

CHAPTER V

COMMUNICATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT - SURVEY ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

College principals have major responsibilities in terms of planning, coordinating, communicating, maintaining human relations, evaluating performance and giving feedback, resource mobilization and above all, handling financial matters. The leadership qualities and the general personality traits of the College Principals contribute a lot to the overall organizational climate of the institution since all manifest performance is hinged on the role that they play within the framework of the managerial needs and requirements. The overall competence and enhanced communication skills of the college principals in performing their role—would—to a great extent determine their overall efficiency at work. College Principals shoulder major responsibilities of Educational Administration, and the researcher proposed to develop an Instructional Module in Communication for them.

For the above purpose, the researcher initiated the study by conducting a Needs Assessment Survey of Communication Needs of College Principals in order to identify and determine meaningful parameters for the content of the module. The Needs Assessment was done with the help of a Needs Assessment Schedule (Annexure 1B). The researcher had appraised the respondents through personal contact (visits / telephone talk) and mailed correspondence (please refer appendix 2B,2C,2D for the letters) – about what was required of them in the context of the study, and this helped elicit the responses.

The Needs Assessment Survey was preceded by a pilot study the procedure and findings of which are presented earlier in Chapter III. The pilot study paved the way for finalizing the Needs Assessment Schedule and using it for further data collection with college principals.

The contents of the questions of the Needs Assessment Schedule had also explained (and clarified whenever the respondent sought any doubts to be cleared) to the respondents by the researcher in her one-to-one interaction with them so that

they could attempt to answer with the best understanding. Moreover, the stature of the respondents in terms of their academic qualifications, experience and present designations, and her meetings with them – had the researcher quite convinced that their responses would be honest and their drive towards self-learning genuine; and that their answers too would be given after due thought and clarity of the matter.

Some of the respondents (16) answered the schedule immediately while interacting with the researcher, while some (23) discussed everything at length with the researcher – and mailed the schedule back later. And with the remaining 10 of the respondents, the researcher had an interaction and a detailed talk, and they had agreed to mail the schedule back but for some reason did not. One of the respondents who did not respond – held additionally the charge as a principal at another college (i.e. he was the principal at two of the colleges of the sample) – hence out of the 50 college principals whom the researcher had met – the total number of non-responses is 11.

5.2 Analysis of the Survey of Communication Needs of College Principals

The total number of Needs Assessment Schedules analysed is 39 (though some observations which had been noted have been inclusive for all of the sample of 50).

5.2.1 Background Information and Profile of the Respondents

- Of all the 39 respondents, four (4) were females and thirtyfive (35) were males; thirtyfour (34) of them being in the age group of 45 to 55 years. Only five (5) of the respondents were over 60 years of age.
- Of all the respondents, 20 respondents had an educational qualification upto Masters level (one Masters degree), five respondents had a Masters degree plus additional diplomas like PGDTE (post-graduate diploma in technical education) / PGDBA (post-graduate diploma in business administration), additional Masters degrees; or even degrees in law. Thirteen of the respondents had a doctorate (Ph.D.) qualification; while one respondent had a Ph.D. plus additional post-graduate diplomas.

- The present designation of thirtytwo of the respondents was that of College Principals, two of the respondents were Deans of the two Medical Colleges of Ahmedabad, while three respondents were Directors – one of an Institute of Technology, another of an Institute of Computer Applications and one of an Institute of Business Management. One of the respondents was the coordinator of a Communication Centre; and one respondent was the Officiating Principal of a Commerce College.
- Of all the respondents, twentyfive of them had been college principals since a time period of 1 to 5 years, seven of them had been College Principals since a time period of 6 to 10 years, four of them had been College Principals since a time period of 11 to 15 years; while three of them had been at the position since over 15 years.
 Thirtysix of the respondents had begun their careers in colleges (only three of the respondents had begin their careers in schools) – either as Demonstrators, Assistant Lecturers or Lecturers and had steadily chartered their growth to the stature of College Principals. All the respondents had over twenty years of experience in educational institutes in and outside Ahmedabad – with most of them having been transferred at one point of time or another to different colleges / institutes within Ahmedabad and Gujarat or sometimes even outside.
- The profile of the respondents reflected their high academic qualifications, years of rich experience and a good professional stature; and thus in their capacity as respondents for the study, they formed an appropriate representative group.

5.2.2 Analysis of the Responses

An analysis of the communication needs of college principals based on the needs assessment survey is presented below.

