

**BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**  
**NOTES ON MODULE-I (Oral Communication)**  
**(MBA Batch 2020-22)**

**CONTENTS**

<b>PART</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>PAGES</b>
<b>A. Communication Basics</b>	• The Process of Communication	<b>2-5</b>
	• Some concepts in Communication	<b>5-7</b>
	• Types of Communication	<b>7-11</b>
	• Non-verbal Communication	<b>12-14</b>
	• Communication flow in Organizations	<b>14-21</b>
<b>B. Language Skill 1: Listening</b>	• What is Listening ? • Importance of Listening • Types of Listening	<b>22-28</b>
	• Barriers to Listening • Guidelines for improving the listening Skill	<b>28-32</b>
<b>C. Language Skill 2: Speaking</b>	• Characteristics of Effective Speech (Guidelines for improving the speaking skill)	<b>33-37</b>
	• Features of a good conversation • Effective conversation Management	<b>37-40</b>
	• Cellphone Etiquette • Effective video conferencing	<b>41-42</b>
<b>Short- answer Questions on Module-I</b>		<b>43-48</b>

## A. COMMUNICATION BASICS

### 1. THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

#### 1. COMMUNICATION - PROCESS AND ELEMENTS

The word 'Communication' is derived from the Latin term '**communis**' which means 'to share'. Thus, communication can be simply defined as "the sharing or exchange of information, ideas and feelings between two persons or groups through a common language or code of symbols."

The process of communication requires at least 5 elements:

1. Sender (Encoding)
2. Message
3. Medium or Channel
4. Receiver (Decoding)
5. Feedback

The communication process happens, through the following steps:

**Step 1:** The sender conceives an idea according to the purpose of communication.

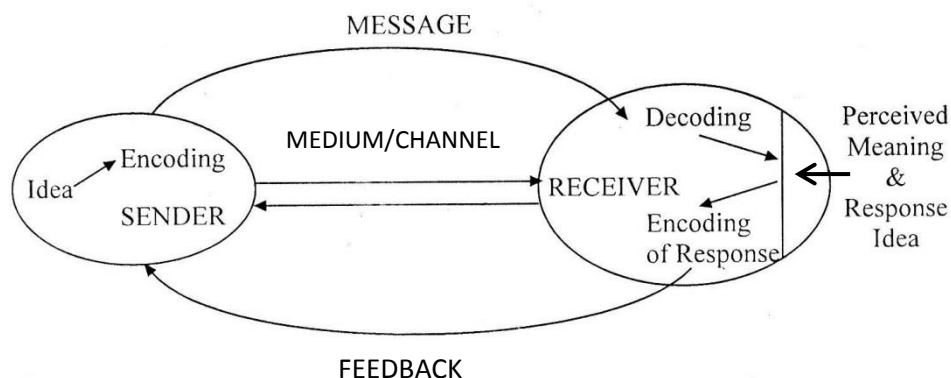
**Step 2:** The sender chooses a code (= a language) and puts the idea into the code (= encodes the idea) and thus formulates the message.

**Step 3:** The sender decides the appropriate medium or channel (oral, written or non-verbal) and sends the message through the chosen medium or channel.

**Step 4:** The receiver receives the message and understands it with the help of the knowledge of the common code (= language).

**Step 5:** The receiver sends the response and thus communicates to the sender that the message has been understood. This is known as feedback to the sender.

The process of communication represented in the diagram below:



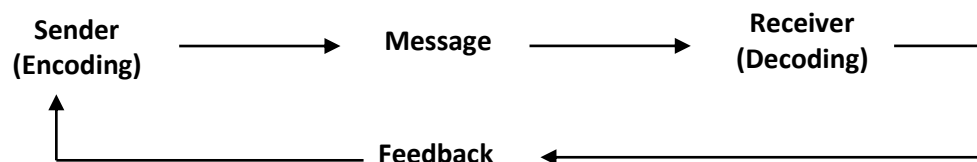
Thus, communication is a 5-step process in which (i) the sender has an idea and encodes this idea into a message, and (ii) the message is transmitted through speech, writing or body language. As the next step (iii) this message is received,

decoded and understood by the receiver. (iv) After understanding the message, (v) the receiver encodes a response, and Finally sends appropriate feedback to the sender. This completes one cycle of the process of communication. Usually communication continues between the original sender and the original receiver who takes turns and co-operate with each other throughout the process of communication.

## Advanced Version

The word ‘communication’ is derived from the Latin word ‘communicare’ which means ‘to share’. Thus, Communication can be defined as “the sharing or exchange of information, ideas and feelings between two persons or groups through a common language or code of symbol.”

### Process of Communication



The process of communication involves decisions and activities by the two persons involved, the sender and the receiver.

The **sender** begins the process of communication. The sender has to be clear about the **purpose** (or goal or object) of the communication and about the target audience (or receiver) of the communication; that is, the sender decides why and to whom to send a message. Conscious or intended communication has a purpose. We communicate because we want to make someone do something or think or feel in a certain way, that is, influence the person.

The sender has to decide what information to convey, and create the **message** (or content) to be conveyed by using words or other symbols which can be understood by the intended receiver. The process of putting the idea into symbols is called encoding; in order to **encode**, the sender has to select suitable symbols which can represent the ideas, and can be understood by the receiver.

The sender also chooses a suitable **channel or medium** (mail, telephone, face-to-face talk) by which to send the message. The choice of the medium depends on several factors such as urgency of the message, availability and effectiveness of a medium, and the relation between the two communications. The choice of the medium/channel also influences the shape of the message.

Finally, the sender tries to note the effect of the message on the receiver; he checks whether the receiver has got the message, how the receiver has responded to the message, and whether he has taken the required action; this information about the receiver's response is called **feedback**.

Sender's functions make up half the process of communication. The functions of the sender are:

1. Being clear about the purpose and goal of the communication
2. Finding out about the understanding and needs of the target audience.
3. Encoding the required information and ideas with symbols to create the message to suit the receiver/audience
4. Selecting the medium to send the message
5. Making efforts to get feedback

The **receiver** becomes aware that a message has arrived when he perceives it with his senses(he may see, hear,feel,etc. ). The receiver attends to the message and interprets it. The process of translating the symbols into ideas and interpreting the message is called **decoding**. Interpreting is a complex activity; it involves using knowledge of the symbols and drawing upon previous knowledge of the subject matter. The receiver's ability to understand, level of intelligence, values and attitude, and relation with the sender will influence his creation of meaning.

If the sender and the receiver have a common field of experience, the receiver's understanding of the message will be closer to what the sender intended.

The receiver also has a reaction to the message; this reaction may be conscious or unconscious.It may cause some change in the receiver's facial expression. The message definitely leads the receiver to think. The receiver may take some action, if required. He may also reply to the message. The reaction, the response and the reply together form the **feedback**.

The receiver's functions complete one cycle of the process of communication. The functions of the receiver are:

1. Attending to the received message, that is, listening, reading or observing
2. Decoding the received message
3. Interpreting and understanding the meaning of the message
4. Responding to the message
5. Giving feedback to the sender of the message

Thus, communication is a 5-step process in which (i) the sender has an idea and encodes this idea into a message, and (ii) the message is transmitted through speech, writing or body language. As the next step (iii) this message is received, decoded and understood by the receiver. (iv) After understanding the message, (v) the receiver encodes a response, and finally sends appropriate feedback to the sender. This completes one cycle of the process of communication. Usually communication continues between the original sender and the original receiver who takes turns and co-operate with each other throughout the process of communication.

## **2. Some Concepts in Communication**

- (i) **Channel:** Channel is the medium which carries information from the sender to the receiver.

In oral communication, information is carried from the sender to the receiver through sound waves which travel in air and can be heard (auditory channel). Oral communication can be either 'face-to-face' or through a phone.

In written communication, the Sender produces visible marks on paper or an electronic screen which the receiver reads, and thus receives the message through the eyes. Here communication takes place through the visual channel. Gestures also make use of the visual channel.

In some cases, the auditory and visual channels are used together, for example, when a person says 'No' and shakes his/ her head at the same time.

- (ii) **Code:** Code refers to a system of symbols used for the purpose of communicating messages. A symbol is an object which represents a certain meaning. For example, green, yellow and red lights are symbols in the code of traffic lights. Similarly, every language is a code, in which words are symbols representing certain meanings.

Encoding is the process of using a code to create messages. Decoding is just the reverse process; it refers to the process of recovering meaning from a message with the help of a code.

- (iii) **Feedback :** 'Feedback' means the reverse flow of information from the Receiver to the Sender, through which the Receiver indicates that

(s)he has received and understood the message. Without proper feedback the process of communication will break down.

- (iv) **Filters:** Each one of us sees the world through a mental filter based on our personal experience and view of the world. This mental filter also colors our communication. The sender sees the world through one set of filters, and the Receiver sees it through a different set. Each message thus passes through two sets of mental filters. Communication can also be influenced by cultural filters. An American, for example, sees the world differently from an Indian because of cultural filters. A filter can sometimes be so powerful that it blocks or prevents communication altogether. The filter then becomes a **barrier**.

Anything that hinders or obstructs communication is called **noise**. Filters and barriers, whether psychological, cultural or linguistic, constitute noise along with physical noise which obstructs communication.

- (v) **Information Overload:** Information overload describes a situation, where the Sender transmits so much new information to the Receiver that the Receiver has difficulty in getting the message. Very often, communication breaks down in such situations.

In order to avoid information overload, the Sender mixes new information with old information and breaks the information into small parts for quick reception of the message by the receiver. The sender should also seek feedback from the receiver during communication so that (s)he can go for self-correction if there is an information overload.

Information overload can also happen when several different messages are received by the receiver at the same time and (s)he is unable to cope with the information.

- (vi) **The information Gap Principle:** In the process of communication, a Sender transmits information to a Receiver. If the Receiver already knows what the Sender transmits, (s)he will not be interested in the communication. There must be an information gap in the Receiver, which the Sender fills, so that communication can be interesting from the Receiver's point of view, and effective communication can take place between the Sender and the Receiver. This is known as the Information Gap principle, which is an important basis of all effective communication.

Transmission of information is possible only if there is a gap between the information provided by the sender and the information that the Receiver already has. The Sender must therefore make an informed guess about whether the Receiver already has the information which (s)he is going to transmit. The Sender must ensure that every message communicates some 'new' information.

