PRINCIPLES AND FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

PRINCIPLES AND FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

In the earlier block, you were acquainted with the nature, scope and concepts of the PR. You also learnt about the role of PR in the developmental context, the ethics in the profession and the career aspects of PR.

In this block, you will learn more of the PR as a process. This block has five units. These are:

UNIT - 1 Principles of the Public Relations
UNIT - 2 Organisation and Structure of the Public Relations Department: Government and Private
UNIT - 3 Function of the Public Relations Structure
UNIT - 4 Planning Public Relations Campaigns and Programmes
UNIT - 5 Evaluation and feedback.

Unit - 1 brings to you the basic principles that guide the practice of PR and some key concepts like 'Public Attitude' 'social environment' etc. This unit will enable you to see how organisational objectives must be related to larger social objectives for creating lasting goodwill.

In Unit - 2 we examine the status of the PR in the central and state governments, in the public and private sectors to see how it differs from company to company depending on the needs and types of organisation.

As you now know, the PR aims at bringing about goodwill, and acceptance and is essentially a management function.

In Unit - 3 you will learn how PR seeks to perform this function through effective information dissemination.

The PR aids management through its advisory and counselling function. The PR department has also to undertake strategic activities around a definite action plan.

Unit - 4 brings to you an understanding of how the PR campaigns and programmes are planned through research; how they are implemented and evaluated.

Unit - 5 discusses the significance of feedback and evaluation in an effective PR programme, and also the commonly used methods of measuring feedback. You will also learn how to apply the results of evaluation to modify existing policies or framing new ones.
UNIT 1 PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall discuss the principles that govern and guide the practice of the PR. After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- list the principles of the PR communication;
- describe the constituents of the PR principles;
- define the key concept of 'Public Attitude';
- explain the importance of judging and analysing public attitudes;
- analyze how the knowledge of public attitudes facilitates and enhances mutual understanding with the public(s); and
- describe the term 'Social Environment' and, on the basis of that, help formulate organizational objectives to meet social objectives.
1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the earlier Block, we defined and discussed the nature, process and scope of the PR along with the ethical codes governing its professional practice. Further, we also introduced you to career prospects in the PR profession, and the contexts in which PR operates in the developmental processes of the country.

In the first Unit of this Block, we shall acquire an understanding of the principles which form the bedrock of the PR. Also, we shall discuss a few key concepts like 'public attitude' and 'social environment' within which these attitudes function. We shall see how organizational objectives can be related to larger social objectives. It is only the PR effort that creates mutual understanding between an organization and its publics, by influencing change in public attitude, and by modifying management policies (in tune) with the interests and aspirations of its publics.

These principles are basically related to the function of communication, which we all practice effectively as a matter of routine, but without conscious effort. As a student of PR, you must ingrain these basic principles of communication in order to develop reflexes which are essential for this profession. To think in terms of the PR communication, it is also suggested that you should be on the constant look out for professional communicators and analyse their effectiveness or otherwise.

1.2 THE PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

In the earlier block, we described in detail the process of communication as it relates to the process of PR. It is clear that the principles governing and guiding all PR activity depend on the principles of communication as these have evolved over a period of time. Though the Public Relations, Publicity and Advertising are viewed as different areas of specialisation, the underlying concept for all these is similar, as they are essentially drawn from the principles of communication.

Briefly, these principles include the framing of a message by a source that sends it through a channel to the receiver, which interprets the message, and, in turn, communicates his response or reaction back to source. However, since the PR communication is essentially persuasive in nature, the Public Relations have acquired an identity of their own, directly related to the objectives of the profession. Thus, the PR have incorporated a few more aspects, which may be termed as 'Principles' governing the nature, process and function of the PR as a profession.

1.2.1 Principles in General

Before we discuss the principles of communication and the PR, we shall first examine what is meant by the term 'Principle'. It implies either i) the basic general truth of the concept, or ii) the guidelines within which the concept is supposed to operate.

1.2.2 The Principles of the Public Relations and Communications

While it is true that often deliberate communication processes bring about considerable desired changes, it is also true that a great deal of communication effort either fails or has unexpected effects. It is, therefore, necessary to examine a few salient factors on which much of our communication depends.
You have already gained an understanding of the various communication theories and models in earlier courses. We shall, therefore, only list some factors on which the success of communication depends:

- Knowledge of the exact frame of reference and the field of experience of the receiver/audience/target public is of utmost significance. This is known as the predisposition of the receiver, based on his socio-economic background and cultural moorings, his education, experiences and exposure, which moulds his outlook on life. Only such communication, which keeps the receiver’s frame of reference in mind, can be successful.

- The receiver’s tendency to believe what is comforting to his firmly held beliefs shields him from guilt or fear.

- The basic needs of the individual, such as individual worth, group acceptance, self-admiration, security, his skill, knowledge and power, motivate an individual to react to persuasive messages.

- The basic need for harmony between the needs and desires of the individual, and social demands and pressures he faces is equally important. According to a basic communication principle every person inherently moves towards acceptance of what enhances harmony, and shields himself from what might create dissonance within him.

- The fidelity of the message is also a very significant factor. Does it reach the recipient in the form in which it has been sent? In other words, does the receiver interpret the message exactly as intended by the source?

- Finally, the overriding factor in all communication efforts is the skill and experience of the communicator. Masterly skills can work wonders. On the other hand, amateurish efforts can prove to be counter-productive.

Thus, barriers to effective communication can be many. The flaw may be in the source, receiver or the message itself.

1.2.3 Influence of the Group in Message Acceptance

Another important principle of communication that has direct relevance to PR effort is the influence of group membership. Berelson and Steiner, renowned communicologists, hold the view that, on matters involving group norms, the more attached people are to the group, or the more active they are within it, the more their membership determines their response to communication. This predisposition determines the recipient’s perception of the communication and the degree to which he exposes himself to an idea.

It is a well known fact that people are more likely to talk about controversial matters with like-minded people than with those who do not share their views. Those who are already interested in a subject and inclined favourably towards it are the ones who are most willing to receive information about it. To state a simple example an anti-cigarette campaign may not interest chain smokers. In fact, as far as PR is concerned, the principle seems to be that those who read about an issue or a controversy also tend to listen, and those who pay attention at one time tend to pay attention at another.

Berelson and Steiner are of the opinion that the effect of the communication programmes which try to convert opinions on controversial issues is usually very little. If the issue matters to the audience, predispositions may block conversion. If the issue is not important, it may get little attention.

