

# Module 1

## Introduction to Communication

### 1.1. COMMUNICATION

#### 1.1.1. Meaning and Definition of Communication

The term 'communication' is derived from the Latin word '*communicare*' which refers to sharing, contributing, informing, popularising and spreading. Communication can be expressed as a process in which individuals (two or more) share their views, suggestions, evidences, thoughts and feelings. The individuals involved in this process are known as sender and receiver.

Communication is a process which includes the sharing of information and mutual understanding among the individuals at same or different levels. Management of an organisation uses communication in assigning and controlling the employees' work. Communication offers help to the workers in achieving their individual goals by making them aware of the internal as well as external events which is also beneficial for the organisation.

According to Newman and Summer, "Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons".

According to Keith Davis, "Communications is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another".

According to the American Management Association, "Communication is any behaviour that results in an exchange of meaning".

#### 1.1.2. Nature of Communication

Nature of communication is as follows:

- 1) **Inevitable:** Communication is a social and psychological activity. If a person is facilitated with all physical comforts, but is not allowed to read, write, speak or listen he will become mentally weak and incapable of performing any task. Hence, communication is very important.
- 2) **Continuous Process:** Communication is an on-going process and not an art or a time-based event. It includes various events and actions that are interconnected and dependant on each other.
- 3) **Two-Way Traffic:** Communication is said to be incomplete unless the receiver is able to understand the message. So, it can be said that feedback is very essential for an effective communication. Therefore, communication is a two-way traffic instead of one-way.

- 4) **Short-Lived Process:** It is said to be a short-lived process, because as soon as the receiver receives the message and understands it in the right context, the communication process is completed.
- 5) **Universal Phenomenon:** Communication takes place everywhere. Not only human beings but birds, animals, etc., also communicate. Hence, it is termed as a widespread phenomenon.
- 6) **Contextual:** Communication always takes place in a particular context. Similar words may lead to different meanings if spoken in different contexts. Therefore, the meaning of communicated words may change according to the context.
- 7) **Needs Proper Understanding:** For proper understanding of the message, the message should be clearly and briefly expressed in words, as the media for communication are many but the main objective is appropriate understanding of the message by the receiver.
- 8) **Leads to the Achievement of Organisational Objectives:** Effective communication leads to achievement of the organisational objectives by creating a sense of objectivity in the organisation.
- 9) **Eliminates Misunderstanding:** Misunderstandings occur when there is a failure to understand or interpret words or actions correctly. Communication removes misunderstanding among people and helps in developing good relationships.

#### 1.1.3. Scope of Communication

In management, communication has a very broad scope. Communication covers all sort of religious, social, economic, political, financial and cultural activities together to generate an idea. Scope of communication is described as follows:

- 1) **In Personal Life:** Communication is present throughout a person's life and is strongly related to all the activities performed by him. Communication is such an essential part of an individual's existence as each person needs to communicate daily with a variety of people and organisations. Thus, he cannot move ahead in his life without using communication.
- 2) **In Social Life:** Human beings live in a society and are social in nature. They build connections with each other. Communication preserves and makes these social relations stronger.
- 3) **In Industry:** In an industry, to coordinate and combine all five aspects of communication (man, machine, material, money and method) effectively.



- 4) **In Business:** Communication is the foremost requirement of every business. Without communication, a business cannot operate. An organisation can fulfil the demands of the public only through effective communication.
- 5) **In Management:** The process of management includes planning, organising, implementing, decision making and controlling. Communication acts as the soul of whole management process.
- 6) **In Politics:** The different forms of communication include government policies, proposals of political parties, and the slogans of political leaders.
- 7) **In Religion:** Communication helps the predecessors of each religion in popularising the values and deeds of their religion, as religion is a medium of building trust in the group of supporters.
- 8) **In Organisation Behaviour:** To build a healthy relationship among employee, employer, and the organisation, communication is necessary. This relation is formed and maintained through formal and informal communication channels.
- 9) **In International Relations:** As in present era of globalisation every country shares their economic, cultural, technological, and various other issues with the other countries. Some of the national cooperative institutions that contribute in maintaining communication all over the world are SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), European Union, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations).
- 10) **In Industrial Relations:** It is well-known that labourers are the backbone of an organisation. Cooperation of labours is necessary for the organisation's success. It is the responsibility of the HR department to motivate and control them appropriately. To fulfil this objective HR department should create a transparent relationship between labourers/unions and management. Thus, communication is of utmost importance in order to nurture this relationship.
- 11) **In Decision-Making:** Decision-making is a daily routine issue for both the individuals and the organisations. For taking best decisions it is necessary to have complete information about it and communication is the best source to provide such information.
- 12) **In Publicity:** Organisations need to promote their products and services through publicity. To ensure proper flow of the organisational actions through mass media, the organisations need an effective communication. Relatively, if the actions are favourable for society, organisations will take the advantage of unpaid publicity and this will generate the goodwill of the organisation at higher level.
- 13) **In Information:** It is understood that information is the essence of communication. People and organisation communicate to get the information. If there is no need of information, there would be no communication. Hence, communication contributes by providing

### 1.1.4. Purpose of Communication

Purpose of communication is as follows:

- 1) **To Give and Receive Information:** Communication is used by organisations to convey the important information to employees about the goals, policies and rules through meetings, telephone, notices, employee handbooks, and bulletins. Likewise, organisations also use it to communicate with outsiders such as investors, customers, suppliers, government, public, etc., to make them aware about the organisational strategies and efforts either verbal or in written form.
- 2) **To Convey the Right Message:** Transmitting the right message to the right person is an objective of communication. It should also be ensured that the person receiving the message understands it.
- 3) **To Provide Advice:** Advice can be given on both personal and official matters. Generally, advice in business, given by the supervisors to workers is on matters related to handle machines and equipment in the factory premises. Managers also seek expert's advice in the matters of taxation, project finance, quality control, engineering, etc.
- 4) **To Receive Suggestions:** In an organisation, suggestions are welcomed to avoid the ambiguity in communication. It is a voluntary task and sometimes an anonymous effort. Suggestions act as a form of feedback and signify a smooth form of communication. Some important sources of suggestions are the customers and employees, as they are in direct contact with the banking procedures and operations.
- 5) **To Persuade People:** The art of influencing the attitudes, opinions and actions of people is known as persuasion. It is an essential goal of communication and needs efficient speaking and writing skills. Face-to-face conversation makes persuasion more effective.
- 6) **To Motivate People:** Motivation is the process of making people work hard for accomplishing organisational goals. Humans achieve their goals because of this motivational force. For this purpose, a secure, mutually cooperative, and trustful environment is required which can be built through communication.
- 7) **To Provide Counselling:** Counselling is a systematic and focused activity that needs professional know-how and objectivity. When an employee faces some personal or family problem his efficiency and confidence falls down and thus he needs counselling.
- 8) **To Issue Orders and Instructions:** For getting things done, manager issues orders and instructions to the employees. An order is a command to do something; on the other hand, instruction tells the way of carrying-out the order. In other words, order involves giving a task and instruction shows the way to



### 1.1.5. Elements of Communication

Five main elements of communication process are as follows:

- 1) **Sender/Encoder:** The creator of idea or the message is known as source or sender or encoder. A sender could be an individual, a group, or an individual who might be acting on behalf of a group. The sender (source) acts as the transmitter of the message.
- 2) **Message:** Message refers to the stimulus that the sender transfers to the receiver. Messages are made up of symbols which have specific meaning to both the parties: the sender and the receiver.
- 3) **Medium/Channels:** Channel plays an important role as means of transmitting the message. Mostly, the channels are in written or oral form but as technology is developing rapidly, visual channels are becoming more popular and common. The telephone and the other various written forms such as letters, memos, and reports fall under the common channels of

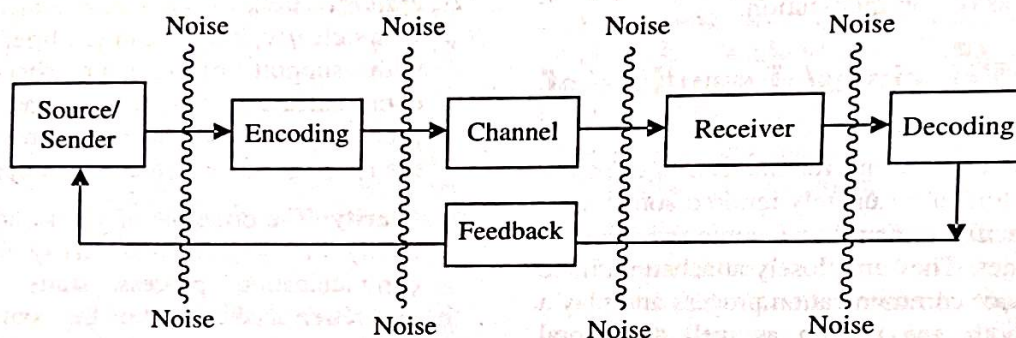
communication. Based on the nature of communication, the effectiveness of the communication can vary.

- 4) **Receiver/Decoder/Listener:** The person who receives the message, understands it, and interprets its meaning, is known as receiver. The next element that comes after selecting the right communication channel is decoding the message. Decoding has been done by the receiver.
- 5) **Feedback:** The most significant element of communication is feedback. In the absence of feedback, communication will not be effective. The sender will not be able to verify that the receiver has understood his message correctly.

Feedback is very important to make communication successful. It is the reaction, reply or effect of the information conveyed to the receiver.

### 1.1.6. Process of Communication

Communication is a two-way process which deals with the exchange and succession of ideas towards a direction that is mutually accepted. The communication process takes place with two participants via a medium that transmits the message holding a specific objective and which is understandable to both the participants, i.e., the sender and the receiver. The communication process is shown in the **figure 1.1:**



**Figure 1.1: Process of Communication**

- 1) **Source/Sender:** The individual, group, or organisation that starts the process of communication is known as sender or encoder. The whole responsibility of communication rests upon the shoulders of sender. The message can be affected by certain traits of sender such as experience, behaviour, knowledge, abilities, perceptions, and culture. If the message is framed according to the receiver's expectations, the acceptance and approval level would be higher. The source absorbs the idea, frames the message, chooses the channels or medium, and lastly decides regarding the receiver.
- 2) **Message:** The encoded idea that is transferred by the sender is called message. It is something that a sender wants to communicate or transfer to the specific receivers. Messages can be in two forms; verbal which includes written or spoken; and non-verbal which includes appearance, body language, silence, sounds, signs, etc.
- 3) **Encoding:** It is a method by which idea or thought of the message is converted into symbols that can be transmitted. In the process of encoding, one should

consider the contents that have to be included in the message and should also consider that how the receiver will interpret it and how it can affect the relationship among the two parties. **For example,** the communication done with the infant child is in encoded form because at that time the infant will understand the language of gestures and symbols.

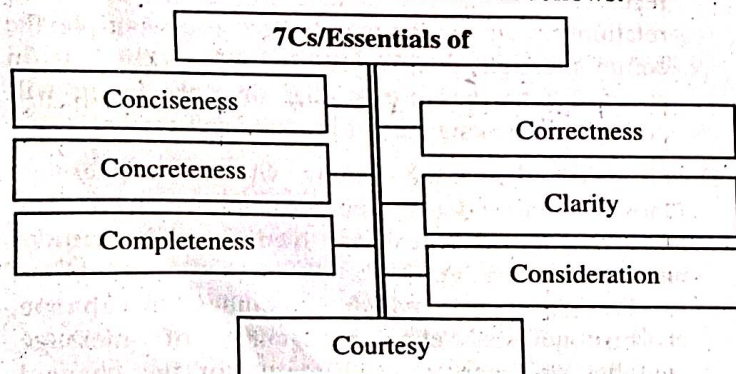
- 4) **Channel:** The medium by which the message moves from sender to receiver is known as channel. The channel can be mass media which includes newspapers, radio, T.V., etc., or it could be of individual use which includes telephone, correspondence, etc. Importance of message, number of receivers, availability of the channel, cost and effectiveness of the channel, etc. are some of the factors on which the selection of channel depends.
- 5) **Receiver:** The targeted recipient of a message is known as the receiver. He receives the encoded message and tries to decode it by understanding, interpreting, and perceiving the meaning of it as the sender has transmitted.



- 6) **Decoding:** Decoding is the stage where the receiver decodes the encoded message. He interprets and comes out with meaning of the message. In interpreting the symbols of the message, the receiver applies his knowledge and experience, or in some cases he may consult with a third party authority such as a dictionary or a code book. The receiver is not so much active in the process of communication but in this stage, he becomes more active. What the receiver interprets may be same or different from the actual intention of the sender; and if the interpretation has gone wrong, chances of misunderstanding increases and the process of communication can be hampered. For example, A said to B please take your seat. B decodes this and understands that A said me to sit down.
- 7) **Feedback:** At the end, the receiver responds to the communication that has been transmitted by the sender. The interpretation can be done clearly or it could be based on misunderstanding of the message that has been sent. The reaction or response of receiver to the sender is known as feedback.
- 8) **Noise:** Noise is that interruption in the communication process which hinders communication process. It is a negative component in communication channel. In general, noise can be introduced at any stage in the process of communication.

### 1.1.7. 7C's/ Principles/ Essentials of Communication

The pathway for building a strong relationship is effective communication; which is unfortunately ignored sometimes. People use some specific principles of communication to write effective messages. They are closely attached with the fundamental concepts of communication process and play a significant role in both, the written as well as in oral communications. They are popularly known as '7Cs' namely; completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy, and correctness. These essentials of effective communication are as follows:



- 1) **Conciseness:** One should be very specific and able to communicate in least possible words without letting go the virtues of other 'Cs' in business communications. Conciseness is one of the essential conditions to effective business communication and a concise message is complete without being lengthy. Concise message is time saving and less expensive for both the sender and the receiver.

By conciseness, one can highlight the essence of significant ideas by eliminating the needless words. When conciseness is pooled with the "you-view", it becomes more interesting to the recipients. A concise message values the recipients by not confusing their professional lives with needless information.

