Unit 1 - Fundamentals of Communication
(Lecture Notes)

Topic - 1: Definition and Meaning, Overview

'Communication' can be defined as the "exchange of ideas, information through accepted code i.e. signs, symbol or common language"

"Communication is the sum of things that one person does when he wants to create an understanding in the mind of others. It is a bridge of meaning. It involves systematic & continuous process of telling, listening & understanding".   ~ Louis A Allen

COMMUNICATION - OVERVIEW

"A blow with a word strikes deeper than a blow with a sword."

-Robert Burton

- Indicating that the written word is more effective than violence as a means of social or political change.
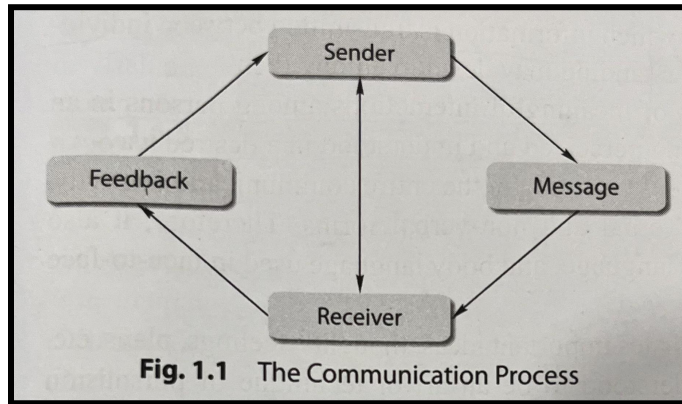
COMMUNICATION - DEFINITION

- Communication, in today's world, originates from the Latin word **communico** or **communicare**, which means 'to share'. Various researchers and analysts define the term 'communication' in their own way.
- Despite their different versions, it can be briefly summed up that *'communication essentially means the transfer of ideas, feelings, plans, messages, or information from one person to another'*.
- Obviously however, communication is considered effective only when it gets the desired action or response.

Topic - 2: Process of Communication

Communication is a process whereby information is encoded, channelled, and sent by a sender to a receiver via a medium.

The receiver then decodes the message and gives the sender a feedback.

All forms of communication require a sender, a channel, a message, a receiver, and the feedback that effectively winds up the process.
Communication requires both the sender and the receiver to have an area of communicative commonality.


Fig. 1.1   The Communication Process

However, sometimes there occurs a hindrance in the communication process, which is called noise.

Noise can be defined as an unplanned interference in the communication environment, the one that causes hindrance to the transmission of the message

It may mainly occur due to two reasons:
a) disturbance in the channel/medium and/or
b) some kind of error in the message sent.

Fig. 1.2   Noise Hinders Communication Process
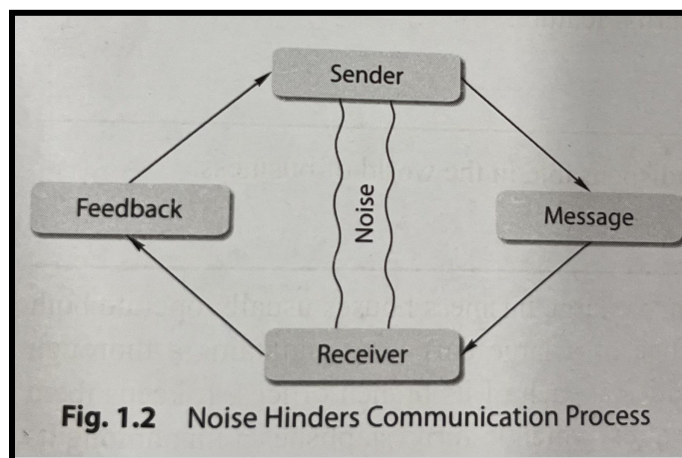
- Difference between General and Professional Communication

Table 1.1 Differences between General and Professional Communication

	General Communication	Professional Communication
Content	Contains general message	Contains a formal and professional message
Nature	Informal in style and approach	Mostly formal and objective
Structure	No set pattern of communication	Follows a set pattern such as sequence of elements in a report
Method	Mostly oral	Both oral and written
Audience	Not always for a specific audience	Always for a specific audience, e.g., customers, banks, etc.
Language	Does not normally involve the use of technical vocabulary, graphics, etc.	Frequently involves jargon, graphics, etc. for achieving the professional purposes

(Contd)

Topic - 3: Features of Successful Professional Communication

Since communication matters a lot in the professional world, it is quite important for us to get acquainted with the most important features of successful professional communication.