It is vital, therefore, for any PR professional to recognize the complexities and pitfalls, as enshrined in these communication principles, and to eliminate possible errors before launching any communication programme or campaign.
1.2.4 The Public Relations Principles

Till very recently, it was believed that the essence of mass persuasion was exposure of an idea, a brand, a name, a product to the target audience. The success of communication was measured in terms of the number of people reached and the number of exposures. Today, we know that not only do individuals respond differently to the same stimuli, but the response to a communication is also very selective. The PR professionals, therefore, need to evolve a new set of principles to guide their efforts.

Let us then examine the following:

i) efforts involved in modifying or altering the attitude of an individual towards a particular object, idea, person or institution;

ii) also such efforts as systematic scanning, monitoring and interpretation of the relevant social environment, and how these impinge on the performance of the organization:

A) Honest Communication

Increasing literacy rates and growing education has led to an attitude of skepticism towards a kind of communication that seeks to influence, motivate or persuade them. Thus, the first principle ought to be that PR communication should be honest and sincere. Blatantly insincere PR efforts are not only ineffective but build up resistance to the acceptance of any future persuasive efforts.

B) Tackling Information Overload

The mass media message output being phenomenal, the mass audience suffers from what has come to be known as 'information overload' i.e. communications being targeted by different interest groups from all sides to the same audience. It is necessary, therefore, for the PR practitioner to be careful in 'positioning' his PR messages. Instead of directly sending persuasive messages, one can adopt a strategy of injecting ideas and information into that broad stream of communication, for example, a newspaper which flows incessantly to the target publics. These may be picked up along with all other ideas and information, and subtly help become part of a receiver's thinking, which moulds his attitude. This requires tact, and comes with experience.

C) Use of the Intermediates or Opinion Leaders

Nearly five decades ago, Berelson, Lazarsfeld and Gaudet propounded the two-step process of communication. This process recognizes that people may not be directly influenced by mass media messages but will accept them from a trusted intermediary. The role of the intermediary is to serve as a 'bridge' between the mass media and the individual receivers.
flow theory of communication. "Ideas often flow from radio and print to the opinion leaders, and from them to the less active sections of the population. While the concept of the 'opinion leaders' is useful, the problem are involved in locating them as they are not clearly identifiable by position or otherwise. However, there is evidence that some media are far more suited to imparting information and ideas to opinion leaders in the areas they cover than others. Choice of appropriate media is, thus, a crucial task for the PR professional. Further, the two-step process is now being partially displaced by the instant visibility being achieved through the audio-visual media like the TV, Video and Films. These media bring the 'reality' directly into the lives of the mass audience. The greater impact of the TV, higher literacy/educational levels, and more leisure time have transformed the way in which the PR influence is generated.

The researchers have identified three separate groups in the “leader” category. These are:

- Vocal Activists who devote themselves to advocating a cause;
- Leaders such as the mass media and key educators;
- Power Leaders like the politicians, bureaucrats, judges and others who have the power to take actions that affect organizations and society.

Among the three most important groups is that of the Power Leaders, who can actually make things happen. The other two groups have access to the power leaders, but have little power themselves. However, the information input that gets to the Power Leaders is much more from the vocal activists and opinion leaders than from the general public and the public organizations.

As a result of this disproportionate pattern of input, Power Leaders often tend to assume that the distorted impressions they receive from the small articulate groups are what the public feels. This aspect has to be borne in mind, when the PR professionals interact with Power Leaders.

D) Choice of Tools

Further, the growing visibility of events, through the mass media, has led to higher public reaction levels. Therefore, as a principle, the PR professionals need to know all that could be made to capture the imagination by becoming real forces in people’s minds—actions, emotion-stirring speeches, films, events, dramatizations, events, displays, exhibitions or symbols, have a chance to capture the public attention, and win public support.

E) Ensuring Receptivity

Finally, for the PR to be effective, the basic principle that always needs to be kept in mind is that the target public must be in a ‘posture of receptivity’. This is of critical importance in PR. It is a recognized fact that the favourable inclination of an individual towards all messages from a given source is the result of his total experience with that source.

The character of an organization is exemplified by its actions and the sincerity of its previous attempts and efforts. On this depends the acceptance or rejection with which the organization’s communication is met.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: Explain the following terms in one or two sentences in the space given below:

a) Information Overload:
b) Positioning of Message:

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c) Two step Flow:

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d) Choice of Tools:

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1.3 PUBLIC ATTITUDE

Having discussed the principles of the PR let us see how these could be applied to influence public attitude, the most important function of the PR.

An ‘attitude’ is the feeling or made of an individual for or against some person, organization, issue or object. It represents the predisposition of an individual to evaluate controversial questions in a favourable or unfavourable manner. Attitude can be defined as the degree of positive or negative effect associated with some psychological object. The psychological object may be a symbol, phrase, slogan, person, institution, ideal or idea, towards which people can differ with respect to positive or negative effect.

Simply stated, it is an inclination to respond in a given way to a given issue or situation.

1.3.1 How are Attitudes Formed?

Attitudes are dormant until aroused by motives that are incited by a need, emotion, idea or physical state. The motives that arouse attitudes in individuals originate in desire for reward, self-defence, expressions of personal values and acquisition of knowledge. Attitudes may be shaped by a desire for reward, as in the case of an employee who has a positive attitude towards a trade union, because it is striving for increased wages and other benefits. Managements, therefore, seek to foster a favourable attitude by rewarding employees with benefits for improved performance. Attitude may also originate from motives of ego defence. A worker with a feeling of inadequacy may try to come to terms with his environment by adopting an attitude of superiority towards a section of the people around him. An attitude, once aroused in an individual, may be repressed due to external influence or will-power. For instance, a critical attitude may be repressed for fear of disciplinary action by the management.

1.3.2 Types of Attitude

Individuals manifest three types of attitude: positive, passive and negative. A positive attitude is a disposition of the mind to respond in a favourable or approving manner to stimuli from the environment. A person holding a positive attitude towards something is likely to react to it in a favourable manner. A passive attitude is a disposition of the mind to respond in an indifferent or neutral manner to stimuli from the environment. A person holding a passive attitude towards something is likely to remain indifferent or neutral in response to it. A negative attitude is a disposition of the mind to respond in an unfavourable or disapproving manner to stimuli from the environment. A person holding a negative attitude towards something is likely to react to it in an unfavourable manner.
attitude induces a person to react favourably towards another person, an issue, a policy or an organization. For instance, an entrepreneur, generally, has a positive attitude towards the government's efforts to simplify industrial licensing, for he sees the benefit the policy will bestow on him and the society to which he belongs.

