Media
  - 17.5.1 Independent New Websites
  - 17.5.2 Social Media as Alternative Media
- 17.6 Future of Alternative Media
- 17.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 17.8 Further Readings
- 17.9 Possible Answers: Check Your Progress

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### 17.0 INTRODUCTION

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This is the last unit of the course Media and Society in which we shall discuss the concept of alternative media and explain how it is different from the mainstream media. We shall examine different forms of alternative media such as folk media, small scale newspapers, community radio, community video and citizen journalism and their relevance in the present context. We shall also look at new media and social media as alternative platforms and examine the issues related to credibility of the content on social media. The section on future of alternative media throws light on the usage of technological advancements which can change the alternative media discourse and lead to appropriate action by concerned authorities.

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### 17.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After reading this unit you should be able to:

- define alternative media;
- compare the business model of mainstream media with alternative media;
- discuss different forms of alternative media;
- describe the relationship between new media and alternative media; and
- discuss the future of alternative media in India.



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## 17.2 WHAT IS ALTERNATIVE MEDIA?

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Let us first try to understand the meaning of the word ‘alternative’. According to the Oxford English Dictionary alternative (in this context) means available as another possibility or different from what is usual or traditional. When do we look for alternatives in our lives? We generally look for alternatives in our lives when we are dissatisfied with the current option available to us. For example, if you are disappointed with the performance of your mobile phone; you start looking for alternative mobile phone or any other alternative arrangement which can enhance the performance of your mobile phone.

Similarly, alternative media is ‘another possibility to the mainstream media’. Alternative media can be any medium - newspaper, magazine, newsletter, radio, TV, films, new media, wall paintings, graffiti, street art which provides an alternative to the mainstream media. In other words we can say when the mainstream media creates discontent and dissatisfaction; the audience look for alternative sources of information (media) which provides them relevant information and different interpretation. They either become the producer or the consumer of the alternative media.

In their book “Manufacturing Consent” Herman and Chomsky (1998) have mentioned the evolution of radical press in first half of the nineteenth century in Great Britain. “This alternative press was effective in reinforcing class consciousness; it unified the workers because it fostered an alternative value system and framework for looking at the world” which encouraged them to collective action. At one time this radical press became a threat to mainstream media as well as to the legislature. Alternative media differs in content, production and distribution from the mainstream media. It should be noted here that alternative media should not be seen as opposite to the mainstream but considered as a platform where opinions of all shades and pluralistic views are accommodated. The alternative media aims to voice different opinions rather than enunciating only popular or adverse opinion of the mainstream media.

While discussing the concept of ‘gatekeepers’ in previous units you would have read that gatekeepers in mainstream media have their limitations as well as vested interests for highlighting, down playing or even ignoring particular issue. In contrast, the alternative media provides freedom to voice different opinions to surface which are rejected or downplayed by mainstream media.

German philosopher and sociologist Jurgen Habermas, outlined the concept of ‘public sphere’ which is conceived as a social space in which different opinions are expressed, general problems discussed, and collective solutions developed, that may even influence political action. A vibrant public sphere is the central arena for societal communication, however, what are the discourses and who participates and voices their opinions in the public sphere is a key issue. Habermas’s public sphere has been replaced by virtual world wherein a great deal of discussion and debates have influenced political action. Recently, India Against Corruption, Nirbhaya movement are a few classic examples of public discussion and debate which lead to political action. Even individual tweets to ministers lead to political action and follow up.

Certain radical groups of Maoists and Naxals publish their newspaper and enunciate discontent in the society; Awami Jung, known as Jung, is one such internal journal of the Maoist party in India. Some student groups/unions at University or college level also exploit different forms of alternative media to express their views and dissent in the system. The Student federation of India publishes 'Student Struggle' monthly in English and 'Chatra Sangrash' in Hindi and many other in regional languages to spread their voice and unite the students for social transformation. Internationally, Julian Assange's Wiki Leaks is a popular example of exposing the misdoings of various Governments and Corporate sector. *Democracy Now!* is independent award-winning news programme hosted by journalists Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzales in the United States of America. It is a national programme which is distributed through various online and offline media platforms (refer to <http://www.democracynow.org> for more information).