Table 5.1

Level of satisfaction of college principals
with the nature of work in the current job

CRITERIA	Responses					Total Respondents
	1	2	3	4	5	
	Highly significant	Quite significant	Partially significant	Insignificant	Cannot decide	
No of respondents	25 (64.10)	12 (30.76)	2 (5.12)	-	-	39 (100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

As evident from the Table 5.1 above, it is seen that a high level of satisfaction about the nature of work was conveyed by most of the respondents. One of the respondents, though did convey that the levels of satisfaction varied from place to place (referring to transfers to different colleges) depending on the designation held and personal experiences with the work and the people around.

Table 5.2

Significance of the Communication Component within the varied demands
of the job in deciding the extent of job satisfaction

CRITERIA	Responses					Total Respondents
	1	2	3	4	5	
	Highly significant	Quite significant	Partially significant	Insignificant	Cannot decide	
FREQUENCY	18 (46.15)	18 (46.15)	3 (7.69)	-	-	39 (100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

As evident from the Table 5.2 above, it is seen that a high level of significance was attributed to the communication component within the varied demands of the job in deciding the level of satisfaction at the work place.

Table 5.3

Rating of Professional Performance by College Principals in terms of
Communication Abilities with People at Work

Sr. No.	People at the work place	Responses					Total Respondents
		1	2	3	4	5	
		Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	
1	Superiors	18 (46.15)	18 (46.15)	3 (7.69)	-	-	39 (100)
2	Equals	19 (48.71)	17 (43.58)	3 (7.69)	-	-	39 (100)
3	Colleagues	15 (38.46)	19 (48.71)	5 (12.82)	-	-	39 (100)
4	Subordinates	16 (41.02)	21 (53.84)	2 (5.12)	-	-	39 (100)
5	Students	25 (64.10)	9 (23.07)	5 (12.82)	-	-	39 (100)
6	Research Associates	9 (23.07)	23 (58.97)	7 (17.94)	-	-	39 (100)
7	Administrative Staff	14 (35.89)	20 (51.28)	5 (12.82)	-	-	39 (100)
8	Parents / Guardians of Students	14 (35.89)	17 (43.58)	8 (20.51)	-	-	39 (100)
9	Visitors	16 (41.02)	17 (43.58)	6 (15.38)	-	-	39 (100)
10	Any other :						
	i) Visiting faculty	1 (2.56)	-	-	-	-	-
	ii) Other organizations and industries	-	1 (2.56)	-	-	-	-
	iii) University authorities for different purposes	-	1 (2.56)	-	-	-	-
	iv) Dealers	-	1 (2.56)	-	-	-	-
	v) City police						
	vi) NGO's						
	vii) Union representa- tives						
	viii) Govt. Dept of Education						

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

As evident from the Table 5.3 above, it is seen that only about 20% of the respondents said they had average rapport, while the rest (80%) of the respondents

conveyed having a 'very good' or 'good' rapport with persons at work – which is a rating on the higher side in terms of communication abilities of the respondents.

Some of the respondents additionally mentioned the following persons / institutes with whom they interacted at work :

i.) Visiting Faculty (one respondent – 2.56%) mentioned having a very good rapport with them; while one respondent each (2.56%) mentioned having a good rapport with the following : ii.) Other organizations and industries with whom there may be interface, iii.) University authorities (for different purposes), iv.) dealers, v.) City police, vi.) NGO's (Non-Government Organizations), vii.) Union representatives and viii.) Government Department of Education. None of the respondents mentioned having a poor or very poor rapport with persons at work. However there always remains ample scope for further development of communication with different people and organizations.

Table 5.4a

Rating of the usefulness of the Conceptual Understanding of Communication by College Principals

Sr. No.	Parameters of the concept of communication	Responses					Total Respondents
		1	2	3	4	5	
		Very useful	Quite useful	Partially useful	Not useful	Cannot decide	
1	General understanding of communication	21 (53.84)	17 (43.58)	1 (2.56)	-	-	39 (100)
2	Elements of communication	13 (33.33)	23 (58.97)	2 (5.12)	1 (2.56)	-	39 (100)
3	Process of communication	15 (38.46)	22 (56.41)	2 (5.12)	-	1 (2.56)	39 (100)
4	Nature of communication	15 (38.46)	21 (53.84)	2 (5.12)	-	1 (2.56)	39 (100)
5	Types of communication	12 (30.76)	25 (64.10)	2 (5.12)	-	-	39 (100)
6	Functions of communication	9 (23.07)	20 (51.28)	9 (23.07)	-	1 (2.56)	39 (100)
7	Need of communication	17 (43.58)	21 (53.84)	1 (2.56)	-	-	39 (100)
8	Models of communication	8 (20.51)	16 (41.02)	15 (38.46)	-	-	39 (100)
9	Theories of communication	6 (15.38)	12 (30.76)	19 (48.71)	2 (5.12)	-	39 (100)
10	Barriers to communication	10 (25.64)	19 (48.11)	6 (15.38)	1 (2.56)	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
11	Scope of communication	10 (25.64)	23 (58.97)	6 (15.38)	-	-	39 (100)
12	Organizational communication and its dynamics	14 (35.89)	23 (58.97)	2 (5.12)	-	-	39 (100)
13	Any other	-	-	-	-	-	Nil