An individual's attitude towards an issue, person or an organization may be completely passive. As a consequence, the person will have no opinion on issues affecting the group. The voters apathy during elections is, at times attributed to the passive attitude of a significant section of the electorate towards persons and issues that are involved in the elections.

Attitude may also be negative. An individual with such an attitude has an unfavourable opinion of a person, issue or organization; for instance, in the case of privatization of the public sector units, about which the trade unions generally have a negative attitude. This explains their unfavourable opinions on the issue.

1.3.3 Attitude and Public Opinion

Attitude become opinions. Active attitudes when publicly expressed become opinions. The basic motives, inducing persons to express their attitudes in the form of opinions, are their desire for comfort and convenience, safety and protection, pride, affection and to escape pain. The opinions of individuals are activated by their attitudes, which are motivated by mental and physical forces inducing them to express themselves. People are usually not aware of their motives impelling them to express attitude in the form of opinions. The intensity of one's motives varies from time to time as the urgency of the need increases or diminishes with circumstances. It is here that Public Relations steps in. The basic objective of PR is to measure and analyse the influence of the public opinion, which is shaped by the attitudes of the individuals comprising the public. Therefore, it is important for PR personnel to understand:

- the meaning of attitudes;
- why people hold the attitudes they do;
- the role of attitudes in the opinion-forming process; and
- the motives that cause people to express their opinions.

1.3.4 Public Attitude and Organization

Having realized the relationship between public relations and attitude; let us now examine the management functions of PR to analyse and interpret the anticipated public opinion, which might affect the operations and plans of an organization.

It is essential that the PR practitioner, who is the 'eyes and ears' of an organization, functions like a 'radar'. This helps to detect obstacles and eventualities which might shape the opinions/attitudes of its various public towards the organizational image.

No organization can afford to disregard the opinion of its publics—both internal and external.

Here, we can draw a distinction between the attitude of the employees or internal publics within the organizational functioning and its image, and also the attitude of those outside the organization or the external public, which cannot be ignored.

The attitude of the internal audience employees is important for the performance and image of the organization.

Also, this attitude often accurately reflects an organization's image of itself. For the employees, to respond in any way to an organizational ideal, the ideal must be defined and communicated to make the employees understand it in order to enable shaping of attitude in a desirable direction.
The communication gap between the organization and the employees, that affect the morals of the latter, is extremely harmful, and could tell upon the performance of the organization and its image. For instance, if the workers in a type-manufacturing factory have apprehensions about emissions of poisonous gases and the impact on their health, there is a need to educate them on the anti-pollution measures undertaken so that there is no threat to their health. This could foster a positive attitude towards the organization.

Similarly, the attitude of the external audiences or publics is of paramount importance, if an organization is to gain social acceptability. Take for example, the case of a cigarette manufacturing firm. The external audience, or particularly the health conscious and environmentally sensitive publics, cannot be expected to have a positive attitude in view of the harmful effects on health and environment. However, if these publics are convinced that this organization is making a positive contribution to society in, the form of the much needed foreign exchange it is earning, and the employment it is generating, then a change to some degree, could be brought about in their attitude.

It is clear from the earlier discussions that effective public relations involve changing the attitude of the internal and external publics towards the organization in a desired direction. But, how are the attitudes changed?

1.3.5 How are Attitudes Changed?

Changes in attitude occur when an existing attitude no longer provides a person with satisfaction or when the aspirations of the person are raised. Changes in attitude are accomplished by communications aimed at creating new beliefs or by appealing to the emotions that arouse favourable or unfavourable attitudes. Changes in attitude are also brought about when an individual experiences problems, frustrations or dissatisfaction with his cherished beliefs, self-image, economic status, value system and other circumstances. Appeals to the physical, social and economic needs of the people are most effective in changing their attitudes.

Attitude change is directly related to the immediacy of the issue to the individual. An issue, directly affecting the satisfaction or personal welfare of a person, is likely to cause a change from a passive attitude to either a positive or negative attitude.

Factors Influencing Attitudes: Attitudes are influenced by value symbols: these are the criteria by which persons, institutions or events are judged to be good or bad-wealth, material, possessions, prestige, physical appearance, etc. These value symbols are important factors in determining value judgements, and in influencing the attitude of the people.

Events play an important role in changing attitudes. Happenings or occurrences of direct significance to the members of a group are major determinants of attitudes and opinions. These have a stronger impact on attitudes and opinion than the simple communications. The PR practitioners, in view of this, plan events, and try to use these to change attitude and opinions. Some events could have a temporary effect on the attitudes but events that persist over a period of time, could have more lasting impressions on the attitudes.

Options are the public expression of active attitudes. The opinions of individuals are activated by their attitudes, which are motivated by mental and physical forces that induce them to express attitudes in the form of opinions. The public relations practitioners should understand the motives that cause people to express their opinions so that the public relations communications could appeal to the needs and motives of the people.
Activity 1

In your neighbourhood, interview five families to find out which of the following consumer durables they possess, the name of brand purchased and the factors that influences the purchase decision.

You might use the format given below to tabulate information. Use the given codes to indicate influencing factor: More than one factor could be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Refrigerator</th>
<th>Television</th>
<th>Two Wheeler</th>
<th>Music System</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name of the Factor Brand</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Codes for factors influencing purchase decision

Reliable quality = R
Impression gained through advertisements = A
Opinion of a well wisher = O

1.3.6 Analysing Public Attitude

As discussed earlier, effective public relations involve shaping public attitude and public opinion. However, a prerequisite of such an effort is to guage and analyse the existing public attitudes on various issues relevant to the organization. The evaluation is done through a scientific rigour, called Research. If a major policy decision like the Golden Handshake or the voluntary Retirement Scheme is to be introduced, it is imperative that a systematic study of the attitudes or opinion of the employees be undertaken.

Public opinion research includes image surveys, motivation research, effectiveness surveys and studies of individual publics. Two or more of surveys may be used concurrently in determining the character of opinion. Opinion research seeks answers to what people think about an organization and why they think as they do so. That constitutes is the public reactions to organizational policies, practices, services or products.

