

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to present findings from the review of related literature pertaining of organizational communication and preparation of self-instructional material for educational administrators and its effectiveness. Owing to the interdisciplinary nature of the study, the literature reviewed was quite varied in nature and content.

2.1 Background to the Review of Literature

The researcher initiated the review with a scrutiny of literature on organizational communication since it was important to address oneself as a researcher to this academic field, beginning by acknowledging two important facts: viz. 1.) that the subject matter associated with the field has been designated by a variety of labels, of which 'Organizational Communication' is the most recent. Of course, this label did not achieve general use until the late 1960s or perhaps even the early 1970s; moreover, in the 1980s other labels frequently emerged, and 2.) Academic course work and research programs dealing with organizational communication always have been, and still are, offered in a bewildering diversity of departments or other administrative units. These include such entities as business administration, financial management, industrial management, psychology, sociology, speech (oral) communication, and, finally, communication. The historical overview to the emergence of 'Organizational Communication' as a concept has been reviewed in detail for the present study.

Next, the researcher reviewed some work on 'Job Satisfaction', since in her own study, she worked on the premise that job satisfaction is to a great extent determined by the 'communication' component as manifest in the varied demands of the nature of the work in all the different professions. Literature which emphasized the significance of 'life-long education' for all was also reviewed. The relevance of this concept lies in making a case for taking steps to sustain interest

and cultivate an attitude among adult learners of keeping a readiness for self-learning to enhance required skills. Literature in the context of 'Role Analysis' and 'Needs Assessment' was looked at vis-à-vis the methodology undertaken by the researcher for the purpose of the study. No relevant studies, though, pertaining to or focusing on the 'role analysis' and 'needs assessment in communication' aspects were found, and the researcher thus explored literature on the same in terms of conceptual understanding and in meaning per se. Lastly and importantly, literature pointing to the need for research and documentation in the area of communication for educational administrators was reviewed.

2.2 Excerpts from Documents Reviewed

Following are the relevant excerpts from the documents reviewed by the researcher :

2.2.1 Organizational Communication : The Story of a Label

According to Redding (1985), labels can be no more than lexical tags, or they can speak volumes about their referents. When "business and industrial" was generally dislodged by "organizational" as a modifier, this symbolized what one could nominate as the most important conceptual shift in the history of the field : the final acceptance of the blatantly obvious fact that the world is full of many kinds of organizations in addition to just those we call businesses and industries.

Moreover, the noun term "communication" is also noteworthy. It gradually came to replace narrower labels denoting such specific skills (or processes) as "speaking" and "writing", not to mention even narrower ones like "public speaking", "report writing", and "corporate publications". Although we can find instances of "communication" – or its variants, "communicate" and "communications" – in the business literature as early as the late nineteenth century, the term appears to have become popular only after the United States entered World War II. A six-year period, 1942-1947, has been identified as "The Seminal Years" in the history of the field. It was during these years that "communication" emerges repeatedly in both academic and nonacademic

publications. However, the cases in which “communication” was paired with “organizational” were extremely rare until the 1960s. We now get down to specifics about the phrase “organizational communication”, in its literal lexical form.

The answer to the question, “Who first used the label ‘organizational communication’, and when?” is that nobody knows. However, one can locate some early examples – very few before 1960. First we find that H.A. Simon, renowned authority on organization theory (and a Nobel laureate), used a phrase very similar to “organizational communication”. In his classic treatise *Administrative Behavior* (1945) he discussed “organization communications” systems. Note the omission of the suffix *al*, and the plural *s*.

Simon left no doubt, in his separate chapter devoted entirely to “communication” (the generic term, no *s*), that the basic process of communication was of the highest importance in his theory of organizational behavior. Simon is famous for positing the “decisional premise” as the fundamental unit of organizational functioning. It was in this frame of reference that he offered a formal definition of communication as “any process whereby decisional premises are transmitted from one member of an organization to another” (Simon, 1945 : 154).

However, despite his sophisticated theorizing, Simon was also able to slip into a less exalted view of communication in the organizational setting. Modern readers may be startled, for example, by such pronouncements as the following :

The crucial point is whether the recipient of an order, or of any other kind of communication, is influenced by the communication in his actions or decisions, or whether he is not. The problem of securing employees’ compliance with a safety rule is not *very different from the problem of securing a customer’s acceptance of a particular brand of soap* [Simon, 1945 : 164; emphasis added].