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

As evident from the Table 5.4a above, it is seen that a very high number of responses are in the 'quite useful' category, while the responses in the 'very useful' category are also quite high. There were a moderate number of responses in the 'partially useful' category, and very few responses in the 'not useful' and 'cannot decide' category.

Thus, it clearly emerges that the inclination on part of the respondents is towards knowing and understanding more about the concept of communication.

4b. Understanding about 'Communication' already possessed by the respondents :

— Responses to the question asked regarding the understanding about 'communication' as already possessed by the college principals are quoted below verbatim :

- i.) "More than anything else a 'closed door' situation / attitude becomes a major barrier to communication. Language and nature of communication are important to understand".
- ii.) "Holding the responsible and accountable position as the principal of a leading college, communication becomes inevitable in coordinating multilateral aspects of the institute and its functional dynamics. The channels of these aspects should continue to operate smoothly through meaningful interactions and regular feedback or inputs".
- iii.) "The meaning of communication is the response you get. If you do not like the response, change your method of communication".
- iv.) "To talk in a polite manner to anybody is the most impressive and the best way to communicate".
- v.) "Communication is of high importance for the right functioning of Educational Institutes as well as the position I hold".
- vi.) "In educational institutes, communication is a process between staff, students and parents".
- vii.) "Communication is a vital factor for administrative work and persons holding such posts. It has different aspects to it depending on the type of work and the people involved".
- viii.) "Understanding and initiating the process of communication is quite useful to expedite the problems".
- ix.) "Two way communication is essential in teaching and other daily activities. Communication gap is a major problem in our life".

- x.) “Good communication skills are a must for effective and fruitful administration”.
- xi.) “As a head of institute, I have a major role to play in undergraduate and postgraduate medical teaching; and I also have to strive to achieve best results for health of the community at large – for which curative and preventive aspects are to be taken care of. I also have to remain alert to unusual, natural calamities – like major earthquakes, epidemics, school child health check-up programmes, vaccination camps, family planning awareness, Aids awareness, emergency and critical situations, disaster management, etc. For all these multidimensional responsibilities, communication is a continuous, interlinked process”.
- xii.) “There are many different types of barriers to communication : 1.) ego barrier wherein the recipients are not open to any suggestion / criticism, 2.) communication with office staff who may have different social problems. Communication can be enhanced by small but effective practices such as : 1.) Communication by using “post-it” adhesive slips for messages and, 2.) Having boxes per person / unit / department – put up in the central hall of the institute – where letters / messages can be put directly into the boxes – to avoid lapses in communication”.
- xiii.) “As a teacher in the area of ‘management’ subject, it is obvious for one to know about the need, usefulness, scope and impact of communication”.
- xiv.) “Communication is the sole link between two individuals, among many individuals, between individuals and organizations, among institutes themselves. An ‘event; is the result of ‘communication’. Communication is the most integral part of any individual / group / organization”.
- xv.) “Communication is a must for human relationships. It can be useful for empowering people by providing them information and education regarding their day-to-day lives and advancement of their skills”.
- xvi.) “I have to communicate with students, teachers and parents on one hand, with non-teaching and administrative staff on the other hand – in different

languages and modes altogether. The extent of the communication has to be precise, and the timing most appropriate”.

- xvii.) “During my period of work, the concept of communication and organizational behaviour were not clearly known or articulated. But obviously communication happened all the time and ones natural behaviour itself created / was a way to communication.

Thus, in their own different ways, the respondents conveyed their understanding of communication as they perceived it – from their own reading and experience of it. Most of their expression was correct, though perhaps not very articulate.

The researcher was all the more convinced that the respondents would certainly find the module interesting since it would give them the required appropriate inputs in terms of communication terminologies and indepth understanding of the same.