In addition to determining the views of the public as a whole, studies are made of opinions regarding individual publics such as employees, stock holders, dealers, etc. The effectiveness of the public relations activities in creating favourable public opinion towards an organization is also studied to determine possible improvements in the communication programme.

Image surveys determine the institutional profile or corporate image in the public mind by ascertaining its attitude towards an organization, how well it understands it and what it likes or dislikes about it. Image survey seeks to understand how well a
company is known, its reputation and what the public thinks about its products, services, prices, advertising personnel and practices.

**Motivation Research** seeks to find out why the public looks with favour or disapproval upon an organization. It seeks to discover through in-depth interviews with a representative sample of the population, the factors that motivate the public attitude towards an organization.

To understand the motives that influence an individual's opinion, it is necessary to explore the psychological factors that shape that person's attitude towards an organization. The 'public image' of an organization may be affected not only by its policies and actions, but also by the attitude of the public towards the industry of which the company is a part. Motivation studies are undertaken to discover the underlying emotional factors that influence the public opinion about an organization.

**Effectiveness Surveys** are used to measure the impact made by the public relations activities of the organization on public opinion. These surveys are used to measure the response of the public to the communications of the organization, as well as to measure the public opinion of specific events such as open houses, anniversary celebrations and so on.

**Content Analysis Study** is a technique through which an objective, systematic and quantitative analysis is made of the content of one or more of the mass media. Through this technique, an organization can determine what is being published or broadcast about it and the context in which it was presented.

**Check Your Progress 3**

**Notes:**

i) Answer the following questions in the space provided below.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of the unit.

1) Define 'Opinion'.

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2) What are three kinds of attitudes?

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3) State some factors that influence attitudes.

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4) Mention some public opinion research studies.

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**1.4 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

There is a very close relationship between the PR and the social environment in which
it operates. The official statement on public relations says ‘public relations help our complex pluralistic society to reach decisions, and function more effectively by contributing to mutual understanding among groups and institutions. It serves to bring private and public policies into harmony.’

Also Public Relations serve a wide variety of institutions, such as business, trade unions, government agencies, voluntary associations, foundations, hospitals, educational and religious institutions. To achieve their goals, these institutions must develop effective relationship with many different audiences or publics such as the employees, members, customers, local communities, shareholders, other institutions, and also with society at large.

In a democracy like India, with its diverse cultures, religion, language and wide socio-economic disparities, the Public Relations assume greater significance, their importance to the task of binding these groups into a harmonious whole by shaping the public opinion.

No organization can function in a vacuum. Firstly, it must interact with and work in a social environment, which is in a constant state of flux. The basic element of a sound PR programme lies in the social philosophy of management, which places the interests of the public on the top priority. Secondly, since the right of an organization to operate is conferred on it by the public, this privilege might be withdrawn by the same public. These organizations serve the primary needs of the people dependent upon it for employment, wages, income, goods and services, social and moral satisfaction.

The Social philosophy of management is reflected in the policy decisions taken in the public or national interest. For instance, in the recent past when the industrial units of India, both in the public and private sectors, were called upon to step up exports to help tide over the problem of depleting foreign exchange reserves, the more enlightened organizations responded to the challenges and contributed their mite towards solving the national problem.

1.4.1 Organizational Objectives vis-a-vis Societal Objectives

The Public Relations department of any organization has to work towards the realization of certain objectives. These objectives are designed within a broad framework to help foster and sustain mutual understanding between the organization and its publics. The objectives of the Public Relations Unit represent an action plan with responsibilities delegated at various levels of the PR setup. However, these objectives, themselves are drawn from the overall goals and objectives of the organization.

How does an organization set its task in terms of objectives? Every organization has to operate in a Social milieu. Often, contradictions occur between the overall social objectives and the given objectives of an organization. As a result, an organization has to work towards the realization of its objectives to conform with the realization of its objective to conform with the realization of the social objectives.

To cite an example, the Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited (BHEL) has formulated an objective to earn profits in the wake of the ongoing economic reforms to bring about self-sufficiency of the Public Sector. At the same time, the BHEL operates against social objective of supplying cheaper power to the consumers, particularly the peasants and artisans. Thus, power generation at a subsidized rate clashes with profit objective of the BHEL.

It is in such cases that the principle of Public Relations comes into action. The PR department in a particular organization has to convince its management about the rationale behind its objective, keeping in view its social objective. Thus, the pursuance
of social objectives might call for a degree of sacrifice of immediate profit, but, in the long run, it could reap more benefits in terms of social acceptability.

Now, let us discuss the social goals which every organization has to bear in mind while retaining its objectives:

- Overall economic progress,
- Social harmony and tranquillity,
- Social justice,
- Respect for cultural values and practices, and
- Development of human resources.

These social objectives are not static but change with the changing environment. It is a principle in Public Relations that these changes are to be monitored and analyzed.

Check Your Progress 4

Notes:

i) Answer the following questions briefly in the space provided below.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) Why should public interest be taken into account by the management in policy decisions?

2) Mention some broad social goals that every organization should bear in mind while formulating its objectives?

1.4.2 Management by Objectives and the PR

Let us introduce you to a relatively modern concept called Management by Objectives (MBO). We shall first try to understand the need for such a concept in the Public Relations. This concept seeks to

- provide a focus to three PR activities,
- organize the PR activities for effective realization of objectives, and
- involve the personnel at various levels.

After understanding the need for such a concept in the PR, we shall discuss the various stages in the implementation of this concept.

The PR goal should be clearly stated by the top executives of the PR Unit, and the approval of the management obtained. Thus, the PR goal is accepted as an organizational goal.

- The goal should be defined in terms of specific objectives.
- The individual objectives for different levels in the PR set-up top, middle and lower should be well defined so that the action plan could be carried out correctly.
Measurable standards in terms of implementation should be worked out. This will help in judging the performance of the individuals and the unit, as a whole.

For instance, if you are a PR Manager of an organization, which is poorly projected in the press, your goal would be to improve the organizational image. This broad goal could be translated into specific objectives such as:

- establishing rapport with the press.
- to liaise with the press to arrange for publishing features, special articles and interviews to enhance awareness of your organization, and
- to organize press conferences, press visits, exhibitions, and so on.

Thus, we see that working by objectives enables the Public Relations Unit to perform its functions methodically and effectively.