Seema Mustafa, senior journalist and political commentator views that alternative media is smaller in comparison to mainstream media but "it can connect with the rural, is committed to the poor and the oppressed and reports the truth". She believes that in the past quarter century media has undergone tremendous changes and "the takeover of the corporates has resulted in a total disconnect of the real India from the mainstream media", hence the need for alternative media.

Berrigan's (1979) identifies two critical concepts of alternative media: access and participation. Access refers to the availability of communication tools and resources for local community members to express themselves collectively or individually, irrespective of geography, class, ethnicity, or gender. Participation on the other hand focus upon two aspects, the involvement of the community in media processes of design, production, and implementation as well as the level of peoples engagement, ranging from tokenism to full ownership of processes on the other (Fairbairn 2009; Berrigan 1979). Several scholars also point towards the locally and culturally relevant content of Community media as its defining aspect.

Audiences' identification with the producers of local content of community media builds trust and credibility of content.

Carpentier, Lie and Servaes identify the following characteristics of alternative media with reference to mainstream media:

- Small scale and oriented towards specific communities, possibly disadvantaged groups, respecting their diversity;
- Independent of state and market;
- Horizontally structured, allowing for the facilitation of audience access and participation within the frame of democratisation and multiplicity;
- Carriers of non-dominant discourses and representations, stressing the importance of self representation.

They further advocate a rhizomatic view of community/ alternative media as it tends to cut across borders and build linkages and connections among civil society, other community media, the state and the market, to serve the interest of the community they serve without losing their identity and diminishing the rigidities

and certainties of public and commercial media organisations and highlighting the fluidity and contingency of community media organisations.

### Activity -1

Listed below are some alternative media platforms. You may browse their websites to get acquainted with their functions and activities:

- Woman’s Community Radio
- World Pulse Magazine
- GAMCOTRAP
- NYC Grassroots Media Coalition
- Black Music Radio or Pirate Radio
- Indy Media
- OneWorld.net
- Jay’s Leftist & “Progressive
- Community Broadcasting Online
- Australian Community Radio and Television
- Alternative Radio
- The Common Dreams News Center
- ZNet and the Alternative Press Review
- Global Voices Online
- Good News Agency

In the light of above discussion, we may define alternative media as “a small-scale, independent, grassroots media which encourage alternative discourse to highlight the marginalised section of society.” It is people’s media which is run largely by community for the benefit of their own community. Thus, alternative media is by the people, for the people, and of the people.

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## 17.3 MAINSTREAM MEDIA

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Herman and Chomsky (1997) have compared mainstream media to elite media, “sometimes called the agenda-setting media because they are the ones with the big resources, they set the framework in which everyone else operates”. They emphasised the five filters of propaganda model which have trapped the media professionals so much that no one is able to see the biasness in the reports. These filters are:

- The ownership pattern: who owns media, its size, type of ownership, wealth involved, and profit making;
- Dependency of mainstream media on the advertising revenue;
- Relying on information provided by government, business and expert by mainstream media (at times funded and approved by them);
- Flak and enforcers; and

- Anti-communism as control mechanism.

The ownership pattern of mainstream media plays crucial role in defining its content which serve the interest of dominant ideology of the system. The mainstream media is big media and demand huge resources which corporate houses are best placed to cater. Generally, corporate houses run mainstream media but there are some exceptions in our country where mainstream media is controlled by families and politician and political parties too. The mainstream media runs on a business model and the latest trends reflect a growing tendency to maximise the profit. With the intervention of corporate culture news has been turned into a commodity, which like any other product in market needs to be marketed, packaged and presented in scintillating way to the audience. This commodification of news is largely centred around the personal views of the prime time television news anchors. This trend has further eroded mainstream media’s role to express alternative views and dissent voices.

