
UNIT 1 INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Nature and Functions of News Agencies
- 1.3 Global News Agencies
 - 1.3.1 Alternative to the "GLOBALS"
- 1.4 International Broadcasting
 - British Broadcasting Corporation
 - Voice of America
 - Visnews
- 1.5 International Organisations
 - 1.5.1 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
 - 1.5.2 International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
- 1.6 Inter-governmental Agencies
- 1.7 Other International Organisations
- 1.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.9 Further Reading
- 1.10 Check Your Progress: Model Answers

1.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define the nature and role of the international information agencies,
- list various transnational and multinational information agencies,
- describe the functions of information agencies, and
- describe the role of the inter-governmental international organisations.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Have you ever thought as to how the radio, the television, and the newspaper get all the information, facts and figures from far flung corners of the World? How could all the newspapers, in a very short span of time, gather the information? I am sure, you must have thought about it. And you know how the whole system of news gathering and dissemination activities operates. You may not have a deep knowledge about their operations. But don't worry, you will learn about them as we move ahead in this unit.

Production and distribution of information has become a very complicated and competitive business. News agencies have performed this role for many years. Since the material is distributed and used by many media establishments, there is a concern about the power of these agencies. This unit, will explain the nature and role of the international information agencies and the functioning of the trans-national news agencies. We shall also discuss the role of inter-governmental international information organisations.

Significant changes in communications have occurred in the recent past. These changes have implications for both national and international communication flows. These flows have advantages as well as disadvantages. They have also raised a number of issues concerning politics, economy, and culture in different countries, and prompted them to evolve a framework of communication of their own in keeping with their own needs. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the nature and content of communication flows between and among nations and the organisations that are involved in these tasks.

There are hundreds of agencies, which are in the business of supplying information to the mass media. These agencies are referred to as news agencies, feature services, and syndicates. The news agencies supply material to suit the print as well as the audio-visual media. The impact of these agencies on what we read and see is quite significant.

Therefore, an essential pre-requisite for a student of communication is to understand the background of some of these agencies. Since our focus, in this unit, is on the international information and news agencies, we shall confine ourselves to the international sphere only.

Activity 1

Before we proceed, we shall engage ourselves in a short activity.

Take any newspaper that you can lay your hands on. Open the first (or cover) page, and list all the names of the news agencies attached with each news item. For example, "Diana's stepmother to remarry (London, Reuter); here Reuter is the news agency.

News Items	News Agencies
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1.2 NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF NEWS AGENCIES

A news agency generally deals with news coverage. It combines spot coverage with interpretation of the important political and economic events. Although its emphasis is limited, the news agency plays a very important role in shaping public opinion on crucial national and international affairs. The news agency does not deal directly with the public. It works through the intermediary of the other means of mass communication, namely the press, radio and television. Essentially, it plays the role of a wholesale supplier of news. The media depend on material supplied by the news agencies mainly out of economic necessity. In order to have a wide coverage, which the readers of any standard publication expect, the newspaper has to maintain a costly network of staff reporters, correspondents, offices, bureaus and telecommunication equipments on a world-wide scale. But we are aware that many newspapers of our country, and for that matter, most of the newspapers of the Third World countries cannot even maintain a proper network of correspondents within their own country of operation. Only a few newspapers can afford this investment and recurring expenditure. For a majority of the news media, the news agencies are a major source of news supply. The subscribers to the news agencies include the daily newspapers, the radio and TV stations, the local newspapers, magazines, offices and institutions, particularly government agencies, large corporations in the private and public sector, banks, and commercial establishments.

The proliferation of the news agencies began with the World War II, especially after many countries gained their independence. When you compare the contents of the newspapers, you will notice, especially in international news that there is a high degree of similarity. The reason is that almost all the newspapers subscribe to common sources for their foreign material. Any one of the several global or, as they are better known, transnational news agencies can be regarded as a common source. In our country, the two leading news agencies, the **United News of India (UNI)** and the **Press Trust of India (PTI)**, have contractual agreements with these global news agencies.

