



## UNIT 3 MODELS AND THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

#### Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Models of Communication
- 3.3 Theories of Communication
- 3.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.5 Key Words
  - 3.6 References / Selected Readings
  - 3.7 Check Your Progress Possible Answers

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear Learner, you may be aware that a model provides a simplified view of complex object, phenomenon, or process, so that fundamental properties or characteristics can be high-lighted and examined. Models highlight some features that their designers believe are particularly critical, and there is less focus on other features. Thus, by examining models, one learns not only about the object, situation, or process, but also about the perspective of the designer. Similarly, theories are analytical tools for understanding, explaining, and making predictions about a given subject matter. As with other subject areas, models and theories of communication also provide important insights into the various perspectives of the communication. Keeping this in view, the important models and theories of communication are discussed in this unit with suitable examples.

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Explain the important models of communication.
- Describe the important theories of communication.

#### 3.2 MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

A model is a systematic representation of an object or event in idealized and abstract form. Models are somewhat subjective by their nature. The act of abstracting eliminates certain details to focus on essential factors. However the key to the usefulness of a model is the degree to which it conforms—in point-by-point correspondence—to the underlying determinants of communicative behavior.

In the Information and Communication Technology era, the field of communication has changed considerably. Yet the models used in the introductory chapters of recent communication textbooks are the same models that were used forty years ago. This is, in some sense, a testament to their enduring value.

#### 3.2.1 General Communication Model

You are well aware that communication takes place when the sender selects a certain message and gives it a special treatment for transmission over a selected

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channel to a receiver who interprets the message before taking the desired action. This can be represented through a diagram as follows (Fig. 3.1)



#### Fig. 3.1: General Communication Model

If you recall the contents of the first unit, the above figure represents the elements of communication process.

**Sender :** We may call sender as communicator / speaker / source. In the context of extension and development, you are the sender of the messages. You decide what messages to send, how to treat it, which channel to use so that your audience can receive and follow it. If you make poor choice, your communication is likely to fail.

**Message :** Message is the information package or technical know how of extension and development programmes. It may be a single line of message with a picture as in a poster or complete information through pamphlet / booklet.

**Treatment** : It refers to the ways in which the message is handled before it is placed on the channel. Its purpose is to make the message clear, understandable and realistic to the audience.

**Channel:** It is the path of the communication. Examples for channels include, news paper, radio television etc.

**Receiver:** The receiver may be a single person when we write a letter, it may be a group of people who read a circular letter / news letter or it may be the masses that listen to radio programme / see television or read a news paper. The more homogenous the receivers are, the greater the chances of effective communication.

In any model of communication, we can find few or all of the above elements of communication process.

#### 3.2.2 Aristotle's Model

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) was the first to give the earliest basic persuasive communication model. His explanation includes three communication elements viz.,

- Speaker
- Subject
- Audience

Aristotle was of the opinion that these three elements are essential for a meaningful communication and that we can organize our study of communication process under the three headings: i) the person who speaks, ii) the speech that he/she produces, and iii) the person who listens.

As per ancient times, five processes are involved in the study of communication, namely invention, organization, language, memory and delivery. From Aristotle's

#### Models and Theories of Communication

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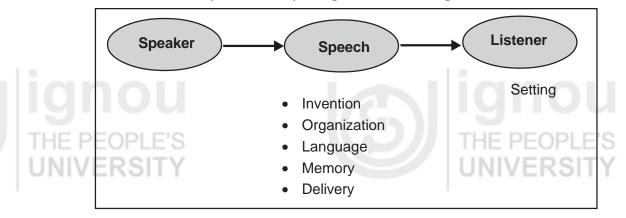
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view, generation of message involves invention (finding the content), arrangement (organizing the material in logical sequence), language or style (to reach the audience), memory and delivery (the practice of actual presentation).





#### Aristotle Vs. Persuasive Communication



Aristotle was of the opinion that persuasion was a result of the influence that a speaker makes. He used 'discovery of the available means of persuasion' for defining the whole art of persuasive communication. Aristotle's communication model formed a basis for other earlier communication models. Though Aristotle's model was one of the pioneering models, his theory laid emphasis that persuasive communication as a oneway process transpiring from the communicator to the receiver. The important role of feedback from the receiver was not included as a part of process of persuasion.