Indeed, Simon proposed that there are just two basic dimensions characterizing all organizational messages : “intelligibility” and “persuasiveness” (p. 171).

Those who are familiar with “Boulwarism”, the labor relations philosophy espoused by Lemuel R. Boulware, vice president of General Electric in the 1940s and 1950s, may recall that Boulware also insisted that persuasion was the major objective of corporate (that is, managerial) communication. It is not enough, Boulware said repeatedly, for management to “do right”. The company must also *persuade* its employees that it is indeed doing right. In one of his earliest published statements, Boulware (1948) urged managers to *sell* their employees (see Baritz, 1960 : 242; also Northrup, 1964 : 25-36). Whether Boulware had read Simon (1945) is, of course, impossible to determine. What matters is that, at least in some limited respects, the views of the theoretician Simon and of the corporate manager Boulware overlapped. This can be said while at the same time honoring Simon for having made some of the most creative and sophisticated contributions to the theory of communication in this century.

In 1951 Bavelas and Barrett, two mathematically oriented experimenters, published a paper that has become one of the most influential publications in the history of the field – a paper with the precise lexical phrase “organizational communication” in its title : “An Experimental Approach to Organizational Communication”. Like Simon, they postulated communication as a fundamental determinant of organization :

Simon (1945) : “Communication is absolutely essential to organization”.

Bavelas and Barrett (1951) : It [communication] is the essence of organized activity and is the basic process out of which all other functions derive”.

The authors went further to suggest a minimum of three basic dimensions of organizational communication : (1) message content, (2) technique (for example, rhetorical devices), and (3) channels. Then they proceeded to devote their research report entirely to the last of these : channels – or networks. The paper described experimental manipulations of communication channels in small (five-person) groups, operating in highly controlled laboratory settings. Results were couched

largely in terms of effects upon speed and accuracy of problem solving, as compared with effects upon “morale”.

Although conducted with small groups in restricted settings, and with highly artificial modes of transmitting messages, the Bavelas and Barrett (1951) study was a pioneer in the network tradition. If we were to select a single contribution as the starting point for the network approach to the study of organizational communication, the Bavelas and Barrett paper would probably qualify. However, it would have to share this particular “first” with another influential paper published the same year (1951) by Jacobson and Seashore. The difference between the two is important. Whereas Bavelas and Barrett concerned themselves with a small laboratory group operating under artificial, controlled circumstances, Jacobson and Seashore applied network analysis to a large real-life organization (n=204), using a descriptive rather than experimental design. Also, Jacobson and Seashore spoke in terms of “communication practices in complex organizations” and especially of the “communication structure of organization”; at no time did they use the label “organizational communication”.

Five years after the Bavelas and Barrett article had appeared, the journal *Advanced Management* printed an essay by Professor Harold Zelko of Pennsylvania State University. A widely known professor of speech and consultant to corporations and government agencies, Zelko addressed himself to the problem of determining the overall effectiveness of a business firm’s total communication efforts. “How effective are your company communication?” (Zelko, 1956). What concerns us here is that the label “organizational communication” was a prominent feature of the Zelko article. More important, the article itself was a preview and summary of major topics discussed in a college-level textbook, written by Zelko and a coauthor, the following year : *Management-Employee Communication in Action* (Zelko and O’Brien, 1957).

Both in the article and in the textbook, the phrase “organizational communication” was used in a less-than-comprehensive sense. First, two broad divisions of the total subject were delineated, under the labels “internal communication” and “external communication”. No label was offered that would

embrace both these divisions : Obviously, the title of the book, *Management-Employee Communication in Action*, could not logically subsume the heading “external”. One might imagine that “organizational” would have been reserved to provide a single, comprehensive designator – at least for all “internal” communication phenomena. But such was not the case. The authors, rather surprisingly (as it appears from the vantage point of the 1980s), chose to subdivide “internal communication” into two areas, one of which was called “organizational”; the other, “interpersonal communication”. In fact, they went so far as to declare, “It is a *long jump* from organizational to interpersonal communication”, adding that “the close, personal relation between supervisor and worker and between employees themselves is the *key* to the communication system” (Zelko and O’Brien, 1957 : 21; emphasis added).

