
UNIT 13 COMMUNICATION

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13.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the meaning and characteristics of communication;
- explain the process of communication;
- identify the barriers to communication;
- describe the communication network;
- state the significance of communication in an organisation;
- explain the communication direction;
- discuss the principles of communication; and
- explain the methods of overcoming the barriers to communication.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

You must be aware that in order to achieve the objectives of an organisation, the role of all the functions of management is very important. Apart from these functions, the achievement of objectives largely depends upon the fact that human efforts are properly coordinated and integrated. Thus, the persons engaged to the business perform different functional related activities. We can say that working and maintaining of these relationships is possible through communication, which provides for exchange of information and sharing ideas. So the communication becomes an essential element in human relationship which provides the foundation for human interaction. To be more specific and clear, communication performs the energizing

function in the organisation by transmitting information, facts, feelings and ideas thereby making coordinated efforts possible. In this unit, you will learn the meaning of communication, significance and process of communication. You will be further apprised with the barriers of communication that obstruct the flow of proper and effective communication. You will be further exposed to the Interpersonal dynamics in communication.

2.2 DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATION

The communication can be defined as the process through which two and more persons exchange ideas and develop understanding. Two aspects are important in communication, first is the transmission of ideas, feelings, facts, etc. It implies that there must be a receiver if communication is to occur. The sender of message must consider the receiver while structuring his message from a technical standpoint as well as in delivering it. When the receiver is not considered, there is either no response or there may be wrong response. Secondly, it emphasizes the understanding element in the communication. Sharing of understanding would be possible only when the person, to whom the message is meant, understands it in the same sense in which the sender of the message wants him to understand.

3.3 NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNICATION

In an organisational set up, communication is the means by which people are linked together for a common purpose, to establish a common interest or mutual understanding. Thus, communication does not simply involve sending of a message by one person. It also involves the receiver listening to it, interpreting it, and responding to it or acting according to it.

Communication is essentially a two-way process. It is not completed unless the receiver of the message has understood the message and his reaction or response is known to the sender of the message. The basic purpose of communication is to create mutual understanding and unity of commonness of purpose. It may involve exchange of facts by way of information, thought, or ideas, opinion or point of view, feeling or emotions. Communication is a continuous process in management. No manager can avoid communicating with his superior and subordinates in the course of his activities. Inadequate or ineffective communication is often responsible for making managerial performance unsatisfactory. Managers at all levels and in all departments must communicate to keep the wheels of operations running smoothly. Thus, communication pervades the entire organisation.

The characteristics of communication in a business enterprise may be outlined as follows :

- It is a cooperative process involving two parties, one who transmits and one who receives the message.
- The respective parties to a communication must have the ability to convey and listen to what his counterpart has to communicate.
- Communication includes sending the message as well as receiving the reaction or response to the message and therefore is a two-way traffic.
- The response to a communication is as essential as the initial communication because response indicates the impact of the communication.
- The message to be communicated may be conveyed verbally, in writing, by means of signs, gestures or symbols. More than one means may be adopted to make the communication effective.
- The purpose of communication is that of passing information and understanding, to bring about commonness of purpose, interest and efforts.
- Communication is a continuous process for effectiveness and efficiency of on going operations, planning and policy making.

- Communication may flow vertically upward or downward between superiors and subordinates, horizontally between persons occupying similar ranks in different departments, as well as diagonally between persons at different levels and in different parts of the organisation. Hence, communication flows pervade the entire organisation.

3.4 COMMUNICATION PROCESS

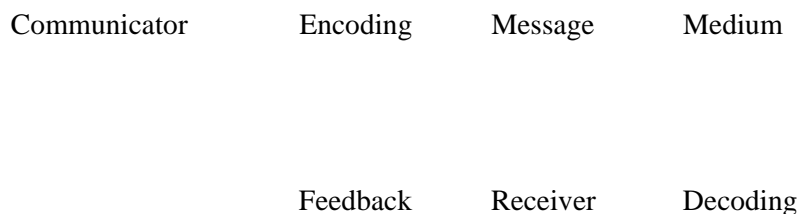
The process of communication implies the existence of a sender, a receiver, a message and a motivating climate for it. The process includes the following steps :

