

## **Barriers of Communication:**

Communication is a process that covers series of steps involving among others, encoding, decoding and transmission. For ensuring effective communication, all the parties and instruments will have to play their part as envisaged. At every stage of the communication process, however, there are barriers, which hinder or dilute the flow of communication. The barriers to communication may arise out of behavioral differences, differences in skills and understanding as well as physical factors. While some kinds of barriers like behavioral differences and differences in skills may be commonly applicable to all methods of communication, barriers arising out of physical factors may be specific to the method of communication adopted. There are a lot of causes of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the message communicated. As the process of communication involves sender, channels and receiver; the problem of communication usually lies with either one or more of them. There may be certain flaws in encoding and decoding the message, the channels used may be defective or faulty. Some of these barriers may be categorized into the following groups: *(a) Semantic Barriers, (b) Physical Barriers (c) Organizational Barriers and (d) Psychological Barriers.*

### **Semantic Barriers:**

Semantic barriers are concerned with problems and obstructions in the process of encoding and decoding of message into words or impressions. The same words or sentences may be understood or interpreted differently by different individual's causing confusions and misunderstanding. The main cause of semantic barriers may be lack of good communication skills.

*The various reasons for different interpretations or meanings resulting in semantic barriers may be discussed as:*

#### ***(a) Badly expressed message:***

Use of inadequate, incorrect words, omission of important words etc. may distort the message. The badly expressed message fails to convey the intended meaning of the message.

#### ***(b) Words/ symbols with different meaning:***

Some words may have multiple meanings. While communicating a message sender may use a word with specific meaning but if there are alternative meanings then the receiver may perceive the meaning in accordance to his/ her understanding and ability. Different perceptions lead to ineffective communication.

***(c) Faulty translations:***

The communication may be ineffective if the translation of the original message is done by a translator who may not be proficient with both the languages. The use of wrong words or incorrect understanding of the content may result in different meaning of the translated message.

***(d) Unclear assumptions:***

Some communications are backed by assumptions, which may be interpreted differently by different individuals.

***(e) Body language and gesture decoding:***

If the body language or gestures of a person do not match with the words used to communicate his/her instructions then the receiver may get confused and perceive the information wrongly.

***(f) Technical Jargon:***

If people with specific expertise use technical words or jargons while explaining the unskilled people from different field, the communication may transfer in parts due to lack of clarity in information. The receivers may not have sufficient knowledge to understand the meaning of technical words used.

**Physical Barriers:**

*Some of the physical barriers are as follows:*

***(a) Noise:***

Any disturbances or interferences that reduce the clarity and effectiveness of communication are called as noise. It may be physical and psychological, written or visual. Noise distracts the persons communicating and acts as barrier to communication. Loud noise of speaker playing outside or noise due to machines affects listening process of persons communicating (Physical noise). Mental trouble and turmoil affect the receiver's listening and understanding the message. Similarly inattentiveness and indifferences of the listener make communication ineffective (Psychological noise). Bad handwriting and incorrect typing irritates the reader not to speak of understanding the contents (Written noise). The late arrival of employee's results in distraction of superior's attention (Visual noise).

***(b) Improper time:***

Improper timing of communication also hinders the process of communication, e.g., an order at closing hour to execute an urgent work, may cause resentment in the employee who has to catch train for going back to his home. Message requiring action in distant

future may be forgotten. A phone call at midnight, interrupting sleep, further irritates the receiver, if message is not urgent.

***(c) Distance:***

The distance between sender and receiver acts as a barrier in the communication process as the sender has to speak loudly to convey the message, similarly in import-export transactions because of distances of miles, communication may be ineffective if proper use of Fax and Telephone is not made.

**Organizational Barriers:**

*Some of the organizational barriers are as follows:*

***(a) Organizational rules and regulations:***

Organizational Rules and Regulations, prescribing the different sub-matters along formal communication may restrict the flow of messages act as hindrances in the communication process. Sometimes it happens that important messages are omitted or manipulated. Observance of rigid rules and regulations relating to communication causes delay of messages and discouragement to employees in conveying their creative and innovative ideas. On the other hand, where such rules and regulations are flexible and communication is free, employees feel encouraged and motivated to come up with new ideas and opinions.

***(b) Non conduction of Meetings in time:***

To overcome the above barrier, certain organizations conduct staff meetings to know the grievances and suggestions of employees. In organization where such meetings and conferences are missing, free flow of communication is interrupted and the communication gap between persons being ruled and the ruling widens.

***(c) Wrong choice of channel:***

There are many mediums and channels of communications available, like face to face, oral communication, telephone, Email and audiovisual. Each channel is not ideal and perfect in every situation. For Eg., written communication is required in case of formal relations, but communicating with the illiterate people, this channel fails. Illiterate people are to be communicated properly with the support of pictures.

## **Psychological Barriers:**

Psychological barriers arise from motives, social values, different perceptions etc. and these creates a psychological distance, cause misunderstanding among people at work and hinder the communication process.

### ***(a) Selective Perceptions:***

Our sensory receptors have their own limitations. As a result we perceive not the whole spectrum, but a few selective symbols based upon our needs, motives, experience, background, etc. Because of our selective perceptions, we cannot communicate the whole. And because of different perception, neutral words conveying certain positive message convey the opposite meaning as they reach the receiver. It results into misunderstandings and misinterpretations and makes communication in-effective.

### ***(b) Premature Evaluation:***

It is human tendency that we try to evaluate quickly. We do not listen or read the whole, but try to infer from part of the message. The moment we try to evaluate, we stop further message visible to our sensory receptors. As a result, effective communication does not take place because of premature evaluation. The premature evaluations are mainly because of individuals being judgmental or are prejudiced against communication.

### ***(c) Different comprehension of reality:***

Reality is not absolute concept; it is relative to different persons. Each person's has unique sensory receptors and mental filters. As a result our abstractions, inferences and evaluations are different.

### ***(d) Distrust:***

Distrust between the sender & receiver may act as a barrier in effective communication. If two people do not trust each other, they may either try to hide or withhold information or do not try to understand the message in original sense. In fact, they may be suspicious towards each other and try to find hidden meanings in the message.

### ***(e) Loss of transmission and poor retention:***

If communication passes through various levels or channels it may result in complete loss of transmission of in accurate information. Transmission of inaccurate information in case of oral communication may be due to lack of attention or retention amongst people.