One can justifiably regard the Zelko and O’Brien (1957) book as the first comprehensive, college-level *textbook* taking a broad view of *communication* in the organizational setting – as contrasted to earlier titles that consistently dealt only with restricted aspects of communication, such as speaking or writing. Adapting principles taught in speaking and writing courses (especially group discussion), rather than findings from “scientific” research, Zelko and O’Brien set out to provide a general-purpose guide to practical application. Considerably more than half their book was devoted to specific, detailed instructions for improving communication skills – with heaviest emphasis upon the oral situations of public speaking, conversation, interview, and small-group conference. As the authors pointed out in the preface :

The principles and suggestions in this book are the result of years of experience in organizing and conducting training programs in communication. We have found our proving ground for testing our theories and methods in many consultative activities with groups and industries (Zelko and O’Brien : xiii).

Whereas Zelko and O’Brien (1957) were offering a practical textbook and singing the praises of communication as a humanizing elixir in organizational life,

another book came out in the same year that could almost be regarded as a point-by-point rebuttal of Zelko and O'Brien. Chris Argyris – who has since become one of the most famous authorities on organizational behavior – published *Personality and Organization*. Ostensibly a painstaking, scholarly review of the theoretical and research literature (and, in fact, a very good one), the book is much more. It is a well-documented polemic, attacking the typical modern organization as an engine of destruction, frustrating any “mature” needs its members might harbor. It is included in the present discussion because : (a) it singles out “organizational communication” for special attention, and (b) it brings its heaviest artillery to bear against the then-popular precepts of “human relations”, with particular reference to corporate communication programs. Argyris directly challenges many of the most widely touted communication “rules”, arguing that most organizational communication practices are based upon such assumptions as “management knows best”, and employees “are inherently lazy” or stupid. Communication programs, he charges, are filled with mindless gimmicks derived from the “human relations fad” (Argyris, 1957 : 139-174). Although much of the research cited by Argyris is now outdated, contemporary students of organizational communication would do well to go back and read his book, for much of what he says still poses a cogent critique of important concepts and premises in the field.

Further, looking at publications that appeared until the end of the 1950s, we find no important documents other than the few already cited that featured “organizational communication” as a title or chapter heading. What terminology, then, was in fashion during those early years? The fact is that no single label earned unanimous support. However, as the years passed, the terms “business”, “industrial”, and especially “business and industrial” appear to have been used more often than any others. When one adds such adjectives as “administrative”, “managerial”, “corporate”, “employee”, or “management-employee”, about ninety percent of all the modifiers paired with “communication” are accounted for.

One key development, however, must be noted : the rapid increase – after 1940 – in the frequency with which “communication” (or one of its variants) was used. Two psychologists, Sexton and Staudt (1959) published an exhaustive

review of the literature, using the overall label “business communication”. This is the earliest systematic and comprehensive literature review to be completed in the history of the field. The authors listed a total of 178 titles, the great majority of which had appeared between 1945 and 1958. Of these 178 entries, the only one displaying “organizational communication” in the title was the piece discussed earlier by Bavelas and Barrett (1951). But a quick count indicates that about one hundred, or almost 60 percent of the whole list, contained “communications”, or “communicate” in their titles. Before 1940, any derivative of the verb “communicate” was a rare occurrence in publications dealing with subject matter relevant to this chapter.

However, while “communication” was steadily gaining ground throughout the 1940s, “organization” did not fare nearly so well. Of the 178 items in the Sexton and Staudt (1959) review, only three revealed in their titles any variant of the term “organization”. This is a highly significant fact, for it reflects the astounding reluctance, on the part of both scholars and practitioners, to conceptualize “organization” as a genre in its own right. Everyone was preoccupied with one or more particular types of organization; business, industry, the military, government, and the like. But it was not until 1958 that March and Simon published their groundbreaking book *Organizations*. And when the pioneering anthology *Modern Organization Theory* appeared the following year, the editor remarked, “Even ten years ago, it would not have been possible to bring together such a group of papers”, considering that “the term ‘organization theory’ itself would have seemed out of place” (Haire, 1959 : 1). Reflecting upon this state of affairs, then, we can hardly be surprised that several years were to pass before the phrase “organizational communication” achieved a semblance of general currency.