Senior journalist, P. Sainath argues that “it depends on what the media presume as their social role. Today for instance, the media see their role as a representation of the corporate world as it believes in its ideology. In a different time, in a different period, Indian journalism was a child of the freedom struggle”. He also points out that “increasingly the media now function as stenographers to the powerful”. According to him the Indian media is politically free but they are hemmed in the profit making and still ruled by the elite ideologies.

Scholars working in the area lay stress not only on the alternative media content but also on the alternative corporate structure or an alternative business model which supports the objective of alternative media and does not dilute the content and information. They argue that the business model should not be profit-centric but focused on social change and development.

Thus it can be argued that mainstream media stands for status quo while alternative media roots for change. When the mainstream media fails to perform its responsibilities, a vacuum is created in the society wherein people long for authentic information without prejudices of the media house. The alternative media aims to address the information needs of audience and provide them information reflecting alternative opinion and perspectives.

**Check Your Progress 1**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Define alternative media.

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2) Why mainstream media is also known as elite media?

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- 3) List five areas on which alternative and mainstream media largely differ.

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## 17.4 ALTERNATIVE MEDIA IN INDIA

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In India, the concept of alternative media is still evolving and is seen more as an anti-establishment and radical media. Sainath, however, argues that the existence of alternative media in India can be traced back to our pre-independence days when Indian media acted as the alternative media to the ruling British media. At that time, many underground press and radio stations were functional; many small regional language newspapers were regularly published in support of the nationalist movement to topple down the British raj. The states with high literacy rates such as Kerala were able to establish regional newspapers and presses which contributed to the national awakening.

In this section, we shall look at some alternative media forms in India such as folk media, street theatre, small newspapers, community video and radio among others.

### 16.4.1 Folk Media

Folk media is considered to be the most important alternative media in the rural India. It is the oldest form of entertainment and information in our country. Folk media took its shape and form as per the culture of a region. For instance, Nautanki from UP, Bhavai of Gujarat, Tamasha of Maharashtra, Jatra from West Bengal, Rajasthan's famous Puppetry show, Ramleela and Rasleela are performed in various states. In modern India in various cities and colleges Nukkad Natak or Street Play became prominent folk medium to reach out to people with social messages.

Street plays have evolved a lot since past three decades and have become voice of various radical groups. In 1940's, one of its kind alternative medium was started in the form of Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) by the Communist party of India, which still exists. The primary objective of IPTA was to bring social reforms and to act against British repression. They disseminated their messages through the medium of theatre and made people aware about their rights and responsibilities. IPTA highlighted the issues that were ignored by the national media in the wake of the freedom struggle. Many popular names, including KA Abbas, Dr. Homi Bhabha, Ismat Chughtai, Sahir Ludhianvi and many more were members of IPTA and they worked hand-in-hand with common people to bring about change. The Government of India after independence realised the prominence of folk/traditional media and established Song and Drama Division. This unit works at grassroot level and promotes Government programmes and policies through live and direct folk performances.

Feminist author Urvashi Butalia (1993) in her case study, "Women and Alternative Media (India) discussed various alternative platforms available to women in India. She highlighted how Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP) had used Yatra as an outreach tool for engaging the audience by using various tools such

as public speaking, puppetry, songs, plays, posters etc. “Save Narmada Yatra” was a campaign on similar lines against building of Narmada and Saradar Sarovar Dam in Central India. Another medium was street theater, a play – “Om Swahs” by Delhi based women group ‘Stree Shakti’ against dowry highlighting the plight of women who could not bring enough dowry.

#### **Activity-2**

Identify a folk media of your region and explain how it acts as an alternative medium.

