Barriers to Communication

According to Noam Chomsky,’ Anyone in a position to overcome barriers to free thought and communication should do so.”

According to John Dewey, “ Everything which bars freedom and fullness of communication sets up barriers that divide human beings into sets and cliques, into antagonistic sects and fractions, and thereby undermines the democratic way of life.”

A barrier is like a sieve which allows only a part of the message. It is something that comes in the way of desired outcome.

A} Physical Barriers: They are the factors that materialize from the natural environment or be a product of human creation.

1. Noise is the first physical barrier. Its a sound or malfunction that creates blockage. It can affect how communication takes place. It hinders the overall performance of communication process.

According to Kathleen Vederber, Rudolph Vederber and Deanna Swellnows, “ External noises are sights, sounds and stimulai that draw people’s attention away from the message. For eg a popup advertisement may draw your attention away from the web page or blog. Likewise state or static interactions can play havoc in cell phone converstions, the sound of a fire engine may distract you from a professor’s lecture or the smell of donuts may interfere with your brain of thought during a conversation with the friend.”

There are various types of four noises. Phsiological noise refers to interference caused due to fatigue,stress and other biological condition. Physical noise refers to physical disturbances like extreme lightning, temperatures and pop ups, disturbance in phone calls etc. Pschyological noise refers to mental barriers. Semantic noise refers to disturbance caused in language.

2. Architecture- The layout of a physical work can affect how well employees communicate with each other. The distance between offices and the absence of a conference room can affect the communication process. Nowadays, open door policy is being followed by managers.

3. Technical difficulties in channel- Glitches in phone calls, video conferencing etc can create physical barriers.

4.Time and Distance- Interactions with others from different time zones create trouble.

The more the distance, the more chances of hindrance to communication.

5. Environment-Noise in surroundings can cause hindrance. Scorching heat,bad air quality and rainy weather can cause troubled.

B.Pschyological Barrier- It refers to the various internal states of people that inhibit communication.

1. Defensiveness and fear- It refers to a confused state of mind. The individual defends by sarcasms and remarks. For eg, Sarah fired back when she was asked for correction.

2.Frame of Reference- It is the system of standards and values with an overlying action. Childhood events, life and cultural environments make up the mind of the person. It paves the way for preconceived notions which alters the communication process.

3. Wrong Assumptions- Many barriers stem from wrong assumptions. When a doctor asks patient to take medicines under SOS , the patient may not understand it.

4.Varied perceptions- The story of six blind men and their description as snake,rope, wall, tree, sword shows how different individuals perceive message differently.

5.Blocked Categories- If, positive , person can react nicely If negative, they are reluctant to respond. Some people criticize new developments as they are people with blocked categories. These people are not ready to listen to new point of view.

6.Wrong inferences- People create wrong information which often results in grapevine communication.

7.Categorical thinking- People do not react as they think that they know already. Such people are pansophists who often induce communication barrier.

C. Semantic Barriers arise due to improper use of language. They are also known as language barriers.

1.Bad Expression- It states the use of wrong words while conveying the message. Messages which are not formulated can result in barrier to communication.

2.Faulty transmission- Message must be translated according to the understanding of the person.

3. Archaic language and jargon.

4.Connotative Barrier

5. Denotative barrier

6.Poor quality and lack of clarity

D.Organisation Barriers- Barriers which surface due to structure of organisations. Sometimes people in low positions cannot communicate due to fear. Often gossip leads to wrong information and results in grapevine communication.