However, if the information is totally new and the Receiver does not have any background knowledge, to which (s) he can relate the new information, (s)he will not be able to understand the message. An effective message should, therefore, be a mixture of 'old' and 'new' information.

### **3. Types of communication**

#### **A. VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Communication by using language is called verbal communication. It can be either oral or written. Communication through the use of signs and symbols in non-verbal communication. Verbal communication can be in the oral or the written form.

#### **(a) Oral communication**

Oral communication involves exchange of messages with the help of spoken words. It is most frequently used. It may take place through

- Face to face communication
- Mechanical and electronic device

#### **Advantages of oral communication**

- (i) It provides immediate feedback and clarifications. Receiver can Immediately ask questions.
- (ii) It builds up a healthy environment by giving a personal touch to the relationship between superior and subordinate.
- (iii) It can be made more effective with supporting gestures and demonstrations.
- (iv) It is time saving and cuts down paperwork.
- (v) It is the most effective tool of persuasion and for resolving conflicts.
- (vi) It is effective for group interaction.
- (vii) It is economical both in terms of money and time.
- (viii) It is flexible as it provides ample scope to the sender to make himself clear and make amendments unlike written message which cannot be changed.

#### **Disadvantages of Oral Communication**

- I. It does not always save time and money. Very often meetings go on without results.
- II. It is not always effective since it depends a lot on attitude of sender and receiver.
- III. Limited human memory allows only limited retention of the messages. No records can be maintained.
- IV. In the absence of recorded or taped messages, oral messages do not have legal validity.

- V. Oral communication is not possible when parties who intend to communicate are at distant places and no means of communication is available.
- VI. It is not feasible when the message to be conveyed is very lengthy.

## **(b) Written Communication**

Written communication is transmitted by written words in the form of letters, memos, circulars, bulletins reports, instruction cards, pamphlets, newsletters, handbook etc. It offers several advantages. It is suitable for lengthy messages which are not possible to convey through oral message. It is less likely to get distorted because it is difficult to alter the contents of written matter. The receiver too gets sufficient time to analyse and evaluate the message.

Therefore the response is well thought and records can be easily maintained. It is possible to communicate figures, diagrams etc. better through written communication. It also has certain disadvantages as it is often difficult to make amends once the written message has been dispatched. The efficacy of the message too is largely dependent on the language drafting skills of the sender. It also takes longer than oral communication to convey the message and seek clarifications. It cannot be emphasized upon by the use of non-verbal messages which makes it less rich in terms of the cues present.

## **B. NON- VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Speech is not the sole means of communication. People communicate even when they choose not to speak. When a person listens to someone speaking he does not merely interpret the words that are spoken to understand the message. He also looks at the person who is speaking and derives meaning from his gestures, the way the words are being said, appearance of the speaker etc. to understand the message in totality. Thus the receiver processes both verbal and non-verbal cues while receiving the message. Communication not involving the spoken word is referred to as non- verbal communication.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

1. Non-verbal communication is less prone to manipulation as it exists at a more subconscious level. Individuals are more often than not, unaware of how they communicate non-verbally.
2. It is more factual/true as compared to verbal communication. Since it is less prone to manipulation, it represents a truer picture of the individual.
3. Non-verbal communication also tends to be less consistent with respect to interpretation. For example the likelihood of a gesture being misinterpreted is very large as different individuals would interpret the same gesture differently.



4. Many non-verbal cues need to be considered perhaps together at times to arrive at an appropriate interpretation. Non-verbal communication may complement or contradict verbal communication.

## **FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION:**

Communication is categorized as formal or informal according to the situation in which it takes place. In an organization, formal communication is a means of controlling activities through circulation of authoritative policies and procedures stating what is to be done when, where, how and by whom. Formal communication moves along the established “channels” of communication within the organization. It is impersonal (desk to desk) official, and in most cases, written. Formal meetings are documented by writing summaries and minutes.

Informal communication is personal, unofficial and mostly oral. It is based on the realization that personal interaction among employees is healthy for an organization. The purposes of informal communication are to educate through information sharing, to motivate through personal contacts and to resolve conflicts through participation and friendship. It maintains enthusiasm, loyalty and commitment by involving employees in organizational matters.

In formal communication we use the formal style of English, and the informal style is used in informal communication.

Formal English is used in ‘serious’ texts such as official documents, books, news reports, articles, business letters or official speeches. Informal English is used in everyday conversations and personal letters. Example : “*As the price of five dollars was reasonable, I decided to make the purchase without further thought*”. (Formal)

“*It was just five bucks, so I said, ‘Okay’*”. (Informal)

The following are the major differences between Formal English and Informal English:

<b>Formal English</b>	<b>Informal English</b>
1. Used in official, literary or academic writings	1. Used in everyday personal conversations
2. Sentences are longer and more complicated : “Toyotas’ sales bounced back in March as substantial discounts helped to win back customers who had been shaken by the firm’s mass safety recalls”.	2. Sentences are simpler and shorter : “Did you see Toyota’s sales figures ? Looks like discounts have really worked”.

3. The standard of correction is higher. * She's liking it. → (She likes it.) * I feel real good. → (I feel really good).	3. The sentences below are considered correct in informal English : She's liking it. I feel real good.
4. No contractions and few phrasal verbs are used in Formal English.	4. Informal English a) Uses contracted forms : I've seen him. I haven't been there. b) Uses <i>who</i> for formal <i>whom</i> : Whom do you want to meet? (Formal) Who do you want to see ?(Informal) c) Uses a lot of phrasal verbs <u>Looked into</u> for <u>investigated</u> .
5. <i>Precise vocabulary is used in formal English:</i>  Fewer mistakes ..... no significant differences Sufficient Demonstrates Dull, depressing Excellent Surely, certainly	5. Precision is not demanded in informal language. I have made less mistakes No big differences Enough It shows that Lousy Cool Sure, I want to leave the house
6. No slang expressions are allowed in formal English. : Chuck : Throw Hang on : Wait A drag : Bore	6. The frequent use of slangs makes informal English vivid and colourful.

## **GENERAL COMMUNICATION AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

Compared to communication that happens generally in the large environment in society business communication is restricted to communication that takes place among business entities, in markets and market places, within organizations and between various groups of employees, buyers and sellers, service providers and customers, and also between people working in organizations and the media people.

Business Communication refers to "all day-to-day exchange of information and ideas among the employees within a business organization, and by the employees with outside stakeholders and entities, in the course of doing business."

## General Communication & Business Communication

GC	BC
1. Broad Scope	1. Restricted scope-hence a subset of GC.
2. Not focused on Purpose and Persuasion	2. More purposeful and persuasive
3. Use of formal or informal language according to situation	3. Generally formal language
4. Less need for structuring	4. Logically organized - strictly follows an appropriate format such as a memo, a letter, an

## **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

These terms are used to describe the communication in an organization. It includes written, oral and non-verbal communication. Messages that move within the organization, among its members, are internal communication; messages that go out of the organization and are received from outside are called external communication.

Internal communication moves along the lines of authority, upward and downward, and also along horizontal lines among persons of the same status. Organizations have internal media for communication within the organization. Informal communication in the organization is called grapevine and moves mostly horizontally. The style and quantity of internal communication affect the atmosphere in the organization and can have impact on the business because employees who are comfortable and happy work better. Changes can be brought about in the organization's functioning by modifying the style of internal communication.

The style and tone of outgoing external communication affects the organization's public image. An organization needs a carefully considered policy with regard to its communication with the public. The messages which come from outside have to be properly documented passed to the concerned person for action and filed for future reference.

## **4. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION:**

Verbal communication refers to the communication which occurs with the help of words. On the other hand, non-verbal communication is communication without the use of words. It is the transmission of messages by some medium other than speech or writing. Thus, Non-verbal communication refers to the transfer of meaning by body language, sign language, space, time, and paralinguistic features of speech.

### **Aspects of Non-Verbal Communication**

**I. KINESICS:** Body language or Kinesics refers to the movement of a part of the body, or movement of the whole body. Our body movement includes our head, eyes, shoulders, lips, eyebrows, neck, legs, arms, fingers, hands, posture, and gestures. Together these pieces can convey if we are comfortable, unhappy, friendly, anxious or nervous.

**(i) Facial Expression:** Face is the primary site for expressing emotions. It reveals both the type and the intensity of feelings. Facial expressions are usually a reliable indicator of the speaker's inner feelings. A wide range of meanings can be communicated by facial expressions. These are happiness, sorrow, fear, anger, surprise, disgust, interest, confusion and determination.

**(ii) Eye-contact:** Eyes are especially effective for indicating attention and interest, influencing others, regulating interaction, and establishing dominance. Eye contact has a cultural dimension. For example, in the USA, lack of direct eye contact connotes distrust or dishonesty and that the speaker is hiding information, whereas in many Asian countries eye contact is a sign of disrespect.

**(iii) Posture:** The body position of a person conveys a variety of messages. The posture of straightback expresses confidence and readiness to face challenges. Closed Postures, with features such as folded arms and crossed legs, indicate a closed personality and lack of confidence. A leaning posture towards the speaker conveys the listener's interest and attention, while leaning back away from the speaker means that the listener is disinterested and bored. Legs also communicate non-verbal messages. A person shifting from one leg to another while standing expresses nervousness. One needs to keep the legs still in interviews and meetings. One should never cross legs in formal settings.

**(iv) Gesture:** Gestures refer to movement of arms, hands and fingers. Many gestures have a specific and intentional meaning, for example, a wave of the hand means hello or good-bye. Most of us, when talking with our friends, use our hands to describe an event or an object. Ideally, a person's gestures should flow with the vocal channel so as to enhance the effect of verbal communication.

Arms give away clues as to how open and receptive a person is in an interaction. Keeping arms out on the side of the body or behind the back shows that the person is not scared to take on whatever comes his way and that he meets things "full frontal". In general terms, the more outgoing you are, the more you use your arms with big movements. When you want to be seen in the best possible light, you should avoid crossing the arms.

Palms slightly up and outward are seen as a mark of an open and friendly person. On the other hand, palm down gestures are generally interpreted as indicative of a dominant and aggressive person.

Conscious gestures made with fingers are known as emblems. Examples of emblems are the thumb-and-index-finger gesture that signals 'Okay', or the thumbs-up gesture expressing 'You win'.

## **II. HAPTICS:**

Haptics or communication by touch is an important form of non-verbal communication. Although used most frequently during greetings and departures, touching may occur in a variety of circumstances, including a conversation. Touching comes in the form of pats, hugs and handshakes.