1. Communication is a two-way process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/or organizations so that an understanding may develop among them.
2. Communication is a continuous process of meaningful interactions among persons in an organization that results in meanings being perceived and understood in a desired way.
3. The role of the receiver and the sender keeps changing in the entire communication activity.

4. Communication broadly includes both verbal and non-verbal forms. Therefore, it also includes lip reading, finger-spelling, sign language, and body language used in face-to-face communication.

5. It is a process which transmits and disseminates important ideas, thoughts, feelings, plans, etc.

6. Communication skills are generally understood to be an art or technique of persuasion through the use of oral, written, and non-verbal features.

Topic - 4: Role of Creative and Critical Thinking in Communication

- Critical thinking and creative thinking are important skills for professionals.
- Both of these skills are really important for making our minds smarter and helping society grow.
- They are extremely useful in communication as well.
- They are complementary to each other and helps in making our communication effective and impactful.
- Depending on context and purpose, critical and creative, thinking, skills can be interdependent or separately applied.

A. *Creative Thinking*

Creative thinking is about coming up with (generating) new ideas.

- Creative thinking allows us to look at a situation with a new point of view.
- With creative thinking we can come up with new solutions.
- It requires preparation, incubation, inside, evaluation, elaboration, and communication.
- Creative thinking 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
• Think of challenges as a chances to learn.

• Enjoy the process of trying, learning, and evolving
• Avoid jumping to conclusions; give time before judging
• Believe in mixing ideas.
• Be tough on yourself, but fair.

B. *Critical Thinking*

Critical Thinking means carefully thinking about what you already know on the basis of the evidence.

- Critical thinking helps in analyzing the situation deeply.
- With Critical thinking we can check the accuracy and credibility of the data.
- 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.
- Critical thinking is a process of thinking about things in a smart way.
- It involves -

• Observing carefully: Paying close attention to details.
• Asking questions: Wondering and asking the right questions.
• Thinking differently: Not just believing what everyone else does, and checking ideas.
• Seeing future problems: Predicting issues that might come up.
• Checking facts: Making sure statements are true and arguments make sense.
• Deciding well: Making good choices and finding good answers.

Topic - 5: Different forms of Communication

Communication is generally classified into the following types:
   a. Verbal communication
- Oral communication
- Written communication
   b. Interpersonal communication
   c. Extrapersonal communication
   d. Mass communication
   e. Non-verbal communication
   f. Media communication
   g. Intrapersonal communication

Below mentioned diagram provides a skeletal view of professional communication.