#### 3.2.3 Lasswell's Model

Lasswell put forth one of the basic but significant communication models with social scientific background in 1948. This model includes the sequence namely i) who says ii) what, iii) in which channel, iv) to Whom, v) under what circumstances, and vi) with what effects.

This model provides explanation for linear, one-way communication. This model gives importance to the communicator and his message but like in Aristotle's model, the element of feedback was not included. However, this model had helped improving the understanding about communication among social scientists engaged in communication theories. This model was useful in political communication, propaganda and political symbolism. The model also assumes the communicator wishes to influence the receiver and, therefore, sees communication as a persuasive process.

#### **Check Your Progress 1**

1) What do you mean by communication model?

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2)	Name the five elements in general communication model.	Models and Theories of Communication 
3)	What is the major limitation in Aristotle's and Lasswell's communication models?	THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY
Sti mc eff cor	<b>2.4 Stimulus-Response Model</b> mulus-Response (S-R) model is one of the basic interpersonal communication dels (Fig 3.3). Person 'A' communicates something to person 'B' with $\Sigma$ ect [A $\rightarrow$ B = X]. However, according to Newcomb (1958), the expression 'A nmunicates something to 'B' comprises a number of sub-categories, such a en, how, in what medium, under what circumstances etc.	THE PEOPLE'S
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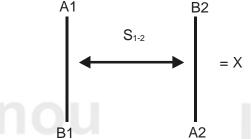


Fig. 3.3 : Stimulus-Response Communication Model

#### Limitation of Stimulus – Response Model

- The Stimulus- Response (A B) does not fit into the facts. A may say something to B, but what B hears and interprets depends upon B and not of A. Also what A says may be a necessary condition of B's subsequent behavior, but the sufficient condition is how B processes A's statements (s).
- It is possible that A's saying does not fall into a temporarily off mind. Whereas, A's saying may be meaningful to B, only to the extent, (a) B's mind is active and (b) B's level of comprehension to understand A's statement in the context in which it occurs.
- Neither A nor B, nor even X in this model is independent of any of the conditions of, when, how, in what medium, and under what circumstances etc. So describing communication in linear form is too simplistic assumption. Rather communication is a complex system of elements and their interactions.

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#### 3.2.5 Schramm's Model

As per Schramm model of communication (1964), there is a source, who encodes a signal, and there is a receiver, who decodes the signal. The sender and receiver must be tuned together and maximum output from communication can be achieved based on the common field experience of both the source-encoder and the decoder-receiver (Fig. 3.4).