Touch is an important way to convey warmth, comfort and reassurance.

It is now well accepted that people greet each other and introduce themselves to one another with a handshake. A firm handshake with upright and vertical hands is the desirable kind, as it shows confidence and keenness. On the other hand, a limp handshake suggests inferiority feelings, and a 'bone-crusher' handshake suggests aggressiveness and a desire to dominate.

**III. PROXEMICS:** A fascinating area in non-verbal communication is that of proxemics or space relationship. Indians, Russians, Italians and Middle East people maintain smaller distances while making interpersonal communication. In contrast, Americans, Englishmen and Germans tend to maintain bigger interpersonal distances.

Edward Hall defines four primary distance zones by American standards:

- (i) Intimate zone (up to 18 inches)
- (ii) Personal zone (18 inches to 4 feet)
- (iii) Social zone (4 feet to 12 feet)
- (iv) Public zone (more than 12 feet)

Intimate distance is considered appropriate for familiar relationships, and it indicates closeness and trust. Personal distance of 4 feet is the most comfortable distance during business interactions and social functions. The Social zone is used during interactions with strangers and occasional visitors. Public zone is used in situations such as a public speech where two-way communication is not desirable or possible.

**IV. CHRONEMICS:** Chronemics refers to the use of time as a message system, including punctuality, amount of time spent on a job, and waiting time. Coming in time to office reveals your interest, sincerity and serious attitude towards work. Similarly, being scrupulous about our use of time on the job creates a positive impression about us with our superiors and colleagues.

**V. PARALANGUAGE:** Language deals with what is said; paralinguage deals with how it is said. Just as we can communicate various attitudes through our gestures and postures, we can express emotions and feelings with the help of different aspects of speech such as voice, tone, inflection, pitch, volume and tempo.

When we receive a call and hear 'Hello', we are able to make out the gender as well as the socio-linguistic and educational background of the caller. We can also identify whether it is a known voice or an unfamiliar voice. None of these meanings are contained in the word 'Hello'. These are all derived from paralinguistic features of the voice.

**Tone:** Tone is used to convey an attitude. It can be direct, commanding, harsh, soft, gentle, comforting, etc.

**Inflection:** Voice inflection is the way we change the tone of our voice to emphasize key words. The variation is caused by stressing or stretching a word or phrase and by pausing before a word or phrase.

*Stressing:* I've got a BIG project.

*Stretching:* I've got a b – i – g project.

*Pausing:* I've got ..... a big project.

**Pitch:** Pitch refers to the rise and fall in tone. Pitch variation allows an oral message to acquire dynamism. It helps to remove the monotony of speech and also make the articulation persuasive. People in higher positions in an organization use high-pitched voice as compared to their subordinates. A high pitch characterizes a person who is emotionally charged, for example, when he is angry.

**Volume:** Maintaining an adequate volume of the voice is crucial for creating the right kind of impact on an audience. The speaker who speaks at a low volume is likely to be seen as someone lacking confidence and conviction. On the other hand, a speaker whose volume is too high may be seen as arrogant or boorish.

**Tempo:** Tempo refers to the rate of speaking – the number of words we utter per minute. Speaking too fast shows the speaker's lack of confidence. If the pace of speaking is too slow, the audience loses interest and feels bored. A speaker should, therefore, use a pace that is fast enough to keep the audience interested and to show the speaker's confident knowledge of the subject.

#### **VI. PERSONAL APPEARANCE:**

Although an individual's body type and facial features impose limitations, most people are able to control their attractiveness to some degree. Grooming, clothing, accessories, 'style'-all modify a person's appearance. If our goal is to make a good impression, we should adopt the style of the people we want to impress.

It may be noted in conclusion here that some non-verbal cues or expressions are culture-specific, whereas there are a few universal non-verbal cues. For example, direct eye contact in Asian cultures is regarded as disrespectful, whereas it is taken as a sign of confidence in western cultures. However, pointing a finger at someone is taken as an insulting gesture in almost all cultures.

### **5. COMMUNICATION NETWORK IN AN ORGANIZATION:**

*“Whether an organization is small or large, it is communication that binds the organization together.” Discuss in detail the flow of communication in an organization in the light of the above statement.*

**OR**

*“A free flow of information ensures the success of an organization.” Elaborate this statement in the light of the flow of communication in an organization.*

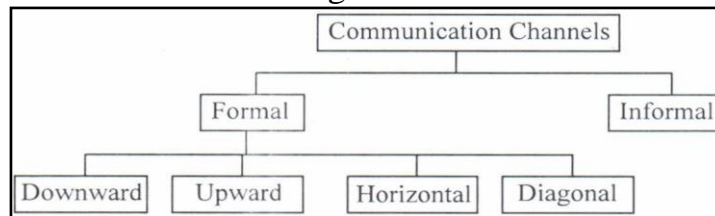
Communication is the life-blood of an organization. As life will come to an end without blood circulation in the human body, similarly an organization will become defunct without circulation of information and ideas among its managers and employees. Thus, an efficient communication network is vital for successful functioning of an organization. Such a

communication network consists of various channels of communication in the organization.

**Channel** refers to the direction of transmission of messages within an organization. First of all, there are formal and informal channels of communication. **Formal Communication Channels** are those channels which are designed by the management to channelize the flow of communication along the formal structure of the organization. Such communication flow is created along official positions to ensure regular, smooth, orderly, accurate and timely flow of information.

**Informal Communication** in an organization takes place outside the official channels. It is spontaneous and unofficial. It has no set directions. The informal communication channels in an organization is also called the grapevine, as they extend in various directions like a grapevine.

The communication channels in an organization can be classified as follows:



### Formal Communication

Formal channels are structured and predictable. In the rational organisation formal channels are orderly and there are chains of command. Policy information flows downward to inform and transactional information flows upward to inform management of progress. The advantages and disadvantages of formal communication are broadly as under:

#### Advantages

- Seeks to achieve goals using the most efficient means of communication.
- Responsibility at each level of hierarchy is fixed.
- Ensures direct contact between the sender and the receiver of the message.
- Better relations are established.
- Solutions to problems are easily found.
- System is more effective as a rational mechanism for improving organisational performance.

#### Disadvantages

- Managers are more concerned with rules, directives, jurisdiction and the like which tend to increase the workload.
- As in bureaucracy, long line of superiors causes delay and consequent frustration.
- No premium is placed on simplifying decisions and ensuring human relationship factors.
- Cares only for limited, organizationally relevant behaviour rather than on the larger social, cultural and technological context of the surrounding environment.

**Formal channels consist of the following four categories according to the direction of the flow of communication.**

(i) **Downward Communication:** Downward communication refers to the flow of information from the superiors to subordinates in an organization. A communication from the

general manager of a company to the branch managers is an example of downward communication. Downward communication is essential for the efficient functioning of an organization.

The first problem associated with downward communication is that information is quite often lost or distorted in its journey down the chain of command. It is time consuming; the more the levels, the more chances of delay or dilution of information.

(ii) **Upward Communication:** Upward communication is the flow of information in an organization from lower levels to higher levels. As an example, when a Marketing Manager submits a report of a market survey to the Vice President (Marketing), (s)he is using the upward channel to communicate. The main purpose of upward communication is to provide feedback and suggestions on different areas of organizational functioning.

The upward flow of communication often creates a psychological problem. Generally the higher-ups do not like to be 'told' by their subordinates or to take their suggestions. As a result, the employees may feel let down and reluctant to participate in upward communication.

(iii) **Horizontal Communication:** In horizontal communication, messages flow among members of the same work group or among managers at the same level belonging to different departments or divisions. The communication between the Marketing Manager and the Production Manager is an example of horizontal communication. The purpose of horizontal communication is to facilitate co-ordination and harmony among work groups or departments in an organization.

Horizontal communication takes place mostly during committee meetings or conferences where peers interact with one another and take decisions or prepare inter-departmental reports. This channel of communication is necessary for inter-departmental conflict resolution and co-ordination.

(iv) **Diagonal Communication:** Diagonal communication takes place when employees in an organization communicate with one another beyond hierarchical status and established reporting relationships. The Production Manager (higher level) communicating with salesmen(bottom-level employees) of the marketing department to get their suggestions is an example of diagonal communication. Diagonal communication is the result of the growing realization of fraternity and common concerns in the corporate sector. It promotes trust and co- operation among managers and employees and expedites work.

On the downside, however, diagonal communication can encourage indiscipline and power-play among employees. It can also create coteries or favoured groups around a power – loving manager to the detriment of the organization.



### **Informal Communication:**

Informal communication networks are vital in any hierarchical structure. Obviously,, a formal structure is quite rigid and indicates who is responsible for what and who communicates formally to whom. The informal structure is not exactly structured or documented in any organization, but it grows from the self-groupings that people naturally form. All human beings are social animals. Whenever they come in contact with each other there will be incidental exchange of feelings and information. Such personal communication is a part of the work environment and is integral to the working lives of men and women. Such informal communication channels in an organization are called 'the grapevine' because they extend in all directions like a grapevine.

#### ***Advantages***

- Speed of communication is faster than formal means.
- It is multi-dimensional.
- Recipients of the message react more quickly.
- It can supplement the existing formal channels of communication.

#### ***Disadvantages***

- There can be half-truths and misinformation.
- Moves in an erratic manner without firm direction.
- No responsibility is fixed for anyone either as senders or receivers.
- Message changes according to motive of persons involved in the process.
- Difficult to exercise any check in the free flow of messages.

Significantly the informal system of communication can be as important as the formal process in fulfilling the goals of the organisation. In fact, informal channels, spring up by virtue of communication interests between people in organisations, caused by work, social or outside relationships. Not surprisingly, the late Mr. Dhirubhai Ambani (founder of one of India's largest business and industrial conglomerate, Reliance Industries Ltd.) had made a startling comment about the usefulness of the informal channel. He said, "If I plant a rumour I'll get a reaction within a day. If I send a formal memo, it takes three weeks to get a response, that too after a few reminders."

When information is introduced into the grapevine, it tends to travel quickly because it is not restricted by any structural constraint. Managers who stay in touch with the informal networks can use them strategically to expedite decision making in the right perspective. Prof. Keith Davis who made extensive research on organisational grapevine pointed out, "if properly guided, it (the grapevine) can build teamwork, company loyalty, and the kind of motivation that makes people want to do their best."