- **Clear Perception of the Idea or Problem :** No message can be transmitted properly unless the idea or problem is formulated with clarity of thought and perception on the part of the communicator. It is only on the basis of clear thinking that the communicator can decide on the means to be adopted to convey the message.
- **Participation of others Involved :** The next step is to secure the participation of other persons in the decision to communicate a message. This may be helpful in clarifying the ideas through interaction with others, gathering new ideas and suggestions, and in creating a motivating climate for securing positive response to the message.
- **Transmission of the Message :** What to communicate to whom, when and how are expected to be decided before actual transmission of the message. Actual transmission involves preparing the matter and the form of communication (known as 'encoding' the message) and selecting the medium or means of communication (oral or written) keeping in view the nature of persons or groups to be addressed.
- **Motivating the Receiver of the Message :** The communicator cannot depend on the message alone to get an appropriate response from the receiver. He/she must ensure that the receiver of the message is not only able to interpret the message correctly but is also prepared to act according to it. Thus, apart from the clarity of the message, it must inspire the receiver to do or behave as desired by the sender of the message.
- **Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Communication :** After the message has been transmitted and accepted by the receiver, it remains for the communicator to ascertain and evaluate the nature of the communication. This determines whether and to what extent the receiver has positively responded to the message.

Elements in the Communication Process

The process of communication may be better understood if we take into account the basic elements in the communication process. The elements are shown in Figure 13.1.

Figure 13.1 : Elements of Communication Process



Let us now discuss them one by one .

- **Communicator** : The communicator plays an important role in the process of communication as the message originates from him/her. Communicators may include managers, subordinates, clients, customers, as well as outside parties.
- **Encoding** : Encoding the matter to be communicated is the second element. It refers to preparing the subject of communication (idea, fact, information, etc.) in a suitable language.
- **Message** : The encoded message needs to be transmitted by appropriate means. It may be in verbal or written form depending on the purpose.
- **Medium** : The medium of communication carries the message from the communicator to the receiver. Face-to-face verbal communication, use of telephone, inter-com facilities, issue of memorandum, notice, circulars, statements, telegraphs, telex, etc. are the various means available as media of communication. Besides, non-verbal media like signals, gestures, etc. may also be used. The choice of medium is an important aspect of communication, since proper medium also determines its effectiveness.
- **Decoding** : Decoding refers to the conversion of the message by the receiver into meaningful terms so as to make it understandable. This is another important element of communication because the receiver's response depends upon his understanding of the content and purpose of the message.
- **Receiver** : The receiver of the message has an equally vital role to play as the communicator. Indeed, communication to be effective must be receiver oriented, for it is the receiver, his ability to decode the message and understand it, that contribute to a positive response from the receiver.
- **Feedback** : The actual response of the receiver to the message communicated to him is known as 'feedback'. This is an important element to the communication process because it reduces the possibility of a difference between the intention of the communicator and the interpretation of the message by the receiver. Two-way communication requires feedback to the initial message sent and enables the sender to check whether the message received has been properly understood by the receiver.

13.5 COMMUNICATION NETWORK

In an organisation, there are a number of channels or paths connecting various positions for the purposes of communication. The sum-total of these channels is referred to as communication network. This is made up of two types of channels, which are interrelated and interdependent, viz. formal and informal. The existence of these channels is necessary for the execution of organisational communication. Further, these channels also determine to a very significant extent the smoothness, rapidity, and correctness with which the messages flow to the organisation.

1.1.1 Formal Communication

The formal channel, as the name implies, is deliberately created, officially prescribed path for flow of communication among the various positions in the organisation. It is a deliberate attempt to regulate the flow of organisational communication so as to make it orderly and thereby to ensure that information flows smoothly, accurately and timely to the points to which it is required. Further, it is also intended to prescribe for filtering of the information to various points to ensure that information does not flow unnecessarily thereby causing the problem of overload.

This officially prescribed communication network may again be designed on the basis of single or multiple channels. A single channel communication network prescribes only one path of communication for any particular position and all communications in that position would have necessarily to flow through that path only. Ordinarily, this path is the line of authority linking a position to its line superior. This is what is commonly referred to as 'through proper channel', i.e. through the line of superior-subordinate authority

relationships and its implication is that all communications to and from a position should flow through the line of superior or subordinate only.

The channel of communication under this system is, no doubt, narrow, but ordinarily, it does allow for flow of essential information. Besides, it is easy to maintain, supports the authority of the superiors and provides for closeness of contact thereby reducing channels of miscommunication. It helps in exercising control over subordinates and in fixation of responsibility in respect of activities carried out by a person in the organisation.