ACTIVITY 2

Make a list of activities that an organization might carry out locally in public interest to obtain goodwill. A few ideas are mentioned for your benefit. Look around your town and in the local newspaper columns for ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organisation</th>
<th>PR Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) ABC</td>
<td>Maintaining children’s park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) XYZ</td>
<td>Building bus shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) OPQ</td>
<td>Donating for relief funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>4)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.5 RELATING THE PR OBJECTIVES TO PUBLIC INTEREST

- A Public Relations Unit sets itself a task in the form of objectives. These are shaped, keeping in view the objectives of both the organization and society at large.
- The PR Unit, through its various activities and communications, constantly strives to educate its publics on the objectives of organization and the efforts it is making to realize the same.
- To illustrate, let us think of a two-wheeler manufacturing organization, which may have set its objective of becoming a market leader. The PR Unit in the organization must address itself to the task of educating various publics, such as
Principles and Functions of Public Relations

employees, dealers, auxiliary suppliers, stockholders, etc. While such an effort is bound to motivate the publics, such as employees and dealers, in realizing these objectives, the esteem of the organization will also go up in the minds of the other publics.

- Another dimension to the PR role is that of monitoring and analyzing the opinions and attitudes of the various publics, their aspirations, and expectations from the organization.

If, for instance, you are a top executive in the PR Unit of an airlines, it should be your endeavour to gauge the opinion of various publics such as air passengers, tourists, and top executives, in the hotel and tourism industry.

ON the services the Airlines offers, its drawbacks, their perceived need of new routes, new services and new package of tariffs that are viable, both in terms of utility and productivity.

This could be done by conducting surveys. The result of such surveys can form the basis for advising the management about modifying or adopting new objectives.

Efforts of this kind certainly help the organization to redefine its objectives in the light of the attitudes of the various publics, and enable it to perform to the greater satisfaction of its publics. The PR Unit has a vital role to play in this important exercise.

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Check Your Progress 5

Notes:  
 i) State whether the following statements are true or false.

 ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) The PR activity is independent of social environment

2) Immediate and tangible profits are more important than long term benefits for an organisation

3) There may be contradiction between the overall social objectives and the given objectives of an organisation

4) Purchase of social objectives could prove beneficial in the long run

5) Social objectives might change with changing environment

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1.6 LET US SUM UP

- This unit is devised to help you understand the basic principles guiding the PR practice.

- These principles are derived from an understanding of factors which influence the success of any communication. The PR personnel must, therefore, minimize errors in communication.
In the light of the changing communication and media scenario, we have described how communication flow. The two-step flow of communication and the role of the opinion leaders in the formation of the public opinion are explained.

The current social environment and the need for the PR personnel to make appropriate choice of the media to overcome audience resistance to persuasive messages has been discussed.

There is a constant need for monitoring approval: an organization must try frame its broader objectives in tune with the social objectives. The PR personnel can help accomplish this integration with their skill and effort to achieve mutual understanding with the public.

Activity 2

1) Prepare a questionnaire to study the attitude of the commuters in your area to assess their opinion of the services offered by the State Transport Organization.

2) Study the house journals of any two institutions, and identify the items on which these institutions are trying to fulfil the societal objectives.

1.7 GLOSSARY

Fidelity: Faithfulness

Posture of Receptivity: The favourable inclination of an individual towards all messages from a given source is the result of his total experience with that source.

Public Attitudes: The degree of positive or negative effect associated with some psychological object in the minds of the public.

Value Symbols: The criteria by which persons, institutions or events are judged to be good or bad.

Self Esteem: Value on oneself or self respect.

Persuasion: Process of influencing attitudes and behaviour.

Field of Experience: Sum total of experiences of an individual that guides the interaction of the person with the external world. It is believed that communication cannot be successful unless the field of experience of the source and the receiver overlap.

Image: Mental representation.

Information overload: Conditions in which the complexity or amount of information available is too complex to be managed effectively.

Opinion Leaders: Persons who are articulate, possess leadership qualities and serve as intermediaries between the group and the media. They help to disseminate information, and act as catalysts.
1.8 FURTHER READING

Black, Sam and Melvin L. Sharpe; *Practical Public Relations*; 1983.


1.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The term 'principles' covers information about the nature, process and functions of the PR as a profession and the achievement of its objectives.

2) Some factors governing successful PR communication include.
   a) Exact frame of reference of the target public,
   b) Firmly held beliefs of the receiver,
   c) Self esteem of the receiver,
   d) Whether or not the message has group acceptance,
   e) Harmony between needs/desires of the individuals and the social demands/pressures,
   f) Fidelity of the message, and
   g) The communicator's skill.

Check Your Progress 2

a) The phenomenal output of messages by the mass media targeted to the same audience from all sides is said to result in information overload.

b) In order to ensure that the message is received by the target public, one could adopt the strategy of subtly injecting ideas and information in the broad stream of communication so as to change the attitude of the receiver without his recognising the perspective effort.

c) Ideas often flow from the mass media to the opinion leaders, and through them to the less active persons, because of the role of intermediaries. Such flow of communication is called two step flow.

d) Deciding which channel may best help to capture public attention in a given target group for specific messages from among the available choice of the media, e.g., mass media, display, speeches, etc.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Active attitudes when publicly expressed become opinions.

2) Positive, passive and negative.

3) Value symbols and events, and appeals through communication.

4) Image surveys, motivation research, effectiveness surveys, content analysis studies.
Check Your Progress 4

1) Organisations depend on the public for their material and human resources. They owe their very existence to the cooperation and goodwill of the public. Hence, to reap long term benefits, it is important to consider the public interest.

2) Overall economic progress, social harmony and tranquility, social justice, respect for cultural values and practices, and development of the human resources.

