
UNIT 16 MASS MEDIA

Structure

- 16.0 Objectives
- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 What is Mass Media ?
- 16.3 Modes of Mass Media
 - 16.3.1 Print Media
 - 16.3.2 Radio Broadcasting
 - 16.3.3 Television and Audio-Visuals
 - 16.3.4 Public Relations
 - 16.3.5 Advertising and Advertisements (ADS)
- 16.4 Scope and Functions of Mass Media
- 16.5 Mass Media as a Source of Information
- 16.6 Summary
- 16.7 Answers to Self Check Exercises
- 16.8 Key Words
- 16.9 References and Further Reading

16.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- describe the idea what mass media is and its expanding dimensions;
- list the reference potential of mass media;
- identify the different types of experts and expertise available in mass media for providing reference and information services;
- design and develop appropriate tools and techniques to provide access to mass media information; and
- pick up skills to exploit mass media for reference service.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

We have learnt in Units 14 and 15, that human experts and information institutions are information sources of high reference value and hence are useful as information sources. In this Unit, we shall study yet another institution complex, viz., Mass Media which disseminates information through both print and non-print media.

The importance of Mass Media arises out of the fact that every significant human event and activity of contemporary life is daily recorded and disseminated by mass media. Every subject from *army* to *zebra* comes under the purview of mass media so much so, it becomes a vital diary of contemporary human life which has not only of current but also of great historical value of global dimensions. Today, mass media is not a mere physical transmission of information, but a complex, integrated, intermixed and interactive system that has resulted in the seamless integration of data, text, images and sound within a single digital information environment, known as *Multimedia*. Mass media is also widening its scope to include not only conventional paper-print media but also a variety of audio-visual and electronic media. Public relations and advertisements also form parts of this field.

In this Unit, we shall study Mass Media in all its dimensions: multimedia which transmits mass communication in an integrated digital form; the experts who are involved in these systems as potential sources of contemporary information; and the skills to utilise these sources of information for reference and information services by libraries and information institutions.

- Radio broadcasting;
- Television, and audio-visuals;
- Public relations;
- Advertising and Advertisements.

We shall examine these with reference to their functions, products, experts and specialists involved, and media technology used. The sole purpose of this exercise is to identify the reference value of mass media for reference services.

16.3.1 Print Media

Among the print media that carry contents of mass communication, the daily newspapers occupy the centre. Today's newspapers bring out supplements almost every day relating to education, science and technology, business and industry, management, sports and games, cultural events, entertainment, and so on. Besides these daily supplements, they also bring out Saturday and Sunday magazines. They also bring out special supplements on occasions that are nationally significant, for example, Independence Day, Republic Day Teachers Day, Martyrs Day, or important religious festivals.

There are also daily newspapers exclusively devoted to economic and business affairs e.g., Economic Times they also cover matters relating to films and such other subjects of public interest and potential demand.

The fortnightly, weekly and monthly popular magazines are predominantly light reading material, having more entertainment and amusement features rather than informative or educative matter. They have, however, wide circulation both in English and Indian languages.

Newspapers carry news, commentaries, analysis and reviews on current significant events and activities, personalities, feature articles on subjects of current interest, sports and games, general information on weather, local programmes and activities, radio and television programmes, stock market news, business information and many others. Advertisements occupy a major share of space in almost every newspaper.

Except wealthy newspapers of industrial and business houses which have their own mechanisms for news supply, the others get' their news supply through Reuters, Associated Press, Press Trust of India, Indian News Agency and such others. Newspaper industries are well structured, in terms of administration and management and are staffed with persons who are academically qualified with professional training/experience, good technicians and technologists to use modern technologies effectively for production.

The editorial staff of newspapers include reporters, editors at various levels, analysts, and feature writers. The production staff comprises technologists, technicians with various professional experience and training and professional managers.

Many newspaper agencies, particularly the well established ones, bring out their products not only in print media but in microforms and electronic media as well. Some newspapers have good documentation and information service units also e.g., The Times of India, The Hindu and others are bringing out Internet editions.

Research libraries build up newspaper collections, because of their archival and historical research value and offer newspaper clipping service. Microfilms of newspapers are brought out for long time preservation.

Self Check Exercise

2) What are the distinct features of the Print Media?

