



**NEERAJ®**

# **M.J.M.-30**

## **Media And Communication Theories**

**Chapter Wise Reference Book  
Including Many Solved Sample Papers**

*Based on*

**I.G.N.O.U.**  
**& Various Central, State & Other Open Universities**

*By: Rakesh Kumar*



**NEERAJ  
PUBLICATIONS**

*(Publishers of Educational Books)*

Mob.: 8510009872, 8510009878 E-mail: [info@neerajbooks.com](mailto:info@neerajbooks.com)

Website: [www.neerajbooks.com](http://www.neerajbooks.com)

**MRP ₹ 320/-**

Content

**MEDIA AND  
COMMUNICATION THEORIES**

Question Paper—June-2023 (Solved)..... 1-2  
Question Paper—December-2022 (Solved) ..... 1-2  
Question Paper—Exam Held in July-2022 (Solved) ..... 1  
Question Paper—Exam Held in March-2022 (Solved) ..... 1-2

---

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i>	<i>Page</i>
--------------	-----------------------------------	-------------

---

**BLOCK-1: SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES**

1. Cultivation Theory.....1  
2. Agenda Setting Theory ..... 14  
3. Uses and Gratification Theory..... 25  
4. Dependency Theory..... 35

**BLOCK-2: PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES**

5. Selectivity Theories..... 44  
6. Individual Differences Theory ..... 52

---

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i>	<i>Page</i>
7.	Persuasion and Attitude.....	62
8.	Theories of Learning.....	74

**BLOCK-3: CRITICAL AND CULTURAL THEORIES**

9.	Marxist Theory.....	87
10.	Critical Theories .....	98
11.	Cultural Studies.....	113
12.	Political Economy Theory .....	125

**BLOCK-4: MEDIA-SOCIETY THEORIES**

13.	Technological Determinism.....	135
14.	Media and the Public Sphere.....	147
15.	Audience Theories .....	160
16.	Feminist Media Theories .....	174



**Sample Preview  
of the  
Solved  
Sample Question  
Papers**

*Published by:*



**NEERAJ  
PUBLICATIONS**

[www.neerajbooks.com](http://www.neerajbooks.com)

# QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

## MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION THEORIES

M.J.M.-30

Time: 3 Hours ]

[ Maximum Marks : 100

Note: Answer any five questions. All questions carry equal marks.

**Q. 1. Describe some theories which were based on the all powerful role of mass media and how these were redefined over a period of time.**

**Ans.** The major theories are agenda setting theory, gratification theory that were based on the all powerful role of mass media and how these were redefined over a period of time.

**Also Add: Ref.:** See Chapter-2, Page No. 20, Q. No. 5, Chapter-3, Page No. 28, Q. No. 1.

**Q. 2. “Dependency theory explains our degree of dependence on media and its profound influence on the audience.” Analyze this statement and write suitable examples.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-4, Page No. 35, ‘Media Dependency Theory: Concept and Nature’, ‘Media Contents and their Effects on Audience’.

**Q. 3. Discuss some major communication theories which involve individual differences in explaining media effects on the audience.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-3, Page No. 28, ‘Related Theories’.

**Q. 4. Describe the basic concept of the Marxist theory and explain how these are portrayed and applied in media text.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-9, Page No. 89, ‘Marxist Theory: Core Concepts’, Page No. 90, ‘Marxist Theory and Media’.

**Q. 5. Explain the contribution of the Frankfurt school to media academia.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-10, Page No. 99, ‘Frankfurt School’.

**Q. 6. Discuss the characteristics of the political economy approach of mass media and explain how it is related to its economic power.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-12, Page No. 126, ‘Characteristics of the Political Economy Approach’, Page No. 129, Q. No. 3, Page No. 126, ‘Political Economy and Economic Power of Media’.

**Q. 7. Explain the core concepts of the theory of technological determinism and how applicable are they in the present context.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-13, Page No. 137, ‘Core Concepts’, Page No. 138, ‘Related Theories’.