Certain studies reveal that there are about 1200 news agencies operating in the world. However, the five large transnational agencies, **Reuters**, **Agence France Presse (AFP)**,

Sovetskavo Soyusa (TASS) put out around 35 million words per day, and claim to provide nine-tenths of the total foreign news output of the world media. In addition, there are other major agencies, like the **Deutsche Press Agentur (DPA)** of Germany, **Kyodo** of Japan, and **Xinhua** of China.

Several regional or alternative news agencies have developed on a co-operative basis among the developing countries. They are the **ASIN** of Latin America, the **Caribbean News Exchange Pool**, and the **Non-aligned News Agencies Pool (NANAP)**.

One reason for us to focus on a few agencies (**AP**, **UPI**, **Reuters**, **AFP**, and **TASS**), in this unit, is that, as described earlier, their output is quantitatively very high. Further they have been able to maintain their dominance with their vast scale of operations. Consequently, other agencies are effectively blocked from setting up rival services. Another reason is that the history of these news agencies is closely linked to the consolidation of colonial empires in the nineteenth century.

For a very long time, the communication of information depended on the physical movement of people. You must be knowing that in the good old days the kings and emperors would have messengers, who would move from one place to another carrying messages on horse back. Eventually, submarine cables along sea routes and cables across land outpaced the physical movement of information through people.

The news agencies utilised this system, and thereby established a wide network. It was in this context that the first news agency was founded by a Frenchman, **Charles Havas**, in 1835. Havas is historically very significant because he laid the foundation for the French (**AFP**), UK (**Reuters**) and German (**DPA**) news agencies. We shall now briefly look into the background of the five global news agencies.

Activity 2

Notes: Use the space below for your answer.

- 1) We have just discussed how the news agencies function. Please present the flow of news in a flow-chart.

1.3 GLOBAL NEWS AGENCIES

Reuters: This news agency takes its name after its founder, **Paul Julius Reuter**. As an employee of the Havas agency and through his friendship with a well-known physicist of his time, Carl Fredrich Gausess, he came to know the advantage of the electric telegraph. Around 1850, he set up a carrier pigeon service. When he moved to the UK, in 1851, he opened a telegraph office near the London Stock Exchange. Initially, his services were confined to commercial information. When he was able to persuade more newspapers to subscribe to his service, he diversified into other areas. Historians suggest that his first major breakthrough came in 1859, when he sent a despatch for shadowing a war in Italy. Since then the agency has expanded, and is regarded as a global news agency.

Reuters supplies news to its media clients such as other news agencies, newspapers, the radio and television stations under various categories. These include general and economic news, news pictures and the TV news. Information is collected from around 160 exchanges and markets. It has a network of about 1200 journalists, photographers and cameramen, who operate through 100 bureaus in different parts of the world.

Under its present form of ownership, a public company, **Reuters** claims that it can ensure that no particular interest group or faction can have control. Consequently, it hopes to preserve its integrity and freedom from bias. These claims are questioned by many Third World countries.

Associated Press (AP): The impetus to provide speedy transmission of news was given by the telegraph invented by **Samuel F.B. Morse**, in 1844. The telegraph enables many small town newspapers in the US to get their news. It is in this context that the meeting of the leading New York publishers, in 1848, gains significance. Although a decision was made to start a news agency, the name, **Associated Press**, was not used till about 1860. It is said that the newspapers, which formed the **Associated Press**, were able to demonstrate their enterprise during the Mexican War.

Associated Press has since expanded its operations to include economic and financial international news service called **AP-DJ** (Dow Jones). This service is run in conjunction with **Dow Jones Inc.**, publisher of the **Wall Street Journal** and with **Telerate** a major US computer based financial data service.

