

## CHAPTER VII

### FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The researcher had undertaken in her study a 'Role Analysis' and a 'Needs Assessment' Survey before developing the self-instructional module in Communication for College Principals, implementing it to them, and evaluating its utility vis-à-vis the enhancement of their communication skills.

#### 7.1 Findings

The following are the significant findings of all the procedures undertaken:

##### 7.1.1 Significant Findings of 'Role Analysis'

It clearly appeared to the researcher that the nature, dimensions and intensity of the problems faced by principals varied depending on the subjects being taught at the respective colleges – and they had to deal with the same according to the nuances of the situation presented to them.

Moreover, there were some major duties and responsibilities which college principals had to shoulder in their roles as heads of institutes. These the researcher discerned from her interaction with the college principals and are as follows :

- 1) Inadequate staff and infrastructure to cope with the thousands of students seeking admission each year.
- 2) Admission time pressures, including having to cope with threats, man-handling, destruction and violence by blundering students, their leaders, and vested interest lobbyists.
- 3) Conducting annual elections for student representatives which usually whip up a lot of positive and negative emotions and passion on campus – beginning with campaigning to the time the election results are announced. And it doesn't end there, because then the problems with the Students Union and its activities would begin.

- 4) Hosting cultural events / activities / youth meets where thousands of students would gather and interact over a few days; and till all of it passed off peacefully, the principals remained under pressure.
- 5) Hosting sports events (unfortunately sports activities are usually relegated to the background) – which really need to be encouraged by college principals; but end up being a lot of work for which not all staff members extend necessary cooperation.
- 6) The main concern of all principals is the peaceful passing off of examinations – both internal and final. They said that almost every year they had to deal with delays in conducting examinations, sometimes owing to strikes by students – demanding postponement, cuts in syllabus, or full option in the question papers; and sometimes owing to disruptions in the academic routines owing to natural or manmade calamities. Conducting examinations is itself such a tedious affair – from getting papers set to organizing seating arrangements, ensuring smooth circulation of question papers and answer books; maintaining vigilance at the time of the exams, collection of the same at the end of the exam; and later distribution of answer books for correction, and finally announcing results on time. In colleges with a semester system, all of this procedure has to be conducted twice a year.
- 7) And inextricably woven into the fabric of all of the above, in small or big measures, was the ‘crime’ element – and having to handle that – one of the most challenging tasks for the principals. Round the year, for different reasons; mostly – for elections and examinations, the college principals have to coordinate and arrange for security with the police.

Thus, it was often that the college principals found themselves involved with tasks which were far removed from their academic or administrative responsibilities, sometimes playing a role they would have hardly envisaged for themselves.

### **7.1.2 Significant Findings of the ‘Needs Assessment’ Survey in Communication**

The following are the significant findings of the Communication Needs Assessment Survey of College Principals :

- 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 :

- (i) 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.

### **7.1.3 Significant Findings of the Evaluation of the Module**

It clearly emerges from the above analysis that the 'Communication Module' has definitely been useful to College Principals to help enhance their communication skills and competence to optimally perform at work. The most positive response was to the Sections 1 and 2A on the 'Conceptual Understanding of Communication' and 'Organizational Communication and its Dynamics' respectively. The Sections on Oral and Written Communication too had been found useful by the learners, while the last section on the use of technology for communication evoked an interest in them to know and learn more about computers and the Internet. The college principals also seemed keen to read up further on the areas which may have particularly interested them more and put in more conscious efforts into their manifest 'communication' at all levels.

Moreover, though the module has been primarily prepared for College Principals, it clearly appeared from the opinions expressed by them (and other experts whom the researcher met during the proceeds of her work) that the module could also be of use, with necessary modifications, to all educational administrators, managers, leaders, academicians, or any other persons genuinely interested in the same; to place communication concepts in appropriate perspective and help enhance communication skills which would enable more meaningful and satisfying work performance and output.

Also, in context of future utilization in terms of research and policy prescription, the present study offers scope to explore possibilities to work further with different target groups; as also lay emphasis on 'communication' orientation / study programmes for all groups of professionals and different sections of society –

to impart (at least) a fundamental understanding of 'communication' to them and thereby attempt to infuse into the different strata of society – an appropriate and useful flow of knowledge, thought, and action.

Further, the respondents had found the sequencing and flow of the module logical and smooth, and could work through the module within the timeframe allotted by researcher of eight to ten weeks. They said that they found the module to be a rich text and communication resource which had helped them to enhance their communication skills and performance.