**Q. 8. “The new media by connecting us to a virtual world have emerged as the new public sphere.” Justify this statement in the light of Habermas’ theory.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-14, Page No. 149, ‘Habermas and Public Sphere’.

**Q. 9. Among various media theories which ones do you find more applicable to study the projection of women in some select film of your choice? Explain with examples.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-16, Page No. 177, ‘Media Production and Consumption’, Page No. 184, Q. No. 5.

**Q. 10. Write short notes on any two of the following:**

(a) Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-3, Page No. 25, ‘Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs’.

(b) Cyber ethnography

**Ans.** Cyber-ethnography as a research methodology represents a move to reconceptualise the traditional notion of ‘the field’ as adopted by ethnographers and take it to another special level. In cyberspace the boundaries of the observed field are both virtual and free from location in place or geography. As people conduct more activities online and leave digital tracks (pictures, blogs, emails), researchers can study human behaviour in cyberspace. Cyber-ethnographers participate in and observe blogs, Web sites, and chat rooms. They analyse how people form social networks or groups online and establish cultural identity. When applied to interrogate the developing use of technology as a means of teaching and learning, cyber-ethnography

permits the investigation of the social and cultural conditions that best promote learner engagement. Through cyber-ethnography we can explore how digital technologies support the needs, abilities, aspirations and circumstances of learners and learning communities. Inspired by Donna Haraway's cyborg concept, cyber feminists utilize digital technologies and online spaces as tools for activism. Cyber ethnography is employed to study social interactions and community cultures in online spaces.

**(c) Spiral of silence**

**Ans.** Public opinion represents the collective views and attitudes of the public on matters of public interest. According to agenda-setting theory, the media's coverage of issues influences public opinion, with people perceiving the most covered issues as the most important. Public opinion can be influenced by factors such as the degree of citizen independence, the rule of law, and the level of public participation. The theory also mentions the 'Spiral of Silence' effect, where minority opinions may be silenced due to fear of reprisal, allowing majority opinions to prevail.

However, the influence of new media on public opinion in the context of the 'Spiral of Silence Effect' requires further research and exploration.

Spiral of silence, in the study of human communication and public opinion, the theory that people's willingness to express their opinions on controversial public issues is affected by their largely unconscious perception of those opinions as being either popular or unpopular. Specifically, the perception that one's opinion is unpopular tends to inhibit or discourage one's expression of it, while the perception that it is popular tends to have the opposite effect. Developed by German survey and communication researcher Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann in the 1960s and '70s, the spiral of silence theory more broadly attempts to describe collective opinion formation and societal decision making regarding issues that are controversial or morally loaded.

**(d) Selective communication**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-5, Page No. 45, 'Purposes Served Through Selective Communication'. ■■

NEERAJ  
PUBLICATIONS  
[www.neerajbooks.com](http://www.neerajbooks.com)

# Sample Preview of The Chapter

*Published by:*



**NEERAJ  
PUBLICATIONS**

[www.neerajbooks.com](http://www.neerajbooks.com)

# MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION THEORIES

## Cultivation Theory

### INTRODUCTION

This block of information focuses on various sociological theories of mass communication, including Cultivation theory, Agenda-setting theory, Uses and Gratification theory, and Media Dependency theory. These theories are based on the idea that mass communication has a significant impact on social change. The discussion aims to explore whether mass media shape common beliefs or set an agenda for people, if media influence habits, particularly in individuals who heavily rely on it, and why people use media and how it affects them.

Among these theories, Cultivation theory holds particular importance in understanding the effects of media on its users. The theory suggests that mass media subtly influence audiences, who absorb the dominant messages, narratives, and symbols conveyed by the media without being fully aware of it. George Gerbner conducted research on the impact of television and examined how media can alter behavioural patterns and cultural indicators in society. He also studied how individuals engage with media content and technologies to fulfill specific social needs.

This unit will delve into different aspects of Cultivation theory, including the initial debates and contributions from cultural theorists. It will cover the concept, nature, and significance of this theory, as well as the implications of media usage on society. Additionally, the strengths and limitations of Cultivation theory will be explored, along with its application in research.

### CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

#### INITIAL DEBATES

Communication and culture are closely intertwined, as communication plays a crucial role in creating, expressing, sustaining, and changing cultural

aspects of life. Moreover, it influences the way we interact and communicate with others. The patterns of communication observed within a society are reflective of its cultural values and perspectives. In essence, communication and culture have a reciprocal relationship, with communication both shaping and being shaped by the cultural context in which it occurs.

#### Cultural Theorists Contribution

The media-culture connection gained momentum with the Payne Fund studies conducted in the 1920s and 1930s, which investigated the influence of movies on young people. The studies revealed that movies disrupted viewers' routine life and had effects on sleep, moral values, emotions, attitudes, and behaviour. In the 1950s, public concern shifted to comic books, which began featuring increasingly violent and vengeful content. Children enthusiastically consumed these books, leading to concerns among parents and educators.

By the 1960s, television advertisements for alcoholic beverages and tobacco products raised concerns among government and researchers. Television producers voluntarily withdrew these ads and replaced them with surrogate advertisements for similar products. Melvin DeFleur discussed the cultural impact of media, noting that the mass media can influence behaviour by shaping or manipulating cultural norms through selective presentations and emphasis of certain themes.

The introduction of television in post-World War II, America led to a rapid adoption of this new form of mass communication. Television offered a variety of content, including motion pictures, audio-visual presentations, news, cartoons, documentaries, and soap operas. It provided cheap and easily accessible entertainment for American families, leading to a significant increase in TV viewing and the widespread presence of television sets in households.



2 / NEERAJ: MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION THEORIES

During the mid-1960s, Professor George Gerbner developed the Cultivation theory, also known as the cultivation hypothesis or cultivation analysis. His project, known as 'Cultural Indicators,' aimed to understand the effects of television programs on viewers' perceptions of the real world.

**Media and Violence: Mean World Syndrome**

In surveys conducted by George Gerbner, a consistent correlation was found between television consumption and a heightened fear of becoming a victim of crime. Gerbner coined the term 'Mean World Syndrome' to describe this long-term effect on viewers. According to Gerbner's fear index, individuals with high media consumption tend to perceive the world as more dangerous than it actually is and believe that television content contains more violence.

Gerbner and Larry Gross also developed a controversial violence index, which measured the amount of violence portrayed in media and its impact on viewers. Violence was defined as the overt expression of physical force, with or without a weapon, that compelled action against one's will under the threat of harm, injury, or death, and was incorporated into the plot of media content.

**Perception of the Role of Media**

Media plays a significant role in shaping the desired effects and influencing the topics and issues that people focus on within a society. According to Maxwell and McCombs (2005), the media not only influences what people think, but also has a remarkable ability to determine what people think about.

Gerbner's study reveals that heavy media users tend to believe that crime is pervasive and that people are constantly involved in criminal activities, leading to a sense of insecurity even while walking at night. Gerbner's theory consists of two components: the first relates to the content of television and how it portrays the real world, while the second focuses on the repeated exposure to distorted images in the media content, which leads to their internalization.

Griffin's study supports these findings and suggests that viewers often adopt a mindset that expects the worst, which can be referred to as the 'mean world syndrome.' This syndrome reflects a perception of the world as more dangerous and violent than it actually is, influenced by the distorted representations of reality frequently presented in media content.

**CORE CONCEPTS**

Television content is shaped by complex interactions among society, the public, media

institutions, and various interest groups. However, despite considering these factors, it remains difficult to determine whether television will continue to influence viewers' perceptions of the world and their cultural and social values. This influence is largely derived from the inherent characteristics of television as a medium.

**Significance of Cultivation Theory**

Television serves as a platform for presenting various ideas and concepts related to social and cultural aspects of society, including race, gender, and sexuality. According to Gerbner, violence was a prominent element depicted on television, and he expressed concern that this portrayal 'cultivated' a belief among viewers that the world was inherently violent. He defined violence as the overt expression of physical force, either with or without a weapon, that compelled action against one's will under the threat of harm or death, and was integral to the plot.