- 2) **Correctness:** In business communication, the word 'correctness' means using proper level of language, accurate facts, figures and words. If the information is not communicated in a proper manner, the sender can lose his trustworthiness. Wrong information conveyed to seniors can hamper the decision-making process and for the outsiders it can ruin the image of the firm.

With accurate use of grammar, composition, correct words and selecting the right communication level according to the receiver's level; the correctness of communication can be decided. For successful communication, the use of right tone is very important in delivering a message. The expressions that are real and exact are preferred over unclear and abstract expressions.

- 3) **Concreteness:** The concreteness of message is very important for a successful communication. It suggests being specific, exact, and clear rather than being unclear and general. We cannot make diagrams, graphs or tables in oral communication to express the views clearly, but we can use brief and specific words with support of relevant facts and figures to communicate the right message. If the message is precise, the receiver would be more likely to interpret the message as the sender has proposed.

- 4) **Clarity:** The principle of clarity implies two branches; clarity of thoughts and clarity of expressions. The communication process starts with the thought generation in the mind of the communicator. The idea that is to be communicated should be clear in words so that the receiver can interpret it in the same context in which it is communicated.

**Clarity of expression** means that there should not be any element of doubt in the message. To fulfil this objective the idea that has to be communicated should be very much clear in the mind of the sender. It should be reminded that words itself do not speak but the speaker gives them meaning. If the message is precise and specific, it would derive a response from the recipients. It is also very important that the receiver should understand the language in which the communication is taking place, and he should be well-versed with the assumptions and technicalities of communication.

**Clarity of thought** means that the speaker should be very clear in his mind about what he is going to communicate (message) and the reason why he wants to communicate (purpose), to whom he wants to communicate (receiver), when he wants to communicate (time), and how should he communicate (medium). When he is clear in his mind, it must be expressed through a clear and simple language.



- 5) **Completeness:** When a business message is included with facts and information that the receiver requires to know in order to react in a desired manner, it is considered as a complete message. With incomplete message, the receiver may get confused and there could be a chance of misunderstanding also. To avoid these situations, use of relevant facts and figures should be there in a business communication. When a person replies to a letter he should answer all the questions. Hence, only a complete message is called an effective message.
- 6) **Consideration:** Consideration usually means the process of consideration or allowing. For an effective communication, one should think and see from the view point of the receiver. The sender should follow a benevolent approach and understand the emotions, sentiments and the needs of the receiver. In short, the socio-psychological background of the receiver should be understood by the sender. The sender should follow the golden rule of "First understand then be understood".  
Consideration simply means trying to put oneself in receiver's place and creating messages that has to be communicated. One should imagine the recipient according to their perspective, i.e., desires, problems, circumstances, emotions, and their possible reactions. By doing so, one can understand the viewpoint of the recipient. This approach is known as "you-attitude" which means to understand the human nature by putting oneself into his shoes.
- 7) **Courtesy:** The term 'courtesy' means the friendly and caring attitude for others. The communication could be enhanced with polite manner. It motivates the participative communication. It plays a more important role in business writing than that of oral or face-to-face communication. A message with courtesy, strengthens existing business relations; it helps in enhancing the social circle and building goodwill of the organisation. Courtesy originates from 'you-attitude' and it is not always with the polite terms like 'please', 'thank you', etc.

When the trustworthiness of the sender has been recognised, the sender should express himself in a courteous manner. The word itself depicts the essence that the sender/speaker should understand the emotions of the receiver/listener very well. In business communication, one not only communicates the information and ideas but also tries to maintain a sound understanding among the parties, for the growth and development of the business and to maintain the goodwill. Courtesy does not always mean to use the simple phrases like 'please' or 'thank you', it means to show gratitude and genuine expressions that come from respect and concern for the other parties. Courtesy is the starting and the ending point in business world and there is lot of scope for achievements if appreciation and admiration of people are included in the message.

### 1.1.8. Role of Communication

Communication plays a major role in everyone's life. Some important domains where communication is of utmost importance are given below:

- 1) **Managing Complex Situations:** The role of internal communication is quite significant in the success of any company. Each department of the company should communicate effectively for the smooth operation of the functional activities. If the marketing or the promotion department is not able to communicate effectively the needs of the customers for a particular product, the production or the manufacturing department will not be able to meet the required demands. This will eventually hamper the company's growth and the prosperity.
- 2) **Establishing Cooperation and Understanding:** Open communication is the key to build trust, cooperation, and team spirit. It helps in continuous and two way flow of news and information. Hesitation and other related factors create unnecessary obstacles and hurdles in promoting healthy communications which in turn jeopardise the development of the organisation. A healthy and open system of communication proves a boon both for the company and the employees as it effectively meets their mutual demands.
- 3) **Effective Management of Organisation:** A good and open communication helps in maintaining the pace with business expansions and developments. Business situations are changing at a dynamic pace and it is quite challenging to stay updated regarding real time business developments. Every company has its branches and sister concerns over different parts of the globe. This requires a strong and effective communication network for smooth functioning and understanding of company's policies and objectives.
- 4) **Facilitates Cohesion:** Globalisation has integrated different business units all over the world into a big family. Efforts are made by every company to promote harmony and feeling of oneness amongst the employees. This would bind them and keep them united with each other. Company gatherings promote feeling of knowingness and bonding between the workers. Employees feel a sense of cohesiveness by participating in these gatherings, which in turn increases their attachment with the company.
- 5) **Developing Positive Company Image:** Company environment plays a very prominent role in establishing a positive image of the company in the market. Effective communication increases employee performance which leads to very few retrenchments and layoffs. This also helps in boosting the reputation of the company. The long association of the employees with the organisation speaks about strong internal communication of the organisation.
- 6) **Increases Profits:** Company losses are minimised and repetitions are reduced with the help of efficient communication network. Further, company's profits get increased when unnecessary repetitions are decreased. Communication also helps the company in acquiring knowledge about cheaper sources of raw materials and about newer markets to sell their goods and services. If a common form message is to be



created for the entire office, it can be done by one employee and circulated to the rest of the offices for their use. This way money is saved and so is time.

Hence, a good communication is a time and money saver for the industry. If the channels of the communications are maintained and developed properly, the profit is bound to go high thereby reducing the losses considerably. If the entire organisation follows a common network of communication, the company can efficiently attend to the needs and demands of the market.

- 7) **Fewer Layoffs:** An open communication system can help in decreasing the level of employee turnover. The management listens to all the grievances of the employees and the employees are also free to discuss their problems with the management. This helps in building confidence and trust between management and the employees, which results in fewer layoffs. Long-term association of the employee with any organisation works favourably for its growth and development.
- 8) **Better Customer Interaction:** The chances of having a favourable relationship with the customers become very bright with strong and effective communication channels. The company under such circumstances is able to attend the customers and see to their requirements in an efficient manner. This promotes harmonious relationship with the customers.
- 9) **Ease of Information Collection and Dissemination:** Internal communication helps to maintain and strengthen the unity between various departments. Correct processing of information at the correct time decreases the level of unnecessary botheration.

A proper flow of the information helps in providing efficient customer service as well as after-sale service. It can be from procuring of the raw material to the finishing of the product. In the absence of appropriate communication, the chances of delayed production can harm the reputation of the company.

### 1.1.9. Characteristics of Successful Communication

The following points reflect the characteristics of successful communication:

- 1) **Clarity of Purpose:** Communication is generally undertaken with specific purpose in mind. The aim or purpose of having a communication should be clear to both the sender and the receiver. There should not be any confusion about what one wants to achieve through a communication process. Hence, there should be clarity of purpose before sending a message.
- 2) **Known Target Audience:** The sender before sending any message gathers information about the receiver so that he/she can deliver a good quality message. The message should be properly addressed as well as focused on the targeted audience. If a good message full of bright ideas reaches to a wrong person, then it loses its value and the entire exercise gets wasted.

- 3) **Adequate Information:** The main purpose of a communication is to pass on the proper and correct information to the receiver. The sender of the information must be well-versed about the message content and should be able to appreciate the nature of the communicated message. The sender should send the message according to the expectations of the receiver.
- 4) **Effective Planning:** A communication process can be useful and fruitful only if it is properly planned. While planning a communication message, the sender should consider the content, words, desired feedback, result, and so on. In absence of a proper plan the communication process loses its effectiveness.
- 5) **Extreme Feelings should be Avoided:** The sender should check his/her feelings while writing a message. Negative feelings like anger, frustration and depression should not be incorporated in the message as they generally lead to distortion of the intended message. The sender should bear in his mind that the words once communicated cannot be taken back. Hence, a message sent in a fit of rage can do considerable damage to the relationship between the sender and the receiver.
- 6) **Sincerity:** The process of communication should be carried-out with sincerity and honesty. One should never try to mislead or manipulate the message in order to cheat its receiver. If the trust of the receiver is lost then the message loses its credibility.
- 7) **Time Factor:** Time plays a very important role in any communication process. The effectiveness of a message greatly depends on proper speed and timing. A message becomes more effective if it is sent and received at the right time.
- 8) **Appropriate Communication Channels and Modes:** Selection of types and forms of communication depends on the situation in which the message is sent. However, the quality of communication is decided by the type of methods and aids used in the communication process. Sometimes the sender may use oral communication instead of written communication. Sometimes a telephone call may be more appropriate than sending a letter.
- 9) **Cost Consciousness:** Monetary aspect should also be kept in mind while sending a message. Both direct and indirect costs are associated with the communication process. However, this cost varies a lot depending upon the type of communication aid used. Communication is a continuous process and its expenses can become quite significant, if not handled on time.

### 1.1.10. Importance of Communication in Management

Communication is an important component of the management process. To get the work done, it is necessary for every manager to communicate with others. Hence, it can be said that success of an organisation



greatly depends upon effective communication. Significance of communication is as follows:

- 1) **Basis of Decision-Making and Planning:** For planning and decision-making communication is very important. The quality of the decision taken by the management is based on the quality of communication. Communication helps the management in gathering information which is necessary for decision-making. In addition, the subordinates are also required to be made aware of the decisions and plans of the management. Effective communication aids in appropriate execution of the plans and policies of the management.
- 2) **Ensures Continuous and Efficient Working:** Efficient and continuous flow of work in an organisation is carried-out due to communication. Communication makes it possible for the managers to modify and regulate the activities of the employees towards the required path.
- 3) **Ensures Proper Coordination:** Communication helps in uniting the actions through interchanging thoughts and information for achieving a common objective. It also promotes coordination and brings people together.
- 4) **Improves Managerial Efficiency:** A manager's efficiency depends on his capabilities to communicate effectively with other employees in the organisation. Communication makes it possible for the management to communicate its aims, requirements, issues, instructions and orders in order to allocate jobs and duties and assess the performance of the subordinates.
- 5) **Promotes Cordial Industrial Relations:** Besides developing mutual understanding and faith among employees of the company, effective communication also facilitates cooperation between the employees and the employer.
- 6) **Helps in Establishing Effective Leadership:** In absence of effective communication between the employer and the employees no leadership activity can be carried-out. Communication helps in developing effective leadership and brings the leader (manager) and followers (subordinates) close to each other.
- 7) **Motivates and Boosts Morale:** It is through communication that transformation is brought about in the behaviour of the employees and the resulting changes are observed in their activities. Communication helps in uplifting the self-esteem of the workers and motivating them to accomplish the organisational goals.
- 8) **Ensures Effective Control:** Communication is used as a tool for effective control. Activities like communicating plans to the juniors, measuring their actual performance and informing the top management about it, taking remedial actions to accomplish the desired objectives cannot be carried-out without efficient communication system.
- 9) **Provides Job Satisfaction:** Job satisfaction among workers is developed through effective communication. It raises the level of confidence and mutual trust between the employers and the employees. Thus, communication plays an important role in achieving job satisfaction.

- 10) **Facilitates Democratic Management:** Communication allows workers to participate in management by involving them in the decision-making process. Hence, communication is necessary for democratic management in an organisation.

### 1.1.11. Communication Structure in Organisation

In any organisation, the efficiency of a communication system is tested in terms of its right and quick delivery without the loss in its data or content. This simply means that the information should reach in its intended form to the receiver. Such an efficient message delivery system helps the organisation in developing integrated and coordinated team of workers and also helps them in realising their organisation goals.

There is an efficient network of communication in every organisation through which a message is conveyed at different organisational levels and to the concerned executive heads. The communication flow depends upon the hierarchy of the organisation structure. This flow of information in the organisations is depicted through the organisational pyramid (figure 1.2.).

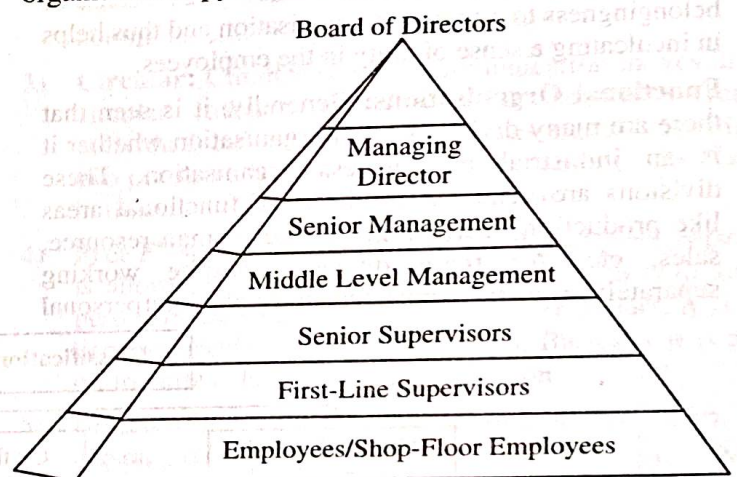


Figure 1.2: Organisational Pyramid

#### 1.1.11.1. Vertical Communication

Almost all the organisations have a clear set of communication channels. Firstly, a decision is taken in the boardroom and from here the concerned message is sent to the senior level managers. They go through the language and content of the message and bring upon the necessary steps in making it more comprehensible, acceptable and easy to implement by the organisational members. In big companies there is a special department which ensures that the message passes through different organisational levels and is acknowledged by all the employees. These managers remain in personal contact with each and every employee of the company. They are capable people who are aware of various needs, able to give guidance on matters related to policies, guidelines and infrastructures.