### **17.4.2 Small-Scale Newspapers**

Initially, alternative media in India was largely limited to the small newspapers and magazines circulated by some radical groups. Khabar Lahariya is one such newspaper started by a Delhi based NGO -”Nirantar” in 2002. It is an eight page weekly publication from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar written in multiple local dialects and it covers the functioning of panchayats, government, schools, hospitals, social issues, civil issues in the region. Women from the marginalised sections of society with little or no formal education are provided training to report, edit, design, illustrate, and take photographs for the newspaper. They even distribute newspaper via small shops, teas stalls and block headquarters. According to khabarlahariya.org “it has 40 members, Khabar Lahariya team sells 6000 copies across 600 villages of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to a readership of 80,000 per week. Khabar Lahariya began as the only Bundeli newspaper in India and now has editions in Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Hindustani and Bajjika”.

### **17.4.3 Community Video**

On similar lines, in 2007 Appan Samachar, an all-women community news channel was started by Mr. Santosh Sarang in Ramlila Gachi, Muzafarpur, Bihar. The village girls were trained to undertake various activities related to news production on their own. The 25-minute news capsule was exhibited in *haats* using projector. Urvashi Butalia (1993) highlighted the contribution of Cendit – a Delhi Based group and Self-employed Women’s Association (SEWA), a woman’s group based in Ahmedabad. Cendit on one hand was making videos for women keeping their way of story-telling (Swang) and modeling them in the video so that the video was not alien to them. On the other hand, SEWA, a large trade union of women workers in the informal sector in Gujarat were given training in video production which empowered them to shoot their own routine issues and exhibit them.

Social campaign videos are still shown in cinema halls and on television but digital media has given it a new impetus.

### **17.4.4 Community Radio**

All India Radio has a wide network of radio stations connecting the urban and rural parts of the country. Being a public service broadcaster it incorporates regional and people-centric programming. While private radio stations are entirely devoted to entertainment. Community Radio Stations (CRS) fill this gap created by public and private radio stations and emerge as an effective alternative broadcast medium and as the name suggests, the CRS serve a certain community.

CRS operate in an area of 5-10 km radius and aim to function for the betterment of the society by democratising information. The CRS are largely owned and operated by Universities, NGOs, independent media practitioners and media groups (which are not part of any big corporate). They broadcast content which is useful for the people residing in that community and highlight social issues ignored by the mainstream radio stations. Community radio programming is aimed at social development keeping the information needs of the community of that area in mind.

The Community Radio Guidelines 2006 stress that “the programmes of community radio should be of immediate relevance to the community and focus should be on issues relating to education, health, environment, and agriculture and rural and community development. And fifty per cent of the content should be generated by the participation of local people in the community in local language and dialect”. For instance, discussions and debates in studio, phone-in programmes, traditional music promotion etc. The essence of such people generated content is that they know the pulse of the audience and can contribute in making a content rich programme. Though the content produced in all the media platforms discussed above may be amateurish but expresses the spirit of the alternative media. Thus, community radio can be termed as peoples’ medium which is for the people by the people and of the people.

In 1998, The Deccan Development Society (DDS), an NGO working with poor, rural, dalit women in the Zaheerabad area of Medak district in Andhra Pradesh, had set up a CRS with assistance from UNESCO. Gurgaon ki Awaaz Samudayik Radio Station is another CRS in Gurgaon (Delhi NCR) which caters to the marginalised sections, migrant labourers from different states and villagers in the corporate hub of Gurgaon. The content is produced by villagers in popular languages and dialects such as Hindi, Haryanvi and Bhojpuri. Music programmes of wide range are aired from musical to discussion and debates in chaupal style keeping in mind the needs and understanding of the marginalised sections in the area.

#### **17.4.5 Citizen Journalism**

The Indian broadcasting sector is now majorly dominated by the private players and corporate houses. The Government control has become less with the increase in 24X7 television news channels in past few decades but these private broadcasters also repress the alternative voices instead of articulating them. Dasu Krishnamoorthy, former journalist and academician (2003) in a post - “Defining alternative media in Indian context” stressed on the weakness of mainstream media of not fulfilling the role of mass communication and informing the society. He said that government and mainstream media both do not pay much heed to the public opinion and alternative media should provide training to its manpower against mainstream media rather than the government.