## **7.2 Conclusion**

'Communication' is indeed the key element, a fulcrum – on which depends a lot of how the odds and evens of the organizational climate turn .., and yet it is one of the most overlooked aspects of educational administration and teaching. 'Communication' is fundamental to all organizational life, particularly life in educational institutes. As Simon argued as early as 1957, in his volume 'Administrative Behaviour', "Without communication there can be no organization". Yet, the diverse nature of the concept and its branched development among disciplines over time have led "the experimentalist, the historian, and theoretician alike in different and sometimes contradictory directions" (Dance, 1970). Review of the concept of communication in the context of formal and informal systems in educational organizations, and more research related to 'communication' teaching and learning would be of great significance and would contribute a lot to the field. It would also help provide alternative viable means by which sociocultural norms may be examined, debated and upgraded to encourage multicultural dialogue aimed at the reform and improvement of our nation's educational institutes. And indeed, the incorporation of the formal study of 'communication' into administrator and teacher preparation programmes can only enhance the achievement of this important objective.

There could also be a case for the reconceptualization of the role of principal – i.e. to go beyond 'instruction' and being 'internally focussed' and to move

towards the 'community' and external constituents – i.e. to have a 'community leadership role'. Current societal realities suggest keeping and cultivating an interdependence between educational institutes and communities from a transformative perspective. As far the 'conflict management' and 'interpersonal communication' style of the principal is concerned, it was expected that they should have an ability to communicate organizational goals, and be able to exercise effective communication. Though conflict cannot be completely eliminated, the administration should be able to control the effects of conflict by altering the amount experienced at various levels. The principals ability to manage the different types of organizational conflict – impacts worker productivity and therefore directly influences the outcomes of the progress towards improving institutional achievement.

Thus, the following are some of the essential qualities looked for in persons aspiring to be 'principals' : Administrative experience, instructional focus, finely tuned decision making skills, a sense of justice and fairplay, a focus on community and instructional leadership, and finally – sharp communication skills. But there are some factors which deter teachers from seeking principalship – the main ones being the nature of the responsibilities bringing with them expectations of high accountability to the management and university authorities and a not so high compensation to meet all of this. Moreover, difficulties of geographical locations of colleges, possibilities of transfers and placements in mofussil areas may also be at times demotivating factors for acceptance of principalship.

In the context of the present study, the 'communication module' was developed with the expectation that the target learners viz. the College Principals – who would go through the exercise in self-learning would enhance skills necessary to be active and effective administrators. They would additionally cultivate / hone an appropriate attitude in terms of positive changes in their thinking; as well as gain inputs for grooming certain other personality traits – all of which together would work to help them resolve issues and conflicts which they commonly face in the proceeds of their work, as also enjoy a better sense of satisfaction and meaningfulness.



In conclusion, it may be reiterated that the 'communication module' worked out to be useful to the target group of College Principals and it also emerged that it had scope of broader utilization – with necessary modifications, to be of use to all present and future learners as also to any person genuinely interested – to place communication concepts in appropriate perspective and help enhance communication skills which would enable more meaningful and satisfying work performance and output.

Thus, in light of all the above discussion and the parameters covered in the entire study and the module, it is imperative that the necessary 'communication inputs' through appropriate modes should cut across all sections of society and percolate and reach all persons – to enhance 'communication understanding and practice' – which indeed is now clearly emerging as essential in all its manifest utilization as an important 'life skill'.

### 7.3 Recommendations

It emerged from the study that the module may be recommended for study to all educational administrators including school principals, heads of autonomous institutes or any other since the issues they may be facing may be similar to those of college principals. All administrators involved with policy level work or even persons employed in the government administrative sectors would benefit from an exercise in self-learning in communication.

Suggestions for further research in the area include trying out the module on an experimental basis and looking at the variations in enhanced learning considering sampling of college principals based on different criteria for the colleges namely, urban or rural location of the college, colleges for only girls or co-educational colleges, colleges of different mediums of instruction, different nature of funding of colleges, etc.

Moreover the module could be translated in Gujarati to be of more use to persons with a knowledge and understanding of the vernacular language only. *Thus, in the final analysis, one may say that –*  
Ultimately, 'Communication' empowers. It is one of the most important elements that ensures interactional efficiency. A mutual exchange of information

in appropriate ways among different users, across all levels of hierarchy in any organizational setting, facilitates the sharing of ideas and opinions and coming to a common level of understanding – regardless of any limitations. It is therefore important for administrators to focus on self-appraisal processes and taking up performance improvement action in order to equip themselves with comprehensive knowledge and understanding, and acquiring skills to enhance communication performance.