However, despite of all this, if the organisation has many departments and there are different layers of management then the top managers find it very difficult to send the



message across to the lowest level and shop floor employees. In such a situation, the flow of information tends to be slow, gets distorted and takes time to be acknowledged or reacted upon by all the employees. The organisation may have to bear high costs due to the delays caused by these distortions.

### 1.1.11.2. Horizontal Communication

Horizontal communication or peer communication is required by the organisation in the following cases:

- 1) **Geographical Organisation:** A large organisation which is usually spread out in different geographic areas or divisions. Such geographical divisions are often allotted a letter or number. For example, there is a 'G' blast furnace/forge that has its own division at TISCO (Jamshedpur). This division has its own hierarchy of employees and executive managers. Other furnaces at TISCO also have separate allotted numbers and are located separately with their own divisions in the vast site of TISCO. Some other divisions such as those of 'Research and Analysis wing' carrying out the work of development also have the divisions of quality control and so on. These divisions remain in touch with one another through different types of seminars, conferences as well as meetings. In these events information is freely exchanged which gives a sense of belongingness to a common organisation and thus helps in inculcating a sense of unity in the employees.
- 2) **Functional Organisations:** Generally, it is seen that there are many divisions in an organisation whether it is an industrial or business organisation. These divisions are made on the basis of functional areas like production, marketing, finance, human resource, sales, etc. All these divisions despite working separately remain connected through interpersonal

communication. Horizontal communication helps the organisation in coordinating with different functional areas. The importance of horizontal communication has increased with the growth in the organisation in terms of technology, large-scale production, quality checks, R&D activities, etc.

The task of production of goods involves a long process which begins with the selection of raw materials and continues till the completion of goods or services. Effective flow of information is essential for smooth functioning at each stage of production. If there is any problem in the smooth flow of work-related information, it will surely affect the organisation in terms of production efficiency.

An undisrupted connection in the flow of work within an organisation can be maintained only through the proper horizontal communication channel, so that each division is directly linked with each other.

## 1.2. CLASSIFICATION OF COMMUNICATION

The management of organisational communication process constitutes different elements. Several kinds of messages which are quite difficult to draft or construct are a part of organisational communication.

However, communication can be categorised in the context of association it creates, or sender or receiver, or the mode of transfer. Hence, the pattern of communication can be classified into following three ways (Figure 1.3):

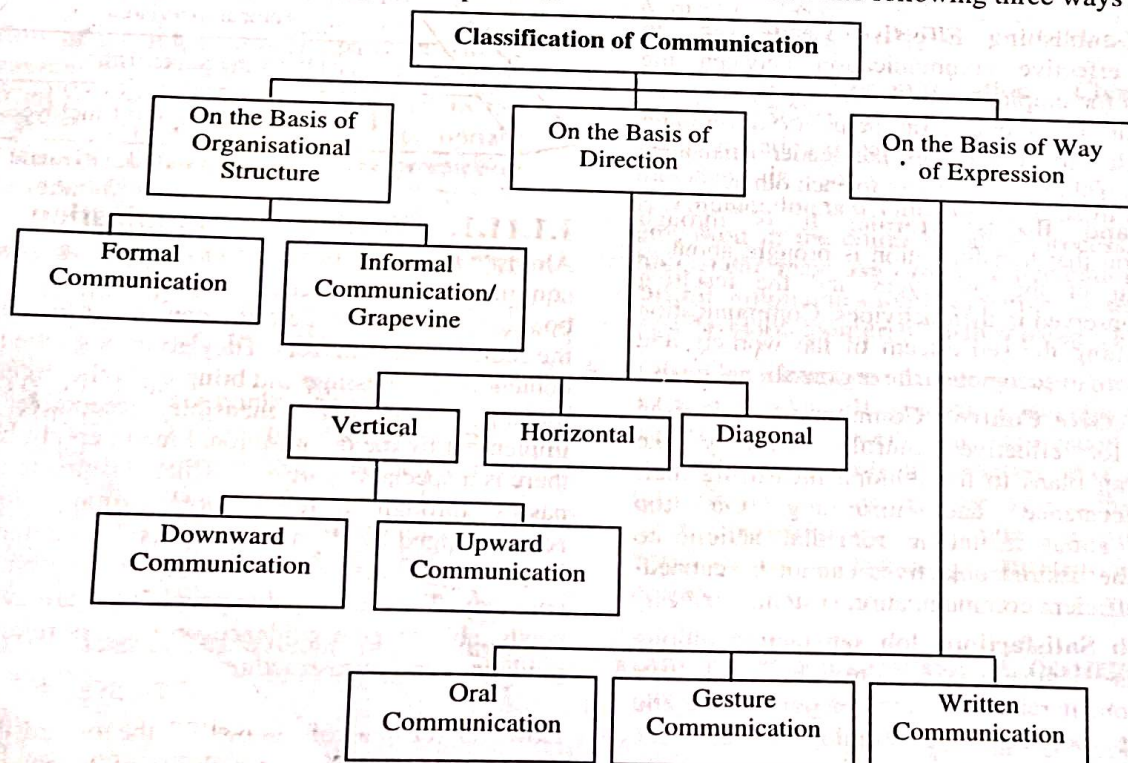


Figure 1.3: Classifying Communication



### 1.2.1. On the Basis of Organisational Structure

Numerous types of messages are essential for communicating in an organisation. On the basis of organisational structure the communication can be categorised into following types:

- 1) Formal communication, and
- 2) Informal communication.

#### 1.2.1.1. Formal Communication Network

A kind of communication accomplished through a proper chain of command is known as formal communication. Formal communication is a method of communication that is generally controlled and directed by the employees or managers of a company.

Formal communication is carried-out keeping in mind the organisational hierarchy. Communication is carried-out through formal channels that are the well-known official positions in the organisational hierarchy.

In order to put organisational communication in sequence and to ensure the uninterrupted, correct and in-time flow of information as and when required, the communication path is intentionally created. It can either be in written (memo, report, policy) or in oral (speech, meeting) forms. Many organisations maintain written records of formal oral communication in the form of copies of speeches, minutes of meetings.

#### Characteristics of Formal Communication

Formal communication has the following characteristics:

- 1) **Written and Oral:** The formal communication can be either of the two types, i.e., oral and written. Day-to-day activities are carried out with the help of oral forms of communication. Whereas, the policy matters are communicated through written forms.
- 2) **Formal Relations:** Formal communication is used between those individuals who have formal relations among them. This formal relationship between the sender and the receiver is generally created by the organisations.
- 3) **Prescribed Path:** A pre-defined path or channel is followed by the formal communication in the course of its movement from one individual to another. For example, a member of operational level staff has to take the help of his immediate supervisor if he wants to put forth any issue in front of the departmental head.
- 4) **Organisational Message:** Formal channel of communication does not deal with personal messages. It conveys only the messages of organisational purposes.
- 5) **Deliberate Effort:** Formal communication channel does not establish on its own but sincere efforts have to be made for it. The efforts for designing the channel should be in synchronisation with the organisational objectives.

#### Types of Formal Communication

Single or multiple channels can be considered as the basis for developing a formal communication network or channel. These different types of formal communication channels are as below (Figure 1.4):

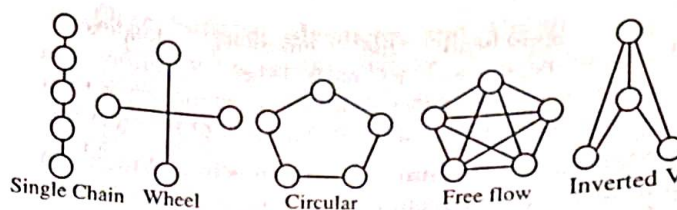


Figure 1.4: Types of Formal Communication

- 1) **Single Chain:** This kind of formal communication channel prevails between a subordinate and his senior official. Since there may be a number of levels in an organisation, each individual within those levels is both superior as well as subordinate, except the person at the top or bottom. The flow of communication in an organisational hierarchy through a single chain can be systematic and easy to manage; however, it is extremely unproductive and time taking activity.
- 2) **Wheel:** Under the wheel channel of communication, all subordinates working under the supervision and directions of one superior communicate through only their senior as he is the 'hub' or effective centre of the wheel. In this channel, there is no horizontal communication as none of the subordinates are permitted to communicate or be in contact with each other. The major disadvantage of this channel of communication is lack of coordination.
- 3) **Circular:** Circular type of communication moves in a circular manner. In a circular channel, every individual can be in contact and communicate with two persons adjacent to him. The communication flow in this channel is very slow and laggard.
- 4) **Free Flow:** In free flow channel, each and every person is allowed to communicate and be in touch with any person in the organisation. As a matter of fact, it is a very adjustable and informal system. Basically it is an unstructured channel of communication.
- 5) **Inverted V:** Under this channel of communication, a person is permitted to communicate with his immediate senior and his senior's senior. In the subsequent condition, the subject matter of communication is specified. In this channel the flow of communication is quick and effective.

#### Advantages of Formal Communication Network

Following are the advantages of formal communication network:

- 1) **Maintains Authority of the Officers:** There is a sustained and persistent association among the seniors and subordinates under the formal communication network. This maintains a decorum and righteousness of the line executives. Formal communication aids in affirming the authority of line executives over their subordinates. These executives are accountable to their superiors and are responsible for getting the work done from their subordinates.
- 2) **Provides clear and Effective Communication:** Under this communication network, the subordinates and their superiors are in direct contact with each other. Both the managers as well as the subordinates



can apprehend the emotions, tendencies, competencies, etc. of each other. Superiors can comprehend the exact time and situation when their subordinates require a particular piece of information.

- 3) **Maintains Systematic Information Flow:** In formal communication, there is a direct contact between the subordinates and their immediate bosses. This helps in developing an effective level of understanding between them. And thus communication is more fruitful and worthwhile.
- 4) **Develops Strong Relationship:** A subordinate is not well informed and does not have much knowledge about the company and the issues faced by the company but a superior is in a better position to find remedial measures easily for organisational problems as he is more informed than that of his subordinates. This helps in maintaining cordial relations between the superiors and their subordinates.

### Disadvantages of Formal Communication

Following are the disadvantages of formal communication network:

- 1) **Increases Workload:** Formal communication increases the workload of the superiors. Their workload increases as every piece of information is conveyed through them and they acts as a channel of formal communication. As a result, the line superiors are left with almost no time to successfully execute other functions of the organisation.
- 2) **Affects Formal Relationship:** Generally, in case of large business enterprises, communication between top level officials and subordinates at the lowest level of organisational hierarchy is quite rare.
- 3) **Dilutes Accuracy of Messages:** Messages forwarded from the top level to the lowest level of the organisational hierarchy are often diluted in terms of the accuracy of the message. This happens because of colouring and filtering that takes place at the middle level of the hierarchy.
- 4) **Decreases Pro-Activeness of the Message:** Each and every incidence or occurrence in a firm cannot be predicted or anticipated. Thus, actions necessary to handle such unexpected incidences cannot be formalised.

### 1.2.1.2. Informal Communication Network/ Grapevine

The communication that is beyond the realm of formal communication is known as **grapevine** or **informal communication**. Informal communication does not function in the lines of authority like formal communication. It is all about communal relationships among the members of the organisation.

The general manager of a company can be in touch with the workers or employees working at the bottom of the hierarchy and can communicate the relevant information directly to them without the assistance of any middle level official. Informal communication can be understood as the genuine

need of people to communicate with others when they meet each other frequently. When people working in an organisation meet and communicate directly, it automatically leads to formation of a small group. The communication system developed by such a group is termed as informal communication. Informal communication is mostly oral but it can be in the written form also. Considerable use of internet and e-mail facilities across the globe has increased popularity of informal written communication.

### Characteristics of Informal Communication

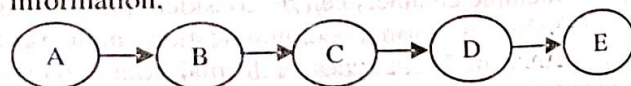
Informal communication possesses positive as well as negative characteristics; some of them are as follows:

- 1) **Complements Formal Channel of Communication:** Informal communication supports the formal flow of communication, no matter whether the information is flowing in downward, upward, or horizontal direction.
- 2) **Transmits Information at a Faster Pace:** Information moves at a greater speed through informal channels than that of the formal channels of communication. Unlike formal communication, the informal communication is based on the personal orientation, which in turn makes the informal system of information dissemination faster. Speedy communication can provide various advantages to the organisation.
- 3) **Spreads False Rumours and Destructive Information:** Informal communication is very less likely to be used in the direction of achieving organisational objectives. This is due to the reason that it proliferate the gossips and hostile information in the organisation. Rumours sometimes may benefit, while the other times it may hamper the process of achieving organisational objectives.
- 4) **Both Written and Oral:** Though informal communication has a tendency to be conducted orally, it may also take place through handwritten or typed documents. However, in modern organisations that depend totally on computers, the messages are usually transmitted with the help of computers only.
- 5) **Less Accurate:** Informal communication is under-judged as less accurate because it makes the error look more intense, which in turn overshadows the numerous accuracies of it. In addition, even small and few mistakes in informal communication result in the change of meaning of entire communication.

### Types of Informal Communication/ Grapevine

There are different kinds of informal communication or grapevine, which are enlisted below:

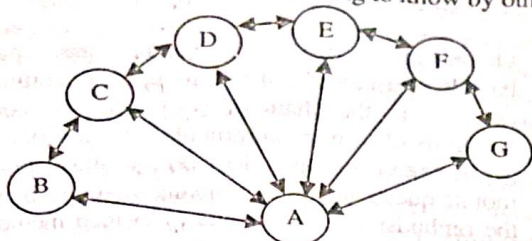
- 1) **Single Strand Chain:** In this type of informal communication, a chain is formed. For example, Mr. X tells something to Mr. Y and he tells it to Mr. A and so forth which goes down the line across the group. Single strand chain type of communication is rarely correct and error free. It rarely passes on the right information.