Over time, people rely on television programs as a guide to navigate life, and continuous exposure to media content cultivates specific values, beliefs, attitudes, and desires within individuals. In today's world, with the increasing dependence on television, understanding cultivation theory becomes even more significant. This growing reliance can be attributed to the unique nature of television, which is considered to be the medium that helps viewers understand the intricate web of societal norms, values, and mindsets more than any other medium.

**Meaning and Nature**

The theory of cultivation suggests that media effects accumulate gradually, much like the formation of shapes on cave floors through the constant dripping of limewater from cave ceilings. Gerbner and his team argue that the media, particularly television, presents an image of the world that is not an accurate reflection of reality. They contend that television images are often exaggerated or fictional, far removed from actual reality. This theory asserts that viewers perceive the real world through a biased lens shaped by their exposure to television content. This perception of television's influence on viewers' understanding of the world remains relevant today.

**George Gerbner's Interpretation**

Gerbner and his research team argued that television messages do not accurately depict the reality of the world. However, they acknowledged that beliefs about society and surroundings are formed through

CULTIVATION THEORY / 3

repeated exposure to these messages, and these beliefs become reinforced and influential. Gerbner attributed the influence of media on viewers to the art of storytelling. He emphasized that humans uniquely construct their world through stories, which used to be homemade and community-inspired, but are now a result of complex manufacturing and marketing processes.

Gerbner conducted studies on the influence of television on viewers, particularly children who spent extended periods watching it. He found that those who watched an average of four hours a day were drawn to the stories, particularly those sponsored by commercial product manufacturers. This concern led Gerbner and his team to examine the concept of cultivation differential, highlighting the constant penetration of constructed commercial messages in media content.

**KEY THEORY**

Television shares many similarities with motion pictures in terms of visual and auditory elements. However, the influence of television on viewers is considered to be stronger due to its wide range of content, including news, cartoons, soap operas, and political campaigns, in addition to films and film-based programs. As television became a central medium in American households, researchers became increasingly interested in understanding its impact. Television was embraced by the American people as a cost-effective and easily accessible source of entertainment. The significant increase in TV viewing led scholars to recognize that its content could have a profound influence on the lives of Americans, particularly children.

**Conceptual Model and its Explanation**

Gerbner's theory emphasizes the influence of long-term exposure to television on viewers. The intentional or unintentional images portrayed on television gradually become ingrained in the viewers' minds, shaping their perception of social reality. According to Gerbner's cultivation theory, heavy viewers of television are more likely to accept the content as an accurate representation of the real world. The theory suggests that viewers, while spending time in front of the television, develop a connection with the characters and tend to believe in what is shown on the screen. This indicates that heavy viewers perceive the television-created world as a true reflection of reality. Their understanding of social and cultural values is heavily influenced by the views expressed on television. The theory assumes that the more television

one watches, the more the portrayals on television resemble real life, leading to the acceptance of the values and culture depicted in the fictional world.

**Social Reality**

Gerbner's research has demonstrated that television is connected to the images and perceptions of social reality held by both children and adults. These include areas such as geography, demographics, stereotypes of individuals and groups, age, gender, role expectations, crime, and family life. The cultivation hypothesis can be tested by examining the extent to which television dramas shape viewers' perceptions of society, even when those perceptions differ from real-life experiences and stories. It is crucial to investigate the influence of television in shaping viewers' conceptualizations of society, considering the disparities between reel portrayals and actual social realities.

**Cultural Indicators**

Gerbner and his research team implemented the Cultural Indicators project, which differed from earlier studies in terms of its historical grounding, theoretical guidance, and empirical support. The project employed a three-pronged research strategy consisting of institutional analysis, message system analysis, and cultivation analysis.

**Institutional Analysis:** Institutional analysis aimed to investigate the development and organization of media message policies.

**Message System Analysis:** Message system analysis involved systematic surveys of week-long samples of televised dramas to examine the content and trends presented to viewers globally.

**Cultivation Analysis:** Cultivation analysis focused on analyzing viewers' perceptions of social reality based on their varying levels of exposure to television content.