The fact is, the label “organizational communication” did not resurface with significant frequency until the late 1960s. A convenient landmark event is the “Conference on Organizational Communication”, which took place at the Marshall Space Flight Center, in Huntsville, Alabama, August 8-11, 1967 (Richetto, 1967). Under the direction of Walter Wiesman, internal communication coordinator for

the Marshall Center (NASA), the four-day conference brought together management representatives from government agencies and MSFC contractors, as well as academic specialists from four universities. The major address, delivered by Phillip K. Tompkins (then of Wayne State University, and a consultant to the Center) consisted of a comprehensive review of *empirical research* that had been completed in the field up to that time. It was a pioneering "state-of-the-art" effort, and the earliest (to my knowledge) to be published explicitly under the title "organizational communication" (Tompkins, 1967). This 1967 conference at Huntsville was also, so far as can be determined, the first conference specifically devoted to theory and research (along with implications for practice) ever held under the label "organizational communication".

Coincidentally, the earliest known bibliography of the field to be published under the "organizational communication" label also made its appearance in 1967 : Voos (1967). Like the NASA conference at Huntsville, this project was also underwritten by a government agency, the Office of Naval Research. Thus, with these two events occurring in the same year, one could nominate 1967 as "*The Year of Official Acceptance*" in history. (An important literature review and bibliography had, indeed, appeared in 1965, under the authorship of Harold Guetzkow; but its title was "Communications in Organizations" (Guetzkow, 1965).

Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that the basic contours of "organizational communication" were determined by around 1950, with no drastic changes for the next fifteen to twenty years, and the 'official acceptance' of the label accomplished in 1967.

2.2.2 Organizational Communication in India : Preliminary Findings from an Empirical Study

This study by Dholakia (2002), being essentially empirical in nature, is based on primary data relating to Indian organizations. The primary data has been collected through a sample survey based on a questionnaire focusing on the following aspects of organizational communication :

- (a) Nature of Communication, focusing on the proportion of working time spent in talking and listening and also the perceived extent of non-verbal communication.
- (b) Communication Content, focusing on the communication of compliments and criticism across levels.
- (c) Communication Outcomes, focusing on the communication goof-ups and the degree of satisfaction with one's communication dealings within the organization.

An attempt has been made in the study to try and examine communication dealings by differentiating between the people working in the Corporate and Academic Organizations; and Males and Females.

The study highlights significant differences between males and females in terms of several aspects of organizational communication. There are a few differences in some aspects of organizational communication between the people working in the corporate and academic organizations.

The main findings of the study reflect that organizational communication has been viewed as highly significant by all the respondents without exception. While commenting on the significance of communication at the workplace, many respondents observed that communication is the lifeline of the organization and the overall effectiveness of the organization depends critically on the nature, content and outcome of organizational communication.

Based on the findings of the sample survey, the following preliminary conclusions can be drawn :

- Persons working in the corporate and academic organizations in India spend more time in talking than listening.
- Almost all employees use non-verbal communication at all levels and across all categories.
- Frequency of complimenting is higher than that of criticizing and compliments are also conveyed much earlier than criticisms at all levels and across all categories.

- Most of the employees face the problem of communication goof-ups regardless of the level or the category; though by and large they are satisfied in their communication dealings with their colleagues and subordinates but not so satisfied in their dealings with the boss.
- There are significant differences between males and females in terms of several aspects of organizational communication.
- There are a few differences in some aspects of organizational communication between the people working in the corporate and academic organizations.

In most cases, the differences in the given aspects of organizational communication across categories and levels observed in this study seem to corroborate the broad conceptual patterns emerging from the available literature on organizational communication.

2.2.3 The Context of Job Satisfaction

Being 'satisfied' is one of the most important criteria one ascribed to work. According to Hoppock (1935), job satisfaction is any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances that causes a person truthfully to say, "I am satisfied with my job".