The citizen journalism related videos broadcast on the private national news channel can also be considered as alternative media. The CNN-IBN broadcasts a special programme called Citizen Journalist wherein the video shot by common citizens of the country on any social issue or human rights violation etc. can be sent to the TV station which can telecast it, if found relevant. The issues picked up by citizens are generally related to their neighbourhood but also have relevance for other sections of society. These days many newspapers also publish a column

contributed by citizen journalists and all these initiatives can be considered as the alternative media.

**Activity- 3**

Listen to community radio broadcast in your area for a week and analyse its content. In your opinion, is the community radio an alternative medium of information keeping in view the points discussed above?

**Check Your Progress 2**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Define citizen journalism.

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2) How community radio station is different from the mainstream radio station?

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**17.5 NEW MEDIA AND ALTERNATIVE MEDIA**

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With the advent of New Media, the difference between the mass media, personal media and alternative media has blurred. New media can be considered as mass media as well as personal media; however, the proponents of alternative media consider new media as an important alternative media which allows people to voice their opinions. With the arrival of social media; also known as Web 2.0, it includes those websites which enable users to create and share content, the differing voices have got a new platform bringing about a sea change in the very concept of alternative media. Now one does not need to be part of any radical group or any student union, as a commoner too you can voice your differences with the system through blogs, social networking sites, micro blogging sites etc.

Alternative media very much involves the various mass media forms; it reaches the masses and generate asymmetrical interaction. Whereas the content of the alternative media is ‘de-professional’; it is not presented professionally as it is in mass media. As you are aware, the mainstream media is run by highly skilled professionals whereas alternative media lacks skilled professionals. Therefore, the content is de-professional and the presentation of the content may not be up to the standard. This is considered to be one of the biggest weaknesses of the alternative media but this pushes it out of the clutches of dominant ideology and powerful interest groups. The alternative media aims to provide alternative views and serve the society by informing and educating the masses not by serving the needs and desires of the corporate sectors and pressure groups. It is in contrast with mass culture propagated by mass media and in addition to de-professional content, alternative media also has lower budgets and operational costs in comparison to mass media.



### 17.5.1 Independent News Websites

New Media as alternative media has recorded significant growth in the past decade. The reason behind this is low fixed cost involved in venturing in this media. It has lowered the entry barrier for the young entrepreneurs to start their own media shops. Moreover, it is the convergent point of all the media as it amalgamates print (text, pictures), radio (audio) and TV (video) into one which makes it more interactive. The instant nature of new media has diluted delayed feedback nature of the other mass media. Many freelance journalists have started their own websites which act as an alternative to the mainstream media. Some such websites are [goodnewsindia.com](http://goodnewsindia.com), [infochangeindia.com](http://infochangeindia.com) and Lokmanch a Hindi language website that voice dissent against the ruling class. Even Khabar Lahriya had launched its website <http://khabarlahariya.org> where they also upload videos, audios and pictures related to their news reports. Merinews.com, launched in 2006 is the India's largest citizen based news portal which allows citizens to express their views on any topic. Its editorial team further scrutinises the reports submitted by the citizens and has started publishing its city specific tabloid.

#### Activity- 4

Compare the number of articles per day in an alternative media website and a main stream media website on the following parameters:

Parameters	Alternative Media Website	Mainstream Media Website
Education		
Health		
Human rights		
Gender		

### 17.5.2 Social Media as Alternative Media

Social media has provided platform to individual citizens to participate in contemporary debates and discussions. People now also rely on Twitter for breaking news than the news channels. To them, Twitter is the place where one gets different opinion that may not find a place in dominant mainstream media. Half a decade ago many important, controversial stories would have been buried by the mainstream media but now with the power of social media it is not easy to suppress information.