### **The Grapevine:**

**What do you mean by the grapevine in an organization? Discuss its usefulness.**

Informal communication networks are known as the grapevine of an organization. They are vital in any hierarchical structure. Obviously, a formal structure is quite rigid and indicates who is responsible for what and who communicates formally to whom. The informal structure is not exactly structured or documented in any organization, but it grows from the self-groupings and interactions that people naturally form. For example, information communication happens around water coolers, in lunch rooms or company canteens, and wherever employees get together.

Within such informal structure, however, a lot of communication occurs but it is

mostly unplanned, oral interactions in organisations. Many such communications, operational or non-operational, are of personal nature. All human beings are social animals. Whenever they come in contact with each other there will be incidental exchange of feelings and information. Such personal communication is a part of the work situation and is integral with the working lives of men and women. Now, the problem comes as to what extent such personal communication should be permissible at workstations.

Significantly the informal system of communication can be as important as the formal process in fulfilling the goals of the organisation. In fact, informal channels, spring up by virtue of communication interests between people in organisations, caused by work, social or outside relationships. Not surprisingly, the late Mr. Dhirubhai Ambani (founder of one of India's largest business and industrial conglomerate, Reliance Industries Ltd.) had made a startling comment about the usefulness of the informal channel. He said, "If I plant a rumour I'll get a reaction within a day. If I send a formal memo, it takes three weeks to get a response, that too after a few reminders."



The advantages of 'the grapevine' are :

- i) Speedy transmission of information
- ii) Quick and genuine feedback value
- iii) Employees' psychological satisfaction
- iv) Generation of new ideas.

### Disadvantages

- There can be half-truths and misinformation.
- Moves in an erratic manner without firm direction.
- No responsibility is fixed for anyone either as senders or receivers.
- Message changes according to motive of persons involved in the process.
- Difficult to exercise any check in the free flow of messages.

When information is introduced into the grapevine, it tends to travel quickly because it is not restricted by any structural constraint. Managers who stay in touch with the informal networks can use them strategically to expedite decision making in the right perspective. Prof. Keith Davis who made extensive research on organisational grapevine pointed out, "if properly guided, it (the grapevine) can build teamwork, company loyalty, and the kind of motivation that makes people want to do their best."

According to Keith Davis, the grapevine transmits information through four kinds of chains:

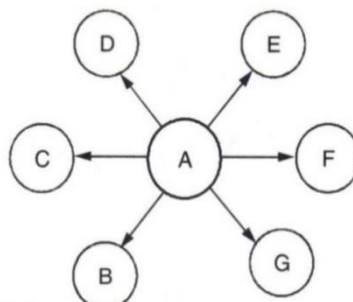
- i) Single strand
- ii) Gossip
- iii) Probability
- iv) Cluster (most popular).

1. *Single strand (one-to-one)*: It is essentially a single strand network. The individual communicates with other individual, that is, one tells another on a selective basis.

A → B → C → D → E

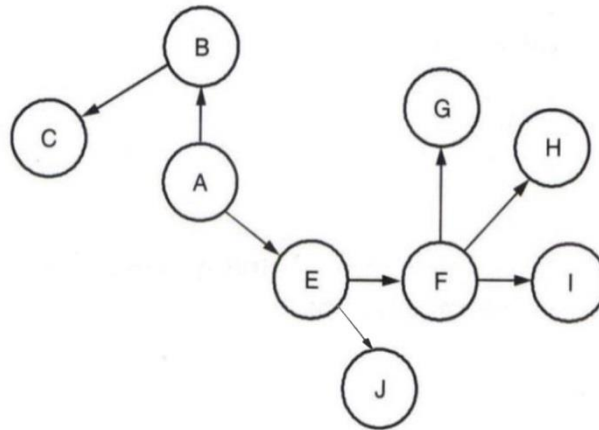
In the process, A tells B, who tells C, who tells D and so on. Many times, it is like one tells one and one tells everyone.

2. *Gossip (one to many)*: A actively seeks and tells everyone

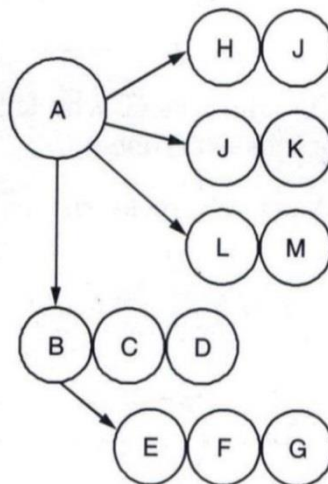


This is like a wheel in which A is at the centre. A passes the information along the spokes of the wheel to others stationed on the rim. Finally, it is a group of people sharing the same information with possibilities of distortion according to motive.

3. **Probability (one to many):** Also known as a **random chain**, here A tells others according to laws of probability. These others tell still others in a similar manner.



4. **Cluster (one to few, few to few):** This is the most popular form of grapevine communication. A tells selected persons who may in turn relay the information to other selected individuals. But group entity is highly noticeable in the cluster process.



In the larger perspective, grapevine is often described as the barometer of public opinion. Therefore, in the organizational framework howsoever well-structured or disciplined it is- the importance of grapevine is a well-recognized truth. Its advantages outweigh its demerits:

- Grapevine acts as a safety valve in time of stress and threat, and provides emotional relief to all those who are a part of the grapevine.
- It can raise the morale in times of difficulties at the personal or group levels.
- Functions in addition to official channels of communication with the distinct advantage of greater speed of transmission.
- Provides much needed feedback to the management when many other channels have dried up.
- If properly used and efficiently handled, the management of an organisation can turn it into a constructive tool.

### **Effective Use of the Grapevine**

Management can use it as a constructive tool in the following ways :

1. Keep the employees well-informed about policy matters and future plans and prospects to check speculation.
2. Organize group activities to enhance knowledge, skills and self-worth.
3. Follow open-door policy without an eye on popularity.
4. Identify leaders and win their confidence.
5. Associate them with the decision-making process.
6. Plant desirable stories in the interest of the organization

How far is it desirable or possible to put a break or control rumours within an organisation? No organisation can ever stop the grapevine fully, and so managers should concentrate on stopping only those rumours which become malicious or destructive. To cut rumours short, disseminate the information that people need or want without delay. Provide full facts clearly and accurately. Additionally, official communication channels must be kept open. Encourage more direct interaction.

Managers must attempt to identify actions or situations which might lead to grapevine. Then, management should hold organised group activities at which key opinion moulders, influential employees and management officials meet to discuss and combat the identified causes and disseminators of the rumours. As counter measures, managers should feed the grapevine with actual information and seek to get the facts through the informal channels of communication.

## **B. LANGUAGE SKILL – I: LISTENING**

Effective listening is the process of analyzing sounds, organizing them into recognizable patterns, interpreting the patterns and understanding the message by inferring the meaning. Listening is not to be confused with hearing. Hearing is a physiological process which involves receiving the sound waves by the eardrum and transferring them to the brain. Listening is more than hearing. It involves the process of interpretation and inference. Listening is extremely important in the communication process. Many of the problems we experience with people are primarily attributable to ineffective listening or lack of listening. Good listening skills are the foundation of effective human relations. Good listeners can be good negotiators and can handle crisis situations successfully.

### **1. Advantages of Listening**

Generally, in organizations, the communication channels defy the hierarchal levels. Under any circumstances, listening has the following benefits:

- Brings relevant information
- Provides a great way to share knowledge and experiences
- Resolves the challenges or issues faced on the personal or the official front.

In many organizations, decisions are often taken on the basis of feedback from the employees secured in direct interaction with them. Interaction with the customers also helps a company take vital decisions. However, many organizations do not take the opinions of customers and employees very seriously. This is a wrong practice.

Consider an example. A company might take a policy decision on, say, the minimum number of hours that employees should put in at work, without consulting the employees. This lack of consultation might turn out to be a cause of concern as the employees might assume that the company 'mistrusts' them. Listening helps to break the barrier between people and prevent revenue loss and time loss, and thereby strengthens the organization.

Corporations exist because of their customers and employees. Employees are the medium through which corporations listen to their customers. If the job of listening is not done well, then the corporation is bound to suffer in the long run. Similarly, since the customers are being served by the employees, it is essential that corporations listen to their employees. Corporations here refer to the top management at the helm of affairs.

All the three stakeholders are interconnected and all of them need to listen to one another. Listening, here, is a three-way process, where corporations listen to customers and employees, and the employees listen to the company's customers. Understanding this fact is important for the company to make progress.

Proper listening amongst corporations, employees, and customers has many advantages. From an organization perspective, listening helps in the following ways:

- *Makes decisions better and faster:* When organizations listen, they are able to understand the process bottlenecks in the organizations and the problems, if any. In addition, if there are any issues that are causing problems to the employees or customers, corrective actions can be taken immediately.
- *Improves policy-making for the employees:* Often policy decisions are taken keeping the employees in mind and to give a sense of direction or structure to the organization. Policies can either be extremely helpful – for example, for giving the employees a clear sense of direction – or can be a hurdle that does not serve the general interest of the company. Before making any kinds of policy decisions, it is important to listen to the employees and grasp the issues. If a policy is planned, it should be open for discussions, and the important issues raised by employees should be addressed.
- *Eases the flow of communication, which makes the organization, with makes the organization more open:* Communication is a two-way process. Just as instructions are passed from top to bottom, information moves from bottom to top. Moreover, the employees are the face of the organization and they need to be heard. If the senior management and managers listen to their subordinates, this accommodative spirit creates channels of communication, which ultimately make for open organizations.
- *Improves productivity and nurtures creativity at work:* On the shop floor, many interesting insights can be provided by the technician or foreman at work. Similarly, organizations that employ knowledge workers may find that they have several innovative ideas to offer. A classic example of this is the 3M\* Post-it\* notes. This product was developed in 3M's lab by an employee. In many companies, employees are asked to give suggestions and these ideas are worked upon. Employees are also encouraged to think out-of-box and improve processes, which, in turn, means time savings and, therefore, cost savings.

Listening also helps employees feel more confident and improves bonding. It helps resolve grey areas that might be troubling the employees. Listening helps understand the customers better.

The success of management concepts are based on the managers' ability to listen. Quality, production, human resources, and marketing are among departments that cannot function without listening. If the process have to be improved, it is essential to listen to the workers. They are, ultimately, the think tanks of any organization.