**Types of Viewers and Effects of Television on Users**

Cultivation analysis, a type of media effects study, proposes that individuals who spend more time watching television programs tend to adopt the perspectives and beliefs portrayed on television as their own. Heavy viewers are particularly susceptible to these long-term effects, as they are more likely to accept television characters, concepts, values, and ideologies as representative of the real world. Gerbner categorized viewers into light, medium, and heavy viewers based on their daily television consumption. Heavy viewers, watching more than four hours a day, are believed to form opinions aligned with television

portrayals rather than real-life practices. Studies have examined the cultivation effects of various media formats, such as reality television shows and video games like 'Blue Whale', highlighting how media content can shape individuals' perceptions and behaviours.

#### **Limitations of Cultivation Theory**

Cultivation analysis has faced criticism for its claims and limitations in explaining the phenomenon in detail. Critics argue that not all television content focuses on violence, so it cannot be solely responsible for cultivating a sense of violence among viewers. Additionally, the theory has been accused of overlooking viewers' individual understanding abilities, as perceptions can vary based on mindset and cognitive factors. Some researchers suggest that more attention should be given to content that shapes perceptions rather than solely focusing on the amount of television viewing. The theory's emphasis on frequency of viewing reflects a quantitative approach rather than considering qualitative aspects such as perception, persuasion, and the overall effect of content on viewers.

Critics of cultivation theory argue that the theory overlooks the pre-existing characteristics of viewers who may selectively choose to watch certain genres of programs, such as crime or violence. External factors such as the simultaneous use of alternative media, personal life experiences, and the viewing environment, including the presence of others, can also influence the viewer's response. Some studies suggest that heavy viewing may not necessarily impact a person's social construction of behaviour or worldview. Additionally, viewers may not always interpret what they see on television as real, making it difficult to establish a causal relationship between the viewer and the media. If viewers are aware that what they are watching is fictional, the implications on the viewer may be different.

#### **RELATED CONCEPTS**

Gerbner's research on Cultural Indicators, which initially focused on prime time and weekend daytime TV network programs, expanded to assess how television content influenced viewers' perceptions of reality. Gerbner termed this focus of research 'Cultivation Analysis.' The widespread concern about the influence of television violence on viewers prompted many researchers to delve into this area of study.

#### **Cultivation Analysis**

Cultivation analysis is a theoretical perspective that emphasizes the influence of television on viewers' attitudes and behaviours. It suggests that viewers who spend excessive time watching television are more likely to adopt and imitate the behaviours and values portrayed on the screen. The analysis focuses on the predominant, frequent, and consistent messages presented in television programs, as these messages shape viewers' perceptions and beliefs. As television content reflects various aspects of society, such as history, culture, and politics, cultivation analysis is considered suitable for cross-cultural and multinational studies.

#### **Application of Cultivation Analysis in Research**

Cultivation theory has been widely applied in studies focusing on the effects of television viewing, particularly in relation to violence. Researchers have found that frequent television viewers often exhibit symptoms of depression, loneliness, alienation, and mistrust. These viewers tend to develop a perception that the world is a hostile and malicious place. Furthermore, studies have examined the impact of violent characters on children, linking exposure to violence on television with increased aggression in real life. Apart from violence, cultivation theory has also been applied to various other areas of study, including health, politics, religion, and gender studies.

#### **Examples of Cultivation Analysis**

Researchers propose that television viewing has two main effects: increased accessibility of information in memory and the construction of judgments through heuristic processing.

**Television as a medium of influence:** Television is seen as a powerful medium of influence due to its audiovisual nature, cost-effectiveness, and ability to engage viewers with storytelling.

**Influence of Television on viewers:** The content presented on television is not necessarily based on real facts, but on speculation, yet it still has a significant impact on viewers' beliefs.

**Television's effects are limited:** The effects of television are considered consistent regardless of viewing patterns, as even a small but pervasive influence can make a crucial difference. While television may not directly change behaviour, prolonged viewing can alter viewers' cognitive perceptions.

#### **Mainstreaming and Resonance**

The concept of extensive television viewing and the potential Magic Bullet effect led to further