Fig. 1.3   Communication at a Glance
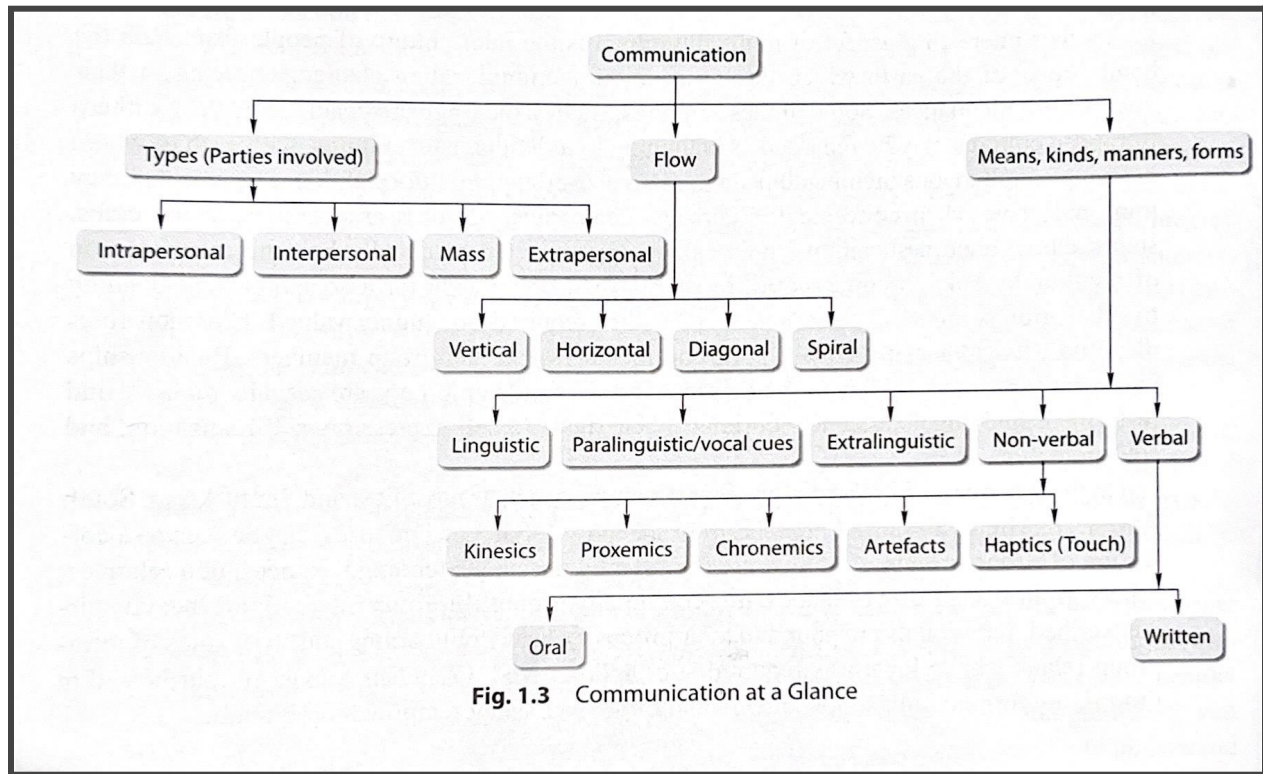
A. **Verbal Communication**:

- *Verbal communication is a type of communication where we use spoken and written words to get our message and information across to the other person. In other words, whenever we use our words to express ourselves, our feelings, and our thoughts, we are verbally communicating.*

- Verbal communication thus stands both for the spoken and the written word used in the communication process.
- It can further be divided into oral and written communication.

- **Oral communication:-** *A face-to-face interaction between the sender and the receiver is called oral communication.*
- In this type of communication, there could be two or more than two persons who use spoken language as a medium of communication.

- For instance, whenever we make presentations, deliver speeches, participate in group discussions, appear for interviews, or simply interact with somebody, we are involved in oral communication.
- **Written communication**:- *In this type of communication, the sender uses the written mode to transmit his/her messages.*
- Reports, proposals, books, handbooks, letters, emails, etc. come in this category.
- Written communication is routinely used for documentation purposes in business and government organizations.

B. Non-verbal Communication:

- *Non-verbal communication is the transmission of messages or signals through a non-verbal platform such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, use of objects and body language.*

- It can be further categorized into two parts: *body language and paralinguistic features*.
- Body language involves aspects such as personal appear-ance, walk, gestures, facial expressions, hand movements, posture, and eye contact.
- The paralinguistic features include a person's voice, volume, pitch, rate, pauses, articulation, voice.

C. Intrapersonal Communication:

- *Intrapersonal communication is when you talk to yourself in your mind, like thinking and reflecting on your thoughts and feelings.*
- Intrapersonal communication helps in self-analysis and understanding one's own emotions and motivations.
- Example: Planning your day and making decisions in your mind.

D. Interpersonal Communication

- *Interpersonal communication is when you talk and interact with other people, like having conversations with family, friends, or colleagues.*
- It involves exchanging ideas, sharing emotions, and building relationships with others.

- Interpersonal communication involves both verbal and non-verbal cues, like facial expressions and body language, which play a significant role in understanding each other.
- Example: Chatting with a friend about your weekend plans.

E. Extrapersonal Communication:

- *Extra-personal communication is when you communicate with something other than humans, like animals, objects, or nature.*
- It involves expressing thoughts or feelings to things that can't talk back, like talking to a pet or a favorite toy. For Example, talking to your pet animals.

F. Mass Communication:

- Mass communication is when information is sent to a large number of people at the same time through various media channels, like TV, radio, or the internet.
- It's used to reach a wide audience and share news, entertainment, or advertising.
- Mass communication includes various forms of media, such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and the internet, to reach a large audience.
- Example: Watching a news broadcast on TV or listening to a radio show.