Associated Press took a concrete form, in 1900, as a modern news gathering association. In 1848, six leading newspapers of New York city launched a cooperative effort through the creation of the Associated Press of New York. It was founded by the newspapers to share the cost of telegraphing the news brought by ship to different ports in the US. Competition and rivalry was very much evident in the formative years, which was overcome by AP. Yet AP was unhappy that its news exchange contracts of 1893 with European news agencies had restricted its entry into the British Empire area. Reuters was controlling the area, with Havas (French Agency) and Wolf (German) controlling other areas. Although it was able to establish foreign bureaus before World War I, it could not sell news abroad. The long struggle, which ended in 1934, resulted in the creation of the AP World service, in 1946. Kent Cooper, as the AP traffic chief, is credited with establishing AP as a world service. The struggle by AP to establish its base and the restrictions the rivals placed on it is often cited as a case that is reflective of many Third World countries wanting to break the monopoly of the "big five", which ironically includes AP.

AP with its wide communications network using advanced technology has bureaus in more than 100 countries. Its 5000 plus correspondents and a host of stringers cater to about 1300 newspapers, 3400 broadcasters in the US and 1000 private subscribers.

United Press International (UPI): The growth of AP spurred the rise of competitors. Edward Wyllis Scripps, the founder of the famous scripps chain of newspapers in the US, formed the United Press Association, in 1907. One of the reasons for starting this association was the closed membership policy of the "Associated Press". Scripps is on record in trusting AP over all others. Further, AP was interested in serving the big morning newspapers, while Scripps was publishing the evening newspapers. Running his own news service was, therefore, attractive.

Initially, Scripps started two regional news services to cater to his own newspapers. At the same time, there was another association, the Publishers' Press Association formed in 1898 by the non-AP eastern newspapers. In 1907, Scripps merged his United Press Association with the Publishers' Press Association to form the **United Press Association**. This association could enter areas which AP could not due to contractual limitations. Therefore, UPA's influence grew.

A major set back occurred in 1918. It sent a report that the war had ended, and later it turned out to be false. Its credibility suffered. Slowly, it recovered, and it is said that the UPA news reports "were dynamic and, like the Scripps papers, conformed to the needs and interests of the mass of readers". On the contrary, AP was looking down upon human interest stories, and was still concerned with straight reporting. The backgrounds and personal accounts enabled UPA to score over AP. Parallel to these developments emerged a third press association, the International News Service (INS).

INS was founded to use the existing leased wire facilities of the **Hearst** newspapers. It faced severe competition from AP. To offset this pressure, INS began to concentrate in a few centres only, and focus on good writers who could do extensive and well researched pieces. The newspapers never looked towards INS as a major source, but subscribed to the service for well written stories and major news beats. Although it was emerging as a major service, by 1956, it decided to merge with AP, in 1958, to form the second major global news agency in the US, the **United Press International**.

UPI claims to have an overseas electronic strength of about 200 journalists overseas distributed in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Australia. Unlike the AP and Reuters, UPI has not diversified much into specialized economic services. However, its broadcast related services are considered to be a specialisation.

Agence France Presse: AFP is a post-war successor to the **Agence Havas**, founded in 1835. The French newspapers control the agency by having the maximum representation on its board of directors. Although AFP is described as an unsubsidised autonomous organisation, in effect, the French government and various agencies under its control subscribed to AFP, and provided good support.

Through a wide network of bureaus within the country and abroad, AFP is regarded as one of the major global news agencies. AFP is important in another sense, and that is its history. As already mentioned, it was a successor to **Havas**. It grew out of a translation agency, which sold the translations to various newspapers. Two of its employees, Paul Julius Reuter and Bernard Wolff, started news agencies in the UK and Germany. All the three countries, France, the UK and Germany were leading European empires. Accordingly, the news agencies, Havas, Reuters and Wolff took control of large segments of the world for news coverage. Many writers argue that this laid the foundation for a close relationship between communication and empire-building.

AFP has more than 10,000 newspapers and 70 agencies as its subscribers. Its operations are in more than 150 countries with a network of 110 foreign bureaus. Its daily output is about 3,350,000 words contributed by 170 full time correspondents and more than 500 stringers.