Table 5.5a

Assessment of Needs of College Principals in Written Communication

Sr No	Criteria (Types of written communication)	Responses							TOTAL
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
		Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not in the purview of the job	Would like to enhance the skills	
1	Letters	1 (2.56)	3 (7.69)	8 (20.51)	9 (23.07)	15 (38.46)	-	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
2	Memoranda	-	-	7 (17.94)	14 (35.89)	12 (30.76)	3 (7.69)	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
3	Instructions / Notices	2 (5.12)	2 (5.12)	3 (7.69)	11 (28.20)	17 (43.58)	1 (2.56)	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
4	Agenda	1 (2.56)	2 (5.12)	4 (10.25)	9 (23.07)	18 (46.15)	2 (5.12)	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
5	Reports	2 (5.12)	1 (2.56)	3 (7.69)	11 (28.20)	18 (46.15)	-	4 (10.25)	39 (100)
6	Minutes	2 (5.12)	2 (5.12)	2 (5.12)	11 (28.20)	14 (35.89)	5 (12.82)	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
7	Speeches	-	2 (5.12)	6 (15.38)	12 (30.76)	15 (38.46)	-	4 (10.25)	39 (100)
8	Reviews	-	2 (5.12)	9 (23.07)	11 (28.20)	10 (25.64)	4 (10.25)	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
9	Articles / Essays	-	1 (2.56)	10 (25.64)	12 (30.76)	10 (25.64)	1 (2.56)	5 (12.82)	39 (100)
10	Proposals	1 (2.56)	2 (5.12)	7 (17.94)	12 (30.76)	13 (33.33)	-	4 (10.25)	39 (100)
11	Academic papers	1 (2.56)	3 (7.69)	7 (17.94)	12 (30.76)	11 (28.20)	-	5 (12.82)	39 (100)
12	Preparing a portfolio	1 (2.56)	2 (5.12)	6 (15.38)	12 (30.76)	11 (28.20)	3 (7.69)	4 (10.25)	39 (100)
13	Any other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Nil

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

As evident from the Table 5.5a above, it is seen that the responses to the criteria 'sometimes', 'rarely' and 'never' having a problem with written

communication in the performance of their job – were found to be higher in number. But interestingly, upto around twelve percent of the respondents also said they would like to enhance their writing skills for different types of written communication.

In addition to the above, two respondents pointed out the following :

- i.) “‘Writing’ is very important, especially letters. How to write better can be learnt from good letters – specially sometimes those arriving from abroad. For example – they would use language like – ‘I urge you to’ etc.’ The writing is certainly ‘different’ – simple yet emphatic and clearly makes the point”.
- ii.) The respondent said that he faced a problem when he did not properly know the language in which he had to write; i.e. he could sometimes not find the appropriate words or sentences for expression. He added that he knew he himself needed to work on his vocabulary and practise writing to become more fluent with the same.

Table 5.5b

Assessment of the Needs of College Principals in Oral Communication

Sr No	Criteria (Types of oral communication)	Responses							TOTAL
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
		Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not in the pur-view of the job	Would like to enhance the skills	
1	Listening skills	3 (7.69)	3 (7.69)	5 (12.82)	8 (20.51)	17 (43.58)	-	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
2	Participating in meetings	3 (7.69)	1 (2.56)	5 (12.82)	12 (30.76)	15 (38.46)	-	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
3	Participating in group presentations	-	-	4 (10.25)	13 (33.33)	19 (48.71)	-	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
4	Presentation skills	1 (2.56)	3 (7.69)	6 (15.38)	11 (28.20)	14 (35.89)	-	4 (10.25)	39 (100)
5	Conducting meetings	-	3 (7.69)	4 (10.25)	11 (28.20)	18 (46.15)	-	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
6	Conducting interviews	-	1 (2.56)	9 (23.07)	7 (17.94)	19 (48.71)	-	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
7	Public speaking	-	2 (5.12)	8 (20.51)	11 (28.20)	15 (38.46)	-	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
8	Impromptu speaking	-	1 (2.56)	9 (23.07)	14 (35.89)	11 (28.20)	1 (2.56)	3 (7.69)	39 (100)
9	Receiving and giving feedback	1 (2.56)	2 (5.12)	8 (20.51)	12 (30.76)	12 (30.76)	-	4 (10.25)	39 (100)
10	Any other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Nil

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

As evident from the Table 5.5b above, it is seen that the responses to the criteria 'sometimes', 'rarely', and 'never' having a problem with oral communication in the performance of their job – were found to be higher in number. But interestingly, upto around ten percent of the respondents also said they would like to enhance their skills for different types of oral communication.