G. Media Communication:

- *Media communication refers to the exchange of information through different forms of media, like newspapers, magazines, social media, or websites.*
- It involves sharing news, stories, and entertainment with the public.
- Media communication encompasses traditional media like print and broadcast, as well as digital media like blogs, podcasts, and online videos.
- The Internet has become a major means for all sorts of official or personal communication.
- Example: Reading a newspaper article or watching a video on a social media platform.

## *Topic - 6: Communication Network in an Organisation*

- In the world of business, communication is like a measuring tool for an organization's success and growth.
- The better and more information flows among its people, the more successful it tends to be.

- Nowadays, speed matters a lot in business communication. Even a small delay can lead to big losses.

Therefore, we need to understand the networks / flows of communication available in an organization.
Types of Communication Flows:
1. Horizontal / Lateral Communication
2. Vertical Communication (Upward)
3. Vertical Communication (Downward)
4. Crosswise / Diagonal Communication
5. Spiral Communication

FiG. 1.4   Information Flow in an Organization
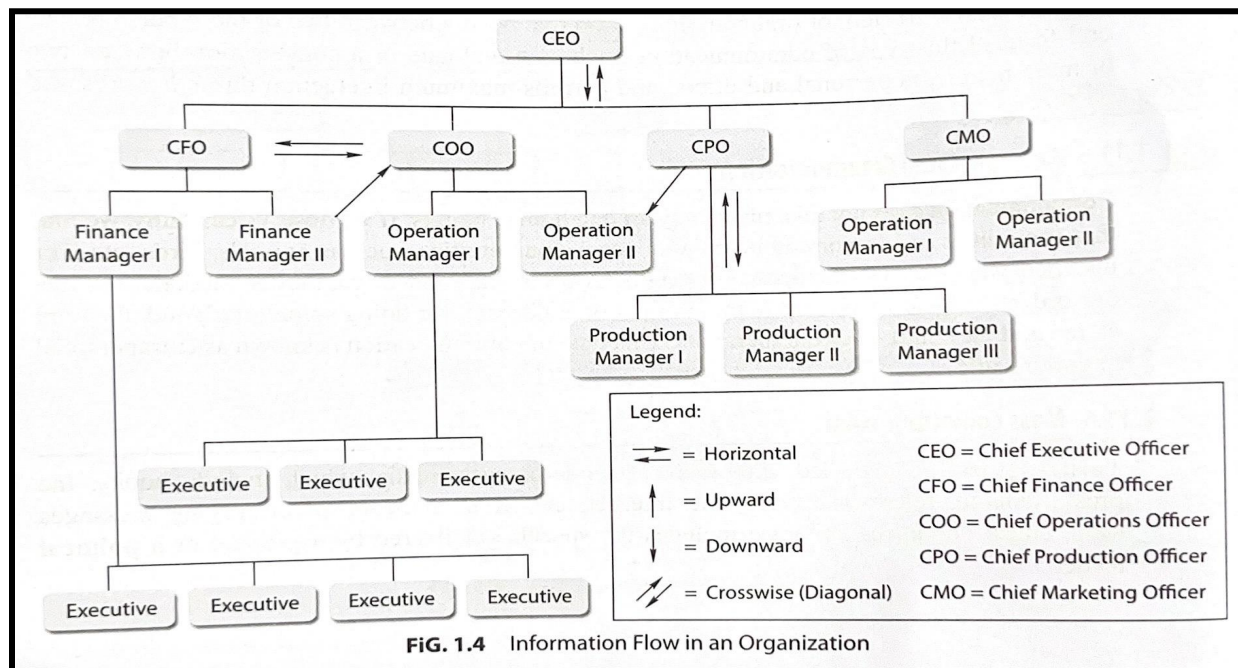
1. Horizontal / Lateral Communication:

● In order to achieve the production target for a particular month, the discussion held between the production manager and the supply manager will certainly be a perfect instance of horizontal communication.
● This is like talking with your colleagues at the same level in the organization.

● You share information and ideas with people who are on the same team or department.

2. <u>Vertical Communication (Upward):</u>

• Imagine talking to your boss or higher-ups. This is upward communication.
• You share feedback, reports, or concerns with people above you in the organization.