Job satisfaction stands for the complex state of the workers attitude towards work (Blun, 1956). In other words, it is a 'verbal expression of an incumbents evaluation of his/her job' (Katzell, 1957). According to Smith et al (1969), it represents the difference between what is expected and what is experienced in relation to the alternatives available in a given job situation. Thus it represents the degree of satisfaction obtained by the individual employee from performing the job (Chatterjee, 1970). It expresses the extent of agreement between ones expectations of the job and the rewards that the job provides (Davis, 1981).

Several theories exist concerning the dynamics of job satisfaction and its general impact upon worker behaviour.

Further, Kanungo (1982), has drawn a subtle distinction between job involvement and work involvement. He regarded work involvement as a

generalized cognitive state of psychological identification with work, when work is considered to have the power to satisfy ones needs and aspirations. On the other hand, according to him, job involvement refers to a specific cognitive belief-state of psychological identification with the present job. Besides, job involvement is influenced by the situational, personal-psychological, and the demographic variables of an individual in a specific socio-economic and cultural milieu.

2.2.4 Importance of Life-Long Learning

According to Singh (2001), life-long education should enable people to develop a better awareness of themselves and their environment, of their strengths and weaknesses; and encourage them to play their social role at work, in the community, and in the government of the country. However, while planning any programme of education, its following characteristics should be kept in mind :

- i.) It should be need-based
- ii.) It should encourage creativity
- iii.) It should help in solving problems
- iv.) It should bring in desirable changes in knowledge, attitude and skills, and
- v.) It should create and sustain interest among the learners.

An effective life-long education system is possible only through intelligent selection and proper use of various communication channels. Too often, we have pushed ill-conceived messages through weak communication channels to inappropriate audiences. In addition to the age-old person-to-person communication, the latest communication strategies to spread messages quickly and effectively should also be employed.

Moreover, emphasis of research should also shift as suggested below :

- i.) Shifting attention from end users to decision-making process
- ii.) Emphasising the role of Education in the structural change process
- iii.) Shifting attention from individual effects to institutional effects
- iv.) Laying greater emphasis on improving quality output by ensuring peoples' professional upgradation too.

A powerful and innovative communication programme can play a significant role in motivating masses towards self improvement.

Communication and education are the primary tools for conscientizing the people towards organizing themselves to take actions necessary for their emancipation and development. Knowledge can prepare the people to discover their strengths and weaknesses and their potential role in the process of change and development. Communication is the tool in the hands of educators to bring desirable changes in the knowledge, attitude and skills of the people through information, helping them to help themselves through active participation. An appropriate communication strategy based on a multimedia approach; deliberately planned, organized and directed in a manner and form which are popularly relevant to the changing environment and the desired change would be essential for the success of all the life-long learning programmes.

2.2.5 The Context of Role Analysis

In the context of Role Analysis, Pande (1989) in her study “A Study of Role Analysis – Role Enactment, Role Contentment and Role Constraint of Home Science College Teachers” stated that the role concept was introduced into the terminology of social sciences by Linton (1936) whose first formulation about role was :

A status, as distinct from the individual who may occupy it, is simply a collection of rights and duties ... A role represents the dynamic aspect of a status When (an individual) puts the rights and duties into effect, he is performing a role ... Status and role serve to reduce the ideal patterns for social life to individual terms. They become models for organizing the attitude and behaviour of the individual so that these will be congruous with those of other individuals participating in the expression of the pattern.

In this definition – status and role are pictured as two aspects of the same thing and quite inseparable. Linton (1945) in his later book shifted his emphasis to introduce new features. He states :

The term 'role' will be used to designate the sum total of the culture patterns associated with a particular status. It thus includes the attitudes, values and behaviours ascribed by the society to any and all persons occupying the status. It can even be extended to include the legitimate expectations of such persons with respect to the behaviour towards them of persons in other statuses within the same system.

