**UNIT 2 : ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

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|  | * Define Organisational communication * Describe the different contexts of communication within organisations * Explain the importance and function of communication in organisations * Identify the different methods of communication used in the public sector * Explain the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods of communication used in the public sector. * Choose the appropriate method of communication to use in any given situation |

**Content**

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* Contexts of communication within organisations
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  + Oral
  + Visual
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* Advantages and disadvantages of the different methods of communication used in the public sector.

**Definition of concepts**

**Organisation**

An organization is a social unit of people that is structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals. It is an open system which affects and is affected by its environment.

An organization is an entity, such as an institution or association that has a collective goal and is linked to an external environment.

An organization is a consciously coordinated social unit composed of two or more people that function on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or set of goals. (we organize together to achieve what we cannot accomplish individually. Organising happens through communication).

**Communication**

Communication (from Latin communicare, meaning “to share”) involves conveying information and meaning through verbal, non-verbal, or visual media.

Communication is much more than an understanding of the spoken or written language. It is a composite of symbols, gestures and illustrations that accompany the spoken or written words.

Communication is a two-way process in which there is an exchange and progression of ideas towards a mutually accepted direction or goal.

In the two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, participants not only exchange information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning. In general, communication is a means of connecting people or places. In business, it is a key function of management – an organization cannot operate without communication between levels, departments and employees.

**Organisational communication**

It is a process by which activities of a society are collected and coordinated to reach the goals of both individuals and the collective group.

It is the sending and receiving of messages among interrelated individuals within a particular environment or setting to achieve individual and common goals.

Organisational communication is highly contextual and culturally dependant. Individuals in organizations transmit messages through oral, written and visual means. Organisational communication largely focuses on building relationships, or repeated interpersonal interactions with internal organizational members and interested external publics.

For organizations to be successful, they must have competent communicators. Organisations seek people like you who can follow and give instructions, accurately listen, provide useful feedback, get along with co-workers and customers, network, provide serviceable information, work well in teams and creatively and critically solve problems and present ideas in an understandable manner. Effective organizational communication involves knowing how to create and exchange information, work with diverse groups or individuals, communicate in complicated and changing circumstances, as well as having the aptitude or motivation to communicate in appropriate manners.

**Contexts of Communication within Organisations**

1. **Intrapersonal Communication –** This is communication where a person communicates within or with him/herself. Examples of communication within oneself are thoughts, ideas, and reflections. Examples of communication with oneself are, speaking to oneself, or writing out plans for future action.
2. **Interpersonal Communication –** This is communication between two people It may be in spoken or written form (verbal communication) or in behavior (non verbal communication).
3. **Group Communication –** This is where a number of people interact and exchange ideas and information. Groups may vary in size i.e. small medium or large.
4. **Mass Communication –** This is communication between an entity and a large and diverse audience, mediated by some form of technology. Examples of mass communication forms are television, newspapers, and radio. These forms are essentially designed for mass audiences.
5. **External Communication –** This is communication between an organization and its clients or stakeholders.

**Importance of communication in organizations**

* Effective communication is a basic prerequisite for the attainment of organizational goals. No organization or group can exist without communication.
* Co-ordination of work is impossible and an organization will collapse for lack of communication. Co-operation becomes impossible because people cannot communicate their needs and feelings to others.
* Communication is like a thread that holds the various interdependent parts of an organization together.
* It is through effective communication that a manager gets work done by others. Therefore a successful manager must know the art of communication.
* Communication plays a major role in dealing with employee-employer relationship problems, employee productivity and all human relations matters.
* Etc.

**Functions of communication in organizations**

The most basic functions of communication in an organization are to inform, persuade, control, and motivate. Employees need to have communication in order to achieve good job performance. Communication involves a mutual exchange of understanding and is the essence of the basic functions of business management which include staffing, directing, planning, organizing, and controlling.

**Methods of Communication in the public service**

Thecommunication methods used are:

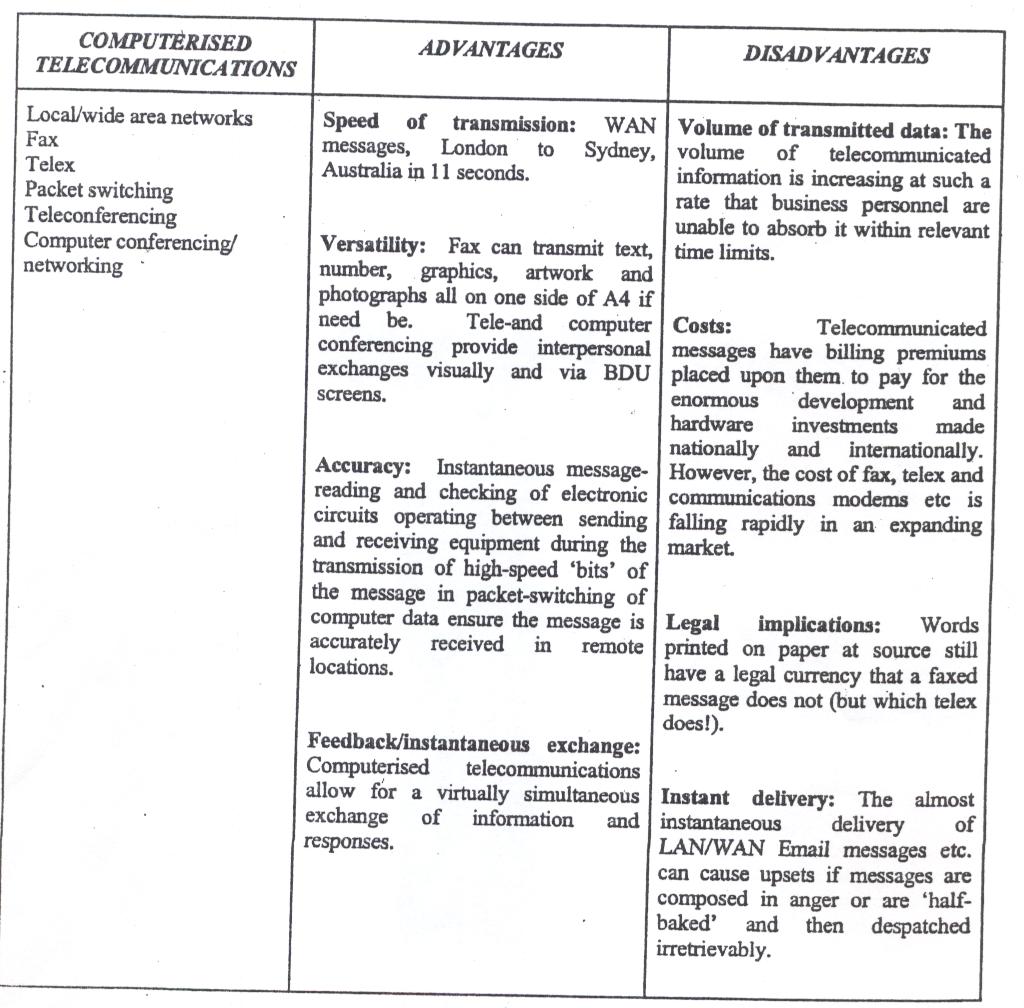
* Oral
* Written
* Visual
* Computerised telecommunications

Oral and written can be categorized under what is referred to as verbal communication, i.e. where words of a language are used in communicating. Visual method can be both verbal and non-verbal. Non-verbal communication involves the use of means other than words of a language.

The choice of what method to use depends on various factors including context, purpose and audience.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of various communication media:**

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| **WRITTEN COMMUNICATION** | **ADVANTAGES** | **DISADVANTAGES** |
| Letter  Memorandum  Report  Abstract  Minutes  Article  Press release  Etc | Provides written record and evidence of dispatch and receipt; capable of relaying complex ideas; provides analysis, evaluation and summary; disseminates information to dispersed receivers; can confirm interpret and clarify oral communication; forms basis of contract or agreement. | Can take time to produce, can be expensive; communication tends to be more formal and distant; can cause problems of interpretation; instant feedback is not possible; once dispatched, difficult to modify message; does not allow for exchange of opinion, views or attitudes except over period of time. |
| **ORAL COMMUNICATION** | **ADVANTAGES** | **DISADVANTAGES** |
| Face-to-face conversation Interview  Meeting  Oral briefing  Public address  Oral presentation  Telephone call  Conference  Training session  Etc | Direct medium of communication; advantages of physical proximity and, usually, both sight and sound of sender and receiver; allows for instant interchange of opinion, views, attitudes – instantaneous feedback; easier to convince or persuade; allows for contribution and participation from all present. | More difficult to hold ground in face of opposition; more difficult to control when a number of people take part; lack of time to think things out – quality of decision-making may be inferior; often no written record of what has been said; sometimes disputes result over what was agreed. |
| **VISUAL COMMUNICATION** | **ADVANTAGES** | **DISADVANTAGES** |
| Non-verbal communication e.g.:  Expression, gesture, posture  Diagram  Chart  Table  Graph  Photograph  Film slide  Film  Video tape  Model  Mock-up  etc | Reinforces oral communication  provides additional visual stimulus; simplifies written or spoken word; quantifies – provides ideas in number form; provides simulations of situations; illustrates techniques and procedures; provides visual record. | May be difficult to interpret  without reinforcing written or spoken word; requires additional skills of comprehension and interpretation; can be costly and expensive in time to produce; may be costly to disseminate or distribute; storage may be more expensive; does not always allow time for evaluation. |

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