
UNIT 4 DEPENDENCY THEORY

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4.0 INTRODUCTION

Mass media have emerged as dominant players in modern society. They exert influence in varying degrees on their users. The steady expansion of mass media beginning from print followed by cinema, radio, television and in recent times the convergence of different media technologies have profound influence on audience. The combination of electronic media – radio and TV has brought society further closer to information and entertainment round the clock. The average time spent on various communication media has gone up in an impressive manner over the years.

Mass media are 20th century phenomenon. Apart from their growth and expansion, the interest in their consumption patterns and their influences attracted researchers to examine their influence. These studies identified the time devoted on media, the consumption patterns, the gratifications they derived and the effects they had on their audiences. The expansion of mass media engaged audience by diverting their time and attention from other activities and reached large number of people.

Dependency Theory is an extension of Uses and Gratifications theory advocating integral relationship among audiences and media within the context of social system. The key factor is whenever certain social factors and practices are challenged, the dependency on media would increase while during peaceful time, people rely less on them. The key elements advocated in the Dependency Theory are in the context of audience, media and social system. Two eminent communication scholars Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Lawrence DeFleur proposed Dependency Theory in 1976. In the 1970s and 1980s, DeFleur continued studies on news diffusion. The research investigations undertaken by DeFleur

and Sandra Ball-Rokeach in 1976 lead to the formation of the Media Systems Dependency Theory.

4.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the effects of media on users in socio-cultural context;
- describe the factors that influence dependence on the media by audience;
- analyse audience-media-society relationships; and
- analyse the relevance of the Dependency Theory in the context of new social media.

4.2 MEDIA DEPENDENCY THEORY: CONCEPT AND NATURE

The steady expansion of mass media during the early part of 20th century attracted the attention of media researchers, mostly from sociology, political science, and psychology, to examine media effects. Urbanisation and migration of population compelled people to depend more on media for information and entertainment. The traditional news sources gave way for technology aided communication media. Media like radio and cinema were extensively used for the purpose of political propaganda during the two world wars. In post-war period researchers evinced keen interest in studying media effects and a new tradition of media research was born. Media intervention in modernising agriculture and health practices attracted attention of communication researchers.

In the early part of 20th century, Media established its presence in large parts of Europe and America. The researchers evolved scientific methodology to examine the effects of such powerful and pervasive media devices. Early studies advocated that mass media are very powerful in influencing the people. Later, studies with better methodological approaches proved that many intervening variables play significant role in influencing people. One such theory that advocated the influence of social, cultural and other beliefs that shape media effects is the Dependency Theory of media effects or Media Dependency Theory.

In an article published in the journal (Communication Research, 1976), both Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Lawrence DeFleur challenged the notion of all powerful effects of media. Their argument was that both “hypodermic needle” and “magic bullet” concepts of dominant media effects have failed “to support such a conceptualisation”. Earlier, media were projected as all powerful, pervasive that directly reach the audience without any hindrance. Factors such as personal beliefs, societal and cultural barriers were not considered as intervening factors for effective communication. The stimulus response probabilities ignored the complexities of human communication.

Another aspect is that of complex social system and the relationship between the individual and the society. A social institution like mass media plays a critical role in influencing people on many issues. The declining power and control of social system over individuals paved way for the commanding role of media. Studies have endorsed the premise that media play a dominant role in persuasion

of audience in adoption of messages. It is this complex relationship of variables, which requires to be examined in order to establish the dependency on media.

When the traditional society transformed into an urban and industrial mass society during 20th century, certain distinctive characteristics emerged in the process. They were influenced by factors such as “bureaucracy, contracts, migration, stratification, and the spread of innovation. It is said that all of these individual and social forces have worked to set people apart rather than bring them together” (Lowery and DeFluer, 1995).

The new impersonal society emerged because of social differentiation, erosion of social controls, and psychological alienation in urban setting which led to dependency on mass media. Aside with rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, mass media emerge as central forces disseminating information to a diverse audience. As the circulation of newspapers and magazines galloped, their influence was evident in social and cultural behaviours. Watching of films was becoming more popular. Critics accused media responsible for the decline of moral and cultural values in the society. This led to more studies aimed to examine the influence of media on their audiences.