Single Strand Chain

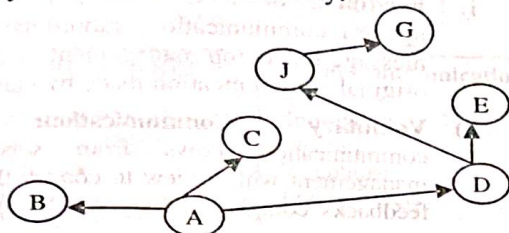


- 2) **Gossip Chain:** Under this chain, a person speaks publicly and informs everyone about the information he or she has acquired. Usually gossip chain is used when a person wants to convey a message which is not related with work but is otherwise interesting to know by others.



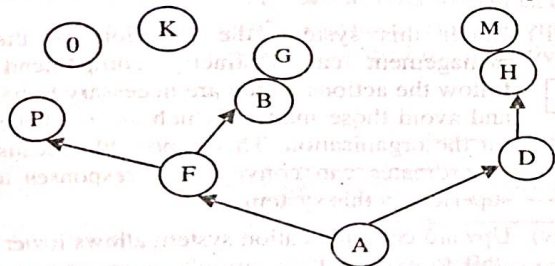
Gossip Chain

- 3) **Cluster Chain:** In this type of chain, 'A' tells something to a few selected individuals and others also relay the information selectively.



Cluster Chain

- 4) **Probability Chain:** Under this type of informal communication, people who are transferring the information are neither interested nor they are concerned about the people to whom they are communicating the information. They just pass on the information in a haphazard manner. And those people also in turn tell everyone in a random order. Probability chain is established when the data transmitted is quite interesting but rather unimportant.



Probability Chain

**Advantages of Informal Communication/Grapevine**  
Informal communication offers many benefits to the people and the organisation as a whole, which are explained below:

- 1) **Safeguards Emotions:** There are several issues in an organisation which causes anxiety and concern among the employees. Promotions and retrenchment are such issues that cause stress and agitation amongst the employees and become a phobia for them. When a colleague talks to them, they can share their emotions with him which reassure and relaxes him. Hence, informal communication screens and protects the developed emotions of juniors or assistants.

- 2) **Organisational Harmony and Unity:** Grapevine indicates the interest among the employees. The grapevine process creates consensus and organisational harmony even though the employees talk and communicate amongst themselves. Therefore, if grapevine is used in an effective way, then it can boost an employee's confidence, self-esteem, and morale.

- 3) **Supplement to Other Channels:** Formal channels of communication are not always favourable and convenient to convey messages and information. Sometimes it is inadvisable to communicate essential information through formal means of communication. Hence, grapevine can be used in such conditions for quick and efficient transfer of information.

- 4) **Quick Transmission:** Gossips and misleading information can spread at the speed of lightning. In a similar way, information in a grapevine travels very rapidly. Hence, the moment certain information conveyed cleverly as a 'top secret' to the leader of the grapevine, it reaches every other member in no time.

- 5) **Feedback:** The top management receives necessary feedback from employees through informal communication. This process helps them to get acquainted with the employees in an easier way while keeping in mind the various functions of the organisation.

**Disadvantages of Informal Communication/Grapevine**  
Informal communication or grapevine also has certain disadvantages, which are discussed below:

- 1) **Distortion:** One of the most serious disadvantages of informal communication is distortion. Grapevine spreads unwarranted, uncalled for and distorted information which can be obstructive for the employees. It may perhaps condemn the most evil and immoral intentions on the most modest and dignified people.

- 2) **Incomplete Information:** Information is likely to be misunderstood or misinterpreted because information in grapevine is generally considered incomplete.

- 3) **Destructive Speed:** The rapid speed with which information travels in a grapevine can be detrimental and obstructive. Any rumours or misleading messages can obstruct and cause far-reaching damages before it reaches the top management and they are able to take any corrective measures.

- 4) **Leakage of Information:** Top management should be very careful and cautious while using informal communication because the grapevine often leads to the disclosure of sensitive and confidential information.

- 5) **Lack of Authenticity:** Generally, information transferred through informal communication channel is trivial talk or gossip without any supporting proof and evidences. Thus, it is not authentic and sound. In that event, the information loses its authenticity.



### 1.2.2. On the Basis of Direction

The flow of communication in an organisation can be in two different ways namely; **intra-scalar** or **inter-scalar**. **Inter-scalar** communication can be defined as a flow of communication between two people at different managerial positions.

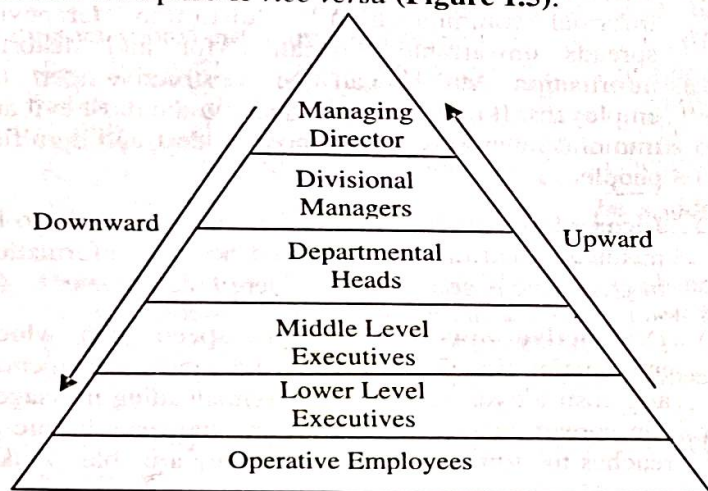
Moreover, when communication travels from subordinate to superior, i.e., from lower level to higher level of organisational hierarchy, it is termed as **upward communication**. When communication travels from superior to a subordinate, i.e., from higher level to lower level of organisational hierarchy, it is termed as **downward communication**.

**Intra-scalar** communication can be termed as a flow of communication between people at the same managerial positions in an organisation. It is also known as lateral or horizontal communication. Communication can be classified into different types on the basis of direction. The classification can be explained as under:

- 1) Vertical communication,
  - i) Upward communication
  - ii) Downward communication.
- 2) Lateral or horizontal communication, and
- 3) Diagonal communication.

#### 1.2.2.1. Upward and Downward (Vertical) Communication

Flow of information either in an upward or downward manner is the result of vertical communication. Communication runs from higher level, i.e., top management to lower level, i.e., employees working in a business enterprise or *vice versa* (**Figure 1.5**).



**Figure 1.5: Vertical Communication– Upward and Downward**

Generally, it is more difficult to communicate directly when a number of people are involved. In such a case, an opinion leader or third person besides the two groups primarily involved is necessary to convey the information to the bottom level.

There is a high probability that messages under such conditions may get completely twisted or distorted while they travel from one person to another. Different types of vertical communication are as follows:

- 1) **Upward Communication:** Upward communication flows along the line of authority from lower level workers to the high level executives through middle level executives. It is just the reverse form of downward communication.

Organisations from democratic and participative backdrop usually conform to upward communication. Apart from the chain of command, the conventional mediums of upward communication are joint setting of goals, exercising open-door policy, suggestion systems, morale questionnaires, complaint systems, the grapevine, the ombudsman, appeal and grievance methods, group meetings, exit interviews, counselling sessions, etc.

There are two forms of upward communication, which are as follows:

- i) **Feedback of Information:** In this type of upward communication, subordinates transfer a message to the top management as a reply to the original communication made by management.
- ii) **Voluntary Communication:** Voluntary communication flows from subordinates to management with a view to convey their opinions, feedbacks, complaints, disapproval, suggestions, etc.

#### Advantages of Upward Communication

Advantages of upward communication are as follows:

- i) Subordinates get the necessary inputs such as opinions, suggestions, etc., from their seniors about job related matters of the organisation under the upward communication system.
- ii) Cordial and affable relations are established due to upward communication system. This system helps in initiating favourable working conditions in an organisation.
- iii) Under this system, the superiors or the top management can distinctly comprehend and follow the actions which are necessary to be done and avoid those matters which are not beneficial for the organisation. This is possible because the subordinates can convey their responses to the superiors in this system.
- iv) Upward communication system allows lower level staff to express their attitude or opinion to upper level staff. As a result sub-ordinates are influenced to work more towards fulfilment to target.

#### Disadvantages of Upward Communication

There are few drawbacks of upward communication, which are listed below:

- i) Due to several reasons, the lower level staff is often hesitant to participate in upward communication.
- ii) The entire communication system can get distorted because sometimes the subordinates are not ready to convey the information to the management.
- iii) Subordinates tend to alter the correct information in this communication system. Hence, the top management is unable to make sound decisions.



iv) Prolonged and very slow flow of information to the top executives is one of the most significant drawbacks of this system.

- 2) **Downward Communication:** It flows from top level management to lower level staff. This type of communication flows from the CEO to the employees (figure 1.6). Downward communication moves the opposite way, i.e., it is the reverse of upward communication. It flows from superior officials to subordinate level staff. It moves from divisional head to individual unit heads and from head office to different branches of the organisation. Downward communication can be explained with the help of various **examples** such as work related orders, business goals and objectives, letters from General Manager/CEO's desk, business preferences, newsletters, motivational letters, etc.

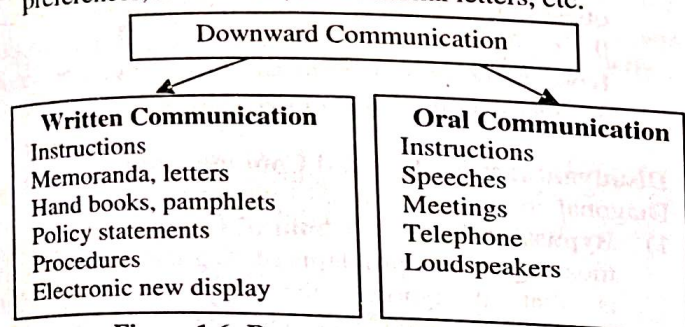


Figure 1.6: Downward Communication

#### Advantages of Downward Communication

Downward communication is beneficial to the organisation in the following ways:

- This system encourages lower level personnel and employees to enhance their productivity and performance.
- The lower level staff gets acquainted with various business policies, plans, method of work, processes and programmes and other critical information for conducting business activities. This system also helps the staff in performing their routine activities.

- It acts as an effective technique to control various activities of employees and to provide immediate feedback.
- The management's expectations are clearly conveyed and informed to the bottom level staff through downward communication.

#### Disadvantages of Downward Communication

There are few limitations of downward communication which are as follows:

- The essential information or message is not conveyed on time.
- A sense of opposition or unwillingness is involved in this system.
- The message is generally twisted and distorted.
- There is always a risk of losing significant information during conveyance.
- The message is either to be loaded or unburdened.

#### 1.2.2.2. Lateral (Horizontal) Communication

Communication between the various departments working at the same level or between employees in the same departments without any kind of superior-subordinate relation is known as horizontal communication.

It is also termed as lateral communication. Hence, communication that flows among people at the same level in the organisation is known as lateral communication as shown in Figure 1.7.

The fundamental objective of horizontal communication is maintaining proper coordination between different but related activities of many departments of an organisation. Oral or written are the two channels through which horizontal communication can be transmitted.

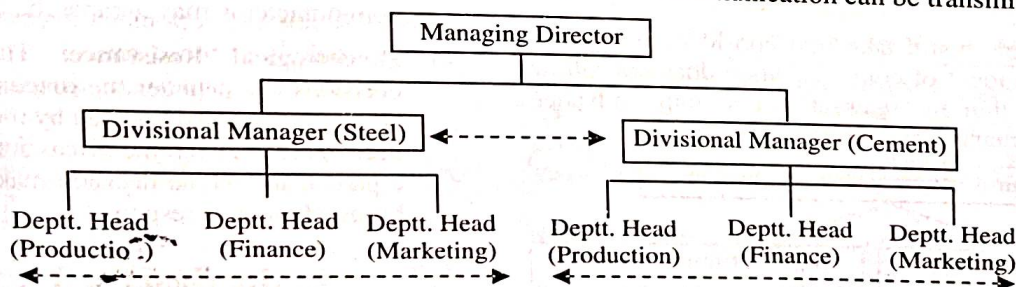


Figure 1.7: Horizontal or Lateral Communication  
[(- - - - -) Denotes Horizontal Communication]

#### Advantages of Horizontal Communication

Horizontal communication provides following benefits to the organisation:

- Improves Understanding:** Horizontal communication helps in refining and boosting understanding among the employees of an organisation. Various employees from different departments can execute their work effectively through horizontal communication system.

- Enhances Coordination:** Coordination and bonding between employees from various departments becomes more powerful when direct communication is acknowledged and vertical channels are eliminated.
- Increases Productivity:** Horizontal communication resolves and lowers various issues and misunderstandings among different departments of the organisation. Cordial relations among members also help in increasing productivity levels of employees.



- 4) **Raises Confidence:** Mutual understanding and harmonious working environment increases the level of confidence of the employees.
- 5) **Teamwork:** Teamwork is quite significant for certain explicit organisational goals. Horizontal communication is indispensable for effective and successful teamwork.

#### Disadvantages of Horizontal Communication

Horizontal communication provides following disadvantages to the organisation:

- 1) **Lack of Control:** Horizontal communication can create difficulties for the management, if exercised on a large scale. Increased horizontal communication can be very inconvenient and difficult to control.
- 2) **Conflict:** Even though horizontal communication has outperformed vertical communication by permitting direct and open communication between employees, it may create situations that lead to inter-personal disputes.
- 3) **Time Consuming:** There may be delay in implementation of decisions taken by top management because of communication accompanied with vertical directives.
- 4) **Lack of Discipline:** The decorum of the organisation is adversely influenced as there are no dictatorial rules and regulations expected to be followed in this type of communication.