Check Your Progress 5

1) False
2) False
3) True
4) True
5) True
UNIT 2 ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENTS—GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE

Structure

2.0 Objectives
2.1 Introduction
2.2 Status of the Public Relations Departments

   2.2.1 Status of the PR Department in the Organizational Structure
   2.2.2 Trained Personnel for Good PR
   2.3 The PR Stance—its Relevance to the Organization and Society
      2.3.1 The PR Vs Societal Needs
      2.3.2 The PR Objectives and Corporate Business Objectives: Link
      2.3.3 Qualities Required for the PR Department

2.4 Different Approaches to Organizing the PR Departments

   2.4.1 Role of the PR Consultancies
   2.4.2 Points to Remember About the Set-ups

2.5 Structures of the Central and State Government PR Departments

   2.5.1 History of Indian Information Services
   2.5.2 Need for the Government Information Machinery
   2.5.3 The Media Unit of I & B Ministry
   2.5.4 The State Government PR Machinery

2.6 Structuring of the PR Departments in the Public, Private and Voluntary Sectors
2.7 Let Us Sum Up
2.8 Glossary
2.9 Further Reading
2.10 Check Your Progress: Model Answers

2.0 OBJECTIVES

We have already discussed the principles of the PR in Unit 1 of this Block. We shall now introduce you to the organization and structure of the PR departments in the government and private organizations. After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- state the role of the PR departments;
- describe the need for the PR departments;
- explain how the PR serve as a link between society and organization or between a people and the government;
- trace the linkage between the PR objectives and the corporate objectives;
• describe the various media units through which the government information machinery operates;
• describe the qualities of a PR person; and
• describe the role of the PR consultancy services.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have analyzed the principles of the PR: what it is; how it relates to our environment; how it promotes the organizational objectives; and how it could profitably use communication channels. In other words, how could the PR "engineer consent", i.e., the expertise of persuasion.

In this unit, we shall examine the status and position of the PR in organizations. The PR functions being linked to the organizational activities, the structure of the PR department varies—from being a one-man-show to a complex multi-sectorial specialized departmental structure.

We shall examine the PR set up of the Central and State governments, in the public and private sectors, and also that in the research and voluntary agencies. Quite naturally, it differs from company to company, depending on a host of factors, such as, its own needs, its products, its plans, its positioning in the socio-economic environment, its share holding pattern, etc. Therefore, we shall have to be general in our approach, but shall draw on examples wherever possible.

One of the lessons to remember in the Public Relations, or indeed in any discipline of management, is to draw on case studies. It is only by following examples that we can enrich our own experience, and avoid mistakes.

2.2 STATUS OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENTS

We have already discussed the need for the PR today in different organizations, whether in the government or in the private sector. We have also identified several imperatives of the PR professionals. In this section, we shall elaborate on the status of the profession.

As already mentioned, there is no hard and fast rule about the PR department set up. Much depends on the needs and the products of the organization. The Public Relations by the very name imply that these seek public sanction for the organization to fulfill its goals. And the organizational goals and objectives determine the role of the PR personnel.

2.2.1 Status of the PR Department in the Organizational Structure

An organization might have departments, such as Production, Finance, Marketing, etc., which are concerned with their respective spheres of responsibility. But the PR department has an overall responsibility with both internal and external communications. In short, it forges links among various departments as also between the lowest ranked employees and the top management besides linking the organization with its external publics. Therefore, a PR department must have full and continuing access to the top management.

Since the PR professional is the "official spokesman" for his organization, he should, in order to be effective, report to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is the
Principles and Functions of Public Relations

ultimate policy maker. Since the PR professional is also the “official” link between the organization and the identified target public, especially the media, he must have access to the departmental chiefs. This does not imply that the PR professional is the only “official” link between an organization and the publics. The Company Secretary, for example, would deal with the shareholders; the Company Personnel Manager would deal with the employees; the Company Accountant would deal with the financial institutions; and so on. But the PR man would need, as occasion warrants, to deal with all these several publics. One of his most significant publics is the Media, both the press and the electronic media. It is also important to stress here, in defining the positioning of the PR within an organization, that there should not be too many “official spokesman” for an organization. Ideally, the spokes person should be the PR man, in consultation with the CEO and departmental chiefs. Conflicting reports in the Press would negatively affect the credibility of an organization, apart from detracting from the PR person’s authority, which would be detrimental to the conduct of his work.

An eminent PR practitioner, Edward Bernays, has defined a PR person as “a practitioner, a professional equipped by education, training and experience, to give counsel to the client or employer on relations with the publics on which the subject depends. He sets about his task by studying the relations of the subject and these publics. He then advises them on the attitudes and actions necessary to attain the social goals, and then interprets the subject to the public. Thus, the PR counsel functions on a two way street. He interprets publics to client and client to publics.”

This aptly describes the positioning and status of the PR within an organization.

Check Your Progress 1

Note:

i) Fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) The PR establish links between an ................ and its ................

2) Communication within an organization can be both ................. and ..............

3) There should not be too many spokesmen for an organization to avoid ............

4) The PR set up depends on the organization’s ..............

2.2.2 Trained Personnel for Good PR

Training underlines the importance of the right PR man for the job. Good PR men can do the organization a lot of good, but bad PR men harm a corporation greatly. Today, we need well trained men and women in the PR, who could counsel, deliberate, and be judicious in their approach and execution.

Daniel J. Edelman, Fellow, the Public Relations Society of America, Chairman and CEO, Edelman Worldwide Inc. Chicago, says ; “The public relations profession is gaining power and respect among decision makers in America. As practitioners, we are obliged to be aware of the problems facing our country, to counsel our clients on ways to take leadership positions to address these issues”.

As in the developed world, so too, in India, the PR practitioners are gaining greater status.

As trained professionals they must be aware of our several problems and seek to address them. As stated earlier, the communicators in a developing economy have a more difficult and meaningful role than those in more advanced countries.

Check Your Progress 2

Note:

i) Answer the following questions briefly in the space provided.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.
2) What would a PR man need for smooth functioning?

...............................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................

2.3 THE PR STANCE – ITS RELEVANCE TO THE ORGANIZATION AND SOCIETY

As we have mentioned in this Unit earlier, in Section 2.1 the Public Relations must have their roots in the environment. You have learnt in earlier units about the origin of the PR – how “Vox Populi, Vox Dei” resulted in the birth of this profession. The Voice of the People is still the Voice of God, all these many centuries later. To that extent society has not changed. But society has indeed become more complex today, resulting in several pressures and demands.

2.3.1 The PR Vs Societal Needs

Today, more than ever before, an organization exists by societal/public sanction. Public opinion is having an ever increasing say in the management of organizations. And, simultaneously, the demands being made of the PR practitioners are increasing.

Let us illustrate this point by an example. Let us take the scenario of a large company in the private sector, which has a large foreign shareholding. And let us take you back to a period before the Indian economy was liberalized. This particular company wanted several lines of diversification to be sanctioned by the Government. This was a difficult proposition in a closed economy. What could be done? It first decided on a corporate business objective, and then linked this to the corporate PR objective.