Social media gives platform to the citizen to become a producer through their blogs, tweets, status updates, articles etc. Earlier it was difficult to think of owning one's own newspaper or television channel because of heavy fixed costs involved. But now the new media and especially social media have made it easier for the young journalists to become entrepreneurs.

You may ask the questions - how many people have access to social media? Is it still not an urban and elite-centric media? How many times has any rural centric issue become the most debatable issue on social media? Has it become a

promotional tool lately? All these questions are relevant and at times social media does end up being a promotional tool rather than being a platform for discussion and debates. The credibility and authenticity of the content on the social media websites is also under question. At times, information uploaded in haste leads to serious consequences. There is a need to cross check the facts before completely believing them. Even if an individual uploads something on social media it is very important for the producer to be socially responsible and sensitive.

**Egyptian Revolution** is said to be one of the mass movement triggered by social media. In 2011, in Egypt, the socio-political-economic condition was extremely depressing that general masses with the help of social media shook the government in power. The mainstream media of Egypt was under the state control. People chose to voice their dissent through social media; Twitter and Facebook were used rigorously to organise mass agitations and demonstrations against the government at Tahrir Square which resulted in the resignation by Hosini Mubarak from presidency and the powers were transferred to the Armed forces of Egypt. Later, the Supreme Court convicted him to life imprisonment for the failure to stop killings during the first six days of Egyptian revolution-2011.

Closer home, **Anna Movement of 2011 or India Against Corruption (IAC)**, is credited to be one mass movement which was initially engineered by the social media of India later joined by the mainstream media and set the agenda for coming months. In December, 2012 the infamous Delhi gang rape in a bus led to media uproar and social media again became a tool to unite people for **Nirbhaya Movement**. This had pressurised the legislature to amend the rape law of the country. Yet another example of social media phenomena was the support to Jallikattu in January, 2017 in Tamil Nadu wherein numerous Tamilian supporters gathered at famous Marina Beach in Chennai to lend their support to save their tradition and culture. Jallikattu is a bull taming sport held during Pongal, it was banned by the Supreme Court. Large share of this movement goes to social media and mobile messaging applications.

**Check Your Progress 3**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) List some issues involved in the use of social media.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2) What is difference between independent news websites and social media?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity-5**

Make a Facebook Page as your 'neighbourhood alternative media'. Give a suitable name to the page along with a logo as profile picture and complementing cover picture. Write about the neglected but important issues regarding your surrounding which are generally ignored by the mainstream media. Post articles regularly with apt pictures and videos. You may ask your neighbours and Facebook friends to read and participate.

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## 17.6 FUTURE OF ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

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The future of alternative media depends upon on each one of us - users, journalists as well as media channels. It needs to be analysed whether journalism is aimed to serve the society and people through journalistic writings or the interests of corporate houses. P. Sainath says that he will participate in the mainstream media and raise pertinent issues as he does not want to make it easier for the corporate and will also continue his support for alternative media. It is important for the journalists to understand the roles and objectives of media and focus on the developmental and human rights issues.

Apart from the duty of journalists the future of alternative media also lies in future communicating mediums. In last one decade the new media has totally changed the way we communicate. Now not only journalists but the common person has also got an imperative tool to voice their dissent. As discussed in the previous section, New media has given very affordable medium like websites, blogs, micro blogs, social networking sites which can function even without the support of advertising. The future of alternative media lies in the way new media is used by the netizens and how the course of technology changes from here. With pocket internet and ipads people are now using web like never before though it is still accessed by the urban class and there is a strong need to reach out to the rural population.

One such example is of **CGNetSwara** founded in 2008 which uses technology wisely and has emerged as an important alternative medium of communication. CGNet stands for Central Gondwana Net, and *swara* means "voice" in Sanskrit. According to its website- "it is a voice-based portal, freely accessible via mobile phone that allows anyone to report and listen to stories of local interest. Reported stories are moderated by journalists and become available for playback online as well as over the phone". CGNetSwara discusses the issues related to the tribal community in Central Gondwana region which is neglected by the mainstream media.