#### 1.2.2.3. Diagonal Communication or Crosswise Communication

Diagonal communication involves the horizontal flow of information amongst employees present at different levels having no direct reporting relation (figure 1.8). In order to accomplish organisational objectives, the management commonly uses such type of communication for improving coordination of activities amongst employees and for improving the speed of information transfer.

The management should take into consideration the fact that a notable amount of communication does not follow the hierarchy within an organisation but simply advances past the formal channel of communication.

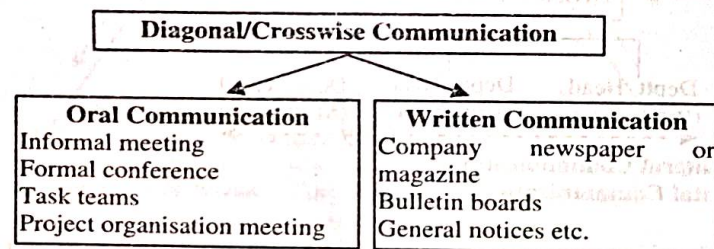


Figure 1.8: Diagonal/Crosswise Communication

#### Advantages of Diagonal Communication

Advantages of diagonal communication are explained below:

- 1) **Direct Method:** Diagonal communication is relatively easy and uncomplicated as compared to the assigned channel of communication. It is a direct medium of communication.

- 2) **Preferred Method:** Diagonal communication is preferred as the method of communication by several organisations.

- 3) **Speedy Communication:** This type of communication enables quick transmission of information from top to bottom and *vice versa*.

- 4) **Better Coordination:** Various departments of an organisation are well coordinated and synchronised due to diagonal communication. Every department of an organisation is attached and linked with each other, hence diagonal communication increases coordination among organisational departments which in turn results in smooth functioning of the organisational activities.

- 5) **Enhance Efficiency:** In diagonal communication, employees get prompt reply to their doubts and questions from their superiors which in turn improves their efficiency levels. This is not possible in other types of communication as it may take one or two weeks to get feedback of their queries.

#### Disadvantages of Diagonal Communication

Diagonal communication has following limitations:

- 1) **Bypassing Vertical Chain of Command:** One of the most significant problems of diagonal communication is that it ignores the sequence of reporting relationship. Such ignorance can lead to a lot of misunderstanding among the neglected superiors.

- 2) **Excludes Superiors:** A dialogue between employees from different divisions or departments can keep the seniors out of the communication loop, which is considered as an infringement and compromise for the senior's position.

- 3) **Harms Superior's Cooperation and Accountability:** As a result of this communication, the seniors who have been excluded may not assist in the work decided by other seniors and their subordinates, even if the work is in range of their unit. Hence, this channel of communication may hamper the reputation of the senior.

- 4) **Psychological Resistance:** The implementation of decisions taken under the diagonal communication can be psychologically opposed by those superiors who have been excluded from the discussions. As a senior was not a part of the whole decision-making process, it will be his psychological response to contradict such decisions.

#### 1.2.3. On the Basis of Way of Expression

Communication can be classified into three classes, on the basis of expression. The classification is as follows:

- 1) Oral communication,
- 2) Written communication, and
- 3) Gesture communication.

##### 1.2.3.1. Oral Communication

Oral communication is one of the most common styles of spoken communication. This type of spoken communication is carried-out through words, non-verbal messages and visual aids. It is the ability and knowledge essential to communicate convincingly with others.



It is the way through which one can exchange information and thoughts with another person with the help of different mediums like listening, speaking, non-verbal cues including body language, etc.

Hence, a process of oral exchange or conveying of information or messages between a sender and a receiver is known as oral communication.

### 1.2.3.2. Written Communication

Written communication is viewed as the most universal form of business communication. It is the way of conveying messages and information through selection of appropriate words.

Primarily, it implies the development and expression of ideas and concepts in the written form. Written communication is effectuated through written signs and symbols which can be in hand written or printed form.

### 1.2.3.3. Gesture Communication

Expressing one's thoughts by using body parts is known as gesture communication. Using right gestures on right occasions is very important to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships.

For example, a senior of good and virtuous nature will not express displeasure or rage on his face while scolding a junior for some major fault; rather, he will indicate a sense of affinity for the subordinate.

This will make the junior feel that the superior was encouraging him or giving hint with a view to improvise and encourage him to work harder and efficiently.

Facial gestures and expressions are effectively used by many professionals for maintaining cordial work relations.

#### Characteristics of Gesture Communication

- 1) It Primarily communicates emotions and attitudes
- 2) It Substitutes, contradicts, emphasises, or regulates verbal messages
- 3) Non-Verbal cues are often ambiguous

#### Advantages of Gesture Communication

Gesture communication offers following benefits to the organisation:

- 1) Cordial relationships and trust is developed due to commonly understood gestures.
- 2) The speech of a person becomes more effective when the person addresses the other person by looking at him while speaking.
- 3) Physical gestures enhance quality of vocal vibrations.
- 4) Well-coordinated gestures and facial expressions improve a speaker's performance.
- 5) Facial gestures and movements increase the usefulness of communication process.
- 6) One can control emotions, send hidden messages and in fact replace communication altogether with the use of correct gesture.

**Disadvantages of Gesture Communication**  
Drawbacks of gesture communication are as follows:

- 1) Every language comprises of a pattern which makes it viable to communicate in case a subject has been altered, for instance, to evaluate its grammar. This type of evaluation is not possible in gestures.
- 2) A speaker, while delivering a speech, can forget the subject matter of the speech, if he tries to focus more on gestures.
- 3) Audience's attention is redirected or distracted from the basic theme of presentation, if too many gestures are used by the speaker during the presentation.
- 4) Gestures may differ between different cultures. For example, thumbs up gesture may not be known or practiced in other cultures.
- 5) Meaning of gestures differs not only by cultures and context, but also by the changing degree of purpose.

## 1.3. CONFLICT AND ITS RESOLUTION

### 1.3.1. Meaning and Definition of Conflict

Conflict refers to demonstration of anger, revolt, negative behaviour, violence, enmity and misconception. It is a result of differences in opinions of people or groups working within an organisation. Reasons can be numerous, ranging from allocation of resources to division of work, to overall functioning of the organisation. Diversity within the organisation in terms of goals, objectives, philosophies and viewpoints results in conflict. Conflicts can arise within an organisation or between two organisations or between organisation and their external environments. It crops up when one party gets the notion that the other party might adversely affect its wellbeing.

According to Peterson, "Conflict is defined as an interpersonal process that occurs whenever the actions of one person interfere with the actions of another".

According to Stephen Robbins, "Conflict is a process in which efforts are purposefully made by a person, unit, or group to block others that results into frustration either in attaining goals or furthering his/her interests."

### 1.3.2. Causes/Sources of Conflict

The main Causes/sources of conflict in organisations are as follows:

- 1) **Organisational Change:** Individuals have different opinions like which path is to be followed, what resources are to be used, which method is to be adopted for achieving the desired objective, etc. Changes are witnessed regularly within organisation due to rapid advancements in the global economy. These changes may lead to conflict.
- 2) **Personality Conflict:** Individual differences are a common phenomenon in an organisation. The thoughts, emotions, mindsets and activities differ from person to person which might lead to conflicts.



Apart from causing conflicts, the differences in personalities also help in finding innovative solutions to problems. Therefore, employees need to acknowledge and respect individual differences and understand how to utilise them positively.

- 3) **Difference in Values:** The beliefs and value systems also vary from person to person. People might have different perspective or ethical values which may result in disagreements. These disagreements might be tough to resolve due to their subjective nature. Comparatively, disputes over objective issues like alternative products, promotional campaign and inventory levels are easier to resolve.
- 4) **Danger to Status:** Status, also called social rank, is a matter of great concern for various people. If status of people is endangered by someone, it may also lead to conflict.
- 5) **Different Perceptions:** Past experiences of people greatly affect their perception. As they have already faced the similar situation and have a fixed mindset regarding it, they expect others to share the same mind-set without realising that they might have a totally different viewpoint. Conflicts might crop up if they do not learn to understand other's point of view and make others understand their own viewpoint.
- 6) **Lack of Trust:** Trust is the foundation of every relationship. Trust provides direction to actions unlocks barriers and improves the entire social framework of the organisation. Trust is hard to build, but it takes a minute to destroy it. Conflict is likely to arise when a person, out of genuine or imaginary grounds refuses to trust another.
- 7) **Inter-departmental Disputes:** Inter-group or inter-departmental disputes are extremely linked to:
  - i) **Territory:** In such a case, one group believes that another group is trying to enter their territory.
  - ii) **Prestige:** In such a case, one group believes that another group is getting the fame and recognition for inputs and accomplishments that rightfully belong to them.
  - iii) **Poaching and Theft:** In such a case, the members of one group are charmed away by the other.
- 8) **Job Related Issues:** Job performed by an individual is also a source of conflict. Its various forms are as follows:
  - i) **Conflict between Job and Employee:** This usually happens in case of experts and senior staff who get frustrated as they are not able to make use of their full potential. The job does not give them much scope for development and professional growth.
  - ii) **Conflict between Job and Organisation:** This conflict is associated with the relation between presence of opportunities and the degree to which they are offered by the organisation.
  - iii) **Conflict between Employee and Organisation:** This crops up when the style of management, wages, supervision and work-culture is not suitable for the employees.

- 9) **Other Agendas:** Concealed, paralleled and secondary issues also create conflict. They flourish when the organisation lacks a well-defined objective. They can also be found in organisations where proper recognition is not given to outstanding performers.

### 1.3.3. Effects of Conflict

Effects of conflict are both positive and negative. A conflict that promotes innovative thinking, renews old conditions, clarifies viewpoints, develops human potential and manages interpersonal disparity is called **positive conflict**. When people interact with others and know their viewpoints like in brainstorming, they become more creative. A conflict that brings resistance to change, leads to confusion in the workplace or inter-personal relationships, creates suspicions, develops a sense of loss or increases misunderstanding is called **negative conflict**.

#### Positive Effects of Conflict

Following are the positive effects of conflicts:

- 1) **Acts as Motivator:** Conflicts motivate people to put in extra effort and perform better. A conflicting situation brings out a person's capabilities and skills on the forefront.
- 2) **Acts as Need Satisfier:** Conflicts fulfils various psychological needs of people like self-esteem, ego, dominance, aggression, etc. Conflict also helps in releasing stress in form of aggression.
- 3) **Inculcates Creativity and Innovation:** Conflict inculcates innovative and creative thoughts into the minds of individuals. **For example**, the historical union-management conflict that lasted for several years resulted into the employee benefits that employees currently receive.
- 4) **Brings Variety in Life:** Conflict brings diversity and excitement in the monotonous life of an individual.
- 5) **Creates Understanding:** Conflict helps employees in understanding various issues, the relationships among employees, improves synchronisation between employees and various departments, and also makes intra-group relations stronger.

#### Negative Effects of Conflict

Following are the negative effects of conflict:

- 1) **Insubordination:** If the management of an organisation is weak, the conflict remains unresolved and continues for a long time. Image of management in eyes of employees also gets eroded as they feel that management is not able to handle the conflict. This ultimately results in insubordination.
- 2) **Drop in Productivity:** When a conflict continues for a long time, the focus of the employees shifts from productivity to the conflict. They start spending more time on trying to get the matter solved which affects the production.
- 3) **Lack of Direction:** When management fails to make it clear in which direction they want to take the organisation, conflicts arise. Employees in such a scenario, infer change within the organisation in their own manner.



- 4) **Fragmentation:** Opponents develop as a result of conflict. These opponents can be individuals or groups. When conflict remains unresolved, stress arises within the group and hence, productivity of the organisation also gets hampered.
- 5) **Lack of New Ideas:** Conflict adversely affects novelty. When conflict arises, people do not focus on generation of new ideas which affects the organisational productivity.
- 6) **Affects the Quality of Work:** When a conflict persists for a long time, the concerned parties lose interest in their jobs and focus on the conflict alone. This reduces the quality of the output and also at times, put employee's safety at risk.

### 13.4. Communication in Conflict Resolution

Communication plays a very important role in conflict resolution. It serves as an effective tool in dealing problems that give rise to dispute among the individuals or groups. Usually, distances among individuals occur due to the lack of communication. Often, lack of discussion over mutual issues lead to increased grievances within the group. Through proper communication people can easily identify the problems and can find out ways to settle their disputes without requiring any support from the third party mediation.

Negotiation, dialogues or talks are the only ways to resolve any type of conflict between two countries at a global level rather than any other means like war or lobbying. Long term disputes that are going on, since many years can be cordially settled through table talks. When we go through world history, we find that wars have done nothing more than taking millions of lives. They have left unforgettable examples for the people who are still indulged in conflict rather than resolving them due to their stubborn nature and ego. However, the developed and elite nations are well aware of the fact that the process of dialogue can effectively settle any sort of on-going disputes among countries. This is the reason why these countries are progressing in every field. Communication plays a very important role in conflict resolution and it could not be ignored in the successful functioning of the business organisation. Hence, effective conflict resolution is always backed by effective communication.

There is no applied formula for making a communication a positive force for settling the conflict as, communication and de-escalation is a wide field. The principles for communicating effectively in the situations of conflict are as follows:

- 1) **Reduce Noise:** Reducing noise is one of the most important principles for effective communication. Noise is anything that leads to unwanted signal to the message. If the ratio of signal to noise is higher, the transmitted message will be closer to the received message. The most appropriate way to raise the signal-to-noise ratio is to increase the probability and redundancy (it is a system design in which a component is duplicated so that if it fails there will be a backup) of the messages. Brevity in communication is appreciated but sometimes it may give rise to misconceptions. Hence, addressing the same idea in many ways will reduce the chances of such misconceptions.

- 2) **Consider the Viewpoints of the Listener while Speaking:** The chances of conflict increases when a speaker opts for his/her own viewpoints while the listener has different viewpoints. This gives rise to high level of misunderstanding between the two and communication goes in wrong direction.