The proponents of the Media Dependency Theory argued, “audiences frequently encounter media messages about which they have pre-established beliefs and norms that are anchored in their group associations and that filter or recreate media messages to conform to the established social realities of the audience. While such generalisations are helpful in understanding the psychological and social processes which act as constraints on media influence, the conceptualisations on which they are based may not be the best guides for studying a complex social process such as mass communication” (Lowery and DeFluer 1995).

The argument of the authors is that every individual is a member of a social group and they have pre-established norms and media messages that will be conformed as per social realities. Further, as the social structure becomes more complex, people lose contact with the system and start to rely a great deal on mass media. As powerful institutions, mass media have a dominant role not only in persuading their audiences but also in providing wide range of information. Researchers earlier advocated that media are all powerful but they ignored audience in the communication process, whereas Media Dependency Theory regards audience as an active participant.

Check Your Progress 1

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

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

1) Why dependence theory is considered an extension of Uses and Gratification Theory?

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- 2) What factors led to the examination of the influence of media on their audiences?

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4.3 MEDIA CONTENTS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON AUDIENCE

The growth of mass communication is inextricably related to the growth of new technologies besides developments in the fields of transportation, economic advancements, increase in the leisure time and enhanced purchasing power of people. The growth of society is consistently supported by improved communication services through various media. During the first half of the 20th century, the circulation of newspapers increased voluminously across Europe, America and other parts of the world. Movies emerged as major source of entertainment.

The widespread reach and popularity of different communication media made people to depend on them for information, education and entertainment in the new urban settings. Researchers argued that the study of mass communication is based on the postulation that the media have effects on masses. Different communication scholars have categorised effects of mass media in different ways depending upon the nature and purpose of media messages.

The postulation of the dependency model is that masses are extremely dependent on media for their diverse needs. One form of dependency is that media are the major source of information. An individual had to depend on media for knowledge to act meaningfully and successfully. Media initially became an urban phenomenon as audience in urban areas have to depend on media for entertainment and relaxation.

This core concept of the Dependency Theory is that communication and society are inseparable and both are interdependent. No modern society can survive without modern media of communication.

The argument of the theory is that people depend on media for information needs in almost all fields – politics, economics, business, lifestyle, entertainment, leisure time activities etc. Thus, several factors control the degree of media dependence. Whenever there are significant transformations in society the dependence on media increases. Throughout such time the reliance on media for information, guidance and suggestions would normally go up. During more secure times, the dependency on media would usually decrease.

As mentioned, the degree of stability varies in the social system. For instance during the times of war, massive floods, disasters, earthquakes or any unnatural developments, the social system gets affected. In such circumstances, the dependency on media goes up as one would depend mainly on media for information, latest developments, precautions to be taken etc. On the other hand, the centrality of information functions varies. Media establishments with their systematic networks of information gathering systems attempt to supply updated developments. If print media offer detailed information on any crisis, television would ensure round the clock updates with both audio and video inputs. Similarly, radio would also offer latest information in more convenient manner as it is mobile. Of course, the latest apps through networks could also provide latest developments through smart phones. Therefore, each medium attempts to fulfil the information needs of the users depending on their needs. As pointed out by the proponents of the theory, information functions of each medium vary in a media system.

On the other hand, the degree of dependence of the audience varies both in social and media systems. If the social system is stable, the dependence on media may be somewhat less and in unstable situation the dependence on media system would automatically go up.

Ball-Rokeach et al. (1976) believed that the dependency on media lead to various cognitive, affective and behavioural effects. The theory explores the relationship between media, society and the audiences. It argues that an individual living in urban areas is more dependent on media for information as it affects their day to day living than those settled in suburban or rural area.

The dependency model proposed by authors attaches importance to several cognitive, affective, and behavioural effects on the audience. Media messages are constant and pervasive in contemporary context. They persistently exert influence on their audience. However, it should be understood that not all messages are accepted by audience as they are competent enough to select according to their needs and interests.

4.3.1 Cognitive

We are bombarded with information by the mass media. We live in information age and an information-centric society. We are flooded with information. Media messages contain an overload of information every day. Messages that originate through newspapers, periodicals, books, websites, radio and television are a valuable source of knowledge, which influence thinking process resulting in gaining knowledge. In the process, information is turned into knowledge through the thought process. As a thinking being, man can evaluate, compare and infer meanings and decide on its uses. Based on one's educational background and mental abilities, a person can draw meanings from media messages. Media help to update knowledge and present different perspectives on significant issues helping audience to draw conclusions. Individuals also have the capacity to think even beyond media messages. This process of evaluating messages is termed as cognitive messages.