Listening cannot be a one-way process. As heads of organizations, and also as managers, we must never stop listening to our subordinates. If we do, and keep ourselves away from them, any kind of task that requires teamwork is bound to fail. This communication gap happens in very large organizations, when the span of

control increases and a person has to manage more than 50 or 100 people. The most popular managers are the ones who regularly interact with and listen to their subordinates.

From an employee prospective, proper listening has the following benefits:

- *Helps understand the work better:* Employees are able to do their work more efficiently when they listen to the manager, while the latter is assigning tasks to them. The employees can immediately clarify their doubts.
- *Improves efficiency:* Better listening means better efficiency at work, as it helps understand the task at hand better, Proper execution of work can be ensured.
- *Helps understand the customer expectations better:* Employees who listen to their customers will be able to understand them better and provide solutions that are appropriate.
- *Facilitates bonding with the team members:* Listening to your team members helps them to develop better relationships with you as a person. You will be looked at differently from the rest of the team members who do not listen. Listening helps you become popular amongst your team members.

It is, therefore, clear that listening forms an essential part of the work dynamics. The more interaction you have as a leader or manager, the better would be the work environment, because listening will help the leaders or managers of the organization to feel the pulse of the organization and take corrective actions wherever necessary.

## **2. TYPES OF LISTENING:**

As a listener, the first step that we should take is to understand the different types of listening. This understanding will help mould us as listeners and make us aware which type of listening we should adopt in each particular instance.

Listening could take three forms. There would be situations when we have to listen to get information. Another situation could be that of a person approaching us to discuss a certain situation or experience. The third type would be a situation when you are listening to a product demonstration from a sales, agent, and you need to take a purchase decision that would be crucial to your business. All the three types of listening and the approaches to them are different. As listeners, we often do not realize these differences and are not 'conscious' about the type of listening that we need to adopt.

### **Content Listening:**

Content listening is primarily to receive information, to learn something, or to keep yourself abreast of a situation. Other examples of content listening would be listening to the technical specifications of a product during a product launch in a company or



listening to the highlights of your company's performance during the CFO's live talk on the intranet. While content listening is about getting information, it would not be good on the listener's part to challenge the speakers, as this may often become counterproductive. The focus in this type of listening should be on gathering information, rather than making any judgment. There is scope for arguments and debates in critical listening (to be discussed later).

It is extremely essential to take notes of what is being said. In case any clarifications are required or if the speaker has used a jargon that you do not understand, it is important to ask questions and get the doubts sorted out.

The *three key strategies* to be followed in content listening are as follows:

- Instead of arguing with the speaker, try and focus on what is being said.
- Do not think critically about what is being said.
- Try and listen so as to get the message intended.

The *first step* while listening to content is to get the bias about the speaker out, even before he or she starts speaking. As a listener, you would always be interested to know whether the speaker is credible and whether he or she has the experience to speak. This information can be secured by trying to find out more about the speaker. Generally, the credibility of a speaker is understood by this person's CV or the rank he or she holds in an organization.

The second step in the process is to effectively listen and focus on the content. Before discussing a significant point, the speaker will tell the audience that this part is important' or he or she will repeat the point to indicate its importance. At this time, the listeners need to pay extra attention.

The *third important* step is to take notes, which will help you to recapitulate the information given. In addition, the notes will provide a summary of the content that you have just heard. They will also serve as a strong reference when you need to look back upon what was said.

An additional point in content listening is to interact with the speaker. Interaction means trying to ask questions and clearing any factual doubts. Since content listening is purely based on 'content', there is very little to argue about, assuming that the speaker has the authority and experience to speak on the given subject and that he touches upon only the relevant facts or information. It is better to ask questions if you have any 'specific' doubts. For example, if the sales head in a meeting mentions that the retention percentage for new clients is 30 in Mumbai, a particular doubt that could arise in the listener's mind about the retention percentages in other cities or what could be the reason for such a low retention percentage in Mumbai. Unnecessary critiquing should be avoided as this will make your listening process counterproductive.

## **Empathic Listening:**

The goal of this type of listening is to understand and realize the feelings of the speaker. It is about listening, without any prejudices. Empathic listening may not indicate whether you approve the idea of the speaker, but the purpose is to give a very patient hearing to what is being said. In the previous type of listening, you focused on the content of the speech. However, here you are trying to help the speaker. Empathic listening involves understanding what kind of mental state the 'speaker' is in at the time of the conversation and responding accordingly. In such a situation, it is very important to maintain confidentiality and not disclose any part of the conversation to any other colleague. In a professional sphere, a person may require empathic listening when this person is not happy with the work that he or she is doing, or when this person has been overloaded with work. In addition, there could be personal issues when a person is not able to give 100 per cent at work and needs someone to listen to him or her. The problem need not always be work related, but could also be personal issues or a poor performance appraisal that is affecting this person's performance. It could even be other issues, such as colleagues spreading rumours.

It is extremely important in empathic listening to be sensitive to the emotional trauma that the speaker is going through. Try and approach the speaker with a positive frame of mind, making sure that you do not add to his or her worries. In addition, make sure not to give suggestions until this person asked for them. Empathize with the person and, if possible, help him or her out. The first important step is to make the speaker comfortable by suggesting that it is all right to share his or her worries and apprehensions. Then, listen to the speaker and try and understand the problem. Clarify, if you have any doubts and try to summarize. The next step is to try and solve the problem.

## **Critical/Evaluative Listening**

One has to analyze the situation and the speaker. When an external consultant or a motivational trainer is invited to give some advice, you have to critically analyze the content in order to make best use of it. In many such situations, the logical aspects, evidences, implications, and the intention of the speaker have to be focused upon. For example, when a salesperson gives a demonstration of a product and talks about only the benefits of this product, while at the same time undermining competitors, the listener has to move into the evaluative mode. The listener has to be on the watch for any kind of bias that might come up, for inadequate information, and for the factual correctness of all that is being said. Many speakers try and connect to the emotional side of the listeners and often get away with it. Typically, a salesperson might deliver positive feelings about the product he or she is selling, and try to associate negative feelings with what the competitor has to offer. The listener

should be very cautious of what is being said. In cases of any doubts, clarifications should be sought.

Often, speakers make generalizations, saying, for example, 'All the products that are currently available in the market are of poor quality'. A listener should take such statements with a pinch of salt and ask questions to clarify facts- for example, questions such as 'how do you say that the other products are not good?' or have you done any study that does a critical comparison of the products ?

Whatever is the case, it is finally the listener who decides what needs to be accepted and what needs to be rejected outright. Do not take decisions on the basis of immediate feelings, but rather take your time to come to conclusions. This advice would be applicable in cases when you need to make strategic decisions that are going to cost your company.

Sometimes, when you are listening in the evaluative mode, you may not have the freedom to ask questions or can probably ask only limited questions. In those cases, try and note down points and validate them later to take a decision. For example, imagine that your company hires an influential consultant, who has been working with your company for quite some time now. The consultant has been referred by a senior manager to help your department out, but you do not find the consultant's work convincing enough. In such a situation, you cannot ask too many questions as the consultant is associated with the top brass of the company.

It's however, always very important for listeners to engage the speakers in a mode of active listening.

### **Active listening:**

Active listening means 'actively engaging self and the speaker. Whatever bias a person listening might hold, the listener should hear and understand what the speaker has to say.

- To avoid environmental barriers, adjust the environment to suit the listeners. Avoid scheduling dry subjects or sessions in the afternoon.
- Set down the audience's expectations from the speaker.
- Keep the speaker informed about the audience he or she is going to address, and the level (of the listeners) at which this person needs to speak.

*What should the sender of a message do to ensure that the receivers are listening?*  
The sender has two alternatives:

- Make positive statements and avoid negative ones. For example, if you have to say 'you have done a poor job; you could say there is tremendous scope for improvement'.
- The speaker should explain the context in which he is speaking and should establish personal credibility especially when he or she is speaking in front of an audience of unknown people.

However, personal deficiencies can only be controlled by the listener himself or herself, and nothing external can be done to eradicate them. At an individual level, the listener should try to improve his or her listening skills.

### **3. BARRIERS TO LISTENING**

Listening is the communication skill we use most frequently. Recent surveys have established its importance. 45% of the time of a business professional is spent in listening. Employees come to a manager with inquiries, suggestions, proposals, comments and complaints. This requires effective listening on the part of the manager. The higher a manager is in the corporate ladder, the more time he/she spends in listening to others. The managers who are rated most highly by their subordinates are good listeners. However, most professionals are poor listeners. This is why effective listening is very important for business professionals.

Listening is the process of receiving and interpreting the spoken word. Listening begins with physical hearing or sensing of the oral message. Once the listener is able to recognize the sound patterns, he or she has to decode and interpret the message. After the message has been decoded and interpreted, its truth value and significance are evaluated, and an appropriate response is given by the listener. Thus, the process of listening consists of sensing, decoding, evaluating, and responding.

If we want to improve our listening skill and achieve effective listening, we need to be aware of the major barriers to effective listening. They are :

1. Physical barriers
2. Perceptual Barriers
3. Speaker-related Barriers
4. Listener-related Barriers
5. Linguistic Barriers
6. Cultural Barriers

**1. Physical barriers :** Environmental distractions and disturbances can easily disturb the process of listening. Noise, physical discomfort or odd time for interaction can become barriers to listening. For example, when a person tries to listen to someone on a running train or in a crowded market, several distractions disturb the listening process. If we want to avoid physical noise during the process of listening, we need to ensure that all channels remain free from noise for the duration of interaction.



**2. Perceptual Barriers :** These barriers result from the differing perceptions of the speaker and the listener. The perceptual barriers are of the following kinds.

**(a) Frames of reference :** People perceive the words according to their frame of reference. Although the speaker may want to convey a particular meaning which seems clear from his point of view, it is the listener's individual frame of reference which determines the actual meaning assigned to the message by the listener. Thus, different frames of reference can lead to miscommunication.

**(b) Experiences and expectations :** Expectations are based on an individual's personality and her experiences in similar situations. Thus, the listener's background can lead her to indulge in 'selective' listening - taking the 'desired' parts and ignoring the 'undesired' parts of the message. She may try to add, subtract, or colour the message according to her experiences and expectations.

**(c) Relationship with speaker :** The relationship between speaker and listener can become a barrier to listening. Subordinate employees will pay close attention to a powerful and trustworthy superior while they would attach little importance to listening attentively to a superior with low credibility or little authority. Similar is the case of teacher-student and parent-child interactions.