3. <u>Vertical Communication (Downward):</u>

• This is when your boss or higher-ups talk to you and others below them.
• They share instructions, goals, and information that you need for your work.

4. <u>Crosswise / Diagonal Communication:</u>

• Crosswise communication is like talking diagonally.
• It involves people from different departments and level or teams sharing information or working together on a project.

5. <u>Spiral Communication:</u>

• In spiral communication, information moves in a circular or repeated way.
• It can involve going back and forth to make sure everyone understands and is on the same page.
• These different communication flows help information move smoothly within an organization.
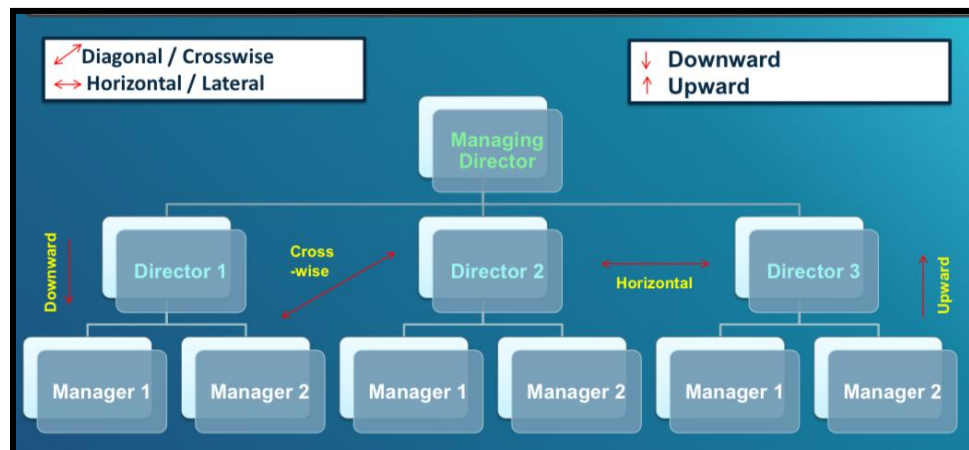
Topic - 7: Barriers to Communication

- _The process of communication is a complex one. When a message is sent by a sender to the receiver, it may be possible that it is not effectively understood by the receiver in the same sense as the sender intended to. There may be several causes for its ineffectiveness. These are called Barriers of communication._

- When it comes to effective communication, there are certain barriers that every organization faces. Here are a few of the most commonly-found barriers to communication in an organization.

1. Language & Semantic Barriers
2. Physical & Environmental Barriers
3. Technological Barriers
4. Psychological & Emotional Barriers
5. Perception & Attitudinal Barriers
6. Cultural Barriers
7. Organizational Barriers

1. _Language & Semantic Barriers_

- _Semantics is about studying the meaning of words and symbols used in communication._
- _When people misunderstand the meaning of a message, causing communication problems, it can be called a semantic barrier. It is also known as Semantic Gap._

- 1. **Different Languages:** Different dialects and accents can make it hard to understand.
- 2. **Faulty Translation:** If the message is translated poorly, it will be difficult to understand.
- 3. **Limited Vocabulary:** If you don't have enough words to express yourself, your communication won't be effective.
- 4. **Ambiguity of Words:** Using unclear words can confuse the receiver.
- 5. **Technical Jargons:** Using complex or unfamiliar terms can make it difficult for others to understand. E.g. a legal advertisement uses too many legal terms/jargons.

- 6. **Symbols with Multiple Meanings:** Some symbols have different meanings in different places and cultures. This can create confusion. For example; *Cross (+) : This symbol can represent Christianity, medical care, or a warning sign. Heart (❤️) : This can be used to symbolize love, health, friendship, or courage.*
- 7. **Misguiding Body Language:** When your body language doesn't match what you're saying, it can misguide people.

2. *Physical and Environmental Barriers*

- Physical barriers are things that distract and block communication.
- They can be natural or man-made and are easy to notice

.

- 1. **Physical Disabilities:** Disabilities like hearing problems or speech difficulties can make communication hard.
- 2. **Time:** Sending a message at the wrong time can make it less effective. E.g. While calling a friend abroad, if we don't consider the time zone of that country, we won't be able to talk.
- 3. **Place**: An uncomfortable location, furniture, or lighting can make people uncomfortable.
- 4. **Space**: Not understanding personal space during face-to-face conversations can make others uncomfortable.
- 5. **Noise**: Noise Disrupts Communication,making messages unclear and less accurate.
- 6. **Climate**: Extreme weather affects how we feel and think, which can impact communication. For example, very hot weather can make people restless.