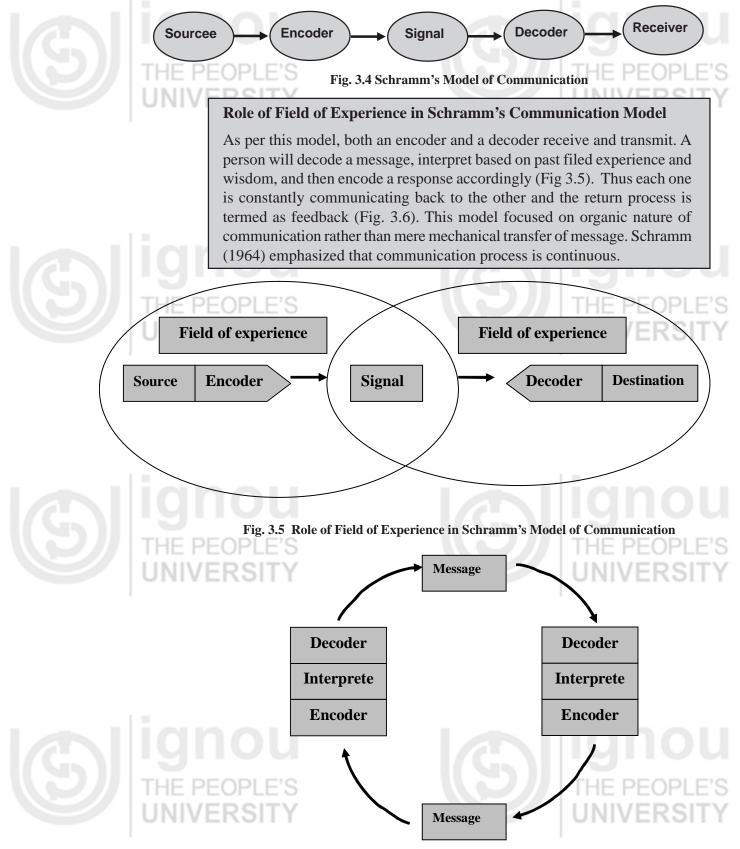


Fig. 3.6: Feedback in Schramm's Communication Model





Merits and Limitations of Schramm's Communication Model

#### Merits

- **Field of experience:** Schramm provided the additional notion of field of experience which refers to the type of orientation or attitudes which sender and receiver maintain towards each other.
- **Feedback:** Communication is reciprocal, two-way, even though the feedback may be delayed.
- **Context:** A message may have different meanings, depending upon the specific context or setting.
- **Culture:** A message may have different meanings associated with it depending upon the culture or society, Communication systems; thus, operate within the confines of cultural rules and expectations to which we all have been educated.

#### Limitations

- Schramm's model, while less linear, still accounts for only bilateral communication between two parties.
- The complex, multiple levels of communication between several sources was not explained by this model.

### 3.2.6 Intermediary Model

This model also sometimes referred to as the gatekeeper model or two-step flow model (Katz, 1957). This model focuses on several important intermediaries who play an important role in the communication process (Fig.3.7). Many of these intermediaries have the ability to decide what messages others see, the context in which they are seen, and when they see them. They often have the ability, moreover, to change messages or to prevent them from reaching an audience (destination). In extreme variations we refer to such gatekeepers as censors.

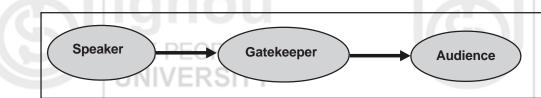


Fig. 3.7: Katz's Intermediary Model of Communication

#### **Role of Intermediaries / Gatekeepers in Communication**

In mass communication media, editors / associate editors decide what stories will fit in a newspaper or news broadcast, with the intermediary or gatekeeper role. Under the more normal conditions of mass media, in which publications choose some content in preference to other potential content based on an editorial policy, we refer to them as editors (most mass media), moderators (Internet discussion groups), reviewers (peer-reviewed publications), or aggregators (clipping services), among other titles.

#### Models and Theories of Communication

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#### 3.2.7 Shannon and Weaver's Model

Shannon and Weaver (1949) provided a visual mode of communication system in relation to electronic media popularly referred to as Shannon and Weaver model of communication or 'Mathematical model of communication' (Fig. 3.8). This model includes:

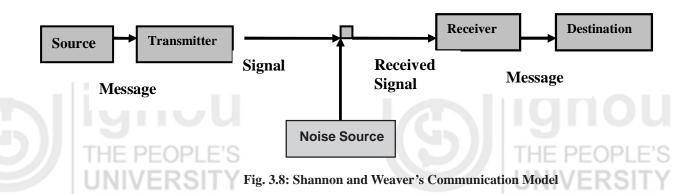
- An information source, which produces a desired message out of a set of possible messages, written or spoken words, pictures, music etc
- A transmitter which changes this message into signals suitable for transmission

• A channel, which carries signals from the transmitter which transfers to the receiver

- A receiver, a sort of inverse transmitter which transfers the transmitted signals back into a message, and
- A destination, the final consumer of the message.

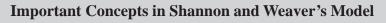
The three levels of problems in the communication of information indicated in the model are

- Technical problems related to the accuracy of transferring information from sender to the receiver, through signals.
- Semantic problems related to the interpretation of meaning by the receiver as that of intended meaning of the sender
- Influential problems concerned with the success with which the meanings are conveyed to the receiver and the subsequent desired behavior on his part.



While transmitting signals, there is a possibility that some unwanted disturbances such as sound in the case of radio, telephone called 'noise', are also likely to be added. This model attempted to explain how to overcome noise and how much redundancy is necessary so that the receiver can successfully receive the signal and in turn the right messages.





**Information:** The information is viewed as a measure of one's freedom of choice when one selects a message.

**Entropy:** The information can be measured by entropy i.e one's degree of freedom of choice to select a message. The ratio of the actual to the maximum entropy is called relative entropy.







Redundancy: The amount of information that can be eliminated or added in a noiseless channel, so that the message would still have meaning.