One respondent mentioned that he sometimes encountered problems with 'listening' – specially when the speaker was a foreigner. This was because, he said – the pronunciations and the speed of delivery of the person who was speaking were difficult to comprehend. Additionally, another respondent pointed out two criteria which were part of their routine oral communication at the job : (i) Enforcing discipline, (ii) Maintaining good humour. Stating it as an example to elaborate his point, the college principal narrated an incident. He said that at his college some of the staff and students approached him with a suggestion to have a regular daily prayer meeting in the morning before the start of the classes. The principal said he would allow the same if and only if everybody maintained the timing, attendance, general discipline and the dignity of prayers. "It should not be treated as a casual affair", he had said. His firm attitude and the way he communicated the same, made the staff and students reconsider their proposal. However, the respondent also emphasized that it was important to maintain an atmosphere of good humour at the work place in order to sustain a good ambience and work output. This, though possible through oral communication, was a very difficult thing to do – he said.

It thus appears that most of the respondents never really encountered problems with the different types of oral communication, but there were a few areas where they would like inputs to enhance their skills.

Overall it appears that most principals do not seem to be having any problems with written or oral communication since they have dealt with almost every type of situation, issues, and problems and with all kinds of people at different levels by the time they reach the position of a College Principal. And even in their seat as a Principal (since however many years they might have been so) – they need and most often they already possess / have cultivated qualities which enable them to deal with their job and the people around them as smoothly as possible. Their experience too as administrators which builds up over the years helps them sharpen their communication skills – and they may perhaps need only helpful tips for the same to enhance their performance.



Table 5.5c

Assessment of Needs of College Principals in terms of the
Use of Technology at Work for Communication

Sr. No.	Criteria (Types of office technology)	Responses							TOTAL
		1 Always	2 Fre- quently	3 Some- times	4 Rarely	5 Never	6 Not in the purview of the job	7 Would like to enhance the skills	
1	Photocopy machine and fax	1 (2.56)	3 (7.69)	-	11 (28.20)	6 (15.38)	12 (30.76)	6 (15.38)	39 (100)
2	Presentation using a computer	-	2 (5.12)	3 (7.69)	9 (23.07)	7 (17.94)	11 (28.20)	7 (17.94)	39 (100)
3	Using internet / worldwide web	1 (2.56)	-	4 (10.25)	10 (25.64)	6 (15.38)	11 (28.20)	7 (17.94)	39 (100)
4	Using e-mail	1 (2.56)	1 (2.56)	2 (5.12)	7 (17.94)	8 (20.51)	13 (33.33)	7 (17.94)	39 (100)
5	Using voice-mail	2 (5.12)	-	2 (5.12)	7 (17.94)	5 (12.82)	14 (35.89)	9 (23.07)	39 (100)
6	Any other : i) OHP (Overhead Projector) ii) Slide Projector for CR iii) Video Cassette Recorder iv) Television v) Tape- recorder			}		1 (2.56)			

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

As evident from the Table 5.5c above, it is seen that responses to the criteria
'not in the purview of the job' – were found to be higher in number. Significantly

though, upto around 35 percent of the respondents also wanted to enhance their skill for the use of technology at work.

One respondent (2.56%) additionally mentioned the use of the following technology (audio-visual aids) at work : Overhead projector, slide projector, video-cassette recorder, television and tape recorder; and said she rarely had a problem with the use of the same. And another respondent additionally pointed out that no advanced technological facilities were installed at his college and there was no question of use of the same.

The respondents of the study were mostly senior principals in whose earlier professional time the use of office technology (except perhaps the use of telephone and typewriter) was not as prevalent nor as indispensable – as present times. One of the respondents did convey that the use of office technology was not that prevalent or accessible in their prime time as now in any of the institutes he had served in his work tenure. Another respondent conveyed that he would like to update his skills on the use of office technology but faced two problems : (i) lack of time at work since as college principal / educational administrator he remained burdened with administrative work / problems, and (ii) having a mental block and some inhibitions towards new technologies

Thus, most of the respondents said that the use of office technology did not directly fall in the purview of their job, though they would like to have an understanding and basic functional skills for the same.