Another common barrier to listening is 'egotism' or self-centred attitude of the participants. If the speaker / listener thinks that his ideas are more important and that he is always right and the other person is wrong, then his mind is closed for the other person's message. As a result, there will be no listening.

**3. Speaker-related Barriers :** The following are the main listening barriers related to the speaker.

- (i) The speaker may speak **too fast** for the listener to understand or **too slow** for the listener to lose interest. Research in speech perception has arrived at one consistent finding : the best aid to understanding is to use normal speaking speed with a few extra pauses.
- (ii) The loudness of the voice of the speaker may be a cause of the listener's annoyance and a barrier to effective listening.
- (iii) The speaker's mannerisms (habitual peculiarities) and body language may make the listener apathetic and distracted.
- (iv) If there is information overload in what the speaker is saying, the listener has difficulty in processing the information and in retaining attention. As a result listening can become ineffective.

#### **4. Listener-related Barriers**

**(i) Disinterest :** The listener considers the subject of discussion or conversation to be uninteresting and has developed unwillingness to listen right from the beginning.



**(ii) Internal rehearsing :** The listener in this case is pretending as if (s) he is listening attentively. But in actuality(s) he is waiting to jump in and make his own point without listening to the speaker.

**(iii) Interrupting :** The listener's impatience and frequent interruptions of the speaker is a big barrier to effective listening.

**(iv) Premature judgement :** Before the speaker has completed what (s)he wants to say, some listeners jump to conclusions, and thus fail to get the speaker's point.

**(v) Listening for a point of disagreement :** A listener who loves argumentation very often listens to what the speaker is saying only to find out a point of disagreement and to start an argument. This is an example of 'selective' listening which is a strong barrier to effective listening.

**(vi) Multi-tasking :** Doing more than one thing while listening is a big distraction. Thus, multi-tasking when one is supposed to be listening is a barrier to listening and can discourage the speaker to continue speaking.

**5. Linguistic Barriers :** Incorrect message decoding by the listener is a frequent barrier in oral communication. If the listener hears something in a language which (s)he does not understand, e.g. difficult words, jargon, technical terms or ambiguous expression, then a communication breakdown will take place.

Differences between the listener's mother-tongue and English in respect of individual sounds and use of stress and intonation can cause difficulties in spoken-word recognition. Of these 3 components in word recognition, stress is often reported to be the most problematic in listening.

**6. Cultural Barriers :** Globalization has forced business organizations, with their operations extending beyond local or regional boundaries, to employ people from different countries and cultural backgrounds.

The cultural differences among the employees of trans-national corporations come down to different values and different approaches to listening. For an example, a European or American values time very highly and therefore likes to be quick in talking as well as listening - to business matters. While interacting with Asians, (s) he finds it difficult to listen effectively as Asians spend a lot of time in small talk or tea while talking business matters. Similarly, cultural differences influence the communicator's attitude about silence which is taken as a major part of listening. Europeans or Americans often feel uncomfortable with long silence, whereas the Japanese, the Chinese and the Koreans regard silence as an important part of communication.

Thus, inter-cultural differences can be a potent barrier to listening.

Apart from these six kinds of barriers to listening, certain wrong assumptions regarding communication can lead to poor listening :

(a) that it is the speaker's responsibility to make the listener listen effectively;

(b) that listening is a passive activity in which the listener absorbs information and ideas like a sponge;

(c) that talking people are dominant and powerful, while listening people are weak and powerless.



## 4. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE LISTENING SKILL

Most of us are poor listeners and active listening requires efforts. But the good news is that we can improve our listening skill. Research at the university of Minnesota shows that individuals who receive training in listening improve their listening skill by 25% to 40%. We can achieve similar results if we think strategically about listening and make a few simple deliberate choices as follows :

### **(a) Decide what your goals are for the interaction :**

Skilled listeners think about the purpose of their interaction and act accordingly. The purpose of oral communication in a business organization include :

- (i) To exchange information
- (ii) To build working relationships
- (iii) To arrive at a decision
- (iv) To feel good
- (v) To make someone feel good

### **(b) Be aware of your options during the interaction :**

If you have the purpose of the interaction in mind, you can then choose when to talk and when to listen during the conversation, when to clarify and when to listen attentively. Good listeners always consciously make a decision when to talk and when to listen. This awareness helps one to keep control over one's listening and speaking.

There are a few effective suggestions on when to speak and when to listen :

**(i) Don't assume that you have to talk more :** Very often, one who listens more influences the interaction more. So one must stop talking more and then try to listen more.

**(ii) Show your interest in the interaction :** If the listener gives the impression that (s)he is listening to understand rather than to oppose, this will create a friendly climate for information exchange and co-operation.

**(iii) Remove distractions :** Certain activities such as playing with a pencil or pen, shuffling papers, looking at the watch and multi-tasking by the listener distract the speaker. In order to get better input from the speaker, the listener should stop doing such things and focus fully on the speaker's words.

**(iv) Empathize with the speaker :** If the listener places him or her in the speaker's position and looks at things from his or her point of view, (s)he has a better chance to improve his listening ability.

**(v) Ask questions :** While interruptions by the listener should be avoided, positive interventions by the listener are desirable. The listener should ask appropriate questions at the right opportunity to elicit more information and clarify doubts. In fact, most speakers would welcome this as it not only provides feedback but also provides an opportunity to clarify the message and correct misunderstandings. Asking questions also tells

the speaker that the listener has interest and involvement in the communication process.

**(vi) Refocus, when the conversation lags :** When the conversation seems to become uninteresting for some reason, it is for the listener to ask the other person questions that will again make the conversation warm, or to talk more about a relevant topic and invite the other person to talk about it.

**(vii) Concentrate on contents and listen for signposts :** Bring your total focus on the contents of the speaker's input and be aware of the signposts for his / her organization of ideas such as "To begin with ...", "Secondly ...", "On the other hand...", "In conclusion...", etc.

**(c) Avoid negative feelings and attitude**

**(i) Guard against your personal biases interfering with your understanding.**

**(ii) Refrain from argumentation and criticism.**

**(iii) Avoid impatience :** Patience is an important attribute of good listening. The listener should wait for the speaker to complete his or her part of the talk and avoid derogatory or cynical comments. Every speaker has a train of thought, and gestures of impatience on the part of the listener may disturb the speaker's train of thought.

**(iv) Don't lose your temper :** Good listening calls for the right temperament. Even if the listener thinks that the speaker is not right, this does not give him or her a right to instant reaction and bad tempers.

The above three strategies with their sub-points, if adopted, has every chance of improving one's listening skill.



## C. LANGUAGE SKILL –II: SPEAKING

### **1. Important characteristics of effective speaking.** **(Guidelines for improving the speaking skill)**

Speaking, like listening, is an important skill necessary for effective communication. Speaking may be described as *a purposeful process in which people using sounds communicate meaning to a listener or a group of listeners*. In professional life, one is required to take part in discussions, meetings conferences, seminars, telephonic and face-to-face conversations, business presentations, teleconferences and video-conferences. Therefore, one's success in professional life would depend on one's mastery of oral communication skills.

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SPEAKING**

##### **1. Clear and Relevant Message**

While communicating a message orally, the speaker is concerned with four major processes : (i) Conceptualisation, (ii) Formulation, (iii) Articulation, and (iv) Self-monitoring.

**Conceptualisation** is about planning the message content. It draws on the speaker's background knowledge of the world, knowledge about the topic, about the audience and about the kind of language to be used. In the formulation stage, the speaker unconsciously finds words and phrases to express the meanings, sequences them and then looks at the pronunciation of the words to be used.

Thus, at the stages of conceptualisation and formulation of the message, the speaker is fully seized with the appropriateness of the message. The speaker should be clear about what message (s)he wants to get across. In order to speak effectively or make the message have 'an impact, the speaker should ensure that the content of the message is clear and relevant to the listener.

##### **2. Audience - Oriented Speech**

Familiarity with one's audience is necessary in order to be an effective speaker. Professional situations such as seminars, conferences, meeting, discussions, etc. demand a careful audience analysis so that the speaker can cater to their expectations and needs.

**Breath control :** Breathing is the energy source of voice and speech. while speaking English or an Indian language, we use the outgoing air to speak words. If breathing is controlled well, the chest muscles, and the diaphragm are used to their full capacity. Drawing in too little breath or too much breath does not help to develop the voice. The voice becomes excessively quiet if one draws in too little breath. If one takes in large gulps of breath, the voice will be excessively breathy.

In order to develop the power of voice, one should habitually breathe in a natural way. If one avoids too deep or too shallow breathing, the outgoing breath is modulated and this gives the voice a consistent tenor.

**Pitch control :** In order to speak effectively, one should not pitch one's voice too high when one starts speaking. Secondly, sometimes in



order to sound confident, one pitches the voice too low. As a result, the voice sounds forced and unnatural. The right thing to adopt is a middle note which is the natural, habitual pitch one uses when one is relaxed. A moderate lilt (= a pleasant pattern of rise and fall) makes an interesting voice.

**3. Voice Quality :** It is the speaker's voice that leaves a strong impression on the listener(s). The quality of one's voice and the manner of speaking reflect the whole personality of the speaker. A nervous, halting style of speech reflects the speaker's lack of confidence and annoys the listeners. On the other hand, a confident and friendly style impresses and wins over the listeners.

The first thing to remember is that one's voice should sound natural. Everybody's voice is unique. Nobody should distort it while trying to learn to speak well and should never try to copy the impressive style of speaking of some other person.

**4. Rate of Speaking :** Deciding how fast to talk is a major difficulty in effective speaking. As a general rule, the speaker should present the easy parts of the message fairly, quickly and hard-to-understand parts at a slower pace. Thus, the rate of speaking needs to vary according to the content of the message. The reason for varying the speed of speaking is rather obvious : easy information presented slowly is irritating and hard information presented rapidly may be difficult to understand.

Another problem related to the pace of speaking is the incorrect use of pauses. Of course, pauses used at the appropriate time during speaking emphasize the upcoming subject-matter and are effective in gaining the listener's attention. Further, pausing at commas and full stops provides the speaker a moment to think and plan what to speak next.

Therefore, an effective speaker should not speak quickly and continuously without pausing. Quickness of speaking shows nervousness, restlessness, over-enthusiasm or onrush of overflowing ideas and annoys the listeners. Slow and ponderous speaking makes the speech uninteresting.

So a speaker should follow the middle path of speaking neither too quickly nor too slowly. In order to be an effective speaker, (s)he should pause to breathe and also to observe the listener's reaction. If (s)he finds that the listeners' attention is wavering, (s)he should try to speed up the pace of speaking to hold their interest.