3. *Technological Barriers*

- Technology makes work faster, but it can create problems for communication inside a company. To keep communication positive, these issues need attention.

- 1. **Wrong Choice of Medium**: Using the wrong way to send a message can be a problem.

- 2. **Outdated Technology:** Old systems that don't work well can disrupt communication. For example, if a system can't handle video calls, it can be a barrier.
- 3. **Lack of Required Software/App:** If you don't have the right software or don't know how to use it, communication won't work well.
- 4. **Internet Issues:** Bad internet connections can be a big problem for distant communication. E.g., network problems during online classes make teaching hard.
- 5. **Limited Access:** Some organizations restrict who can use certain communication tools based on their authority. This can be important, but it can also demotivate some employees when others have access and they don't.

4. *Psychological & Emotional Barriers*

- Some mental and emotional issues can make communication hard. Things like stage fear or speech problems can be tough to handle. Also, how well you control your emotions affects how well you communicate. If you can manage your emotions, it's easier to talk to others.

- 1. **Information Overload:** Too much information at once can make a person feel overwhelmed. It's called "information overload" when you get more than you can handle.
- 2. **Fear of Mistake:** Many people are afraid to make mistakes because they worry about criticism. This fear can stop them from communicating effectively.
- 3. **Emotional Distractions:** When someone is very emotional, they might struggle to express themselves clearly. Emotional excitement or disturbance can affect communication.
- 4. **Poor Attention:** If someone doesn't pay attention to what others are saying, they can't understand the message or provide good feedback.

5. *Perception & Attitudinal Barriers*

- We all see the world differently because of our preferences, values, and life experiences. This shapes our attitude. Sometimes, our attitudes can create communication barriers when we interact with others.

- 1. **Prejudice**: People often have fixed ideas and only hear what they want to hear. False assumptions and stereotypes can create communication problems.
a. **Halo Effect:** Seeing someone as good just because of one positive trait (quality)
b. **Horn Effect:** Judging someone as bad based on just one negative trait.

- 2. **Discrimination based on Gender, Religion, or Race:** Stereotyping people based on factors like gender, religion, or race can disturb friendly conversation.
- 3. **Lack of Interest/Motivation:** If a topic isn't interesting or relevant, or if there are other barriers, it can lead to disinterest in communication.
- 4. **Lack of Trust:** When trust is lacking, people may misinterpret each other's messages, leading to misunderstandings.

6. *Cultural Barriers*

- Cultural barriers in communication are problems that happen when people from different cultures try to talk. The following factors can create barriers in communication.

- 1. **Language and Body Language:** Different languages and gestures can be confusing. E.g. Direct eye contact is appreciated in USA, but not in India.
- 2. **Greetings and Meetings:** In different countries, people greet each other in different ways. E.g., in India, we say Namaste when we meet, while in Japan, they bow down.
- 3. **Cultural Customs & Traditions:** Different customs and traditions can affect communication. E.g. Eating with your hands is common in India, but not in China.
- 4. **Ideological Differences:** Varied beliefs and values can lead to misunderstandings. For example, some cultures focus more on materialism, while others prioritize spiritualism.
- 5. **Time and Space**: The importance of time and personal space differs among cultures. E.g. Canadians do not like when someone enters into

their personal space, while Arabs are comfortable standing close to each other.

7. *Organizational Barriers*

- Organizational barriers are problems inside a company that stop information from flowing between employees. These issues can harm the company's success.

- 1. **Absence of Communication Policy:** A clear communication policy encourages employees to talk. Without such policies, employees may hesitate to communicate.
- 2. **Excessive Authority/Hierarchy Layers:** Too many layers of authority make communication slow and distorted. Information can be lost as it passes through many levels.
- 3. **Filtering**: Filtering means distorting information on purpose. It often happens in upward communication when employees want to make themselves look good.
- 4. **Negative Environment:** If top management has a negative attitude, it discourages employees from talking. A positive atmosphere encourages communication.
- 5. **Organizational Facilities:** Providing tools like computers, the internet, and phones helps communication. Without these facilities, communication can suffer.