Note: i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

.....

programmes, live telecasting of national and international tournaments in sports and games, attract almost every human being irrespective of age, sex and occupation.

Programme designers, directors, script writers, technicians and technologists, artists, musicians, photographic experts, camera persons and many others constitute the staff of a television centre.

The television industry has grown enormously. There are more than a hundred television networks and stations operating in the world today. In India, besides Doordarshan, a number of private television networks are in operation, giving the viewers a variety of programmes to choose from.

Among the many audio-visual media used in mass communication, the video cassettes and CD-ROM are most influential. These are highly user friendly and closely linked with individual and group use. CD-ROM discs are extremely valuable for archival purposes. They occupy very little storage space. An encyclopaedia set can be encoded on a single CD with room to spare. Information or programmes that take up about 1000 floppy discs can be re-recorded on one CD and transferred to the computer when needed. IGNOU has produced a number of Audio Cassettes and Video Cassettes on varieties of courses offered by IGNOU.

The production of audio-visual media is also a complex and intricate affair. Many types of specialists are necessary to produce a good video either for entertainment, or news commentaries, learning kits and others. Content creators, screen script writers, design and development experts, marketing specialists, production professionals aided by camera persons, editors and other technicians are involved in the production of a audio-visual programme.

Self Check Exercise

- 4) List some of the categories of programmes that are telecast by the television medium.

Note: i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

.....

16.3.4 Public Relations

Public Relations(PR) is an activity, unrolling the building up of relationships through communication to inform, resolve conflicts and/or to improve understanding between persons. As demographic pressures have become more and more complex, communication among groups and individuals has become characterised by a very complicated and involved process which has led to the development of public relations as a new discipline e.g., various companies, factories have set up Public Relation Division headed by Public Relation Officers.

Communication experts and specialists in organisations help individuals and groups to foster mutually good relationships among themselves. They try to establish a two-way relationship between the sender of messages and receiver, between the employer and the employee, between the customer and the sales centres.

Although PR activity is often associated mostly with business and corporate interests. most societal problems, today., need PR as a way of maintaining and adjusting relationships with various types of people involved in different public activities.



The different mechanisms through which PR experts build up their contact with the public are paper-print brochures, pamphlets, graphic materials, audio and video materials, radio and television broadcasts, photographs, slides, filmstrips, motion pictures, floppies and such others. This has become a feature of mass communication, as it largely deals with various types of public in different contexts. These contexts may be in relation to building up the image of an organisation, to resolve conflicts between persons involved in sales and production, to establish goodwill in customers and keeping the public informed of policies and implementation by governments and in many similar aspects.

In PR activity, every means of communication is adopted and applied. All the expertise, techniques and technologies needed in mass communication are employed to bring out the varieties of PR products.

Self Check Exercise

5) What are the features of Public Relations that justify its inclusion under mass media?

Note: i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

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

16.3.5 Advertising and Advertisements(ADS)

Advertising is considered part of mass communication for three reasons viz.

- It provides financial support to mass communication;
- Advertisements are usually mass based and hence all expertise required for mass communication are applicable here; and
- Advertising is a pervasive part of modern culture, a medium to build up images of a society.

Advertisements are forms of communication that involve creativity, persuasion and impact of the messages carried by them. Most advertisements that we are familiar with, are consumer ads used to sell products and/or promote a brand of a product among individuals or organisations who are likely to be consumers.

Advertisements specially product advertisements describe the features at the products or services, usefulness and also compare with other products or services. These contain useful information and latest developments.

Advertising is becoming a major industry with numerous avenues for development. Advertising agencies choose their medium for their advertisements. Newspapers, popular journals that are paper-print based, television and broadcasting, video and audio cassettes, and in every medium of mass communication carry advertisements.

Generally advertisements are persuasive, influencing and undering habits and shaping behaviour and fashions.

As the advertisement field is expanding fast, specialists and experts in mass communication find enough opportunities to apply their expertise, methods and techniques in advertisements. All the different categories of personnel who are involved in other areas of mass communication are operating in advertisement agencies. Multimedia technology is fully utilised to produce advertisements.

Self Check Exercise

6) Why are advertisements forming part of mass media?