Channel capacity: The amount of information that can be transmitted per unit of time. Beyond optimum level of information would lead to errors.

Noise: Any unwanted sound, distortion that may be added into the channel which are beyond the control of the transmitter or receiver. However, the efficiency of a communication system can be increased by reducing the noise, or by increasing the band width or by increasing the signal power.

Coding process: Whenever we produce or receive a message we use codes. Efficient coding involves best matching the statistical characteristics of the information source and the channel.

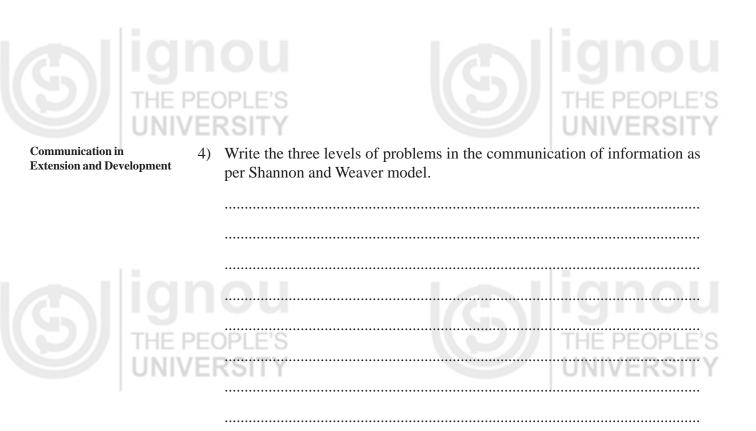
Shannon and Weaver's model mainly deals with problems of communication at the technical, semantics and effectiveness levels. From this model, we can learn that for reducing the uncertainty and minimizing the effects of noise by considering the capacity of the sender to encode and that of the receiver to decode messages. Though the model attempts to explain further the process of communication, it is a linear, one-way communication model without any emphasis on feedback. In this model communication is presented as a linear, one-way process. Shannon and Weaver make a distinction between source and transmitter, and receiver and destination i.e. there are two functions at the transmitting end and two at the receiving end.

## Models and Theories of Communication

#### **Check Your Progress 2**

1) Write any two limitations of stimulus – response model of communication.

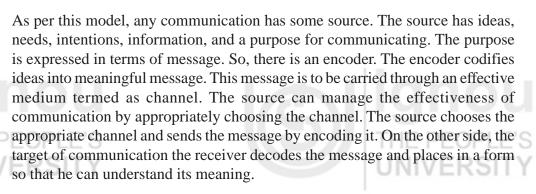
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2)	Write the examples for intermediaries / gatekeepers in mass communication	UNIVERSITY
3)	What do you mean by entropy?	
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#### 3.2.8 Berlo's Model

Berlo's (1960) model includes the following elements in a communication process (Fig. 3.9).

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- Source
  - Encoder
- Message
  - Channel
- Decoder and
- Communication receiver



#### Factors Influencing Communication Elements in Berlo's Model

In Berlo's model, each element - source, message, channel and receiver is influenced by some factors (Also see Fig 3.9).

**Source and Receiver:** Influenced by communication skills, attitudes, knowledge and social and cultural systems.

**Channel :** Influenced by the form of senses viz., seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting.

Message : Influenced by structure, elements, content, code, and treatment



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Source

Communication

skills

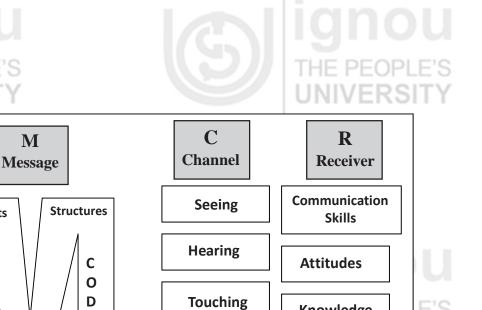
Attitudes

Knowledge

Social

system

Culture



Smelling

Tasting



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#### Significance of Berlo's Model

This model is improved one over the earlier models because:

- It considers behavioral theory and as a result the model was widely quoted among scholars in communication research.
- It views the communication process as continuous two-way process / activity between the source and receiver and the noise is minimized by appropriate feedback.
- The flow of feedback between source and receiver allows the interchange • of roles wherein the source may play a role of receiver and vice versa.
- Because of inclusion of feedback in the model and the variables explaining the performance of elements the model is quite popular in communication research.