- 3) **Become an Active Listener:** One of the essential parts of communication is listening. The person would not be able to resolve the conflict if he/she does not listens properly to the other parties, what they are trying to communicate. An active listening not only means listening to what the other person is saying in words but it also involves listening to what their voice pitch and body gestures convey. Letting the speaker know that he/she is been heard is also an important part of active listening.

- 4) **Be Clear About Your Goals:** While communicating with customer to resolve his problem, the aim of the communicator should not be to any how deal with the customer but to satisfy him by resolving his grievances in the best possible manner.

- 5) **Stay Focussed and Calm:** We normally jump into fight when confronted with aggression. However, when dealing with such situations (such as communicating with an angry client), one should try to keep calm and be focused towards resolving problems. The anger of the client should not affect the behaviour of communicator in a negative way.

## 1.4. COMMUNICATION IN CRISIS

### 1.4.1. Meaning and Definition of Crisis Communication

At the time of any troubled situation, the process of compilation, dispensation, and extension of any information related to the situation, is known as crisis communication. Pre-crisis stage is all about collecting information about the crisis risks, taking decisions about its management, and training people to tackle the situation.

The training involves crisis team members, crisis spokesperson, and others who can be of help in this situation. This form of communication involves not only compilation and giving out of information but also giving out the information to those who are not a part of the team but should be aware of it. Post crisis involves applying the crisis management efforts, communicating the changes made and monitoring the post-management activities.

Crisis Communication primarily deals with crisis response or crisis category. Crisis response refers to the steps and efforts made by the organisation after a crisis. These responses are quite significant in communicating the management efforts and their effectiveness to the stakeholders.

The importance and the utility of this management can be understood by a simple fact that an improper communication can make the condition worse if not



handled properly. A proper and systematic study of crisis communication will help in understanding the extent of crisis management.

The essence of crisis management is communication. It is communication which helps to highlight the importance of crisis management. Effective communication helps in culminating all important facts and figures, arranging them, and sharing them with the concerned people. Thus, communication comes to play a very sensitive role in the whole process.

## 1.4.2. Types of Crisis Communication

Types of crisis communication are as follows:

- 1) **Crisis Knowledge Management:** It includes:
  - i) Recognising the origin,
  - ii) Collection of facts and data,
  - iii) Assessing the information,
  - iv) Sharing or circulating the knowledge, and
  - v) Taking Decisions.
- 2) **Stakeholder Reaction Management:** This type of communication involves communicating the crisis response to the general public. It deals with managing stakeholder's perception towards the crisis response made by the crisis team.

## 1.4.3. Steps for Managing Crisis

The 10 Steps for managing crisis are as follows:

### Pre Crisis Communication

- 1) **Foresee Disaster:** If the situation has been anticipated astutely and practically by the company, there can be a rigorous discussion with the entire crisis communication team. All the relevant facts can be discussed during this session. The positive outcomes of such discussion are:
  - i) Certain situations can be avoided by redesigning the present ways of operation.
  - ii) The team can develop methods for dealing with the best and the worst situations without the pressure of averting a real crisis.
- 2) **Identify the Crisis Communications Team:** The crisis communication team should comprise of senior level personnel. Generally, it is a company's CEO who takes charge of the team. The senior manager and legal advisor are usually part of the crisis communication team and are appointed as chief advisors to the team leader. Heads of different functional areas are appointed as team members. If the company's public relation team is not equipped with crisis communication skills then a team of specialists can also be appointed. These appointed specialists may have subject specific knowledge to deal with the crisis situation efficiently.
- 3) **Identify and Train Spokespersons:** The company should make sure that only the authorised personnel speak on behalf of the organisation at the time of crisis as they are trained to handle a crisis situation. The members of the crisis communication team should be properly trained to handle the situation and to speak on behalf of the company in a crisis. To meet such a crisis situation, a spokesman should have the following qualities:

- i) The required skills to deal with a crisis
- ii) Should have a respectable designation
- iii) Should be trained to communicate effectively in a crisis.

4) **Training the Spokesperson:** The main task of the spokesperson is to minimise the communication gap and promote goodwill of the company amongst the stakeholders of the company. It is the spokesperson who prevents an internal or an external stakeholder from getting misled by the media during the time of crisis.

### 5) Establish Notification and Monitoring Systems

i) **Notification Systems:** Once there was a time when a phone or a fax was used to notify about any happening. This was done as the receiver was always present to take the message. With the rise of technology, instant messaging, internet, e-mails, etc., have replaced old methods of communication. The new methods have made it easier and convenient to reach the external and internal spokesperson immediately at the time of crisis. All the above mentioned modes have become necessities for the business world today. The news travels at the lightning speed to them. Along with this, social media like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc., help to reach the stakeholders in no time and prepare them before the crisis situation.

ii) **Monitoring Systems:** The key ingredient in both crisis prevention and crisis response condition is intelligence. Keeping a track of comments and opinions as posted on social media either by a worker, client, or any other associate helps in taking remedial steps before it is too late to rectify the situation. Similarly, a constant tab on the comments of the stakeholders helps in formulating and executing necessary steps and planning the next line of actions accordingly.

6) **Identify and Understand the Stakeholders:** Every stakeholder (internal or external) is equally important to any organisation. In most cases, employees are considered to be the most important stakeholder for the company. Employees are the public relations representatives of the company. It is very important to recognise and communicate with the stakeholders as they are in a position to display the company image in a positive or negative light. In fact, stakeholders are an integral part of any company and remain involved whether desired or not.

7) **Develop Holding Statements:** Holding statements are the messages prepared in anticipation of the crisis condition. At the outbreak of any emergency, they can be immediately used to communicate the crisis situation. They are prepared keeping in mind every kind of casualty which a company has the probability to face. The expert committee appointed for crisis communication need to review the holding messages for any changes or additions.

### Post Crisis Communication

8) **Assess the Crisis Situation:** Reacting to a situation without any preparation may lead to a complete disaster. The communicator could himself become



target of the situation if the message is conveyed without any adequate information and clarification of the same. But if the information is accurate and easy to understand, then the task becomes simpler and easier. Assessment of the crisis situation helps the crisis team to handle the situation intelligently and rationally.

- 9) **Finalise and Adapt Key Messages:** The crisis communication team should formulate the crisis specific messages on the basis of holding statements. These messages should be developed according to the situation. The message should be crisp, precise and according to the requirements of the stakeholders. The team should not communicate more than three messages to all the stakeholders for a particular situation. Sometimes, specific messages are also drafted for selective audiences from the large group of stakeholder.
- 10) **Post-Disaster Evaluation:** The post-crisis analysis should answer the following questions:
- Was the action right?
  - What went wrong?
  - What remedial steps should be taken next time for the similar crisis situation?

This step helps the crisis communication team in analysing its actions and taking necessary steps to rectify the mistakes, if any.

#### 1.4.4. Importance of Crisis Communication

Following points reflect the importance of crisis communication:

- 1) **Effective Dealing:** Crisis Communication is a major support system for any organisation for handling any seen or unseen emergency, crisis or any condition which may hamper the positive image of the organisation.
- 2) **Proactive:** The conditions which may give rise to unfavourable situations can be well prepared for in advance with the help of crisis communication. Also, installing of an effective communication system can be applied in a situation of crisis.
- 3) **Facilitates Appropriate Actions:** Crisis communication helps the company in putting the interest of the general public before the interest of the company. It is based on the concept that the faith and interest of the employees should be safeguarded first. The eventualities should be faced rather than running away from them. The problem should not be taken lightly or be camouflaged. It also helps in dealing with minor issues before they become major problems for the company.
- 4) **Rapid and Precise Communication:** A confident and optimistic approach towards any problem takes it to the next level of resolving it, even in unfavourable circumstances and conditions. Crisis communication team is committed to broadcasting realistic and factual information to the people. This system ensures that true, realistic and accurate information reaches the masses. The communication team helps the company in communicating and explaining the right thing in the correct perspective.

- 5) **Monitoring Activities:** A constant review of the plans based on the expertise proves helpful in maintaining peace in the organisation. Crisis communication is also responsible to follow up on the crisis situation so that the same crisis can be avoided in the future. Modifying the crisis communication plans and reframing of old rules can help in maintaining company's name in the market.

## 1.5. COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION

### 1.5.1. Introduction

Negotiation is a method by which people settle differences. It is a process by which compromise or agreement is reached while avoiding argument and dispute. In any disagreement, individuals understandably aim to achieve the best possible outcome for their position (or perhaps an organisation they represent). However, the principles of fairness, seeking mutual benefit and maintaining a relationship are the keys to a successful outcome.

The objective of most negotiations is to reach an agreement in which both parties together move towards an outcome that is mutually beneficial. Management function techniques will never be complete without the manager and even various other employees being able to negotiate effectively.

Any organisation runs well based on the skills of their employees. From communication skills to negotiation skills, every organisation would need to hone these skills in their workers to ensure the efficient running of a business organisation. One needs to understand that these negotiation skills are not very difficult to grasp and will only take time and some careful moves with the other party for you to be able to close a good deal, thereby increasing employee productivity to a great extent. The speakers can negotiate on several levels. At any of these levels, the speaker must take heed of the listener's reaction.

### 1.5.2. Formal and Informal Negotiations

Formal negotiation is easily identified. They happen when two or more people arrange a meeting or series of meetings in order to arrive at an outcome that meets the wishes or pressing needs of both sides. Examples are salary negotiations, contract discussions, labour negotiations, territorial disputes.

Informal negotiations on the other hand is generally unplanned. They are those every-day happenings that are less easily recognised as opportunities for negotiation. Informal negotiations refer to the day-to-day discussions by the two parties about how the contract applies to particular situations. Many of the issues that surface when new strategy is developed can be resolved by informal negotiations during meetings between union and management representatives. There are various expressions that we use in formal and informal negotiations, they are as follows:



1) **Expressions that are used in formal negotiations:**  
Include the following:

- i) We hope that you can see our point.
- ii) It has been a very useful and productive meeting.
- iii) I would like to propose that...
- iv) Can we run through what we have agreed?
- v) May we brief our objectives before we begin?

2) **Expressions that are used in informal negotiations:**  
Include the following:

- i) We can't agree with your idea.
- ii) Have you thought of difficulties in implementing this?
- iii) You are too expensive.
- iv) You are quoting too high.
- v) Pass no sale.

### 1.5.3. Role of Negotiation in Communication

Communication plays an important role in negotiation given as follows:

- 1) As a conflict management process, negotiation emphasises the exchange of proposals by parties in order to reach a joint settlement.
- 2) As a joint decision-making process, negotiation is governed by shared formal and informal rules negotiated by the bargainers. After the rules have been determined, the bargainers cooperate within those rules in order to achieve some goal, often to gain a competitive advantage over the other bargainers.
- 3) More specifically, communication undergirds the setting and reframing of goals; the defining and narrowing of conflict issues; the developing of relationships between disputants and among constituents; the selecting and implementing of strategies and tactics; the generating, attacking, and defending of alternative solutions; and the reaching and confirming of agreements.
- 4) Communication during negotiation may also involve tacit bargaining. Verbal and non-verbal communication constitutes the fabric of negotiations.
- 5) An effective communication is directly proportional to an effective negotiation. The better the communication is the better the negotiation would be. Discussion does not mean fighting and shouting, instead it is simply the exchange of one's ideas, thoughts, and opinions with each other.
- 6) One needs to have excellent communication skills for a healthy and an effective discussion. Communication is an art and one should master it to excel in all kinds of negotiation. The other person will never come to know about your thoughts and ideas unless and until you share it with them. One cannot see your grey matter. Lot depends on how you speak.
- 7) Communication is central to the bargaining process, whether bargaining occurs as an institutionalised form of conflict resolution such as collective bargaining, or whether it involves negotiating marketing agreements, legal contracts and settlements, or managing inter- and intra-group or interpersonal disputes.

### 1.5.4. Aspects of Communication in Negotiation

Aspects of communication in negotiation are as follows:

1) **Verbal Communication**

- i) Communication varies according to the formality of the negotiation situation. As the rules and procedures of negotiation, become increasingly detailed and specific, the impact of communication becomes less significant.
- ii) Rules govern communication in negotiation interaction:
  - a) In informal negotiations, many of the rules are generated through the negotiation interaction.
  - b) In formal negotiations, rules and procedures structure communication.
  - c) Rules may be generated in a pre-negotiation stage.
  - d) Within certain negotiation "cultures", rules may become ritualised.
- iii) Communication functions to:
  - a) Coordinate outcomes.
  - b) Exchange information, intentionally and unintentionally; overtly and covertly.
  - c) Express strategic intentions and tactical actions.
  - d) Identify patterns of behaviour.
  - e) Alters perceptions and expectations concerning the bargaining situation, relationship, process, and outcomes.
- iv) Communication in negotiation focuses on:
  - a) Substantive issues.
  - b) Offers and counteroffers; proposals, demands, interests.
  - c) Procedural issues.
  - d) The interpersonal negotiation relationship.
  - e) Intangible issues (e.g., face, respect).
- v) Intentional communication behaviours are tactics reflecting a negotiator's strategic orientation.