It has certain basic limitations as well such as, bottlenecks in the flow, enhancing organisational distance, greater possibilities of transmission errors, screening at various filtering points, etc. These limitations can be overcome by providing a number of communicating channels linking one position with various other positions, the system of multiple channels. An unlimited use of this system may however cause confusion and also undermine the superior's authority.

13.5.2 Informal Communication or Grapevine

The informal channel of communication, also known as grapevine, is the result of the operation of social forces at work place. The term grapevine arose during the days of U.S. Civil War. At that time, intelligence telephone lines were strung loosely from tree to tree in the manner of a grapevine, and the message there on was often distorted: hence any rumour was said to be from the grapevine. While formal communication exists to meet the utilitarian needs of the organisation, informal communication is the method by which people carry on social, non-programmed activities within the formal boundaries of the system. It, thus, exists outside the official network, though continuously interacting with it. This informal channel is generally multiple in natures: same person having social relationships with a number of people working in the same organisation.

This channel also satisfies the communication needs of the various persons in the organisation, more particularly those persons who mix up with others freely and rely upon informal relationships. Informal communication is thus a need-fulfillment device generated when it is found that the existing formal communication is inadequate or insufficient. The requirement of speedier communication creates conditions for informal communication, which is supplement to the formal one. Chester Barnard opines that communication function of the executives help the maintenance of informal executive organisation. The functions of informal executive organisation are the communication of intangible facts, suggestions that cannot pass through formal channels without the requirement for decisions, without dissipating dignity and objective authority. L.M. Prasad found in his study that between 50 and 100 percent subordinates communicating unfavourable work performance, problems relating to work, unfavourable reactions to various organisational practices, used to communicate through informal channel. The major reasons for using informal channel for such communication were: it being more convenient and such subject matter of upward communication did not require formal channel.

Types of Grapevine

Four types of informal communication channels have been identified: They are : single strand, gossip, probability and cluster. Look at Figure 13.2 which shows the types of grapevine.

Figure 13.2 : Informal Communication Network

In single strand network, the individual communicates with other individuals' through intervening persons. In the gossip network, the individual communicates non-selectively. In probability network, the individual communicates randomly with other individuals according to the law of probability. In the cluster network, the individual communicates with only those individuals whom he trusts. Out of these informal networks, the cluster is most popular.

Sometimes word rumour is used as a synonym for the whole informal communication, but there is a difference between the two. Rumour is grapevine information that is communicated without secure standard of evidence. It is the injudicious and untrue part of the grapevine. Since, in most cases, it is incorrect information, it is presumed to be the most undesirable feature of grapevine. Rumour is a product of interest and ambiguity in a situation. Since perception of interest and ambiguity differs among individuals, rumour tends to change from person to person. Depending upon the interest, each person subtracts or adds something to the original message through the process of elaboration and assimilation.

Informal communication, on the other hand, has certain basic limitations. It is less orderly and less static also. Sometimes, messages communicated through the informal channel are so erratic that any action based on these may lead to a difficult situation in the organisation. In this case, the irresponsibility of the persons communicating through the informal channel is the most important factor. Since origin and direction of the flow of information is hard to pinpoint, it is difficult to assign responsibility for false information or morale lowering rumours. Moreover, as each person conveying the message may add, subtract or change the original message according to his motive, informal communication problems multiply. There is a chance that by the time a communication completes a complex journey, it may be completely distorted.

Check Your Progress A

1) What is the concept of communication process?

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2) Prepare a chart of communication process followed in your organisation

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3) Prepare a list of most frequently used informal channel of communications.

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13.6 COMMUNICATION DIRECTIONS

You have learnt the process and channels of communication. You will also agree that communication of a general nature is not very responsive. The communication should therefore satisfy the instincts of

individuality and self-respect of the people. Hence, all communications should be directed to the individual employee as far as possible with the flavour or personal touch in official decorum. Let us learn the directions of communication which are discussed below :

Communication must move in Both Directions : Communication is a two-way traffic; if forced to be only one way, it is bound to collapse. The management should be prepared to listen, interpret, amend and implement in the same manner as to ask, command and direct his employees to implement. Communication will acquire greater effectiveness if the executive encourages the subordinate to participate in the process mechanics of achieving the desired goal. This will provide confidence to implement and the inspiration to respond to the will of the supervisor.