Telegrafnoi Agentsvo Sovetskavo Soyusa (TASS): Often it was customary to exclude TASS from the "globals" as the transnational news agencies are called. However, in terms of influence, impact and coverage, TASS was in no way different from the other agencies. With the changes in the erstwhile USSR, the relevance of understanding TASS as one of the globals may have minimised, but recent changes and the formation of ITAR and Russia, has given it a new outlook and depth of penetration, in terms of coverage.

However, from a historical perspective, it is necessary to understand TASS. This global news agency began on the foundation of what was known as the Petrograd Telegraph Agency, in 1917. When it started functioning under the new regime after the socialist revolution, it was considered as a major publicity organ dealing with the country's economic life. The domestic news operations were coordinated under the Chief Department of Home Information. It supplied news through a network of correspondents in all regional and territorial centres. Officially, its role was to supply balanced information, objectively reflecting the economic life of all republics, territories and regions by taking into account

their economic potential and peculiarities. According to one source, TASS has approximately 20,000 subscribers both domestic and foreign.

The work of TASS was complemented by another information agency, **Novosti Press Agency (APN)**. This was established in 1961 by the Union of Soviet Journalists, the Union of Soviet writers and a few other organisations. The objective was to promote information for peace and friendship among nations.

TASS, in comparison to APN, claimed to be the single state system of information, while APN became the organ for public organisations.

The changes in the Soviet Union are now history. In the changed situation, TASS and APN have correspondingly changed. APN and TASS have been merged to form a new Russian information agency called **ITAR (the Information Telegraph Agency of Russia)**. ITAR will retain a part of the holdings of the erstwhile TASS and APN. The TASS trademark will be used in conjunction with ITAR, and the credit line now is ITAR-TASS. According to a senior functionary of the Russian Government, the changes in the news agency set up are necessiated by financial considerations, such as paying for operations in foreign countries in "hard currency".

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: i) Use the space below for your answers.

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

1) Write down the full names of the five large transnational news agencies.

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2) Name the major news agency of

Japan :

Germany :

3) Name the two major news agencies of India.

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4) Who founded the first news agency? Mention the year.

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5) Fill in the blanks:

a) Reuters news agency was named after

b) Telegraph was invented by in (Year)

c) In 1946, the World service of was created.

d) In 1918, reported that the First World War had ended.

e) In 1958, news agency was formed by merging United Press Association with

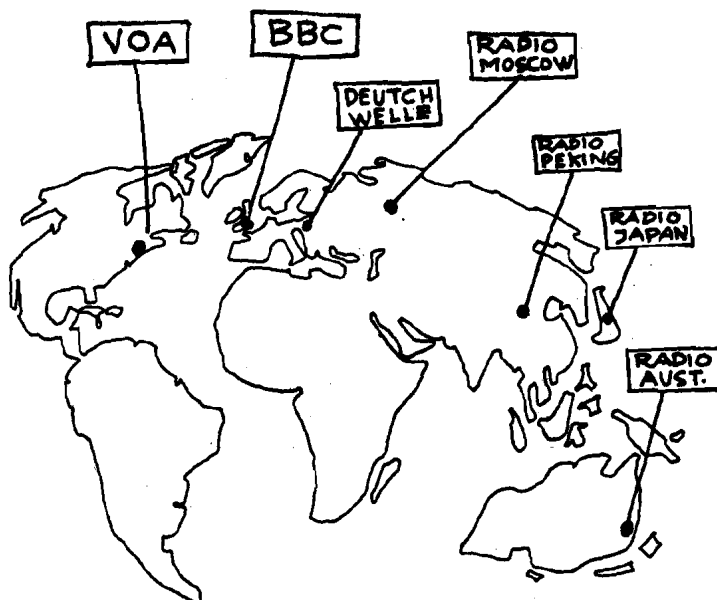
1.3.1 Alternative to the "GLOBALS"

