Getting feedback   The receiver's reaction to the message is also a form of communication back to the sender. Through this mechanism, companies know how much they sell, what public opinion has been formed about their product, and what the customers feel about their products. Good companies also seek feedback with regard to the satisfaction of the employees serving them. It helps them remove the unnecessary cobwebs arising out of the ills of hierarchy and achieve the purpose within an organization.

Thus, communication is like a two-way street that entails the relation between the sender and the receiver both in day-to-day and business communication. In this process, a cycle of communicating messages is formed between the sender and the receiver.

Having discussed the purpose and importance of communication in the business world, let us discuss its different forms.

1.8 ROLE OF CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING IN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Critical thinking and creative thinking are considered high order skills which are essential for professionals. *Critical thinking* is the active, persistent, and careful consideration of beliefs or knowledge keeping in view the available evidence whereas *creative thinking* is the generation of new ideas. Both are fundamental to human intellectual progress and instrumental in the development of the society. Depending on context and purpose, critical and creative thinking skills can be interdependent or separately applied.

Critical thinking, in fact, is a self-reflective process that involves elements of conceptualization, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of the available information upon which judgement is based. This involves a wide variety of skills that must be used in order to form that opinion/decision. A few of these include:

- making careful observations
- being inquisitive and asking the relevant questions
- challenging the beliefs, examining assumptions, and probing opinions which may even be against already established facts
- recognizing the problems and issues that may appear in future
- assessing the validity of statements and understanding the logic and strength of arguments given
- making workable decisions and finding valid solutions

The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, dependent on reason, open-minded, flexible, objective in evaluation, honest in resolving biases, prudent in making judgements and willing to reconsider the judgements made earlier. As a professional, you will always come across new problems and aberrations to the existing practices, your ability to think critically will help you convert the problem into an opportunity. In order to be a critical thinker, you need to be

- Inquisitive
- Systematic
- Analytical
- Open-minded

- Judicious
- Truth seeking
- Confident in reasoning

Creative thinking, on the other hand, is the generation of new ideas within or across domains of knowledge. It requires preparation, incubation, insight, evaluation, elaboration, and communication. In order to develop this, you must try to put aside the common assumptions, look beyond

the conditioning that creates stereotypes, prejudices, and parochial thinking. An unconditioned response to a challenge, an inquisitive approach, an insightful penetration, and a passionate commitment to the task helps us in:

- bringing the existing ideas together into new configurations;
- developing new properties or possibilities for something that already exists; and
- discovering or imagining something entirely new.

Given below are a few basic principles for inculcating creative thinking:

- Be open to new thoughts, ideas, and facts
- Keep your reading and listening faculty actively engaged in observation
- Regard the difficulty or a problem as an opportunity
- Enjoy the process of trying, learning, and evolving
- Avoid jumping to conclusions; follow deferred judgements
- Believe in cross-fertilization of ideas
- Be your worst critic

Thus, if you sharpen your creative and critical thinking, these will equip you with the skills which later in your professional life will provide you an edge in the competitive world.

1.9 ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN COMMUNICATION

Emotions are vital to human life. An integral part in all human interactions, emotions decide the very essence of it, characterizing the tone, colour, purpose, and intent of a message. Since emotions play a major role in the entire communication process, we should know how important or intrusive they can be. Emotions are felt intrapersonally, expressed interpersonally, and have a lasting impact on the entire communicative tapestry we weave with the help of words. Whether we wish to display them or not, emotions radiate our thoughts, express our feelings, reflect our perspectives, and reveal our prejudices more often than not. Functioning as a stimulus, they also trigger a reaction or response from others. Since emotions are central to all interpersonal relationships, it's important to know what causes and influences emotions so we can better understand our own emotions and respond appropriately to others when they display their emotions.

Understanding ours and others' emotions becomes an important skill in the overall process of communication. Such emotional intelligence helps us develop as an effective communicator. Remember, underplaying our emotions may expose as a bland communicator, while overplaying them may suggest lack of equanimity in you. This may, in turn, characterize the response of your co-communicator and hence may affect the quality of your interactions, and even personal or professional relations with them.

Emotionally aware people experience greater success in their careers and a greater sense of well-being in their personal lives. Studies have shown that success doesn't lead to emotional health and happiness, but rather the other way around. The emotionally healthy people experience positive moods, feel more confident, more optimistic, more energetic, and more sociable. These factors lead to greater success in many different aspects of life.

Though emotions are created by us, managing them is not a simple task. In fact, managing emotions largely depends on managing stress. Since modern day living keeps triggering unwarranted stressful responses, negotiating emotions become an uphill task. Therefore, healthy thinking, thought-provoking reading, taking regular exercises, socializing, and meditating can work as effective stress busters. Eventually one can achieve a stage when getting to understand

the creation of stressful emotions within us becomes possible, which in turn can help us negotiate our emotions in a better way.

When one knows how to maintain a relaxed, focussed state of emotional awareness even in trying circumstances, one can maintain emotional equanimity and engage oneself in the task of communication in an emotionally controlled and poised manner.

1.10 ROLE OF INTER-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The way we communicate is determined strongly by the culture we are groomed in. There are several aspects of communication which differ from culture to culture. Such cultural differences may determine how loud or low we talk; the directness with which we speak; the amount of emotions we express in various situations; the use or avoidance of silence; the prevalence or absence of a particular non-verbal or verbal peculiarity and a series of defining signal which we may emit through our manners, facial expressions, posture, eye contact, tone, and pitch of our speech. Interestingly, all this may be misconstrued in an altogether different manner, depending upon the respondent's own bringing up and cultural variety. It is because of this variegated cultural confluence at work place that creates significant challenges to effective communication beyond the obvious barriers.

These days, companies are doing business more and more in a global context. The people that matter in any business including the suppliers, the clients, and the employees may belong to different cultures and may even be located in foreign countries. The need for effective and clear intercultural communication is becoming vital in securing success in today's global workplace. Greater understanding of intercultural differences, etiquette, protocol, and communication will certainly lead to a much higher probability of achieving business goals.

Another interesting aspect of multiculturalism is the inter-culture of people from both the hemispheres of the earth which throw up unique communication challenges owing to their diverse cultural nuances. Some of these cultures, such as the English-speaking and the Northern European cultures may be regarded as belonging to individualistic cultures, with each of whom enjoying simultaneous memberships in numerous overlapping, informal, loose groups that they join, and leave when convenient. Churches, companies, business associations, social clubs, sports clubs, civic associations, political groups, etc., today actually become manifestation of a culturally kaleidoscopic world. In such a flux, obligations for associations and bonding to other groups are weak, and loyalty is neither required nor highly valued. Common rules of polite behaviour apply equally to group members and non-group members. Relationships with strangers are easily formed and dissolved, and friendship groups are casually replaced and re-formed. Individuals assume as primary their rights to self-expression, self-realization, and self-protection.

On the other hand, highly group-oriented cultures, such as most East and South Asian, South American, Middle Eastern, Eastern European, and sub-Saharan countries, can be seen as a collection of strong groups, starting with close family ties and extending to other blood relatives, school groups, work and military units, community groups. In-group interaction is heavily circumscribed. Individuals are bound to their groups by heavy obligations and strict rules of intra-group relationships; loyalty is required and highly prized. Friendships exist primarily within groups, are formed with serious intent, and imply increasing reciprocal obligation.