Supervisor's Role : Supervisors are the most effective chain between the management and the operating force. It is the supervisors who may interpret and misinterpret the communication from management meant for the employees. Similarly, they are the persons who know intimately the pulse of the people and it is through them the management may know the attitude and the thinking of people to make necessary amendment in their commands, which could be implemented without opposition.

Under the circumstances the selection and training of supervisor is very vital to the functioning of an enterprise. The supervisor may be trained not only as a post office to communicate the commands of management received by him to the subordinates but to act as a vital chain between the management and employees. He should have the capacity to receive communication and communicate in the same spirit to the subordinates. He should also have the competence to put communication in the manner that it stimulates employees to respond quickly to the command of supervisors.

Line of Communication should be as Direct as Possible : Communication is apt to be diluted or even distorted when it passes through different levels of management. It has already been pointed out that communication is interpreted differently at each level according to the attitude and thinking of persons. In this process it is possible that by the time the communication reaches the implementing stage it is completely changed both in letter and spirit. To ward off such an exigency, the communication should be as direct as possible.

Communication must Reflect the Policies and Practices of Management : Employees with the passage of time are not merely influenced by what management states but what management does. They become conversant with the way of functioning with the result that they execute many tasks without reference to the superiors. It means effective communication is not what is said but what is done. In other words it is not what people are told but what they accept.

13.7 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD COMMUNICATION

Principles are those fundamental rules, which guides the management in the formulation of policies. Following are the major principles of communication.

Clarify the Ideas before Communication : The problem to be communicated to the subordinates should be clear in all perspectives to the executive himself. The entire problem should be studied in depth, analyzed and stated in such a manner that it is intelligible to the subordinates. For this purpose the competence and skills of subordinates, their attitudes and aspirations and their environments of work have to be taken into account before they are asked to respond. Further, if some queries are made by the subordinates, the executive should answer each of them besides providing the needed guidance for implementing the tasks into actual practice.

Object of Communication : The object of communication should be crystal clear to the communicator. What object he proposes to achieve by transmitting a message to the communicatee? Whether he wants certain information or initiate certain action or change the attitude of the subordinates? The object is related

to the mechanics of communication. It is the object, which will determine the language, tone, and the style of communication. Such object should be clear for each communication.

Environmental Factors : Environments in which the communicator and the communicatee have to interact influence the process of communication. Environments within the organisation will determine the attitudes and aspirations of superiors and subordinates. Whether the environments *inter se* permit communication both ways? To what extent are subordinates permitted to participate in the communication process? Whether the subordinates are responsive to commands of superiors? – all these variables depend on environmental factors. Even the socio-political environments determining the behaviour pattern of unions are ultimately related to effectiveness of the communication system.

Consultation with Others : Before actually communicating the message, it is better to involve others in developing a plan for communication. The consultation will be helpful in crystallising the problem and the methodology for its execution. Persons consulted shall feel motivated because it may satisfy his/her ego needs.

Tone and the Contents of the Message : The contents of the message and the tone i.e., the language used, the manner in which the message is to be communicated, are the other important elements of effective communication. The language used should be such that it does not offend the sentiments and self-respect of the listeners. It should be stimulating to evoke response from the listeners. Similarly, your choice of language particularly your awareness of the words you use, predetermines the reaction of the listeners. It is said that the word of mouth may turn the best friend into an enemy.

Convey Things of Help and Value to Listeners : While conveying messages to others, it will be better to know the interests and needs of the people with whom to communicate. If the message relates directly or indirectly to such interests and needs it will certainly evoke response from the communicatees.

Follow-up Communication : Follow-up action helps communication to be effective. The communicator may ensure the success of communication by asking questions regarding the efficiency of communication. The receiver of communication may also be encouraged to respond to communication. If need arises, the communication process may be improved by the feedback received to make it more responsive.

Communication for Present and Future : Generally communication is needed to meet the existing commitments. To maintain consistency the communication should aim at future goal of the enterprise as well. For instance, if you postpone pointing out shortcomings to loyal subordinates, it will create problems in future. The subordinates will not only feel embarrassed but also feel insulted if such shortcomings are pointed out in future. The enterprise on the other hand will get a setback in its plan of action. Hence, it will be consistent to long-term goal that the subordinates should be properly educated as to their shortcomings immediately when they are noticed.

Correlation between Action and Communication : There should be no contradiction between action and communication. The effective communication is not merely what you say but more importantly what you do. This requires good supervision, clear assignment of authority and responsibility, proper reward system and the enforcement of sound policies.