Table 5.5d

Assessment of Communication Needs of College Principals in terms of their
Administrative Functions / Responsibilities

Sr. No.	Criteria (Types of administrative functions and responsibilities)	Responses							TOTAL
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
		Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not in the purview of the job	Would like to enhance the skills	
1	Financial Planning	3 (7.69)	3 (7.69)	5 (12.82)	11 (28.20)	16 (41.02)	-	1 (2.56)	39 (100)
2	Staff Development	2 (5.12)	2 (5.12)	8 (20.51)	16 (41.02)	11 (28.20)	-	-	39 (100)
3	Student Development	2 (5.12)	4 (10.25)	3 (7.69)	16 (41.02)	14 (35.89)	-	-	39 (100)
4	Curriculum and Instructions	1 (2.56)	5 (12.82)	3 (7.69)	17 (43.58)	12 (30.76)	-	1 (2.56)	39 (100)
5	Evaluation	1 (2.56)	3 (7.69)	4 (10.25)	16 (41.02)	15 (38.46)	-	-	39 (100)
6	Media / Public relations	-	4 (10.25)	6 (15.38)	15 (38.46)	13 (33.33)	1 (2.56)	-	39 (100)
7	Government Relations	-	3 (7.69)	7 (17.94)	16 (41.02)	13 (33.33)	-	-	39 (100)
8	Interaction with affiliated university	1 (2.56)	1 (2.56)	9 (23.07)	13 (33.33)	15 (38.46)	-	-	39 (100)
9	Any other : 1.) Interaction with UGC	-	-	1 (2.56)	-	-	-	-	-

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

As evident from the Table 5.5d above, it is seen that the responses to the criteria 'sometimes', 'rarely' and 'never' having a problem with communication in

administrative functions and responsibilities – were found to be higher in number. Also, significantly – only a negligible one percent of the respondents mentioned a desire to enhance their skills for the same.

One respondent (2.56%) additionally mentioned that he sometimes faced problems in dealings / transactions with the UGC (University Grants Commission). Additionally, one of the respondents pointed out that one of the major problems he had with the affiliated university was that of receiving late circulars – because of which taking the required action on time became a problem.

Some of the problems that the College Principals did face stemmed according to them – more from lack of adequate infrastructural support, and losing a lot of time and energy following up matters with concerned authorities. In the process they said – there was often a loss of motivation; and as one of the College Principals pointed out – they were able to ‘manage’, but unable to ‘innovate’.

6. The respondents were asked whether a comprehensive self-study instructional module in communication would help, and if they had any suggestions for the same
- Thirtynine respondents said ‘yes’ and agreed that a self-instructional module in communication would certainly be of interest to them and would also help them enhance their skills in communication. (Two respondents, though, expressed they would not like to undergo any exhaustive training for the same, since they felt quite equipped and did not feel the need for further inputs immediately – in their given present circumstances.)

Approximately fiftyone percent of the respondents elaborated their views and the comments and suggestions given by them are quoted below verbatim :

- i.) “Yes, the module would be very useful”.
- ii.) “It’s important to overcome the barriers to communication. Language, vocabulary and connotations of words – is important to know and understand”.
- iii.) “Regular updating of information and statistical data and better exposure to modern, latest – electronic means of communication”.

- iv.) “The questionnaire (Needs Assessment Schedule) focuses on various areas and demands of communication at the upper level of an institute. Whosoever responds to it and later goes through the module would find it useful and interesting from the viewpoint of his/her own role in the context of the field of communication”.
- v.) “The module would be very useful. Computers and Internet – have become part and parcel of daily life”.
- vi.) “Yes, the module would be very useful. Learning communication skills is a continuing process”.
- vii.) “Yes, self study modules are always useful to enhance skills”.
- viii.) “Self study instructional modules in different areas of communication would help very much. The training would be very useful to enhance skills in communication”.
- ix.) “Innovative printed material in communication should be provided to concerned learners (College Principals)”.
- x.) “Yes, the module would be very useful; though communication is more ‘common sense’ (than anything else). A clear and clean mind can ‘see’ things better and resolve matters of concern more appropriately”.
- xi.) “I have always assisted ex-deans in all administrative, legal, and financial matters. However, because of recent installations of modern office and information technology (i.e. use of computers, networking, etc.); and not having much time to spare to learn these properly – I find it little difficult at times to operate smoothly”.
- xii.) “In the communication process, psychological factors are important. Everything depends on ones (professional) status – the nature of interactions one has; and also on ones frame of mind i.e. one may react in a particular way depending on the situation at that point. Through education one should learn to improvise. Change is imperative. One has to be a sensible and responsible administrator”.
- xiii.) “Communication is a must for developing / perpetuating culture. Creative output is a must. Even the educational system needs a change – specially

from it being an 'exam-oriented education' for students to a 'communication-oriented' one. Also, an overall interdisciplinary (subjectwise) approach to education needs to be initiated".