The profile of these agencies reflect the strength and power of information. In the '70s, there was a realisation that the Third World countries were represented inadequately and many a time misrepresented. One of the mechanisms devised to correct this was the decision by the non-aligned countries to set up the "Non-aligned News Agencies Pool." It was set up in 1976. According to D.R. Mankekar, the Pool was established to "fill in the deficiency found in the news services of the Western news agencies as imbalanced, oneway flow, ethnocentric, prejudiced and biased against the Third World countries." This is due to the preoccupation of the Western news agencies with "spot news" or news of upheavals. The pool was devised to concentrate on cultural and developmental news, and also to provide a contextual background to the political and economic news emanating from the Third World countries.

The Non-aligned News Agencies' Pool has had a mixed reaction and, by and large, is regarded as falling short of the Third World media expectations. Further, recent changes in the international political scene have played a significant role in the slow marginalisation of the pool. To what extent this has had an impact on news dissemination between and among the Third World countries is yet to be assessed.

1.4 INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING

Broadcasting beyond national boundaries has been a parallel activity for many countries along with the development of their domestic systems. The external services or international broadcasting by different countries are aimed at serving their people settled in other countries, and also to propagate the policies of the respective countries. Since broadcasting developed in the colonial era, the colonial powers sought through the radio to build stronger ties between themselves and the peoples they ruled around the world. England and Holland were the first to think along these lines. However, it was Adolf Hitler of Germany who saw the potential use of the domestic and international radio for purposes of propaganda. During World War II, the international short wave radio was a weapon to conquer people's minds. We shall now examine some of the leading broadcasting organisations.



British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) : Authors interested in broadcasting suggest that the British were adept in using, international radio. Broadcasting in the United Kingdom has undergone phenomenal changes since then. Yet, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) occupies a central place in terms of its international reach and influence. We in India, have always been fascinated by the "BBC World Service". Now through satellites, a few million homes have the benefit of watching the BBC-TV.

BBC is a central institution in the broadcasting system of the United Kingdom. In 1922, several radio manufacturers established the British Broadcasting Company. In 1926, it

became a public corporation. It currently operates two national colour television networks (BBC-1 and BBC-2) and four national radio networks, 1,2,3 and 4, and several local radio stations.

BBC draws international news from its correspondents. BBC's international character is based on the fact that it is in the forefront of the United Kingdom's international broadcasting operations. The operations are not commercial, and finance is provided in the form of a special grant approved by the British Parliament. Consequently, the government is directly involved in the international broadcasting system.

The External Services Department has responsibility for international broadcasting. Within this department there are sub units which oversee the operation of programs covering different parts of the world. Thus there is the European Service, the Overseas Service comprising the African, Arabic, Eastern, Far Eastern and Latin American Services. The World Service provides a range of entertainment and informational programming in English 24 hours a day around the world. According to BBC, the objectives of the External Services are to give unbiased news, to reflect the British opinion and to project the British life and culture and developments in science and industry. Available statistics indicate that the external services broadcast each week about 700 hours of programmes in 17 European languages and 21 non-European languages plus English. It claims that about 75 million adult listeners tune into it at least once a week. This audience size does not reflect the full impact of BBC, as it is an important source of information for the influential community in different countries. For example, in India, it is very common to hear people say that they had heard the news first on BBC. Further, during the internal emergency (1975-77), BBC was criticized heavily by the Government for its "biased" coverage.

The scope, nature and character of BBC External Services was affected during the Falkland crisis. It was also the target of criticism during the Iranian Revolution and the recent Gulf War. However, contemporary developments indicate that international broadcasting is here to stay.

Voice of America (VOA): Another country which has systematically used and realised the potential of the radio and television in international affairs is the United States of America.