Be a Good Listener : Communication depends not only on commands but the ingenuity of patient listening. Subordinates may experience problems of understanding, execution and coordination. These problems could

be removed if you could listen to the queries of the subordinates with patience and then render necessary advice and guidance if needed.

13.8 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

The prominent barriers to communication are delay, distortion and dilution. Delay is caused by the faulty working of the distribution system. Distortion of information or message is caused by personal idiosyncrasies of the intermediate communicators, by impatient or faulty listening of the communicatee, inadequate vocabulary, badly chosen and empty words. Psychological barriers caused by prejudice, preconceived notion, distrust of the communicator, misinterpretation of his intention and so on. Status consciousness among managerial personnel may cause distortion and dilution in communication. Sharing information with subordinates is interpreted as loss of status because status is equated with the possession of greater knowledge. Dilution of communication is caused by a yes man telling the boss what does he want to hear rather than giving him a correct feedback.

Communication barriers may be personal, physical and semantic. Personal barriers arise from human emotions, values and poor listening habits. Our emotions act as filters in all our communications. We see and hear what we are emotionally tuned to see and hear, so communication cannot be separated from our personality. We communicate our interpretation of reality instead of reality itself. One psychological barrier to communication is the egocentric tendency of all human beings to view every activity from a highly personal point of view. Communication is not the simple speaking and hearing of words and sentences. Each man creates for himself a set of filters which affect the transmission of communication from one individual to another. The sender's filter causes him to project ideas which are related to his personal frame of reference and the receiver receives the message from his point of view.

Another personal barrier to communication is the tendency to evaluate and judge others. This can be fault of both sender and receiver, although it is mostly the receiver who evaluates and judges the sender. The evaluation is made not only of the communication but also of the sender himself, his dress, speech habits and physical appearance. Instead of listening to the actual communication, the receiver analyses other irrelevant facts and often rejects the message on such grounds.

Hierarchy and status can be barriers to communication. The existence of excessive hierarchy creates physical distance between people. Effective communication exists where anyone in the organisation is allowed to contact anybody who can help him solve his problems. But organisational hierarchy restricts channels through which communication should move officially. Members have to contact others through formal channels. Which may cause hardships. In the organisational hierarchy, a certain status is attached to a position, which boosts the ego of the incumbent. Subordinates become aware of the existence of such status in their relationships with their superiors. This may distort the upward communication process. Subordinates do not report their problems and shortcomings because of status, they cannot be frank with their boss.

Communication can be thwarted if the potential content of the message threatens the psychological or economic well being of the recipient. People hear only what they want to hear but if the message has a bad content, the receiver pretends of not hearing it. This gap can be eliminated by removing fear and distrust. Many companies use AVOs (Avoid Verbal Orders) to stress the importance of using written rather than oral communication in order to prevent this type of problems. As mentioned by Koontz and O'Donnell, in oral communication something in the order of 30 per cent of the information is lost in each transmission. Therefore, in large scale enterprise, it is impossible to rely on oral communication from one level to another.

Lastly, semantic barriers widen communication gap. Semantics is the science of meaning as contrasted with phonetics – the science of sounds. Nearly all communication is symbolic; that is, it is achieved using symbols (words, pictures and actions) that suggest certain meanings. Semantic barriers arise from

limitations in the symbols with which we communicate. Words have different meanings for different persons. It is rightly said that the meanings of words are not in the words, they are in use. As far as possible use words which the receiver can understand. Words having more than one use should be avoided in order to remove misunderstanding.

Check Your Progress B

- 1) What kind of barriers do you experience while communicating in your organisation.
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- 2) In your opinion what may be the coping strategy to overcome the semantic barriers.
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13.9 METHODS OF OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS

Considering the importance of effective communication in the successful functioning of business organisations, it is essential on the part of the management to overcome these barriers. Though it may not be possible to eliminate these barriers altogether, yet suitable managerial actions in this direction can minimize the effect of these barriers to such an extent that adequate and objective information flows in different directions. Following measures can be adopted to check the barriers.