2) **Non-Verbal Communication:**

Non-verbal communication certainly affects the resolution of conflicts and disputes, yet little research has considered non-verbal communication within dispute resolution contexts. Some speculations follow, gleaned from experiences of practitioners and the non-verbal behaviour literature:

- i) Negotiation practitioners place great importance on non-verbal behaviour (probably too much importance).
- ii) Non-verbal behaviour in negotiation is culture-bound; the cultural identification of negotiators and the cultural context of negotiation will influence what non-verbal behaviour is appropriate and how non-verbal behaviour should be interpreted. Yet some negotiators may regard certain non-verbal behaviours as culturally universal (transcending differences).
- iii) Some non-verbal behaviour "categories" relevant to negotiation are:



- a) **Chronemics (Time):** American negotiators place great importance on time; being prompt, meeting deadlines, and using time efficiently. This emphasis on time may translate into impatience.
  - b) **Proxemics (Space and Distance):** American negotiators prefer maintaining secondary relationship distance when negotiating; they prefer negotiating in environments that ensure distance (e.g., sitting on opposite sides of a table).
  - c) **Kinesics (Body):** American negotiators prefer environments that support formal, controlled behaviour (e.g., sitting *versus* standing).
  - d) **Facial and Eye Expression:** Face and eye behaviours are often trusted greatly by negotiators from a variety of cultures.
  - e) **Physical Appearance and Dress:** Negotiators may rely on appearance attributes to indicate respect for the negotiation situation.
  - f) **Paralanguage:** Like face/eye expression, negotiators may trust judgements based on vocal tone, rate, etc.
  - g) **Social/Cultural Rituals, Manners, and Conventions:** These areas may be particularly critical in the pre-negotiation phase.
- iv) Contrary to some trainers' writings and seminar presentations, non-verbal behaviour does not communicate in isolation, and particular behaviours do not have specific meanings.
  - v) Non-verbal behaviour must be interpreted in context, including the sequence in which it occurs.
  - vi) Negotiators need to avoid over-interpreting non-verbal behaviours (e.g., always trusting non-verbal cues over verbal cues) and falling victim to non-verbal ethnocentrism (like cultural ethnocentrism).
  - vii) Non-verbal behaviours are particularly significant when they are inconsistent with verbal messages. Negotiators should check their perceptions of inconsistency with the other negotiator if the inconsistency is significant.
  - viii) Non-verbal attentiveness may be particularly important in negotiation situations which may involve deception.

## 1.6. COMMUNICATION IN A CROSS-CULTURAL SETTING

### 1.6.1. Meaning of Cross-Cultural Communication Setting

Cross-cultural communication or inter-cultural communication can be defined as a subject that observes flow of information between people from different cultural origins and backgrounds. Cross-cultural communication aims at understanding the various common and diverse

methods through which people belonging to different cultures communicate with one another.

People from different countries interact with each other using distinct methods of communication. For example, In Sweden, people communicate in an impersonal, polite, direct terms and tend to avoid fiery arguments and confrontations. However, in America, a direct and open type of communication and confrontation is preferred.

According to Gudykunst and Kim, intercultural communication is defined as "a transactional, symbolic process involving the attribution of meaning between people from different cultures".

According to Jandt, "Cross-cultural communication is comparing phenomena in diverse cultures".

According to Bennett, "Cross-cultural communication is the capacity to interpret verbal and non-verbal communication, and custom in cultural styles different from our own".

### 1.6.2. Factors Affecting Communication in Cross-Cultural Setting

There are various factors that affect the communication process when viewed from the cross-cultural setting. These factors are as follows:

- 1) **Language:** The multiple use of various languages across different cultures acts as one of the major factors that affect cross-cultural communication. One cannot underestimate the significance of understanding the language differences in cross-cultural communication. Keeping in mind the language differences, businessmen involved in international business give importance to the services of language translators to counsel their clients of different cultures. There are three basic categories of language failures:

- i) **Gross Translation Problems:** These problems occur in the form of errors whenever a translator is involved in translating one language to another. As these errors raise warning flags that alert the translator while translating, hence, they cause fewer conflicts between the business parties than other language problems. These flags also facilitates in eliminating the error as they help the business parties in analysing the communication areas that lead to errors. Analysis of gross translation errors is rather time taking exercise. Moreover, they can be a symbol of disrespect to business parties in some cases.

- ii) **Slight Distinctions from Language to Language:** When the business parties do not have similar command level over a common language, then the slight distinctions which are critical to business negotiations also causes damage to the business dealings. These slight differences create misunderstandings and confusions between the parties. When non-native speakers communicate with native parties, the chances of slip-ups and confusions arises that may lead towards conflicts.



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  - ii) **Slight Distinctions from Language to Language:** When the business parties do not have similar command level over a common language, then the slight distinctions which are critical to business negotiations also causes damage to the business dealings. These slight differences create misunderstandings and confusions between the parties. When non-native speakers communicate with native parties, the chances of slip-ups and confusions arises that may lead towards conflicts.



Along with the slight distinctions, the attitude towards the language and speaking accent also affects the cross-cultural communications. The loyalty or knowledge towards a particular nation or culture is also reflected through the language accent of the speaker.

- iii) **Variations Based on Culture among Speakers of the Same Language:** There exist slight cultural-based variations among the speakers of the same language from different cultures. The social deriving of language consists of various class distinctions and national preconceptions that affect the communication process. **For example,** some accents in US, linked with rural and urban areas, emphasise negative stereotypes in different areas of business, education, intelligence, etc., due to regional preconception and racism. Similarly, in England, different accents are linked with higher and lower class of societies. These accents are usually unknown to non-native speaker.
- 2) **Environment and Technology:** The environmental factors such as topography, climate, population, availability of resources, density, etc., contribute towards the existing conditions of people, country or culture along with their histories. These climates and topography affects the designs and concepts of transportations, settlement, territorial organisation and logistics.
- 3) **Social Organisation and History:** Culture plays an important role in defining the social organisation of a business. The workplace is often affected by the social organisation and thus is linked with the history and background culture. The management of the company should not assume their own culture to be universal regarding sensitive areas like educational values, social class, religion bonds, political association, gender differences, nepotism, etc. These issues possess extensive implications for business practices.
- 4) **Conceptions of Authority:** The views of authority in a particular society shape the way in which a message is received and also significantly affect the environment of a business. This view of receiving any message is based on the relative ranks of the sender and the receiver. Thus, the process of business communications across cultures is affected by conceptions of authority.
- 5) **Non-Verbal Communication:** Non-verbal communication is the most distinct aspect of cross-cultural communication. When an individual communicates, he/she conveys only a part of his/her knowledge of any culture. Apart from spoken words, particular information is also communicated through other means such as eye contact, body language, clothing, touching, conceptions of personal space, etc. These forms of non-verbal communication vary from culture to culture and a business professional needs time to understand and adapt these aspects of communication.

### 1.6.3. Guidelines for Effective Cross-Culture Communication Setting

Effective cross-cultural communications is very important for managing the cultures of various nations. Following are the guidelines which results in effective cross-culture communications:

- 1) **Fluency of Host Country Language:** For managing the inter-cultural communication, the manager should learn the local language and should communicate with his subordinates and staff in that particular language. This will help the manager in gaining respect and acceptance from the employees.
- 2) **Learn to Neutralise Language Accents:** One should learn proper accent and pronunciation of the language along with the language itself. People often pronounce English words reflecting their own mother tongue. **For example,** persons fluent in Tamil, says Canara Bank as Kanara Bank, some Bengalis pronounce Ravindra as Rabindra, similarly some North Indian pronounce school as 'ischool', etc. These accents and pronunciations reflect the mother tongue of the person and can create confusions and misunderstandings.
- 3) **Awareness of Cross-Cultural Barriers:** A manager who wants to achieve effective cross-cultural communication should be aware about the cross-cultural barriers. As different cultures have different barriers and constraints, the manager should understand them and try to steer clear of them. **For example,** Privacy is given importance in British culture and one should not ask personal questions while interacting with British People. Likewise, Koreans do not support 'No' as the answer. They seek happiness and satisfaction from their visitors. Cross-culture barriers can be managed effectively with the help of proper feedback.
- 4) **Speak in Clear and Open Language:** For effective communication, the people dealing in international business should make use of appropriate words without any hesitation or being voluble. This can be achieved by minimum usage of idioms or analogues. Face to face communication and study of facial expressions are also necessary for an effective communication in a cross-cultural setting.
- 5) **Be Sensitive to Non-Verbal Communication:** For an effective cross-cultural communication, a manager should be sensitive and careful towards non-verbal communication as different signs have different meanings across different cultures. **For example,** an intense eye contact is accepted in Latin America and Middle East, which is not supported in Thai culture. Thais have a tendency to speak softly without using any gesture. People belonging to French culture display unusual contact behaviour between friends or relatives. Singaporeans give a smile for covering their embarrassment or anxiety.
- 6) **Show Cultural Sensitivity:** It is important to develop sensitivity towards local cultures along with learning the local languages and their accents. **For example,** various multinational companies such as TCS, Infosys, and Wipro provide special training to their employees about cultural sensitivities.



## 1.7. BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

### 1.7.1. Introduction

Communication barriers can be defined as the obstacles or hurdles which prevent the smooth flow of information between various channels of communication. When the information does not flow from sender to the receiver in the planned and organised way due to various reasons, it creates blockage of communication between the sender and the receiver.

### 1.7.2. Types of Barriers to Communication

The barriers in the way of effective communication are of the following types:

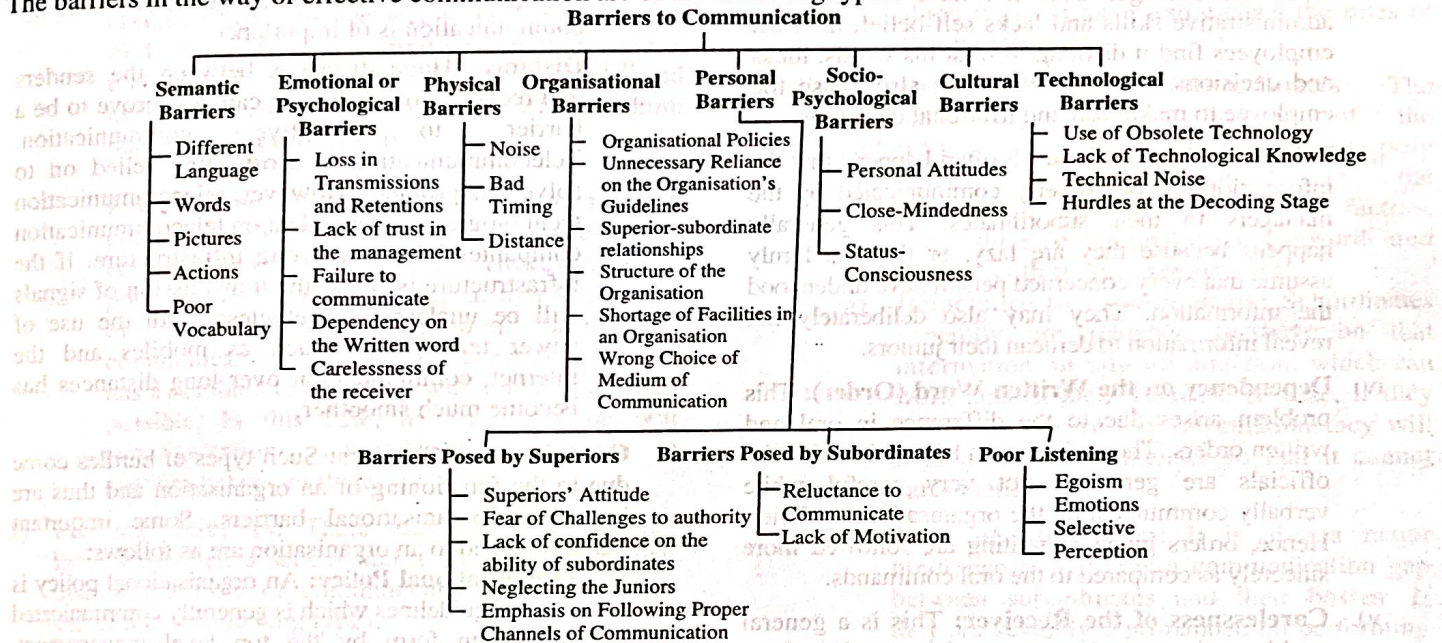


Figure 1.9: Barriers to Communication

1) **Semantic Barriers:** Semantic barriers are those problems that crop up during encoding or decoding of messages. Some examples of these problems are explained below:

- i) **Different Languages:** Each employee in an organisation speaks a different language. It creates communication problems in conveying one's ideas and feelings to each other. This is true in case of both national and multinational companies. Sometimes translators of these languages fail to convey the exact meaning of the content in the letters as well as that of different words in certain languages. The impact of language problem also increases and enlarges with the growth of the company.
- ii) **Words:** Words and symbols may act as a barrier as their meaning change with the changes in the context in which they are used. So, if a reader is not familiar with the meaning of certain words and symbols he/she may interpret them wrongly because of his/her level of thinking.
- iii) **Pictures:** All the pictures, graphs, three dimensional models such as blueprints, maps, and charts must

This blockage may be based on the situation, environment or psychology of the participants. There is no particular reason or situation for the communication barriers to occur.

Due to these barriers the message sent from the sender may not reach the receiver in the intended manner, which may give rise to unnecessary chaos and confusion. It is up to the organisation to take immediate steps and rule out all the scope of miscommunication and distortion of information. This can be done when the barriers are identified and rectified.

have proper caption or written statements under them so that readers do not get confused and can interpret them as per the intended manner.

iv) **Actions:** The area of actions is quite wide as it covers gestures, body language and its movements. Different types of gestures like movements of lips, movement of eyes, breathing movements, smiles, frowns, expressions, etc., come under the purview of body language. Communication becomes impressive and noteworthy if accompanied with correct body language.

v) **Poor Vocabulary:** If one's vocabulary is poor, he/she will not be able to communicate properly either verbally or non-verbally. The sender of the message should use different words in their right context and with their precise meaning and should be ready to replace them according to the situation.

2) **Emotional or Psychological Barriers:** Emotional barriers are born due to reasons like motives, attitudes, judgements, sentiments, emotions, and social values of participants. These problems sometimes disturb the flow of communication either completely or partially.