#### JNIVERSIT Strengths

- The idea of 'source' was flexible enough to include oral, written, electronic, i) or any other kind of "symbolic" generator-of-messages.
- ii) 'Message' was made the central element, stressing the transmission of ideas
- iii) The model recognized that receivers were important to communication, for they were the targets.
- The notions of 'encoding' and 'decoding' emphasized the problems we all iv) have (psycho-linguistically) in translating our own thoughts into words or other symbols and in deciphering the words or symbols of others into terms we ourselves can understand.

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Knowledge

Social system

Culture

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#### Weaknesses

- i) Tends to stress the manipulation of the message—the encoding and decoding processes.
- ii) It implies that human communication is like machine communication, like signal-sending in telephone, television, computer, and radar systems.
- iii) It even seems to stress that most problems in human communication can be solved by technical accuracy by choosing the 'right' symbols, preventing interference, and sending efficient messages. But even with the 'right' symbols, people misunderstand each other. "Problems in "meaning" or "meaningfulness" often aren't a matter of comprehension, but of reaction, of agreement, of shared concepts, beliefs, attitudes, values.

#### 3.2.9 Leagan's Model

In Unit 1 of this block, we discussed the communication definition by Leagans (1961). According to him, communication is a process by which two or more people exchange ideas, facts, feelings, impressions in ways that each gains a clear understanding of the meaning, intent and use of the message. Thus the elements in the communication model by Leagans are:

- Communicator
- Message or content
- Channels of communication
  - Treatment of message
  - Audience and
  - Audience response / Feedback.

In this model, greater thrust is placed on treatment of message and audience response (Feedback). This model is more popular in agricultural extension, wherein, the focus is on transferring the technology to farmers and bringing desired behavior and therefore, the communicators fine tune their communication based on feedback.

Activity 1 : Study the communication models given in the above section. Identify the common elements and write them.

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#### **Check Your Progress 3**

1) Name various communication models.

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2) Write the factors influencing communication in Berlo's Model.

Models and Theories of Communication

3) Write the elements in Leagan's communication model.

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## 3.3 THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

Theories about any phenomenon in general will highlight the key concepts involved in it.

Thus, theories of communication will be useful for a person who is trying to understand a given communication event by way of providing a framework which suggests what he/she should look for.

The theories of communication can be broadly classified into three groups namely:

i) Theories of interpersonal communications

*Ex* : Linguistic theory of communication

ii) Theories of mass communication (message flow models)

Ex : Theories of Mass Media Effects

- iii) Theories of communication distortion
  - *Ex:* Theory of communication distortion and & Theory of communication distortion in transit

#### 3.3.1 Linguistic Theory of Communication

The description of language systems is dealt in linguistic theory of communication. The bottom-line of linguistic theory is social interaction. A system of symbols (words/vocabulary) and appropriate methods of combination of words (syntax) is the basis for any language. Each language has its own symbols to convey meaning and has evolved over a period. In spite of prevalence of various languages, there is common thread of principle of interpretation, response and reward that governs all learning and communication.

When we use a language, we are not transmitting the meaning but people tend to get the meaning from our spoken words based on their own experiences and the rules of the concerned languages. When we write words, they are basically linear



or one-dimensional. However, they become multidimensional when we speak because of facial expressions, body movements and gestures and also vary according to the context in which we speak. How we choose the words determine the effectiveness of communication. Appropriate syntax would be useful in placing structural relationship among words indicating certain objects for the reader or receiver. When we use words to convey denotative meanings along with careful structuring, the accuracy increases.

System of symbolization in human communication is explained in this theory. The process is explained as:

- A message starts a meaning in the mind of source
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- i) The message is encoded into linguistic form
- iii) Linguistic forms are coded into physical signals
- iv) Signals are transmitted through channels as physical signals
- v) The receiver transforms the physical signals into linguistic form
- vi) Linguistic forms are decoded into messages
- vii) Messages are interpreted, screened and acted upon by the receiver.
- Williams (1975) mentioned two dimensions of this theory.