- It is imperative that organisational policy must be clear and explicit and encouraging the communication flow so that people at all levels realize the full significance of communication. The organisational policy should be expressed in clear and unambiguous terms that organisation favours the promotion of communication in the organisation.
- The policy should also specify the subject-matter to be communicated. This does not mean that contents of communication are to be prescribed in a completely exclusive manner but the list should be illustrative and it should emphasize that the subject-matter of communication should be determined by the needs of the organisation.
- Though communication through proper channel is essential for orderly flow of information, it should not always be insisted upon. The system of communication through proper channel serves the purpose adequately so far as routine types of information are concerned. However, when and whatever the situation so warrants, to be overlooked and persons concerned should be told explicitly that insistence on proper channel is not necessary in all cases.
- Every person in the organisation shares the responsibility of good communication; however, persons at the top have special responsibility in this regard. A successful communication system will only be achieved if top management is determined to do so. It must set good examples itself, clearly expects others to follow them, and check from time to time that there are no bottlenecks.
- Organisation should have adequate facilities for promoting communication. Adequate provision of these facilities is not sufficient, but proper attention must be given towards their proper and effective use. They should be carefully looked into and it should be the responsibility of superior managers to encourage the use of these facilities through the adoption of supportive attitude and behaviour needs must be emphasized.

- Communication being an inter-personal process, the development of inter-personal relationships based on mutual respect, trust and confidence is essential for its promotion. In large organisations, status differentials and class distinctions get overemphasized making interpersonal relationships amongst the executives highly impersonal and official. The organisational climate, therefore, should be radically modified to make it more intimate and personal. A modification in the attitude and behaviour of persons is essential for promotion of communication. Towards this end, an educative programme in communication should be organised for managers at all levels. In this programme, managers should be instructed about the need and significance of communication and need for developing close personal contacts amongst individuals.
- There should be continuous programme of evaluating the flow of communication in different directions. This would highlight problem in this area, identify their causes and thereby enable the adoption of suitable corrective actions.

The above suggestions, if incorporated effectively, may help in making the communication more result oriented.

13.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN AN ORGANISATION

Effective communication is a basic prerequisite for the attainment of organisational goals. No organisation, no group can exist without communication. Coordination of work is impossible and the organisation will collapse for lack of communication. Cooperation also becomes impossible because people cannot communicate their needs and feelings to others. Every act of communication influences the organisation in some way or other. It is a thread that holds the various interdependent parts of an organisation together. When it stops, organisation activity ceases to exist. Even a great idea becomes until it is transmitted and understood by others.

When communication is effective, it tends to encourage better performance and job satisfaction. People understand their jobs better and feel more involved.

It is through effective communication that an executive ultimately gets work done by others. Therefore, a successful executive must know the art of communication. Moreover, communication is a means whereby the employee can be properly motivated to execute company plans enthusiastically. It is the means by which behaviour is modified, change is effected and goals are achieved.

The first executive function is to develop and maintain a system of effective communication. It is commonly said that what nerves are to human organism, communications are to an industrial system. Since management has been described as getting works done by people, it is necessary to communicate what the management wishes to accomplish by the various tasks which the organisation has undertaken. Communication is also an intra management problem. It is the force that binds the people of an organisation together. Through communication they can attain a common viewpoint and understand and cooperate to accomplish organisational objectives. Good communication presupposes a two-way flow of information from the top down and from the bottom up. It can be compared to a mighty river on the banks of which business life is built.

McGregor sees all communication as a major factor in influencing others. All social interactions involve communication. In organisation communication is a two-way traffic whereby objectives, orders and policies are transmitted downward and desires and dis-satisfactions are transmitted upward. A successful executive should have the ability to receive, analyse and transmit information. Thus, effective communication is an important skill of management.

Communication is the link between knowledge and information. Possession of knowledge is of no use until it is converted into information. Hence, knowledge alone is not adequate for managerial success; what is required is knowledge plus ability to communicate accurately. The popular saying 'knowledge is power' should be modified to 'applied knowledge is power', and to apply it requires effective communication.

In organisation, communication transmits orders for work, aids in doing the work, buying raw materials and in advertising and selling the product. It is the means used for hire, fire, promote, praise, urge, censure, persuade and so on. Communication plays a major role in dealing with employer-employee relations problems, employee productivity, in short, with all human relations matters. Bad communication is often the root cause of many problems. Secrecy breeds rumours and hush-hush attitude breeds harmful rumours. As far as possible, management should supply all relevant information to employees. The employees of an organisation have great curiosity to know what the company is going to do with, say, computers or bonus or DAs. If the management does not provide information, the employees will concoct information through grapevine rumours, which may have damaging results for the company. In order to avoid such problems, it is the duty of the management to supply all the relevant information through appropriate media at the right time.