Media are windows to the world. They disseminate information about the external world. This helps people to expand their knowledge at global level which also effect their belief systems. We know so much about complex issues like nuclear

arms, global warming, atmospheric pollution, poverty, gender discriminations, and exploitations without being experts on these subjects. We have gained knowledge from media on worldly issues. Whenever some issues crop up at global or regional levels, media clarify on existing values and conflicts and offer information. On prominent issues related to human rights or child rights to education or right to information, media offer an opportunity to public to voice their concerns. Therefore, the value conflicts are recognised by the public and issues get public approval or disapproval. More importantly, media assist in clarifying certain issues and removes ambiguity.

When the level of uncertainty is very high because of inadequate information, audience will be inclined to look up to media to get more insight on the issue. It is to be noted that ambiguity also creates stress in the minds of audience. As pointed out earlier, media would identify some burning issues and make their audience deliberate on them. Public are invited to give suggestions on solving issues. The agenda setting of media on certain situations, if logically created, would make the audience rely more on media for guidance and clarifications. The exposure to media invariably helps to form attitudes on public issues. They may include corrupt practices in politics, gender issues, representation of women in legislatures etc. Most of the times, media draw attention to these issues and create opportunities to deliberate and generate proper understanding of an issue.

People generally depend on news updates to make sure that their life is secure and society is peaceful. Media campaigns on burning issues may prompt some members of the audience to think more realistically and mobilise support for the cause.

4.3.2 Affective

Human beings react to the changes that take place around them, be it happiness, fear, anger or laughter. The media can trigger emotions, especially fear, lust, anger, and laughter. The media also offer their users with lots of opportunities to manage the emotions and moods. People are curious and eager to know what is happening around them. That is one major reason why we access media. We also react to what we watch on TV, movies or Internet. Listening to music can change your mood and help you relax. We watch TV shows to relax and this may reduce routine stress.

Most of the contents both in print and electronic media aim at making you respond to the developments either in positive or negative ways. This is called as affect stimulated by media contents. For instance, prolonged exposure to certain contents might make audience to develop desensitisation. One may not be keen to help reduce such incidents and might dismiss them as routines. Some programmes may make you avoid some places or people as they have been shown in a negative manner. If a group of people or places are constantly shown in a negative way, they may develop a sense of alienation.

4.3.3 Behaviours

Behaviour is defined as response to a particular situation. It is an overt action of an individual. One could be aggressive, polite, passive, cunning, social, helpful or considerate. The list is endless. They can be grouped based on professions, occasions, timings etc. The continuous exposure to media would certainly alter

the behaviours. Media may change the opinions, beliefs of the mass audience. Advertising messages continuously try to change the consumer behaviours. Lifestyle contents in media may affect our dressing, hairstyle etc. Political messages may change party leanings. Cinema exerts a great deal of influence on lifestyle. Some media content might induce aggressive behaviours. As audiences are constantly exposed to media content, their behavioural patterns are bound to be influenced.

Behavioural effects normally result in some kind of action. Many a time, media content induces people to imitate certain actions or repeat them. There is likelihood that one may not repeat such actions because of exposure to media. This activation and deactivation of actions is a continuous process determining human behaviour.

4.4 MODELS ON MEDIA DEPENDENCY THEORY

Over the years, the media outlets began offering specialised contents to catch the attention of the audience. Publications devoted to sports, cinema, women, business, music etc. flourished. Same trend emerged in the field of TV and radio also. Research into the areas of attitudinal changes revealed that even though same messages are delivered to the audience, the reception and effect is not uniform among the audience. Each user of medium perceived common messages interpreted and understood differently. This was a turning point in the history of communication research. The concepts like selective exposure, attention, perception and retention noted that audience are heterogeneous in nature, their media needs are different and they are selective in choosing the messages. Studies have disproved that media have uniform effects. Thus, different audience react differently to media messages based on their socio-economic backgrounds. The notion that media are powerful and would have uniform effect on their audience is proved wrong.