**Psycholinguistic Theory**: This theory deals with the psychological basis of using the language by any individual in other words the coding behavior. The cognitive psycholinguistic approaches were of the assumption that the human brain has the potential to diversify the coding processes in any communication and also in developing language skills. The individual expertise or good exposure to a given language enables him to better perform in life and manage situations.

b) Sociolinguistic Theory: In a society, the process of communication involves both personal factors and social factors or social context. The sociolinguistics is concerned with the relationship between variations in using language according to personal as well as contextual situations. In the sociolinguistics, any individual using a language must count on not only his knowledge of language competence, but also the pragmatic use of language in relation to varying characteristics of communication situations within cultural contexts. Hymes (1972) termed this approach as communication competence.

How we speak a language (modes of speech) is important concept of sociolinguistic theory that helps to have better knowledge about the relations between communication and language.

Language and the way we use it differs across situations and different people and this form a patterns of features. In other words, the linguistic theory also portrays patterns of variation in language across different people, stimuli, relationships, context and competence. If a person is having the ability to use a code, he needs to have a lot of knowledge and additional consideration of factors so as to be sensitive to social demands on patterns of communication.









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#### **3.3.2 Theories of Mass Media Effects**

With the advancements in information technologies, there is expansion in use of mass media in the society. The social impact of mass media is gaining importance in social science especially Sociology and Social Psychology. There are a few theoretical frameworks which explain the variation in the effects of mass media.

- a) Theory of Individual Differences: Defleur (1966) was of the opinion that audience of a given medium is not aggregated group who perceives in a similar fashion to whatever content is directed towards it. The principle of selective perception is important aspect. This would explain the varying communication behavior of a mass media audience. The psychological framework of the concerned person influences any individual response to a mass media message. In brief, we can say that individual differences in psychological structure causing the variation in effects of mass media from person to person.
- b) Psychodynamic Model of Persuasion Process: It has been realized that the mass media has tremendous persuasion effects. The basis of persuasion depends upon modifying the internal psychological structure of the individual. Such influence helps in moderating the psychodynamic relationship between internal processes and manifestation of overt behavior. This will ultimately lead to actions/ behavioral change intended by the persuader. DeFleur (1966), had proposed psychodynamic process of the persuasion as shown in Fig. 3.10. In addition to the external actions which have been intended by persuasive message, there are other kinds of effects also. That is, people comprehend ideas and practices sometimes beyond message even it may include non-intended or opposite effects also. The variations may be due to individual differences as well as environmental factors.

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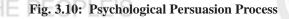
Models and Theories of

Communication

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Alter latent psychological process



- c) Theory of Social Categories: As per this theory similar to individual differences in responses to a given stimuli, behavior of broad social categories of people remain to be almost uniform/common to given stimulus. The theory assumes that though there exists heterogeneity among people in a society, people with more or less similar characteristics or background are likely to exhibit similar behavior, leading to uniform response to mass media. Both the individual differences and social categories theories are extended forms of Stimulus-Response model. In this, the combination of psychological processes, normative patterns within social categories and their interactive influence in communication process in the form of stimulus and response is explained.
- d) **Theory of Social Relationships:** Theory of social relationships to some extent, deal the communication in the form of two stage processes. In a mass media communication, there is possibility that well-informed



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individuals first attend to mass communication and receive the information. Later, this information is passed on through interpersonal channels to individuals who had less access to the mass media. Opinion leaders/ gatekeepers would have direct access to mass media in a given society. Those individuals apart from giving information would usually add their attitudes and interpretations to the content as per their value system to the other members in the society. Sometimes, these opinion leaders even persuade the other members to behave in a particular pattern. Between the stimulus and the response in the mass communication process, the informal social relationship prevailing in the society functions as intervening variables.

#### 3.3.3 Theories of Communication Distortion

The important theories under this category are :

- a) Theory of communication distortion and
- b) Theory of communication distortion in transit.

The first one states that larger the volume of communication, larger would be the communication distortion. Increasing the volume of communication, increases more chances for misunderstanding, mis-interpretation, less concentration and low priorities. The second one emphasizes that messages pass through many layers in an organization. Therefore, repetition and reproduction of the same message is multiplied into many which reduces the efficiency of communication.

#### **Check Your Progress 4**

1) Name the three categories of communication theories.

2) Differentiate between Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic concepts.