This realisation is traced to the year 1941, when the USA entered World War II. Given the private nature of broadcasting within the country, the Government did not have any broadcasting outlet of its own. However, the private companies had short wave transmitters, which the Government procured on a lease basis. Two government organisations, the Office of War Information and the Council of Inter-American Affairs were responsible for international broadcasts during the period. The programming titled **Voice of America** was done on a contractual basis by the private US broadcast corporations.

After the war ended, VOA would have closed down, had it not been for the dawn of a cold war between the USA and the erstwhile USSR. Therefore, when the United States Information Agency (USIA) was established, in 1953, VOA became one of its divisions. At a time when many countries did not have their own local stations, VOA and BBC could command huge audience bases. When local stations developed, VOA directed its programmes to the politically curious.



Although VOA has grown and expanded considerably, its influence is debatable. Critics argue that the disapproval of the US politics in many lands had its impact on VOA's operation and its influence. On many fronts, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf Conflict, VOA has been criticised.

Apart from VOA, there is a separate television service of the USIA. Here, the emphasis is on promoting the programmes to be telecast on the local stations. Through satellite networking, it also arranges for direct telecasts.

VOA broadcasts in 35 languages, and puts out about 800 hours of programmes per week. It may be necessary for the US in India to know that the location of the VOA transmitter in Sri Lanka is a rallying point in our foreign policy pronouncements.

In the future, these operations may change. For example, through satellite dishes, it is possible to receive direct telecasts. The popularity of the CNN news during the gulf conflict is a good example.

VOA and BBC are not the only international broadcasting organisations. Every other country in varying degrees does certain amount of international broadcasting.

VISNEWS : It is related to the international broadcasting service in the supply of audio-visual material similar to the news agency services that has been discussed earlier. One of the major suppliers of visuals for the TV networks around the world is **VISNEWS**.

VISNEWS is a London based international TV news film agency owned by a consortium of the BBC, Reuters, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and New Zealand TV. The service has over 170 subscribers in 95 countries and is the largest contributor to the daily Eurovision exchange programme.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: i) Use the space below for your answers.

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

- 1) Why did British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America start broadcasting?

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- 2) With the proliferation of satellite communication throughout the world, do you think BBC and VOA broadcast services can continue for long?

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1.5 INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

In this section, we shall discuss about two important international organisations. These two international organisations are UNESCO and ITU.

1.5.1 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

UNESCO is an agency of the United Nations. All UN member states have a right to belong to it. It describes itself as both an ideal as well as an organisation. Adapting itself to the changing world, UNESCO's field of specialisation runs into dozens. Although it may be interesting to know about all of its activities, for this unit, it is sufficient to focus on its communication and communication related activities.

In November, 1945, representatives of forty-four nations met in "war scarred" London in a quest for peace. The then Prime Minister of UK, Clement Atlee, and the American Poet, Archibald Macleish together coined the striking message:

"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed"

This is in the forefront of UNESCO's constitution, and is also the key to UNESCO's activities, from its early days. UNESCO has been concerned both with the development of the media and also the problems such a development brings with it. UNESCO is always alert to find how the media and development work in the Third World countries. For UNESCO, it is necessary to understand that the purpose of the organisation is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture. To realise this purpose, UNESCO has sought to "collaborate in the work of advancing mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communications, and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image".

Realising that, qualified personnel were needed to man the media in the 'decolonised' parts of the world, which today constitute the bulk of the so called Third World countries, it published its first study on the professional training of journalists. Based on this study, it set up training institutions in different parts of the world. UNESCO also realised that only a few of the developing countries had any newspapers and more so, news agencies, which could provide the media with news.

Early efforts in this direction are the Union of African News Agencies and the organisations of Asian News Agencies, in 1963. It has established training centres to give training to the news agency journalists. In India, the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi, offers a specialised course in news agency journalism. UNESCO has played a key-role in the introduction and expansion of mass media, especially the television, in many developing countries. Over the years, UNESCO's activities in communication have changed from what has been described as an "ad hoc" attempt to develop mass communication media to integrated programmes in which the communication package is regarded as a whole approach. Efforts in this direction are the preparation of national models and establishing documentation infrastructures.