So, let us say the business objective of this company was: “To make profit, to grow and to diversify”. Its PR objective, which had to essentially tie in with its business objective, was:

“To invest in nationally – responsible activities and create substantiated in that the organizational activities were aimed at bringing socio-economic benefits to the country. Therefore, it was a responsible corporate citizen.”

This being the PR objective, you could see how closely it was linked to the business objective, and how inextricably both were linked to the environment. An organization is but a part of a society and lives and breathes in the social environment. The PR men must therefore, act as the company’s interface with society. That makes it vitally necessary for PR practitioners to understand society and be sensitive to its needs so that it could relate these needs to their own organization.

To translate this PR objective into action, one needs time. The PR process takes time, because of their dealing with intangibles. This particular company went on to diversify in nationally – relevant sectors, by which means it was fulfilling its PR objectives.
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It was also engaged in specified nationally — needed social activities. Needless to mention, despite a restrictive environment, its projects got clearance, and it went on to become one of India's most successful diversified organizations.

Here is a need for caution. It would be erroneous to presume that it was PR alone that made this company successful. It was the company’s appreciation of the country’s needs at that point in time, and its extreme sensitivity to the environment that helped pave the way. In short, commitment was genuine. The PR played a major role in communicating this to the publics; it acted in tandem with the corporate policy, its own objective being an extension of the corporate business objective. This is an ideal situation, and good example of the effective use of the discipline of the Public Relations. The PR effort, therefore, is performance followed by recognition.

2.3.2 The PR Objectives and Corporate Business Objectives: Link

Let us examine a specific case of a corporate business objective, and define the relevant possible PR objective. Ideally, the two need to harmonize. You are a PR professional in an agricultural company in either the country's public or private sector, the question of foreign shareholding may not be relevant. But, if your company's business objective is "to continue to make profits and expand", perhaps your PR objective would be "to create an atmosphere of understanding and trust between the organization and its relevant publics (perhaps here the farmer) both nationally and internationally". Implicit in this objective is the planning and execution of different types of communication, reaching out to the heart of the rural India, and also linking our own producers, i.e., the farmers with overseas markets, thereby fulfilling the national objective of exporting the famous agricultural commodities of India.

For a PR practitioner, this simple objective brings in its wake a variety of factors; communicating to different audiences, in different languages, using various kinds of media and messages. This task implies a knowledge of the following:

i) the farmer,

ii) the products,

iii) the markets, and

iv) the global needs.

It implies a whole host of information and knowledge including understanding of the environment and objectives of the organization. Today, India is opening up to the rest of the world. As PR professionals, you would need to understand newer needs and match your organization’s needs with those of the nation.

2.3.3. Qualities Required for the PR Department

From these two examples, you would learn that the PR practitioner needs to be a part of the planning process in his organization. Besides being in constant touch with top management, he also needs to study and master the art of mass communication, journalism, psychology, advertising, social sciences, etc. He should, first and foremost be tuned to society and the environment. He must understand the government policies, political systems, and their nuances and economic imperatives: he should have communication skills, be tactful and informative in his dealings with a cross section of the publics; he should be able to deal with his colleagues at all levels— from top to bottom. A thorough familiarity with the political, economic, social and cultural environment and an awareness of changing trends is absolutely essential for a successful PR activity.
Check Your Progress 3

Note: State whether or not the following statement are true or false.

1) An organization's goals need not match with national interest.
   (   )

2) The PR objectives are drawn from the organization's overall objectives.
   (   )

3) Communication skills alone are not enough for a PR person.
   (   )

4) The PR efforts cannot succeed unless backed by performance.
   (   )

2.4 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO ORGANIZING THE PR DEPARTMENTS

The nature of the PR function demands access to information. Hence, the PR person must have continuous interaction with all departments including top management.

In this section, let us consider the different approaches that an organization might follow in organizing its PR departments. Let us here mention again that the PR is essentially a staff function, which creates a conducive climate for industry to function effectively in society.

Fig. 2.1: It indicates the flow of Public Relations through the entire organisation.

The PR Flow in an Organization

The human mind knows no barriers. Since the PR essentially deal with human beings, we often think of the PR in the form of a jigsaw, several elements combining to form the whole, each section as important, relevant, and dependent as the others.

We have mentioned the PR as a staff function, which cuts across both staff and line functions. Therefore, the PR activity has to be involved in the organization with
marking and Production which are line functions; and Finance and Personnel, which are more in the nature of staff functions.

Outside the organization, it needs to be involved with society, at large, with particular reference to the specified target publics.

Due to the nature of its activities, the PR departments should not have a hierarchical approach.

**THE PR RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

It is important to ensure that though the PR are the direct responsibility of the CEO, dotted line relationships of the PR practitioner must be maintained with all other functions. With its function assuming greater importance today, PR, in many instances, have become a broad appointment along with other staff functions.

The term 'dotted line relationships' here refers to the indirect links the PR have to establish in an organization for effective functioning, and differ from the direct line of hierarchy within the organization.

Let us now illustrate the ideal reporting relationship(s) of the PR practitioner in an organization, public or private. A similar reporting relationship should also be adopted for the PR in educational and voluntary organizations.

Let us again, in a chart, indicate the ideal staffing of a PR department. This, however, would depend a lot on the size of an organization, and its diversity (if diversified). Let us take the instance here, for the sake of illustration, of a large (diversified) organization, whether in the public or private sector.
If the company’s operations encompass the whole country, the PR practitioner would need dedicated resources in the main cities of its operations.

2.4.1 Role of the PR Consultancies

Other than having the PR personnel on their staff, an organization can also have the option of hiring the services of outside consultants. Consultancy services are provided by advertising agencies or independent consulting firms. The quality of the PR service depends much on the ability and experience of the practitioners.

There are certain advantages in using outside consultants, e.g., they can give unbiased, objective advice, and might have wider experience having worked for several clients. They might be paid for the work commissioned, and the hiring agency is free to terminate the contract. As against this, there are practical disadvantages. There is lack of continuity in operations; also they might have very little practical knowledge of the company and, hence, might not be able to provide speedy service.

On the other hand, having an internal PR department has the advantage of the PR staff being able to establish friendly relations at all levels, and promote better internal relations and speedier press information services. Also, as the organization grows, the specialists could be recruited. But for short term goals, it would be better to hire expert service. Whether an organization should have outside consultant or its own public relations department, would, however, depend on the size of the organization and the nature of its public relations activities.