Based on this assumption, the authors of Dependency Theory proposed that the specific media content selected by the audience assume significance. The dependency on media is subjected to several individual considerations and requirements, which would influence exposure. Depending on individual requirements, the dependency is activated during exposure. If the contents do not suit the wants, s/he would exit. In case the greater degree of intensity of relevance, the cognitive arousal will increase and that would influence thought process. This process would increase in case the involvement in information processing is very intensive. The authors argue that the greater the involvement, greater the probability of cognitive, affective and behavioural effects from media. Therefore, the relationship between media and an individual depends on mutual requirements.

From above analysis it is clear that mass media are not all powerful and their contents would have no uniform effects on their audience. A number of intervening variables come in the way of media contents and the way their audience perceives. Audience tend to select only those messages which are in accordance with their beliefs and attitudes and ignore other contents. Thus, the identical media messages might influence heterogeneous audience differently based on their socio-economic background, culture and social relationships.

The model proposed by the authors of the Dependency Media Theory illustrates how media messages operate in different socio, economic and political systems. Every individual is part of a socio-economic and political system. Similarly, media systems also operate in such a system.

Activity-1

Refer some research articles on web and in your University library. You could also log on to *Shodhganga* and refer PhD theses to understand the significance of Media Dependency theory and its applications in research. Analyse how and why people rely on media for their news, entertainment and informational requirements.

4.4.1 Levels of Message Effects

The process of how media contents affect is grouped into three different levels known as Micro, Meso and Macro levels. These levels are related to each other and also to the individual needs. An individual is also linked to interpersonal networks and his/her relationships are based on individual and personal characteristics, which would influence media system dependency relations. They are affected at three levels.

An influence at **Micro** level is based on their individual characteristics and requirements between individuals and media. The micro level dependency starts with an assessment of the type of motivation that brings individuals to use the media. Goals are preferred to needs to conceptualise the motivations that affect media behaviour. They are the key aspect of individual motivation. Here goals and needs are highlighted by the proponents of the Dependency Theory. Needs may involve both rational and irrational motives while goals imply a problem-solving motivation more suitable to a theory of media behaviour based upon the dependency relation.

The three motivational goals identified are understanding, orientation and play. Understanding such needs requires appreciative of themselves and the world around them. One would also be capable to interact successfully with others in order to direct personal actions. As a member a group, one should be capable of understanding one's need to learn the roles and norms and demonstrate them in some occasions.

At **Meso** level, interpersonal networks of an individual will affect the way messages are received and verified. However, the interpersonal networks would be limited to a community or an organisation. The group interactions and behaviours have a major role in influencing information seeking behaviours of an individual.

At **Macro** level, social environment which constitutes economic and political systems of a nation would affect the way an individual seeks and procures information and that depends on media system. The Dependency Theory argues that these interrelationships influence what kinds of media products are disseminated to the public for consumption, and the range of possible uses people have for media. Media systems cannot operate in isolation. They are part of social, political and economic systems and are mutually dependent and supportive. The goals and functioning of mass media are influenced by several factors. These

factors would also influence the messages the audience consume which in turn affect the audience. The extent to which audience depend on media to fulfil individual needs would depend on the efficiency of media and their commitment. Media should be allowed to function in a free environment keeping in mind the larger interests of the society in which they function. The interdependencies of different systems, which operate in a society, become crucial for the good of a society.

4.4.2 An Integrated Approach on Media Effects

In the earlier phase of communication research, media were assumed very powerful and were regarded as magic bullets fired from media gun to the viewer's heads. The researchers argued that media injects their messages straight into the passive audience. They concluded that public could not escape from the media's influence. However, over the years through adopting newer and refined research procedures, they concluded that several intervening variables are responsible for causing impact on people. The researchers observed that mass media are not the only causes for any change in the society as individuals are part of different socio-cultural groups with strong beliefs in value systems. Research verification and judgments have led to the understanding that specifics of social structure and social institutions intervene powerfully in the process of imitation and diffusion of information.

The integrated model proposed by the proponents of the media Dependency Theory identifies a large number of factors which operate among society, media and media messages. Any social system is interdependent on media and it needs to maintain relations. The cultural dynamics and the structure of the society continuously interact with media. The dynamics of the society are characterised by consensus or conflicts on certain issues.