According to a report in livemint.com "The portal comprises four components: callers, who give missed calls to the portal phone number to either report or listen to news; a server that returns the call and collects and stores the audio bytes; moderators, who publish the byte on the website; and website visitors, who can be either journalists from the mainstream media who want to cover a certain story, non-governmental organisations that want to extend support, urban activists who follow reported stories, or local authorities who want to address grievances". The impact of this alternative medium is also visible at grassroot level; many of the caller problems are resolved as administration is forced to look into the matter, once it is highlighted by the citizens.

**Radio Pitara**, a start up, founded in 2016 utilises ICT for rural communication. It is a free of cost service wherein an individual needs to give a missed call on a toll free number from his/her mobile number and in return, they get a call back and information and entertainment based content is played.

**Activity - 4**

Visit the websites of above organisations and analyse their activities from the perspective of alternative media.

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## 17.7 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we defined the term alternative media “as a small-scale, independent, grass root media which encourage alternative discourse to highlight the issues concerning the marginalised sections”. We examined different forms of alternative media available at the grassroots level for addressing the information needs of people who do not have access to mainstream media or are unable to relate with it. We also looked at some new media platforms such as merinews.com, khabarlahriya.org, cgnetswara.org and social media platforms such as: Twitter and Facebook which give outlet to different point of views.

From the discussion a strong need for alternative media was traced to give impetus to grassroots journalism and highlight the issues of the marginalised sections. For facilitating development and aiming to be a pluralistic society; it is imperative that more such platforms are introduced. The mainstream media should also focus on such issues and resist the pressures of corporate houses, political parties and think beyond TRPs and advertisements. We need to find ways to marry technology with content generation and distribution so that the alternative media reaches out to a wider audience and becomes relevant and remains independent. More liberal and social thinkers are required to take the baton of alternative media forward.

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## 17.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Alternative media can be defined as any media platform run by people for people and of the people.
- 2) Mainstream media is known as elite media since it is owned by powerful corporate houses which largely cater to the needs of the elite class.
- 3) The alternative and mainstream media mainly differ on the following areas:
  - a) Mission
  - b) Content generation
  - c) Content distribution
  - d) Budget and operational cost (Advertisements, subscription cost)
  - e) News as commodity v/s social good
  - f) Role of gatekeepers

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Citizen journalism is a platform promoted by private television news channels and newspapers wherein citizens report about any incident in their neighbourhood with a video footage or photograph with a small write-up. This platform has been adopted by new media as well.
- 2) Community radio stations mainly differ on following parameters:

Parameters	Community Radio Station	Mainstream Radio Station
Coverage	5-10 km	Very wide
Ownership	NGO/ University/ Individuals/group	Corporate/ Government
Content	Community specific, locally produced, Focus on infotainment	Entertainment based (private radio); Infotainment (public radio)
Target Group	Community	Masses
Advertisements	Negligible	Largely runs on advertising revenue
Size	Small group	Large organisations

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Limited access, largely urban and elite centric, use as promotional tool, credibility and authenticity of the content are some of the issues involved in the use of social media.
- 2) Some differences between independent news website and social media are enumerated below:

**Media and Contemporary  
Issues-II**

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Independent News Websites</b>	<b>Social Media</b>
Ownership	Individual/small groups	Owned by big groups/ companies
Content	News (focus on news filtered by mainstream media)	Can be about anything
Reach	Masses	Limited to followers/ Network
Content Producer	Professionals	Users
Use	Information, Education	Information, Entertainment, Education, Promotion
Engagement level	Low	High

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Mediated interaction: it involves some technical medium such as paper, electrical wire etc which enable transmission of information from one individual to other at distance. E.g. E-mail, phone call etc...

Mediated quasi interaction: it involves mass media forms, wherein the sender and audience do not know each other and the information flow is one-way not two-way. E.g. TV, Newspaper etc...

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