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#### 3.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we started by looking at the meaning of models and theories of communication. We studied the general communication model and Aristotle's, Lasswell's, Stimulus-Response, Schramm's, Intermediary, Shannon and Weaver's, Berlo's and Leagan's Communication models along with the communication elements in each model. In the second part of the unit, we discussed different theories of interpersonal communication, mass communication and communication distortion.

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Models and Theories of Communication

The overview of communication models and theories suggests that communication can be described in terms of networks, which gives the observer some indication of who is communicating with whom and it can also be described in terms of the types of interactions which are occurring among communicators. Further, it can be described in terms of message transactions, which indicate how the elements of communication combine to produce a unique unrepeatable event. It can be also viewed from the point of view an individual gathering information as he passes through his environment.

3.5 KEY WO	THE PEOPLE'S
Sender UNIV	: We may call sender as communicator / speaker / source of message. Sender decides what messages to send, how to treat it, which channel so that his/ her audience can receive and follow it.
Message	: Message is the information package or technical know how of extension and development programmes. It may be a single line of message with a picture as in a poster or complete information through pamphlet / booklet.
Treatment THE F	: It refers to the ways in which the message is handled before it is placed on the channel. Its purpose is to make the message clear, understandable and realistic to the audience/ receiver.
Channel	: It is the path of the communication.
Receiver	: The receiver may be a single person when we write a letter, it may be a group of people who read a circular letter / news letter or it may be the masses that listen to radio programme / see television.
Entropy	: The information can be measured by entropy i.e one's degree of freedom of choice to select a message. The ratio of the actual to the maximum entropy is called relative entropy.
Redundancy	: The amount of information that can be eliminated or added in a noiseless channel, so that the message would still have meaning.
Channel capacity	: The amount of information that can be transmitted per unit of time.
Noise	: Any unwanted sound, distortion that may be added into the channel which are beyond the control of the transmitter or receiver.
Psycholinguistic Th	eory: This theory deals with the psychological basis of using the language by any individual in other words the coding behavior.
Sociolinguistic Theo	<b>bry:</b> The sociolinguistics is concerned with the relationship between variations in using language according to personal as well as contextual situations.





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#### 3.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

#### **Check Your Progress 1**

1) A communication model is a systematic representation of elements of communication process in an abstract form.

- 2) The five elements in a general communication model are : sender, message, treatment, channel and receiver.
- 3) The important role of feedback from the receiver was not included in Aristotle's and Lasswell's communication models.

#### **Check Your Progress 2**

- The Stimulus- Response (A B) does not fit into the facts. A may say something to B, but what B hears and interprets depends upon B and not of A. Also what A says may be a necessary condition of B's subsequent behavior, but the sufficient condition is how B processes A's statements (s). It is possible that A's saying does not fall into a temporarily off mind. Whereas, A's saying may be meaningful to B, only to the extent, (a) B's mind is active and (b) B's comprehensive level to understand A's statement in the context in which it occurs.
- 2) Intermediaries / gatekeepers in mass communication includes editors, subeditors, reviewers etc.
- 3) Entropy is one's degree of freedom of choice to select a message.
- 4) The three levels of problems in the communication of information as per Shannon and Weaver model are : technical, semantic and influential.

#### **Check Your Progress 3**

 Various communication models are : Aristotle's, Lasswell's, Stimulus-Response, Schramm's, Intermediary, Shannon and Weaver's, Berlo's and Leagan's.





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- 2) In Berlo's model, each element source, message, channel and receiver is influenced by some factors. Source and receiver are influenced by communication skills, attitudes, knowledge and social and cultural systems. Channel is influenced by the form of senses viz., seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. Message is influenced by structure, elements, content, code, and treatment.
- The elements in Leagan's communication model are ; Communicator, Message or content, Channels of communication, Treatment of message, Audience and Audience response / Feedback.

HE PEOPLE **Check Your Progress 4** 

- 1) The three categories of communication theories are : Theories of interpersonal communications; Theories of mass communication (message flow models) and; Theories of communication distortion.
- 2) Psycholinguistic theory deals with the psychological basis of using the language by any individual in other words the coding behavior. Whereas, Sociolinguistic theory is concerned with the relationship between variations in using language according to personal as well as contextual situations.











Models and Theories of Communication

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