Media institutions on the other hand are privately owned and have their own policies. Their survival depends on the resources they generate primarily through advertisements and subscription. The resource generation of media institutions would influence the quality of services they offer. In reality, the support from advertisers and from establishments is central for their effective functioning. The economic stability of such institutions will affect the quality of information delivery functions. The known and covert objectives of owners largely affect their functioning. The proponents of this theory observed that mass media do have important consequences for individuals, institutions, society and culture. The power of the mass media need to be viewed as to how effectively they can and do achieve objectives over others at the will of those who direct, own or control them or who use them as channels for messages. The ownership aspects of mass media assume significance.

Media messages are obviously directed to their audience. The realities are seen through media persons, constructed and delivered to their audiences. People depend on such information for their cognitive, affective and behavioural alterations.

Check Your Progress 2

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

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

1) Explain in brief the following effects on the audience:

a) Cognitive

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b) Affective

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c) Bhavioural

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4.5 NEW MEDIA AND MEDIA DEPENDENCY THEORY

A new dimension to mass communication is added with the emergence of social media. The computer based network systems brought in advanced connectivity through emails, blogs, websites, and online contents. Further developments in communication convergence technologies heralded a new era in human communication history. Network based Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat and other sites and a host of new services to share and interact on online are redefining the way we communicate. These

new developments are putting the existing theories into re-examination of their relevance. Media Dependency Theory cannot be an exception.

The modern society is increasingly experiencing a mediated world rather than reality itself. The images are based on media creation of social reality. The manifestation of computer-mediated communication has altered substantially the media ecology. The view of the world now is limited to the contact with mediated representations of a complex physical and social world. Most of the social and psychological needs are getting satisfied through exposure to mass media.

New technologies offer users with a wider range of source selection and channels of information. Users are becoming highly selective as many options are available online. Electronic advances could make public consultation and participation wider, easier and more diverse, provide new opportunities, which could both focus and diversify the information, people receive and obtain for themselves.

The Internet is at the centre of a new media ecosystem that has united traditional media such as print and broadcast with modern media. The computer networks supported by communication satellites converged and offered a host of services at affordable cost. For instance, any computer or a smart phone could combine images, text, animated images, and moving pictures in portable instruments which could be accessed anywhere in real time. Distance is no more a barrier. Interactions, information retrieval, and exchange among individuals and groups are possible round the clock without any frontier restrictions.

The individual dependency relations with media have undergone significant changes over the past few decades. The unique content available through participatory usage has been massive and stunning. The cognitive process of mediating with new media technologies is characterised as new media dependency. The online content, which is easily available and shared, has opened a new chapter in communication. The social media domain is expanding fast to share more and more information. Both old and young alike have taken into new media. Hitherto, the dependence on media for news and opinions of the audience was almost one sided. The access to mass media for news, analytical information and access to documents has been almost instantaneous. The access is global, choices are abundant and it is truly a global village as stories could be created and shared publicly.

Social media have gained the ability to move across levels defined as micro, meso and macro levels without any borders. They have provided a framework for multiple relationships in which information flows. Social media played a major role in the Arab uprisings. Core group of activists and civil society leaders who succeeded in overthrowing the government in Egypt, and several Arab countries formed online networks. New media have facilitated public participation in content generation.

Activity-2

Interact with a small group of boys and girls and ask them what they do with social media like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn so on. Find out how youngsters are depending on social media to meet their needs and interests.

4.6 MEDIA DEPENDENCY THEORY: A CRITIQUE

Media Dependency Theory is one of the first theories, which regard audience as an active part in communication process. The Dependency Theory is an extension of the theory of Uses and Gratification. Dependency Theory proposes an integral relationship among audiences, media and the larger social system. The premise is that you depend on media information to meet certain needs and to achieve certain goals. One may not depend on all media equally. The dependence is more on media that meet a number of needs than on media that provide just a few. It is also influenced by social stability. Individuals' needs, motives, and uses of media are dependent on outside factors that may not be in the individuals' control. The more alternatives an individual has for gratifying needs, the less dependent s/he will become on any single medium.

The Media Dependency Theory recognised active role of the audience in the mediated world of mass communication. It recognised the fact that mass media are not all powerful in influencing people. There are number of dominant variables that affect the thought process. The observations of Joseph T Klapper that mass communication does not ordinarily serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions through a nexus of mediating factors, holds good.

Several scholars argue that Media Dependency Theory is often difficult to empirically verify and also lacks power in explaining long-term effects. With the emergence of new media technologies, the media ecology scene is undergoing significant changes in the last few decades. The globalised world depends on globalised media systems and networks. Both materials and ideas play a major role in the globalisation process. People are more dependent on social media to fulfil their cognitive, affective, personal and social needs.