Communication is not confined solely to employees. Management must communicate with its customers, owners, the community as well as its prospective and present employees. But our discussion is restricted to interpersonal communication and the organisational communication process.

13.11 HOW TO MAKE COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE

The principles or guidelines to making communication effective are of a general nature, operationally speaking a number of more specific suggestions can be made to ensure the effectiveness of communications. Following measures should be considered for making the communication effective.

- **Regulating the Flow of Communications :** Planning communication should involve determining the priority of messages to be communicated so that managers may concentrate on more important message of high priority. Otherwise, there is a possibility of managers being overloaded with the task of communication. Similarly, incoming communication should be edited and condensed, if possible, to reduce the chances of overlooking or ignoring important messages received.
- **Feedback :** Along with each communication there is need for feedback, that is, communication of the response or reaction to the initial message. Feedback may include the receiver's acceptance and understanding of the message, his action or behavioural response, and the result achieved. Two-way communication is thus considered to be more helpful in establishing mutual understanding than one-way communication.
- **Language of the Message :** Use of appropriate language is essential for effective communication. While preparing the message, its sender must keep in view the climate, as well as the ability of receiver to interpret the message accurately. Abstract ideas should be explained and vague expressions avoided. He/she must keep in view the semantic problem, that is, the possibility of particular words having more than one meaning. Experimental studies have shown that oral communication accompanied by its written version is more effective in bringing about the desired response.
- **Importance of Listening Carefully :** Listening to verbal messages carefully implies an active process. Half-hearted attention to the communication is often the cause of misunderstanding and confusion. A listener has to be patient, mentally composed, and avoid distractions while receiving the message. He/she should be in a position to concentrate on the message and seek clarification, if necessary. On the other hand, the sender of the message must also be prepared to listen to what the receiver has to say and respond to his questions, if any.

- **Restraint Over Emotion :** Strong feelings and emotional stress on the part of either the sender or receiver of messages are serious handicaps in the communication process. To avoid any negative impact of emotion on the content of the message, the sender may defer the communication for sometime or consult to exercise restraint over his psychological feelings to avoid misinterpretation of the message and to be able to respond to it with a composed mind.
- **Non-verbal Signals of Compliance :** Verbal messages are generally accepted orally by the receiver. But whether action will follow the acceptance of the message is not certain. It is, therefore, suggested that in the case of verbal communication the sender should observe the action of the receiver to ascertain whether the actions are in conformity with the intent and understanding of the message.
- **Mutual Trust and Faith :** No amount of seriousness of the parties involved can make the process of communication effective unless there is mutual trust and faith between them. The best means of developing these among people in an organisation are honesty of purpose and openness of the managers. However, it takes time to build such a climate. Both managers and subordinates have to cooperate for the purpose so that individuals feel free to make suggestions and correct each other's views without misunderstanding.

13.12 INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS : TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

As it is evident that the most potent use of Transactional Analysis is in interpersonal communications both within an organisation and with its contacts with customers of an organisation.

Within an organisation, TA gives a new way of looking at management and leadership style which can contribute to the development of appraisal and counselling skills and help to develop the creativity, problem-solving and decision making skills of groups.

The most valuable use of TA is in team building i.e. the development of the interpersonal skills and goal planning abilities of a section or department of staff.

Apart from team building, TA has a general contribution to Organisational Development (OD) in which many concepts can be used at a 'macro' level to look at the style of an organisation. TA has also been used to examine the origins and nature of the mid-life crisis.

Some more diverse areas for the application of TA in organisations include : the training of trainers in group handling skills, a new approach to the old problem of effective time management (using time structuring), a possible explanation of some forms of accident proneness (using strokes and games), and as an aid to the development of influencing and assertive skills for executive in management and for racial minority groups in organisations. TA has a jargon which can be off-putting and misleading. Where a group is being exposed to TA for the first time it may be worth for the trainer's while keeping the jargon to a minimum and to be sure of using examples, which will be of immediate relevance to the course.

TA implicitly values autonomy (i.e., people being responsible for themselves and their feelings) and assertiveness (i.e., people being direct about their wants and needs). If autonomy and assertiveness are not valued by the organisation then the trainee may find it difficult to fit in after training and equally his boss may find him more difficult to manage.