The role of UNESCO became more significant in the context of the demand by many developing countries for a better deal from the developed countries. The first step in this direction was a call for the establishment. The first step in this direction was a call for the establishment of a **New International Economic Order (NIEO)**. It was realised that the NIEO cannot be independent from socio-cultural factors, apart from political and economic factors. The Fifth Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned Countries (1976) and the 19th General Conference of UNESCO crystallised the idea of a **New International Information and Communication Order (NIICO)**. The report of the International Commission for the study of communication problems, '**Many Voices One World**', better known as the Macbride report, is a landmark document in this direction. The details of the order and a broader historical background will be dealt with in the subsequent units of the block.

After the publication of **Many Voices One World**, the USA followed by the UK charged UNESCO with indulging in political activities, and decided to pull out from UNESCO. Subsequently Singapore also pulled out from UNESCO for the same reasons.

Check Your Progress 3

- Notes: i) Use the space below for your answer.
ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

UNESCO has been in action for a long period of time. Do you think that we need such an organisation?

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1.5.2 International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

ITU was founded in Paris, in 1865, as the International Telegraphic Union to co-ordinate and monitor the development of the telegraph, which was a new invention. With the development of the other systems, particularly the wireless radio, the name was changed to its present, the International Telecommunications Union.

In 1947, ITU entered into an agreement with the United Nations (UN) and thereby became a specialised agency for telecommunications. The ITU Secretariat is in Geneva, and works at various levels. The supreme body in ITU is the Plenipotentiary Conference. Basically, through various administrative conferences ITU makes decisions regarding its various functions. The four permanent organisations of ITU are the General Secretariat, the International Frequency Registration Board (IFRB), the International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee, and the International Radio Consultative Committee.

The main functions of ITU are to:

- allocate frequencies to avoid interference;
- co-ordinate efforts to eliminate interference;
- foster the creation of telecommunication in newly independent or developing countries;
- promote safety measures, and
- undertake studies in the area of telecommunications.

In the context of NWICO, ITU has assumed a different role and perception. On the one hand, it has to promote telecommunications development taking into account a host of factors — political, technological and economical. On the other hand it has to manage a vital resource, the electro magnetic spectrum. It is in these two areas that there is an increased dialogue and conflict between the developed and the developing countries. For example, the use of satellites is related to availability of parking slots in the orbit. While many developed countries are ready to park their satellites, the developing countries argue that certain slots should be reserved for them to use it at a time when they can either develop or afford a satellite. The debate is a continuous one. Although ITU performs a very technical function, it is an important agency that is central to communication development.

Check Your Progress 4

- Notes: i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

What is the necessity of ITU?

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1.6 INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

International Programme for Development Communication (IPDC)

An important step for the establishment of a NWICO was the decision to create the **International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)**. A decision to this effect was taken at the 21st session of the general conference of UNESCO in Belgrade, in 1980.

IPDC is a programme based on an assessment of the communications situation in many developing countries. It recognised that significant inequalities exist between the developed and developing countries in technological, professional, material and financial aspects of communications development. The inequalities are accentuated by the fact that there is enormous dependence on developed countries by the developing countries in all these areas. Therefore, IPDC has applied itself to work towards reducing the existing gaps in communication within, as well as among nations. Accordingly, appropriate infrastructures, equipment, training programmes and resources have to be developed in the developing countries.

IPDC is co-ordinated by an intergovernmental council, composed of 35 member states, elected by and responsible to the General Conference of UNESCO on the basis of equitable geographical distribution and applying the principle of rotation. The task of this council is to implement the objectives of IPDC. IPDC council seeks to avoid conflict and work on consensus. Funds received through contributions shall also be administered by the council. The basis of allocation of funds by the council to various projects is determined through criteria that is defined by the council from time to time.

Over the years, IPDC has played a significant role. An analysis of its funding for various projects in one year indicates that the IPDC assistance is provided under various heads; audio-visual media, printed press, training and research, news agencies, media education, computerisation and data banks, and book production.