Scholars argue that theories are not made to prove true or false. Their usage for the advancement of knowledge and to explain and predict phenomena are more important and relevant. In this context, Media Dependence Theory is still relevant for the study of media effects. The Dependency Theory seems to be logic, consistent and simple. A large number of research studies continue to use the framework of this theory in their scholarly works.

A theory is logical view of phenomena by indicating relations among variables. This would help in dissecting and predicting a phenomenon. Anderson (2012) stated that "all research problems are embedded in some theory whether explicitly stated or not. Theory develops on the foundation of assumptions or irreducible axiomatic beliefs. Theory starts when we assemble a more or less coherent base to consider the implications in some domain". In this context, the relevance of Media Dependency Theory has a major role to play even in the new media ecology.

Activity-3

Select a group of people like homemakers, young boys or girls and interact with them as to what type of programmes they watch on television and why. Do they get influenced by media, do they imitate what they watch on TV like mannerisms, gestures, and dresses, or does TV influence their opinion on politics etc. Analyse your findings in the framework of Media Dependency Theory.

Check Your Progress 3

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

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

1) What is the main critique of Dependency Theory?

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2) What is the defence of this criticism by scholars?

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4.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we undertook a detailed analysis on the importance of Media Dependency Theory. Earlier researchers assumed that mass media are extremely influential. Over the years, systematic and elaborated studies applying rigorous research methods found that various other factors such as culture, belief systems, socio-economic factors also play a crucial role. It is proved that audience depend on media but perceive what they want to see and retain only what is liked and needed owing to socio-cultural factors. The Uses and Gratifications theory looked into what people do with media than what media do to people.

The Media Dependency Theory examined society, media, and their messages in the context of their effects. The proponents of the theory attributed that the structure of the society, social systems and dynamics play a significant role in relation to media and media messages. They stated that dependence on media would be more during the times of crisis, disasters, wars, political upheavals etc. In normal periods, audience would choose any channel of their choice. The Media Dependency Theory strongly advocates that it is not just mere mass media, but there are other variables, which would have effects on the audience.

4.8 FURTHER READINGS

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4.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The dependency theory advocated integral relationship among audiences and media within the context of social system. Whenever certain social factors and practices are challenged, the dependency on media would increase and during the peaceful time, they degree of dependence may go down. The key elements advocated in the Dependency theory are in the context of audience-media and social system this is why it is considered as an extension of Uses and Gratifications theory.
- 2) The emergence of a new impersonal society, rapid industrialisation and urbanisation led to social differentiation and erosion of social controls. Mass media emerged as important force for disseminating information to a diverse audience. The increased popularity of newspapers, magazines and films led to the examination of the influence of media on social and cultural behaviours.

Check Your Progress 2

a) Cognitive

Media messages contain an overload of information every day. Messages that originate through print media such as newspapers, periodicals, books, websites radio and TV programmes are a valuable source of knowledge, which influences thinking process resulting in gaining knowledge.

b) Affective

Human beings react to the changes that take place around them, be it happiness, fear, anger or laughter - known as emotions and moods. Media can trigger emotions, especially fear, lust, anger, and laughter. The media also offer their users with lots of opportunities to manage their moods. Most of the contents both in print and electronic media aim at making you respond to the developments both in positive and negative ways. This is known as affect stimulated by media contents.

c) Behavioural

Behaviour is defined as response to a particular situation. It is an overt action of an individual. One could be aggressive, polite, passive, cunning, social, helpful or considerate, and so on. Behavioural effects normally result in some kind of action. Many a time media content induces people to imitate

certain actions or repeat them. There is likelihood that one may not repeat such actions because of exposure to media. This activation and deactivation of actions is a continuous process determining human behaviour.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) The main criticism of Media Dependency Theory is that it is often difficult to empirically verify. Moreover, the media landscape is undergoing significant changes in the last few decades due to globalisation and the emergence of new media technologies and the theory lacks power in explaining their long-term effects.
- 2) Scholars argue that Media Dependence Theory is still relevant for the study of media effects as theories are not made to prove true or false. Their usage for the advancement of knowledge and to explain and predict phenomena are more important and relevant. The Dependency Theory is logic, consistent and the framework is used in a large number of research studies.



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