- xiv.) "Yes, a well designed module with specific objectives; and covering relevant areas in communication would definitely help".
- xv.) "Apart from skills for communication, 'attitude' – becomes a very important thing. It works either as a 'booster' or a 'barrier' to communication. Unless one is ready to listen to another or opposite point of view – keeping self-ego aside, effective communication would be a problem. Being the head of Communication School – and having to deal with University authorities, administrative staff, students and visiting faculty – including media professionals – has given me a true understanding of human nature".
- xvi.) "Communication through ones (own) behaviour is essentially one of the most important types – and not many people understand or follow that".
- xvii.) "Communication skills in English, Hindi and Gujarati – all need to sharpened in order to ensure that harmonious relations and compatible co functioning exist amongst all those who are a part of any educational institute. Good and appropriate language communication would strengthen the organization".
- xviii.) "It would be a helpful and very satisfactory experience to improve communication skills".
- xix.) "The module in communication would no doubt help – but what about the inadequacies and loopholes within the educational system itself? How does one handle that?"
- xx.) "The module is a must. If this is not done, principals will remain ill equipped".

Thus, the comments and suggestions of the respondents clearly make a very positive case for the preparation of the self-instructional module in communication for them (college principals) to study. This interpretation is in keeping with the

finding from the review of literature which supports the preparation and use of modules for knowledge or skills enhancement.

Further, some of respondents shared additional information with the researcher from their experiences as educational administrators – which is described below.

One of the respondents who spoke to the researcher in detail began by saying that his experience as a principal was different at different places. But because of his personal integrity, he said he could raise the standard of the college/s wherever he was posted. He said he was disappointed at some of the places because of the problem of indiscipline. At some places the behaviour of teachers was also problematic, he lamented. But he said that virtues are inborn, and inherent good qualities of the administrators themselves make a lot of difference. He conveyed that it was sometimes important to withhold important decisions even from subordinates; and strictness at different levels – whenever required – should be imposed. Talking of other administrative challenges – he said that for administrators in the educational systems – financial and legal matters and interaction with the UGC (University Grants Commission) on issues pertaining to the same, sometimes remain ‘grey’ areas, and they find the dealing difficult. It would help, he said, if concerned people got together and discussed the problems and share how they could circumvent the same – so that work may go on uninterrupted. Orientation Programmes for educational administrators would also help – he said.

Emphasising personal qualities as the most important though – he said he always maintained his humility at all times. But one should also maintain wit and dignity – he added and cited an example. Once, he said, when he entered a hall to attend a meeting as the convener, the people present in the hall went against the practice of standing up from their respective seated positions (i.e. they did not stand up to greet). He found this completely unacceptable since, he said, he did not expect to be paid personal respect, but the decorum of the meeting and practice of giving respect to chair must be maintained. So he went up to the chair and stood by it – but did not sit down. The others present in the hall soon realized their mistake

and they all stood up. Hence, he said, without uttering a single word he conveyed a big message to everyone around.

One of the respondents gave an interesting practical suggestion for enhancing functional communication. He said that the 'student-teacher-principal' communication in a college set-up was very important and to facilitate the same he suggested that a 'Communication box' be put up in the college premises hall or lobby so that whoever wanted to may drop their expressions, thoughts or messages into the box. The box would be opened on a weekly/fortnightly basis, the contents of which could be discreetly made known / discussed with the concerned persons. Care should be taken, though, he said, that this did not become an unsporty game of 'fish-pond' where everyone could vent whatever they wanted to. Another respondent who also discussed problems faced by educational administrators mentioned the following activities as sometimes turning problematic :

- i.) Conducting examinations
- ii.) Students elections
- iii.) Students union activities
- iv.) Sports activities.

But, he added, with growing experience each year, they become equipped enough to handle any situation that may arise during the conduct of the above mentioned or any other event.

Thus, the responses, comments and suggestions given by the College Principals are indeed interesting and useful enough to be incorporated into the module to be developed by the researcher.

Moreover, the responses and comments also reflect the preparedness of the respondents towards self-learning through the module, thereby making a very clear and positive case for its preparation and implementation.