Note: i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

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

16.4 SCOPE AND FUNCTIONS OF MASS MEDIA

The functions of mass communication are to entertain, inform, instruct, persuade influence, shape and sell all types of messages and information to large mass audiences. This audience includes children, students, young persons, adults of either sex, housewives, laypersons, experts, specialists, professionals; in fact every conceivable group in a society. It is never aimed at individuals but always at groups. All programmes of broadcasting and television, public relations products, advertisements are oriented to be relevant to the appropriate group ad-dressed.

The scope of mass communication could comprise almost every subject in which a society is interested. Although radio and television programmes devote most of their listening and viewing time to political events and activities, and entertainments, other programmes include aids to students in their learning process, information to industry and industrialists, general programmes of historical and geographical interests for non-specialists, travel and tourist information, and many others to inform the public on different matters.

The nature of the contents have to be simple and in the language of ordinary persons who would not, generally, have acquaintance with the jargon of a subject.

All elements of mass communication require high intellectual and imaginative inputs. Expertise in multimedia technology gives unlimited scope to obtain the best results in mass communication.

16.5 MASS MEDIA AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION

As mass communication is a diary of contemporary events and activities of human beings, its impact on people is decisive. Public opinion is shaped through mass media and every political party is interested in promoting its own views on the public to capture political power. Business and trade interests are also promoted through mass media to be competitive in the business world. A great deal of attention, is therefore, given to mass communication, being one of the most powerful weapon. It is said that the industrially advanced countries are aiming to monopolise global business affairs through a powerful information and communication system.



It is, therefore, natural that librarians and information specialists show great concern towards providing access to the plethora of information, communicated through mass media

A variety of secondary sources have been designed to provide access to newspapers of every kind and region, to clippings in video cassettes and to other types of audio and video recordings. Many libraries and information centres have these sources in their stocks of reference materials. More importantly, an understanding of the available expertise in mass media is essential to supplement these reference sources.

The foregoing short account of mass media would help you to grasp the essentials of mass communication to explore the possibilities of using them when needed. Not only the products of mass media are sources of importance, but also the expertise available in institutions of mass media, which includes information generated by them that do not get published and the expertise of specialists. These are of great value for answering questions that can be answered only through these sources.

An idea of the specialised persons involved in mass media can be got from the list given below:

- Artists (Art, Music, Commercial artists, etc.)
- Ads specialists (Sales promoters, designers, script writers, translators, etc.)
- Camera persons
- Computer specialists
- Correspondents
- Directors
- DTP specialists
- Editors
- Illuminations/light experts
- Musicians
- Managers of various types
- Network specialists
- PROs
- Producers
- Reporters
- Researchers
- Photographers
- Programmers for different types of productions
- Software documentalists
- Sound and acoustics specialists
- Subject specialists
- Writers (Scripts, descriptions, dialogues, etc)

Information about these types of persons and their expertise is never easily available. They have to be personally contacted, if we wish to use them as resource persons.

As mass communication is a very active and live area of human life, various types of information that could not be available anywhere, would be got in mass media institutions, for example, a life sketch of an eminent person with all his background; a track event of an Olympic games with all the rankings of prize winners; the background of a political event,

Any resourceful and imaginative reference librarian or an information officer can use his judicious search capability to tap mass media for types of enquiries of the nature mentioned above.

Self Check Exercise

7) Justify mass media as an important information resource.

- Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.
 ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

.....

16.6 SUMMARY

In this Unit, the value and importance of mass media are explained to include them in the categories of information sources. Mass media is the communication of messages through a number of physical transmission systems. It has two components. First the contents and second the mode of transmission. There are several components of mass media. They are: Paper-print, Radio Broadcasting, Television and Audio-Visual media, Public Relations and Advertising and Advertisements. Each one of these carries programme to record contemporary events and activities, which represent the diary of current human life. These have great historical and archival value. Each of these media use modern multimedia technology to transmit their programmes and activities. A group of specialists with expertise in different aspects of mass communication are involved in designing and developing programmes. Most of it is a team work and meant for large audiences. Their information contents are disseminated quite well and most of these are available in secondary sources like newspaper indexes and summaries of current events and activities.

There are many other types of information generated by mass media that do not get noticed in secondary sources. Besides, the expertise available in terms of specialists who function in mass media. The media itself constitutes an important and very valuable information source. Their reference value cannot be exaggerated. Libraries and information centres should get familiarity with mass media institutions and experts operating them so that these can be exploited when necessary for reference service.