Check Your Progress 5

- Notes :
- i) Use the space below for your answer.
 - ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

List down three main functions of IPDC.

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1.7 OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

In addition to UNESCO and ITU, there are other UN organisations whose activities have a bearing on communications developments. Regional intergovernmental organisations, such as Council of Europe, European Economic Community (EEC), the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Organisation for African Units (AOU), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), to name a few, are active in the communication field also.

There are operational agencies and professional organisations, such as the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT), the Arab Telecommunications Union (ATU), and the Pan African Telecommunications Union (PATU), which co-ordinate the development of telecommunications in different regions. Professional organisations, such as the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) encourage professionalism in broadcasting in different regions.

1.8 LET US SUM UP

In communication studies, a background to international information agencies and organisations is essential to understand how and why communication flow occurs. Since the mass media are considered to have a significant impact on life, the contents of the media are examined critically. Such an examination reveals that there is a great dependence by the world media on news agencies. A few news agencies referred to as the globals dominate the news and information flows.

These global agencies are Reuters (UK), AFP (France), AP (USA), UPI (USA), and ITAR-TASS (Russia). According to the available statistics, these news agencies together contribute about 90 per cent of the news for the world media. They have an international role due to the size and their technological strength. In addition, there are national news agencies. For example, in India we have the **Press Trust of India** and **United News of India**.

The influence of the news agencies has raised questions about imbalance and distortion with regard to representation of the Third World countries. A call for a **New World Information and Communication Order** was given in this context. However, NWICO is not limited to this aspect only. It incorporates other areas in communication, such as technology, culture, and politics.

In culture and politics, the role of international broadcasting is well known. BBC and VOA are good examples of international broadcasting which have an impact and influence in many countries.

NWICO has led to alternative mechanisms such as IPDC which facilitate the development of communications in conjunction with specialised UN agencies such as the UNESCO and the ITU. Other units in this block will provide an in-depth analysis of these agencies in terms of the functions and related issues.

1.9 FURTHER READING

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1.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Reuters
Associated Press (AP)
United Press International (UPI)
Agence France Presse (AFP)
Telegrafnoi Agentsvo Sovetskavo Soyusa (TASS)
- 2) Japan: Kyodo
Germany: Deutsche Press Agentur
- 3) United News of India (UNI)
Press Trust of India (PTI)
- 4) Charles Havas in 1835
- 5) a) Paul Julius Reuter
b) Samuel F.B. Morse in 1844
c) Associated Press
d) United Press Association
e) United Press International, International News Service

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) BBC was started to broadcast (a) unbiased news, (b) the opinion and views of Britain and (c) the culture of Britain. VOA had similar objectives. i.e., to reflect the views of the United States of America.
- 2) Till today, the radio still remains a cheap and very influential medium. Initially, the satellite television may take away some audience from the radio, or people may lessen their time to listen to the radio, but the television cannot sweep aside all the radio audience. With the ever rising credibility of BBC and the economic interests of the United States of America growing worldwide, the giants will have to continue their services.

Check Your Progress 3

It is true that the UNESCO has been working in various areas of development. Definitely the presence of the UNESCO is being felt in almost all the developing countries. There is so much work to be done still. If the UNESCO could work more at the grassroot levels, then, surely, it could initiate a long term change in society. Yes, we do need such an organisation with more attention to the poorer section of the population.

Check Your Progress 4

Yes, it is very necessary to have an international organisation like ITU. If it was not formed the development of telecommunication would definitely take a different turn. There would have been wars and battles over the distribution of frequencies. The powerful countries would jam each other's broadcasts and telecasts. The less developed Third World countries would never get a chance to develop their own telecommunications.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) To reduce the gaps in communication between the developed and underdeveloped countries.
- 2) To conduct training programmes in communication.
- 3) To allocate funds for the development of the infrastructure of communication in less developed countries.