## **5. Clear Articulation :**

Speaking will be effective only when the listeners hear the words of the speaker clearly. The listeners can hear clearly when the speaker articulates the words clearly. For clear articulation of English speech, the speaker has to produce appropriate sounds, use stress on the right syllables and say the sentences with proper intonation.

In order to improve the articulation, the speaker should know the right pronunciation of words with stress and practise the rhythm of connected speech in English. Clear articulation of words and utterances improves when the speaker is confident of the content and style of speech.

## **6. Non-verbal signals**

Next, non-verbal communication as a contributory factor of effective speaking will be discussed under the following headings :

1. Eye Contact, 2. Facial Expressions, 3. Gestures and Postures

**A. Eye Contact :** Eye-contact is very important, particularly in face-to-face communication. Raised eyes show dominance and downcast eyes suggest weakness and submission. Direct eye contact between the speaker and the listener(s) at formal meetings communicates honesty, transparency and neutral attitudes.

Eye contact focusing on a few in the audience does not create a good impact, whereas moderate eye contact with different sections of the audience shows that the speaker has confidence and a genuine interest in the audience.



## **B. Facial Expressions :**

Facial expressions form an important part of body language during a speech. As the proverb goes, face is the index of the mind. The mobile features of the face, the lips and the facial muscles express several different feelings. They are used for transparent expressions of thought and genuine feelings. In certain situations, they are also used for deliberate suppression of natural feelings so that others may not know the speaker's real feelings. For example, a frightened speaker may tighten the jaw unconsciously and begin to grin. The effect on the listener(s) may be an ambiguous image that is contrary to the purpose of the communication. A smile or a grim face accompanying the words conveys a clear message. Appropriate use of facial expressions helps one in effective speaking.

## **C. Gestures and Postures :**

Postures or body positions are obvious things that the audience sees in the speaker. Even if listeners are not close enough to see facial expressions and eye movements, they can see the structure and the state of the speaker's body.

For effective presentation, a speaker's posture has a key role. In efforts to improve his / her posture, a speaker should distribute his / her body weight in a comfortable and poised way consistent with the impression (s)he wants to make. (s)he should keep the body erect without appearing stiff and uncomfortable. His/her bearing should be natural, poised, alert and communicative.

Like postures, gestures add to the message which the speaker communicates. The speaker has to ensure that his/her gestures or movements of limbs do not distract the listener. A clenched fist, for example, adds emphasis to a strong point. But it can also show defiance or deal out a threat. And so it is with other gestures as well. They register vague meanings.

Although gestures very often have vague meanings, they are natural aids to speaking. For example, it appears natural to emphasize a point with a finger. It is clear that the speaker's gestures help to make speaking effective.

Which movements of limbs a speaker should use vary from person to person. These movements are related to personality, physical make-up and the size and nature of the audience. A speaker speaking to a formal group should use relatively fewer gestures. A speaker appearing before an informal audience should use more action. On any given occasion, the speaker should use his/her own judgement regarding postures and gestures that should accompany the oral communication.

Thus, the characteristics of effective speaking include planning the speech at the conceptualisation and formulation stage, and clear articulation through improvement of voice quality and variations in the pace of speaking and finally, through the use of appropriate non-verbal cues consistent with different ideas of the oral communication.

## **2. FEATURES OF GOOD CONVERSATIONS**

A conversation is an informal oral exchange of feelings, opinions and ideas between two or more persons. Conversing is an essential interpersonal skill that helps to build a pleasing personality and receive friendly co-operation in social and professional situations.

**The following are the main features of a good conversation.**

1. *Good conversations are structured* - Conversations are better structured than a casual talk, especially if there is an agenda in place. However, a conversation may drift away from the agenda and tends to go beyond what you wish to discuss. If conversations are meant to discuss important topics-for example, whether the services of an employee should be terminated, and you as the employee's manager are in conversation with the HR team-it is better to arrange for a moderator who can control the flow of the conversation.
2. *All the key people must be involved*- There is no point in having a conversation without involving the key people--the decision-makers and the key input givers. The conversation will be meaningless if they are not involved.
3. *Conversations must be risk-free*-People will express themselves only when they feel that they are risk-free. So, if you want a conversation in which the participants do not feel inhibited, you should provide them with a risk-free environment. Often, people feel that a frank and fair conversation could pose a threat to their job or position and that is probably the reason why they fear to freely express their views.

### 3. Effective Conversation Management

Conversation is an art that tests your innate ability to engage people in front of you in a meaningful dialogue. You will need to practice this skill over years. If you are in a business, profession, or role where your job is dependent on conversations, you will have to sharpen your conversational skills to impress the diverse and interesting people you deal with.

1. ***Learn more about the other person***-In a formal conversation, it is good to know the person to whom you are speaking--that is, being aware of this person's likes, dislikes, and aspects that are related to work and those that are not .

For example, imagine that your client has told you in your first meeting that his or her daughter is studying law. You may probably ask about the client's daughter casually in the next conversation. Knowing an individual beyond the immediate business concerns helps build a rapport. A word of caution: when you are trying to know people, make sure you do not get too personal or offensive. For example, people of some nationalities are very reserved on family-related issues and would not want to discuss them with someone relatively unknown to them.

2. ***Include all key people*** - Another key point that you should keep in mind while you are conversing is to ensure that all the people necessary for the discussion are included in the conversation. A conversation in which the key people are missing is a waste of time.

During conversations you will be making requests. Ensure that you are clear about what you want. Similarly, when another person is making a request, say 'yes or 'no? Many people have the habit of being non-committal as they find it extremely difficult to say 'no' upfront. Do not be vague by using words such as 'Let us see'.

Conversations form the grounds for good negotiations, and you will be a good negotiator only if your ability to converse is well-developed.

### **3. Avoid argumentation**

We all have our individual views and opinions. When people have differences of opinion, minor conflicts occur. When these conflicts escalate, their conversations turn into arguments.

Arguments stem not only from smaller conflicts but also occur for many other reasons-clash of egos, fight for visibility in the organization, differences of opinion, personal conflicts, forced changes, and invasion of personal space. Arguments are often an extension of conversations, and when ideas clash, a war of words results.

It is important to channelize arguments in the right directions, and in some cases, we need to gracefully exit arguments as they may turn bitter.

Here are a few tips to help you during arguments:

- Try to understand the other person's opinion or point of view. Accept the fact that all of us are different.
- Do not argue to counter each other's point. Arguments for the sake of arguing are dangerous and do not lead us anywhere.
- Try and build your case, backed by suitable data points. Ensure that you argue with the hard facts with you rather than with emotions.
- Never lose your calm. At least one of the persons engaged in an argument has to remain silent and calm. Understand when to exit an argument.
- Never try to use an undue advantage that you have over the other person in an argument-for example, in an argument between you, as the manager, and your subordinate, you should not take advantage of your position as this may make the other person retreat.
- Never push your opinions on the other person. If you do, it will leave a scar on the relationship. People will not like to be associated with you.
- Accept that you may also make a mistake. Do this gracefully and correct your mistake rather than arguing just for the sake of doing so.



In situations at our workplace, we argue when things go beyond our control. It is often our ego that forces us to argue. Sometimes, arguments in organizations take the form of power play and people try to demonstrate their superiority. Arguing only with emotions will not lead you anywhere and will make it tough for you to take the right decision and also leave a bitter feeling amongst people. Remember that you may win an argument, but you may lose the relationship forever. Understand this fact, and plan your exit, when you find that the argument is not taking you anywhere.

#### **4. Apply the Three CS**

The final key to becoming a great conversationalist is to practice the friendship factor. The friendship factor is based on the three Cs-*care, courtesy, and consideration*.

You must have heard what is generally quoted to emphasize empathy in human behaviour--- 'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.' It is rightly said that whenever you show another person that you genuinely care about him/her, you come across better as a conversationalist and as a friend. Moreover, courtesy is a magic quality that makes people want to be around you. All good conversationalists make others feel calm and comfortable in their presence. They never do or say anything that could hurt or offend the other person in any way. Moreover, if we respect others and are considerate towards them, we are respected and considered highly by other people. Whenever you treat another person as an important and worthwhile human being, you give them a feeling that you value them. This attitude helps you become not just a better human being, but also a better conversationalist.

#### **5. Be Fluent while speaking**

Fluency is a much desired attribute of a good conversationalist. Therefore, be fluent while talking to others. Apart from good listening and regular practice at conversations, having a good vocabulary also helps you attain fluency in your expression. So, be a good reader and try to learn more and more words in order to express yourself effectively and successfully.

These are some of the ways in which we can manage our conversation well.



## 4. CELLPHONE ETIQUETTE

Prepare a set of Power Point slides on “Cell Phone Etiquette” .

**Ans.** :For a 15-minute presentation, the following are the ten power point slides on the topic ‘Cell phone Etiquette’. It is assumed that each slide, apart from the ‘Title’ slide and the last ‘Thank You’ slide, will take 1.5 minutes on average for explaining.

*Slide -1*

**CELL PHONE**

**ETIQUETTE**

‘A Presentation by X’

*Slide - 2*

**Importance**

- ☐ Mobile phones have become indispensable for modern living.
- ☐ However, we should keep in mind some important rules of mobile etiquette for good business relationship.

*Slide -3*

- Use a cell phone ring tone which is neither loud nor annoying.

*Slide - 4*

- Take or make your calls without disturbing others.

*Slide -5*

- When calling on a cell phone, be brief and to the point.

*Slide - 6*

- Talk in lower tones so as not to bother individuals around you. Do not shout.

*Slide - 7*

Turn your phone off when you are at a public event/ performance.

*Slide - 8*

- Keep in mind the fact that you can message a text instead of calling or receiving a call on your cellphone.

*Slide-9*

- Avoid inappropriate topics of chat and inappropriate pictures for your cell phone address book.

*Slide-10*

Don't use your phone while driving or attending a meeting. Put it in the silent mode.

## 5. VIDEO CONFERENCE

**What are the important things to remember while video-conferencing?**

**OR**

**Write some important rules to maximize the effectiveness of video-conferencing.**

Video-conferencing entails the transmission of images (Video) and speech (Audio) back and forth between two or more physically separate locations. It is used for business meetings, interviews, and urgent interactions facilitating quick decision-making. Used effectively, video conferencing gives significant benefits of increased productivity and reduced costs for a business organization.