They may create misinterpretations which compromises the effectiveness of the communication process. Types of emotional barriers are:

- i) **Loss in Transmissions and Retentions:** The accuracy of a communication decreases significantly when it passes through a number of levels. Some part of the communication is lost in its transmission or conveyance. About 30 per cent of a communication dissipates at each transmission level. There is also a bad record of retention or storage of information. It has generally been observed that the information retention capacity of the workers is less as compared to the supervisors.
- ii) **Lack of Trust in the Management:** Sometimes, when the manager does not have the required administrative skills and lacks self-belief, his own employees find it difficult to trust his words, ideas and decisions. Lack of trust may also cause the employee to make rash and irrational decisions.
- iii) **Failure to Communicate:** It often happens that the information is not properly communicated by the managers to their subordinates. This generally happens because they are lazy, or they randomly assume that every concerned person have understood the information. They may also deliberately not reveal information to demean their juniors.
- iv) **Dependency on the Written Word (Order):** This problem arises due to the difference in oral and written orders. The main reason behind it is that the officials are generally not very careful while verbally communicating the organisational policies. Hence, orders given in writing are followed more sincerely as compared to the oral commands.
- v) **Carelessness of the Receiver:** This is a general problem that employees or the people of an organisation take bulletins, notices, minutes, and reports in a passive way and thus they miss many vital pieces of information.
- vi) **Wrong Assumption:** Something that can be considered as truth without any evidence or questioning is known as wrong assumption. Many barriers occur due to the wrong assumption which affects the communication system. When sender or the receiver both has incomplete knowledge about each other's background, a wrong assumption is usually created. At times, the speaker fails to recognise that different people have different background, education and experiences. These issues are considered by the skilled communicator so as to avoid the barriers which may affect the communication system.

3) **Physical Barriers:** These are of following types:

- i) **Noise:** Sometimes the effectiveness of a communication gets reduced due to the disturbances or confusion created by the 'noise'. A noise may be physical, psychological, physiological or semantic. A physical noise is a noise made by other people or objects around us.

For example, a loudspeaker playing outside an office, in which two people are trying to talk, is a physical noise. A psychological noise has to do with one's mental state or attitude and how that changes the way one communicates. Physiological noises, as the name suggests, comprise interferences in communication caused by pain in some part of the body, exhaustion, etc. Semantic noises occur when the person giving the message uses language that the recipient is unaware of.

- ii) **Bad Timing:** If a message or communication is passed on or conveyed at a wrong time, its effect will be significantly reduced. For example, a phone call made at midnight may interrupt sleep of a person and he/she may get annoyed if the communication is of importance.
  - iii) **Distance:** Huge distances between the senders and receivers of a message can also prove to be a barrier to effective communication. Telecommunication is most often relied on to solve this problem. However, telecommunication technologies are dependent on telecommunication companies having a strong infrastructure. If the infrastructure is weak, the transmission of signals will be unclear. Nonetheless, with the use of newer technologies such as mobiles and the internet, communication over long distances has become much smoother.
- 4) **Organisational Barriers:** Such types of hurdles come due to the functioning of an organisation and thus are known as organisational barriers. Some important barriers related to an organisation are as follows:
- i) **Organisational Policy:** An organisational policy is a set of guidelines which is generally communicated in written form by the top level management. Communication process may lose its effectiveness if the organisational policy disturbs the flow of information in different parts of the organisation.
  - ii) **Unnecessary Reliance on the Organisation's Guidelines:** Going excessively by the rules, at times, creates a hindrance in the smooth functioning of communication within a company. Sometimes, critical information is excluded or manipulated. Strict adherence to an organisation's guidelines related to communication slows down the process of conveying information and causes employees to lose enthusiasm and not share their creative thoughts.
  - iii) **Superior-Subordinate Relationship:** If the senior-junior relationship in an organisation is too rigid, it prevents the free flow of feedback and valuable suggestions in both upward and downward directions, i.e., from junior to senior and *vice versa*, beneficial for both parties concerned and the organisation as a whole. The wider is the difference of status between the senior and the junior employee, the more effort has to be made in reducing the possible communication hurdles between them.



iv) **Structure of the Organisation:** Structure of an organisation also acts as barrier especially in big organisations. As the information travels through different hierarchical levels it may get altered and distorted, which in turn compromises the effectiveness of the communication process.

v) **Shortage of Facilities in an Organisation:** People in an organisation fail to communicate effectively, if adequate means of giving honest feedback such as an open door system, suggestion boxes, conferences, meetings, etc., are not provided.

vi) **Wrong Choice of Medium of Communication:** There are many channels or mediums of communication such as face-to-face conversation, oral communication, written communication, communication *via* telephone and e-mail, and even audio-visual communication. Each medium does not suit every situation.

For example, if a salesperson has to convince a client to buy his product, face-to-face communication is required. However, if a politician has to make an appeal to a large mass of people to vote for him, face-to-face communication with each and every person, who has assembled to hear him, will not be practically possible. In this case, he must rely on oral communication and address a speech to everybody present there.

5) **Personal Barriers:** There may be many internal factors between a sender and a receiver which may disrupt the flow of communication between them. These are of following types:

i) **Barriers Posed by Superiors:** The role of superiors or officers in the communication process cannot be undermined. Due to their seniority and high status, superiors can forward hurdles to communication in the following ways:

a) **Superior's Attitude:** If the attitude of the superior is not positive, then filtering and distortion of information may take place at various levels. Different types of managers at various organisational levels try to manipulate the information in their favour which delays the process of communication.

b) **Fear of Challenge to Authority:** Officers sometimes prevent the free flow of information in order to cover-up their shortcomings which are actually a result of their own depleting self-confidence and work efficiency.

c) **Lack of Confidence on the Abilities of Subordinates:** If the officers are under the wrong belief that they are more competent than their subordinates, then such officers would avoid talking to their subordinates

thinking that it would be a wasteful exercise which in turn results in the lack of communication between them.

d) **Neglecting the Juniors:** Officials sometimes consider themselves much more knowledgeable than their subordinates and it prevents them from having any communication just to show their superiority or importance.

e) **Emphasis on Following Proper Channels of Communication:** Most of the time superiors insist on following the formal means of communication and they do not allow the subordinates to communicate via informal means of communication as they think it is improper and against the rules of the organisation.

ii) **Barriers Posed by Subordinates:** The negative approach or attitude of the subordinates in an organisation adversely influences their involvement in the communication process. Two more factors, blocking their communication (upward and downward) with their superiors, are:

a) **Reluctance to Communicate:** Subordinates generally are reluctant to pass on that information, in upward direction, which can work against their interests. In case, if they will have to give any information they will alter it in such a manner so that it cannot harm them.

b) **Lack of Motivation:** It is also a major hindrance as it forms a communication gap between subordinates and their bosses. If they are severely reprimanded on performing badly, and not rewarded adequately when they do well or offer unique suggestions, they will obviously be demotivated.

iii) **Poor Listening:** People often do not listen to what someone is saying in a sustained and focussed way. They simply listen to the information that is of some interest to them and ignore that part which does not have any importance for them. Such poor listening restricts the flow of communication and prevents an understanding of what is really being said. Poor listening involves:

a) **Egoism:** The process of understanding each other is badly affected, if the communication is restricted due to presence of ego. Egotistic or self-centred people think that their views are the only ones that are significant and that the ideas of others are not.

They are extremely horrible listeners. If a person wants to be understood, he must understand others. Egotism disrupts this kind of understanding, and therefore, also the communication process.



b) **Emotions:** Constructive emotions such as affection and friendliness aid communication while destructive emotions such as bitterness and nervousness hamper it and worsen the relationships between people. A clean heart and a quiet and calm mind are needed for someone to communicate effectively.

c) **Selective Perception:** Selective perception is a process *via* which an individual tends to ignore ideas which disturb him or go against his existing viewpoints, but is receptive to those which bring him comfort and suit his beliefs. It can prove to be a significant obstacle in the way of communication.

6) **Socio-Psychological Barriers:** These are of following types:

i) **Personal Attitudes:** Effective communication is not possible if one cannot overcome the hurdles like personal attitudes and opinions. For example, someone may feel that, regardless of another person's religion, if he is a good person he can be a friend. However, another may be of the narrow-minded view who thinks if a certain person is not of the same religion as himself, he cannot be a friend.

ii) **Close-Mindedness:** A close-minded person is an unreceptive person who is not willing to consider new ideas. Such a person is very difficult to communicate with and such person feels that he knows everything and there is nothing which is worth knowing.

iii) **Status-Consciousness:** At times, a junior or senior's being too conscious of his status might interrupt the communication process in an organisation. Subordinates may fear conveying any disagreeable message to their superiors. They may be too aware of their low status and fear of being insulted. Seniors who are very conscious of their high status may be of the view that asking their juniors for suggestions would be humiliating for them.

7) **Cultural Barriers:** If employees from different cultural backgrounds work for the same organisation, a huge barrier in communication could arise. The same symbols or actions can stand for separate things to people belonging to different cultures.

For example, the colour 'black' is a symbol of death and mourning in Western countries while in the Eastern countries the colour 'white' has the same meaning and symbolism. In the U.S.A. most people love to be called by their first name while people in India and Britain prefer to be called by their title or surname.

i) **Language:** Despite being a global language, there are millions of individuals around the world who do not or are not able to communicate well in English. There can be a number of

misunderstandings resulting from the improper speaking which acts as a barrier to communication. Different cultures have native languages as a part of their heritage which distinguishes them with the rest of the world. Also, most of the people choose their mother tongue for communication as they are more comfortable in their native language rather than communicating in the second language. Thus, language acts as a barrier to cross-cultural communication.

ii) **Hostile Stereotypes:** Stereotyping refers to the various types of assumptions made regarding the traits of particular person or group of persons belonging to a different region. In any group or organisation, one of the major barriers to communication can be observed in the form of wrong and hostile stereotyping of individuals who belong to a different place.

For example, impatient and arrogant are the stereotype traits related to American. It is quite clear that all Americans are not arrogant and unfriendly and at the same time, all are not tolerant and amicable. Thus, there can be misconceptions and barriers to communication due to absurd prejudging.

iii) **Behaviour Differences:** There can be a misunderstanding among individuals belonging to different cultures due to the differences in their behaviours. Each culture has its own native language, rituals, set of beliefs and behaviours which act as a cultural barrier.

For example, some people believe that looking in the eyes of the other person while talking is not a good gesture, while not doing so is considered disgraceful in other cultures. Similarly, there are some cultures where people are very close while interacting with each other; while, there are some other cultures where people maintain a proper distance when interacting with others.

iv) **Emotional Display:** The correct display of emotion varies from one culture to another.

For example, in corporate culture, expression of anger, fear or frustration is not usually acceptable. The emotions of individuals belonging to organisational cultures are hidden; they only talk about the facts. While on the other hand, there are other cultures where expressing emotions is acceptable. Thus, displaying emotions also acts as a cultural barrier.

v) **Ethnocentrism:** When the words "us" and "them" separate one culture from another, it is known as ethnocentrism. Individuals who belong to the similar cultural group are treated as 'one of us', i.e., in-group members, while the individuals from other cultures are considered as out-group. Preference is always



given to in-group members. People treat out-group as evil and inferior as we evaluate other cultures on the basis of our own culture's understandings. Ethnocentrism thus acts as a barrier to cross cultural communications.

- 8) **Technological Barriers:** Although technology has improved communication processes by leaps and bounds, it can act as a hurdle to communication. These hurdles are briefly described as follows:
  - i) **Use of Obsolete Technology:** The use of obsolete technology, or that which is out of date, can hinder or delay a message.
  - ii) **Lack of Technological Knowledge:** If either the conveyor of the message or its recipient, or both, lacks the necessary technological knowledge to operate communication devices, then there are less chances of the message being correctly sent or accepted. The employees operating the technology at both ends should be well trained to keep up with its latest developments.
  - iii) **Technical Noise:** This relates to problems in the device through which communication is being made. For example, disturbance on a mobile phone, a malfunctioning LCD projector, etc.
  - iv) **Hurdles at the Decoding Stage:** Communication may collapse at the receiving end because of the lack of attention of the recipient, his weak reading or writing abilities, his emotional biases, etc.

### 1.7.3. Gateways to Communication

Various approaches for overcoming the barriers and making the communication effective are as follows:

- 1) **Two-Way Communication:** A company's guidelines and policies should focus on creating and maintaining a two-way communication system.

The communication system should be such that it facilitates smooth flow of information in both vertical and horizontal hierarchy of the organisation. It should bring both the parties together and help in developing better understanding between them.

The feedback system of the organisation should be such that there are minimum chances of distortion or misinterpretation of facts. A proper two-way communication system also helps in bridging the communication gap.

- 2) **Reinforcing the Communication Network:** Effectiveness of a communication system also depends on the strength of the communication network. An organisation should ensure that the communication process is simple and there are minimum layers in it. An organisation can significantly improve its decentralisation and delegation system by conducting regular meetings, conferences, and feedback sessions. A

communication network can also be reinforced by efficient distribution of information to the employees.

- 3) **Encouraging Participative Approach:** Participative management approach should be encouraged by the top level managers. All the employees of the organisation should be involved in the decision-making process. It helps in reducing communication gaps and hurdles in the process of communication.
- 4) **Use of Appropriate Language:** A number of symbols are used in the communication. These are in the form of certain words, pictures and actions. Use of simple words helps the subordinates in understanding the language with ease. So one must avoid using complicated words and technical terms. The person who is sending the message should formulate the message keeping in mind the level of understanding of the receiver. A message becomes more effective when it is appropriately supported by pictures, symbols, colours, etc.
- 5) **Message Credibility:** Credibility of the message is quite significant for proper flow of information. Commands and information given by the superior in the form of words and actions are taken seriously by his/her employees only when they trust the authority of the superior.

So there should be no divergence in the words and deeds of the superior. He/she must be truthful in passing an order or taking an action because effectiveness of the communicated message depends upon the level of trust that the subordinates have on their superior.

- 6) **Effective Listening:** In order to become an effective communicator a sender should also be an effective listener. Employees in the management position should encourage their subordinates to share their thoughts and give inputs regarding work related activities. In this way a manager receives useful feedback and also gains an insight regarding the needs and demands of his subordinates.
- 7) **Selection of Effective Communication Channel:** The channel of sending and receiving a communication message should be quite effective. An effective channel of communication can be defined as a medium through which the message is delivered to the right person, at the right time and in the manner as intended by the sender of the message.
- 8) **Development of Proper Interpersonal Relations:** Interpersonal relationship among the employees at different levels of the organisation is essential for the smooth functioning of the organisation.

There should be mutual trust and loyalty among superiors and subordinates. The officials should ensure that communication remains a mutual process and not a one way activity.