16.7 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

1) Mass media means communication through a number of physical transmission modes such as print, audio, audio-visual and electronic forms to a general mass of common persons, irrespective of their position, intellectual attainments, or social status, etc. It is a means by which almost all current human affairs are collected, recorded and disseminated for the consumption of any person. It is an instrument by which the general common public are kept informed of political activities of a State, international relations between countries, economic and business affairs, industrial relations, games and sports, cultural events and entertainments, etc.

There are two vital components of mass communication. First, the physical media and the second the contents carried by the media for communication. Both these aspects have developed to a great extent - contents in terms of their scope and coverage and sophisticated media of communication using advances in its technology.

2) Some of the advantages of print media that distinguishes it from other mass media are:



- a) Print media representing daily newspapers and other popular magazines are cheaper than any other to use;
 - b) Any of these print media can be used anywhere and can be preserved for future use;
 - c) Contents can be read many times to understand their full impact.
 - d) Clippings can be made of items of importance and serviced by libraries without any serious problems;
 - e) It is one of the oldest methods of mass communication and hence, backfiles would be available for historical studies.
- 3) The personnel in radio broadcasting comprise directors, programme specialists, managers of different categories, besides artists, musicians, script writers, journalists and field workers, engineers and technologists, news readers, news editors and commentators, etc.
 - 4) Television programmes range from entertainment to highly organised teleconferencing to project global news on a number of issues concerning political, social, economic and cultural affairs.
News, views, reviews, discussions, etc. on current events and activities, instructional programmes for students at various levels, live telecasting of national and international events in sports and games are some of the programmes televised by TV stations.
 - 5) PR experts build up their contacts with the public through paper-print brochures, house journals, pamphlets, graphic materials, audio and video Materials, radio and television broadcasts, photographs, slides, filmstrips, motion pictures, floppies and such others. These aspects are features of mass communication, as it largely deals with various types of public in different contexts. These contexts may be in relation to building up the image of an organisation, to resolve conflicts between persons involved in sales and production, to establish goodwill in customers and keeping the public informed of policies and implementation by governments and in many similar aspects. PR specialise in activities that have a mass base in certain contexts.
 - 6) Advertising is considered part of mass communication for three reasons viz.,
 - 1) It provides financial support to mass communication;
 - 2) Ads are usually mass based and hence, all expertise required for mass communication are applicable here;
 - 3) Advertising is a pervasive part of modern culture, a medium to build up images of a society.
 - 7) Mass media carries the contents of contemporary events and activities which are of vital interest to every citizen. While much of the information produced by mass communication gets organised and are available in the form of indexes and summaries, some of the other, generated do not get noticed anywhere. Besides, the experts involved in generating various programmes have special expertise which may not be available from any other source. Hence, institutions of mass media as well as those who operate them are vital information resources to libraries and information centres.

16.8 KEY WORDS

Advertisement	:	Messages to consumers to influence their choice for a particular brand of a product or service or for any other options.
Audio-Visuals	:	A medium that uses both audio and visuals to communicate contents.
Mass Media	:	Communication through a number of physical transmission modes such as print, audio, visual, audio-visual and electronic forms to a general mass of common persons, irrespective of their position, intellectual attainments, or social status, etc.



- Multimedia** : A complex, integrated, intermixed and interactive system that has resulted in the seamless integration of data, text, images and sound within a single digital information environment.
- Mass Communication** : Communications of contents to large mass audiences, irrespective of intellectual attainments, social status or any other aspect, through all mass media.
- Print Media** : Mass communication through paper-print, such as daily newspapers, weeklies, fortnightlies, monthlies, leaflets, posters and others.
- Radio Broadcasting** : Mass communication through radio.
- Software Documentation** : Documentation of various software features, as a user facility

16.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Hishert, Ray Elden (et al). (1981). *Mass Media VI: An Introduction to Modern Communication*. New York: Longman.

Hunt, Todd and Ruben, Brent D.(1993). *Mass Communication: Producers and Consumers*. New York: Harper Collin -College Publishers.

IGNOU, (1995). MLIS- 02. Block 4, Unit 16. *Media Persons as Sources of Information*. pp. 57-72.