One of the major strengths of TA is its versatility. It can be used simply as a theory, or as the basis of helping people to develop interpersonal skills for example, if the group requires the trainer readily accepts the theory and can make an on-the-spot decision to go more deeply by introducing some exercises.

TA can be related to management theories and ideas viz. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, McGregor's Theory X and Y, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, Likert's Management systems; Blake's Managerial Grid, etc. All of them can be positively integrated with TA.

TA provides an integrated view of personality (ego states), communication (strokes and transactions) and destiny (scripts). The trainer and the trainees therefore have the opportunity, if they want it, to go beyond a person's behaviour and look at the motivation for it. TA also provides an integrated model of thinking, feeling and doing three basic human characteristics. It also gives people a common language for analyzing behaviour. TA clearly identifies the ways in which they relate to others. TA also values experimentation rather than right answers. It therefore implicitly encourages people to try things out and decide what makes sense. In nutshell, it may be concluded that TA improves the interpersonal relations on various aspects cited above significantly.

Check Your Progress C

- 1) Identify four methods of overcoming communication barriers.

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- 2) What are the significance of communication in an organisation ?

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- 3) What do you mean by transactional analysis ?

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- 4) How do transactional analysis help in improving the communication in the organisation.

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13.13 LET US SUM UP

Communication is the process of transferring information and ideas from one person to another. Successful and effective communication aims at imparting ideas and making one self understand by others.

Communication has occupied a pivotal place in the modern civilization and the success of any organisation/ venture depends on good communication. No managerial activity is possible without communication of some kind, and the major part of a manager's working time is devoted to communicating. The true purpose of communication is to convey the right message, establishing coordination, development of managerial skill and to maintain good industrial relations by executing programmes and policies of the organisation.

Communication is accomplished by continuous and dynamic process in which the sender encodes an idea, which is transmitted through a channel to a receiver who decodes the message and gains an understanding of the idea of the sender. The reverse process of feedback also follows the same pattern. During the entire process, the disturbance such as noise has been experienced at different stages, which can lead to distortion of the communication.

Communication takes place either orally or in writing. It could be just one-way or two-way, which allows the sender and receiver to interact with each other. A two-way communication is regarded well as it brings about understanding through clarity of the message. In an organisation, communication may take place in several directions-upward, downward, lateral and diagonal. Words either written or oral convey a very small part of the communication: most of it is transmitted through non-verbal gestures. A manager ought to be careful lest his non-verbal gestures contradict his verbal message.

Communication within an organisation flows either through formally designed authority channels or through informal channels spontaneously formed and cutting across authority levels. Informal channels can have both positive and negative sides. Cluster chain network of informal communication permits a rapid flow of information through the formation of a grapevine. Formal communication is transmitted through several kinds of networks. The choice of a network will depend upon considerations of the complexity of a task, speed in decision-making in order to adapt to a change, and the satisfaction of members.

Semantic, psychological and organisational barriers cause interference in communication. In order to achieve effectiveness in communication, managers should consciously try to lower these barriers. Effective communication tends to encourage better performance and job satisfaction. Principles of good communication confirm the fact that the tones, contents, and object of the message must be clear and the communicator must be a good listener. Recent changes in the field of communication have brought the people nearer to each other.

13.14 KEY WORDS

Communication: It is a process of imparting ideas and making oneself understood by others.

Communication Barriers: Factors that interfere with the process of communication. The barriers include the distortion of messages due to attributes of the receiver, selective perception, semantic problem, timing and information overload.

Communication Network: Network formed when a small number of people exchange information in a well-defined pattern for the purpose of resolving a specific problem or issue.

Communication Process: It is a process by which a sender reaches a receiver with a message.

Formal Communication: Transmission of information direction in the formal organisation structure.

Grapevine: An informal communication network in an organisation that by-passes the formal channels of communication synonymous with rumour.

Semantic: Is the science of meaning as contrasted with phonetics – the science of sound.

13.15 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) Define Communication: Point out the salient features of communication in an organisation.
- 2) Discuss the various steps in the communication process.
- 3) What are the main barriers to communication? How can these barriers be removed?
- 4) How can we make goods communication in our organisation?
- 5) What is effective communication? Discuss the significance of communication in an organisation.
- 6) What is grapevine? What are its causes? How would you tackle the problems of grapevine?

Note : These questions will help you to understand the unit better. Try to write answers for them. Do not submit your answers to the university for assessment. These are for your practice only.

Single Stand

Gossip

Probability

Cluster