5.3 Summation of the 'Needs Assessment' in Communication of College Principals

The following were the final Interpretations of the Communication Needs Assessment Survey :

- 1.) Most of the college principals were able to convey an understanding of 'Communication', though not all were very articulate in their expression of the same. And all of them did show an eagerness to know more about the different parameters of the concept of communication as delineated by the researcher --viz.-- an understanding of 'Communication', its elements, process, nature, types, functions, need, models, theories, barriers, and scope. Most of the college principals used the written mode (letters, circulars, notices) and the oral mode (meetings and discussions) of communication most of the time at the work place, while only a few of them used the computers or any other office technology (except the telephone) by themselves.
- 2.) From the Needs Assessment Survey it was found that a very low percentage (upto around five percent) of the respondents conveyed 'always' and 'frequently' having problems with the two main communication modes (oral and written) mentioned in the needs assessment schedule criteria; while a high percentage (upto around fiftyfive percent) of the respondents conveyed having problems only 'sometimes', 'rarely', or 'never' with the use of the same as also with administrative functions and responsibilities. With the entire criteria of the use of technology at work, and a few other criteria in written and oral communication – upto fifteen percent of the respondents conveyed that these areas of work did not fall directly in the purview of their job. And upto about twentyfive percent of the respondents conveyed that they would like to know more / enhance their understanding of the various parameters of 'Communication' as a concept.
- 3) The respondents who mentioned about the use of technology not directly falling in the purview of their job – additionally conveyed to the researcher that there were some pertinent reasons for their not being able to use office technology very easily :
 - (1) They remained very preoccupied with policy and administrative matters and had little time to work at and attain expertise with modern technology.

(They would thus hire help or get the work done with the help of office staff.)

- (ii) Due to budgetary constraints, all of the modern office / other new technologies could not be installed at their colleges; hence due to the problem of access, they remained inadequately equipped to handle the same. But most of the respondents also said that despite all constraints they recognized their usefulness and knew that they would certainly like to have an understanding of their use, and with persistent hands-on experience with the same, they would definitely like to acquire atleast the basic functional skills for operating the systems.
- 4.) The researcher observed that the college principals were senior, experienced and equipped enough to combat any problems they may encounter while dispensing their administrative functions and responsibilities. Almost all of the principals conveyed that whatever difficult situations did arise were more due to infrastructural constraints rather than any other factor. During the interaction with the college principals, some of them did talk to the researcher – rather informally though – about ‘getting work done’ and dealing with ‘difficult’ persons at all levels at the work place – being a bigger administrative challenge than any other ! Thus indeed, the importance of recognizing and enhancing the importance of interpersonal communication skills.
- 5.) The categorization of ‘Communication’ into the different functional areas in the Needs Assessment Schedule itself prompted the academic layout of the module to be prepared for college principals. This was as under :
- (i) Conceptual understanding of Communication
 - (ii) Organizational Communication
 - (iii) Oral Communication
 - (iv) Written Communication
 - (v) Use of technology in Communication.

All of the above categories had been respectively broken down into different units or segments enabling the respondents to answer questions to these with ease and clarity. The respondents also approved of the above as the ‘Heads’ under which the content of the module would be developed.

In the Needs Assessment Schedule the researcher had included 'Organizational Communication' as a parameter of the conceptual understanding of Communication. But since quite a high percentage of respondents showed an inclination towards knowing more about it and since it is an extensive subject area by itself, the researcher would later separate it out as a section in the module. Written and Oral Communication too are modes or channels of communication used by persons in organizations, and technology is used to facilitate all communication in an organizational setting. Hence 'Oral Communication', 'Written Communication', and 'Use of Technology in Communication' would be included as separate units in the section on Organizational Communication. This would enhance clarity of presentation and ease understanding as also allow for accommodating adequate information per se on all the topics to be covered in the module.

The Needs Assessment Survey helped the researcher establish priorities in the content to be included in the module – which would cater to the precise needs in 'Communication' which emerged from the entire exercise with the college principals. Clearly, the respondents wanted inputs in specific areas of the 'Concept of Communication', and 'Written' and 'Oral' Communication. Most of them were not too keen on detailed inputs on the 'Use of Technology in Communication'; and confident of their administrative abilities they conveyed that they did not really need inputs for the same. Thus some of the criteria delineated under the 'Administrative Functions / Responsibilities' by the researcher which otherwise also came under the purview of 'Organizational Dynamics' could now be included in the section on 'Organizational Communication' in the module.

Thus the Needs Assessment Survey affirmed that the preparation of a self-instructional module in communication would be definitely useful to fulfil the needs – as assessed – of the college principals to enhance their skills for the same.

The assessment also paved the way for finalizing the structure and formulating specific content for inclusion in the module on Communication to make it optimally beneficial to the college principals.