In this definition 'role' is an ideal pattern of conduct which actual behaviour rarely quite fulfills. Newcomb T.H. (1950) does not follow Linton's use of 'status' but instead pictures every member of a society as occupying a 'position'; each position has a function in the life of a group and consists of rules concerning behaviour towards others. The ways of behaving which are expected of any individual who occupies a certain position constitute the role ... associated with that position. Talcott Parsons (1951) states that in his terminology every position consists of two halves – the role, denoting its obligations, and the status, referring to its rights. Though Parsons suggested that the consensus over the content of roles may be related to the stability and integration of the system, and to the commitment of individuals to particular roles, he also indicates to assume consensus in practice. Banton (1968) states that behaviour can be related to the individual's own ideas of what is appropriate (role cognitions) or other people's ideas about what he should not do (Norms). In this light, Banton states that a role may be understood as a set of norms or expectations applied to the incumbent of a particular position.

2.2.6 The Context of Needs Assessment

According to Dooley (1995), the Needs Assessment stage identifies goals, but does not determine whether the programme has met the goals. Thus, needs assessment occurs in the early, formative stages of programme planning. Often based on surveys or archival data, needs assessment searches for an unmet need and

describes its size and location. The resulting data both – justify the programme and set its goals. Ideally, programmes should dispense their resources giving priority to those areas and populations in greatest need. The failure to conduct a needs assessment can lead to waste. For example, an existing project may expand not because of documented need but because of staff enthusiasm. As a result, scarce resources may go to people with little needs or needs different from the ones best met by the programme. Needs assessment can also help in the later judgement of programme impact by setting clear goals against which to measure the intervention. In case of the present study, it would be relevant to look at or try to assess the communication needs of College Principals in the context of their job setting in order to ensure that the self-study module to be developed for them would serve the required purpose of skills enhancement.

2.2.7 Relevance of Utility of Subject Matter / Content

Thomas (1984) in her study stated that : for instructional purpose, deciding and preparing the content or subject matter is the most important and crucial task needing a great deal of attention. The subject matter should be selected on the basis of its assurance of future utility. Tefler (1979) while discussing the theory of futurism in relation to the field of education indicated that, nothing should be included in a required curriculum unless it can be strongly justified in terms of future, even at the cost of scrapping a substantial part of the formal curriculum. It does not hint at total destruction of past or total removal of the basic knowledge. What it means is that the subjects whose ‘present’ and future utility is questionable should be removed to make room for more beneficial subjects. He suggested Mass Communication and certain common skills needed for human communication / integration as having high future utility. Musgrove (1968) also suggested that broad flexible curricula should be developed in line with major trends in the society.

2.2.8 Need for the Development of a 'Communication Module' for Educational Administrators

An important concern that has been reflected in some doctoral researches and research projects is to draw, of course with discrimination, upon insights into administration derived from other fields and disciplines. Some of the neglected areas of research in educational administration are : administrative climate of educational institutions, administrative behaviours of principals, human relations, communication, evaluation as a feedback service, institutional and decentralized educational planning, the evaluation of the planning machinery in education, training of educational administrators in managerial skills and procedures of planning, university governance, and operational effectiveness of its authorities, boards and committees, decision making in universities, and educational administration as a social science discipline. The Second Survey of Research in Education (1979), stated that : Administration of Education, like any other field of administration, is oriented to human experiences and has concern about effective management, quality output and greater and speedier development in the area that it is administered. While some doctoral researchers did encompass the 'human relations' approach, and few others developed instructional material based on the assessment of 'learner stage' – in their work in the area of educational administration; no documentation that touched the areas such as 'Role Analysis' or examining the 'Communication Needs' of College Principals as educational administrators, and developing a self-instructional module for the same – was found.

2.3 Summation of the Review of Literature

From all of the above Review of Literature, it clearly emerged that of all subject areas, communication skills needed for human communication and integration have the potential for very high future utility. Of course though, appropriate development and design of course content for any target group would be important if it was to lead to enhanced learning and practice. Moreover, it clearly emerges that communication is one of the neglected areas of research in

educational administration of which there is a dearth of documented material, and hence it imperatively needs attention and application. It would be a significant contribution on part of researchers to take up required developmental studies which would fill in the gap in existing literature. Thematically and methodologically too, it would be interesting to look at the 'role' educational administrators play, as also assess their communication needs – studies of the nature of which, though required, have not been taken up nor adequately highlighted. Clearly there are pointers towards taking up studies like the present one where need-based self-instructional material is developed – in the case of the present study – for College Principals – to enhance their communication skills and performance.