Some of the ways to maximize the effectiveness of video-conferencing are as follows:

1. Room Dynamics : Blue colour should be used as background colour on the wall facing the camera. Curtains should be drawn and doors kept shut while conducting the conference. Lighting should come from overhead, and there should be no bright light behind the participant.
2. Microphones : The microphone should be positioned at an equal distance of about 2 – 3 feet from all participants. One should avoid moving the microphone while conferencing because movement sounds are amplified by the microphone.
3. Clothes and colours: Colours of clothes that work well in video conferences are blue, pink and green. Avoid white and black and stripes.
4. Call preparation : Familiarize yourself with the room, the equipment and its operation. Arrive in advance to check if everything works: from dial-up connection to camera, lighting, and seating arrangements.
5. Meeting etiquette : In a video conference, a protocol may be agreed upon regarding asking participants to raise their hand to speak or ask a question so that people do not talk over each other.
6. Speaking: Wait for the image of the other person and your own image to appear on the screen before beginning the discussion. First introduce yourself and your team. Always try to speak clearly and slowly. Direct your message or question by specifying the person you are addressing. Maintain face-to-face connection as much as possible. And finally, plan for a 10-minute break every 50 minutes.

## **SHORT ANSWER QUESTION ON MODULE-I**

**Q 1. Define communication.**

**Ans.** Communication may be defined as “the sharing or exchange of information, ideas and feelings between persons or groups through a common language or code of symbols.”

**Q 2. What are the differences between general communication and business communication?**

**Ans.** The first difference between General Communication (GC) and Business Communication (BC) is that BC is restricted in scope and is a subset of GC. Secondly, BC is more purposeful and persuasive than GC. Thirdly, formal language is generally used in BC, whereas in GC, the situation determines whether formal or informal language is to be used. Finally, a piece of business communication is logically organized and strictly follows the appropriate format such as a memo, a letter, or a report. In general communication, there is less need for structuring.

**Q3 What are important factors in the process of communication ?**

**Ans.** The important factors involved in the process of communication are :

1. Sender
2. Code
3. Message
4. Medium/ Channel
5. Receiver
6. Feedback

**Q4. Why is communication crucial in an organization ?**

**Ans. :** Communication is of crucial importance in an organization because :

- i) It is essential for successful and smooth running of the organization through communication of goals, policies and instructions and creation of a healthy, conducive environment;
- ii) Communication failures can affect productivity and lead to organizational sickness;
- iii) Communication is essential for performance of various managerial functions.

**Q5. Why is feedback important in the process of communication?**

**Answer:** Feedback refers to the reverse flow of information from the Receiver to the Sender. Through feedback, the Receiver indicates to the Sender whether and how far the sender's message has been received and understood. Without feedback, communication becomes one-sided and thus loses the qualities of 'sharing' and completeness.

**Q6. What do you mean by the 'grapevine'? How is it useful in internal business communication?**

**Answer :**Informal channels of communication existing within an organization are called the 'grapevine'. Informal channels develop by themselves without planning, in situations where the employees meet and talk.

An informal communication network is useful in the following ways:

- a. It is speedy and spontaneous in comparison with formal communication.
- b. It is multidirectional; it can flow in any direction.
- c. It strengthens the social relations in an organization.
- d. It supplements formal communication in an organization.

Certain matters which are difficult to communicate through formal channels can be easily and effectively communicated through the grapevine. For example, feedback on the feelings of employees towards executives regarding a particular decision can easily be obtained through informal channels.

**Q7. "The grapevine cannot be completely eliminated from organizations." Explain.**

**Ans.** The grapevine refers to the informal communication channels in an organization. It exists in all workplaces, and it is an informal extension of the formal system of organizational communication. In a way, it is a corrective to the management's information system. The gap in formal communication is filled by informal gossip circulated among employees who form relationships.

Since the grapevine

- (i) Satisfies a deep-seated human need to share information,
- (ii) Gives psychological satisfaction to the participants, and
- (iii) Fills a gap in formal communication,

it cannot be completely eliminated from organizations.

**Q8. What are the characteristics of horizontal communication? Mention its advantages.**

**Answer :** Horizontal communication refers to the flow of information and ideas between persons of equal rank either of the same or different departments in a company. Horizontal communication can also take place between professional peer groups working at the same level in the company hierarchy.

The following are the advantages of horizontal communication:

- a. It is less formal and structured than downward or upward (vertical) communication.
- b. It creates mutual trust and understanding among different departments and solves interdepartmental problems.
- c. It facilitates co-operation and co-ordination among different individuals and departments in an organization.

**Q9. What are the characteristics of diagonal communication? What are its merits?**

**Answer :** Diagonal communication takes place when persons in an organization interact with each other irrespective of their hierarchical status and established reporting relationships. For example, the Production Manager talking with a salesperson to get his opinion on customer preferences is an example of diagonal communication. The merits of diagonal communication are:

- a. It facilitates quick decisions.
- b. It builds an atmosphere of trust and co-operation.
- c. It boosts the morale of the bottom-level employees.

**Q10. “Listen not only with your ears, but also with your eyes.” Explain.**

**Ans.:** ‘Listen not only with your ears, but also with your eyes’. This means that while listening to a person, one should have eye contact with the speaker. The advantage is that the listener can know the real feelings and intentions of the speaker who is delivering a particular verbal message.

**Q11. What is Oculesics ?What is the significance of Eye Contact as non-verbal communication?**

**Ans.:** Oculesics is the study of the ways eyes are used during a communication exchange. This includes eye contact and the avoidance of eye contact. Eye contact is an effective tool for indicating attention and interest, for influencing others, for or regulating interaction, and establishing dominance. Through eye contact, a speaker captures the audience’s attention and convinces the listeners of his sincerity and confidence. The avoidance of eye contact can signal a lack of confidence or honesty. It can also help maintain psychological distance. This is the significance of Eye Contact as non-verbal communication.

**Q12. Mention two ways in which non-verbal communication helps managers to interact with their subordinates effectively.**

**Ans.:** Firstly, non-verbal communication as a general rule takes place unconsciously. While interacting with subordinates, a manager can know from their non-verbal cues their true attitudes and feelings. For example, an employee's yawn can show that he is bored by what the manager is speaking, even though he may say that the manager's talk is interesting.

Secondly, non-verbal communication is more suitable than words in some situations. For example, it is often easier to point to an object than to describe it. Body movement is a silent means of communication and can be used in interactions when the manager is multi-tasking, *e.g.* when the manager is taking a phone call as well as looking for the soft copy of a document on his laptop.

**Q13. What non-verbal message does 'Proxemics' convey about a person?**

**Ans.:** Proxemics is the study of use of personal space. Personal space is the space you place between yourself and others during communication. One's physical distance communicates mental attitudes. As the distance decreases, the degree of intimacy increases. A distance of 1 – 4 feet is considered ideal for most social interactions. However, most business transactions require a standard distance of 4 feet between two persons.

**Q14. How would you interpret the following non-verbal cues sent by others?**

**(i)Yawning:(ii)Keeping silent after a question or remark(iii)Drooping shoulders(iv)Raised eyebrows(v)Standing off(vi)Clearing the throat off and on**

**Answer :**

- i. *Yawning*: Disinterest, boredom
- ii. *Keeping silent after a question or remark*: Uncertain, Reserving one's response, Lack of confidence.
- iii. *Drooping Shoulders*: Lack of confidence, Timidity.
- iv. *Raised eyebrows*: Surprise, sudden understanding.
- v. *Standing off*: Absence of the desire to interact; feeling alienated.
- vi. *Clearing the throat off and on*: Nervousness.

**Q15. Differentiate between hearing and listening.**

**Answer.** Listening involves hearing with total attention. Hearing is an involuntary physical act of receiving sound waves on the ear-drum and transferring them to the brain. On the other hand, listening is a conscious intellectual act involving conscious efforts to hear with attention and understand the message.

**Q16. What is ‘Active Listening ‘?**

**Answer :** Active listening refers to listening with a purpose, while passive listening is purposeless listening which leads to poor understanding the message. Active listening demands that the listener should enter every interaction with a strong desire to understand the other person’s point of view. He or she should not allow personal feelings, likes and dislikes to influence the listening activity. He or she should suspend judgment until the listening process is complete. Active listening is a 4 step process that includes sensing, decoding, evaluating, and responding.

Thus, active listening is purposeful, attentive, bias-free, and therefore, effective.

**Q17. How is Critical listening different from Content listening ?**

**Ans. :** The purpose of content listening is only to receive information. An example of content listening is listening to the highlights of the company’s performance during the CFO’s live talk on the intranet. There is no scope for evaluation and judgement in content listening. On the other hand, in critical listening one has to analyze the situation and the speaker and focus on the logical aspects, implications, and the intention of the speaker. For example, when a salesperson gives a product demo and talks about only the merits of the product while undermining competitors, the listener has to move into critical listening.

**Q18. What qualities of speech do you miss in written communication?**

**OR What are the advantages of oral communication?**

**Ans. :** In written communication, we miss the following qualities of speech. These are the merits of Oral Communication.

- i) Immediate feedback
- ii) Speed of transmission
- iii) Body language
- iv) Time-saving method of group communication

**Q19. What do you mean by ‘Clear Articulation’ ?**

**Answer:** ‘Clear articulation’ refers to the correct pronunciation of the sounds and words of a language. Clear articulation of English sounds and words primarily requires a non-native speaker to correctly pronounce its 24 consonants and 20 vowels. An effective speaker should also master the patterns of speech rhythm that comes from correct stress and intonation. The basic requirement for clear articulation is a neutral accent free from Mother Tongue Interference.

**Q20. What does ‘Voice Quality’ refer to ?**

**Answer:** ‘Voice Quality’ refers to the set of features that distinguishes one voice from another. One’s voice cannot be totally changed, but there is a need to refine the quality of one’s voice after identifying its weak points (such as too low, or too harsh). One’s voice can be trained for impact by cultivating sensitivity to sounds through ear-training and by practicing voice modulation according to the meaning and intent of the message. The ideal voice is a deep and resonant voice.

**Q21. What rules of etiquette would you follow while using your cell phone?**

**Ans.:** Some rules of etiquette to follow while using a cellphone are:

- a. Keep your voice low when using your cellphone in a public place so that you do not disturb others’ activities.
- b. Avoid receiving calls during meetings.
- c. Keep the duration of the call as short as possible.

**BEST OF LUCK**