In developed countries, the PR consultants have a major role to play. In India, the concept is catching on. The future envisages greater role for the consultants in India.

2.4.2 Points to Remember About the PR Set-ups

- The size of the organization, its objectives and needs determine the nature of the PR set up in it.
- The PR department size could vary from a one-man show to a complex multi-department set up, with specialized sections, staffed with skilled personnel in charge of specialized activities.
- The PR department links all departments within an organization, i.e., it is in charge of internal communication, both horizontal and vertical. Hence, the PR chief must have access to the top management.
- It links the organization to its external publics i.e., it must establish external communication to promote the image of the organization.
- An organization could perform with its own PR staff.
- An organization could hire an outside PR consultant instead of having its own PR staff.
- For certain special campaigns, an organization might additionally seek the services of the expert consultants in addition to having their own staff.

Check Your Progress  4

Note:  
   i) Answer the following questions briefly in the given space.

   ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1) What should the reporting relationship of the PR be?
2.5 STRUCTURES OF CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT PR DEPARTMENTS

We shall now examine how the Government PR machinery functions at various levels, and the functions they perform.

2.5.1 History of Indian Information Services

The earliest information service of the Government of India was organised under the Central Bureau of Information (now called Press Information Bureau), which started after the First World War (1919), and was placed under the Home Department. The year 1923 saw the Central Bureau of Information becoming a permanent organization, and the information activities of different departments were brought under it. A Director General of Information was appointed in 1939 to control and coordinate the war publicity through the then available media. It was in October, 1941, that the Department of Information and Broadcasting was created, and various government publicity agencies working under the control of the other departments were brought under its unified control. However, the Directorate of Public Relations continued to operate under the aegis of the general headquarters.

Broadcasting existed in a small form in 1927. It took more than a decade for the Broadcasting Services to be changed from the Indian State Broadcasting Service to the All India Radio. In 1941, the newly created Department of Information and Broadcasting took over the subject of "Broadcasting" from the Department of Communications.

The Department of Information and Broadcasting became the central agency for the Publicity and Information activity of the Government of India. In 1947, the department was designated as the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Since Independence, India has built up an extensive network of mass media facilities, using both the traditional media, and the state-of-the-art satellite communication. The two have blended to create the information revolution in the country that has had an impact not merely on the country's consumer expectations, but has also given rise to political awareness. There has been a rapid socio-economic transformation of society. And now communication itself knows no territorial barriers, with CNN (Cable News Network), Star TV and BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) reaching even our remote villages. The possibilities that this kind of reach opens up for both Government and Industry are mind-boggling. The Indian villagers in the remotest villages of Purulia in West Bengal or Anaparti in Andhra Pradesh are now aware of not only India, but of the entire world around him.

2.5.2 Need for the Government Information Machinery

For any government to function effectively, the need for establishing rapport with its
people is important. More so in a democracy like India, where, the popular support is essential for the government to exist. This necessitates gauging public needs and aspirations, and giving these priority in formulating national policies. It is, therefore, important to convey to the masses the programmes, plans and achievements of the government so that the benefits percolate to all sections of society. It is equally necessary to gather feedback on public attitudes and opinions. This is done to modify or suitably alter any policy. These tasks of communication and collection of feedback are accomplished by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

All news about the Government of India is communicated to the media through the information or PR man in the ministry. It is the function of the information officer to give publicity to the programme of the ministry to which he is attached and to keep the ministry informed of the public reactions.

2.5.3 Media Units of I & B Ministry

Public information of government of India is handled by departments under I & B Ministry called ‘Media Units’.

The Media Units which keep people informed about plans and programmes of the Central Government are: All India Radio, Doordarshan, Films Division, Press Information Bureau, Registrar of Newspapers for India, Publications Division, Directorate of Field Publicity, Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity, Photo Division, Song and Drama Division and its Research and Reference Division. Directorate of Film Festivals, National Film Development Corporation, Film and Television Institute of India, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, and the National Centre of Films for Children and Young Persons.

A) All India Radio (AIR) is headed by a Director General. Our radio stations, spread throughout the country, comprise a vast network serving 90% of the population, and covering almost 90% of the country. The News Services Division of All India Radio is one of the largest of its kind in the world. AIR, as a media, has the largest reach in the country.

B) Doordarshan Kendra (DDK): Indian Television Network was designated ‘Doordarshan’ in 1976, when it was delinked from AIR. In these 20 years, it has expanded its scope of work remarkably, and new stations are being established throughout the country, though AIR’s reach is still higher. Here too, there is a Director General in charge at the Centre.

The SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment), through which satellite teaching was imparted in remote rural areas, was conducted in 1975, and proved effective in providing the rural India with programmes on education, social awareness, health and family welfare, national integration, etc. Today, with our own satellites, instructional, educational and entertainment programmes are beamed all over the country.

C) The Films Division (FD): It was set up, in 1948, to use the medium of ‘film’ to impart information on important aspects of the country’s life and on vital issues like national integration, family welfare, eradication of social evils, like untouchability and the caste system, by producing documentaries and instructional films.

D) The Press Information Bureau’s (PIB) primary function is Press to keep people informed of policies, decisions and programmes of the government. It also feeds news to the electronic media. It provides services in English and regional languages. The PIB is one of the largest public information agencies in the world.
Principles and Functions of Public Relations

E) The Office of the Registrar of Newspapers, which came into being in 1956, is responsible for studying various aspects of the growth of the Indian Press, with particular reference to ownership and circulation patterns.

F) The National Film Archives of India (NFAI): This was set up, in 1964, with the objective of acquiring and preserving the heritage of the National Cinema and the best of World Cinema, to classify document data and encourage film research.

G) The Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) has completed over thirty years of service as a national centre for teaching, training and research in Mass Communication. It conducts a number of short term and specialized courses to meet identified needs.

H) The Photo Division is the largest photographic unit of that kind in the country, with a valuable collection of photographs relating to news events as well as socio-economic development. It supplies other units with photographs for visual publicity.

I) The Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) imparts technical training in the art of film making and provides in service training to the Doordarshan personnel.

J) The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), set up in 1980, covers a wide gamut of activities like production of films, export of Indian films, import and distribution of foreign films; construction of cinema theatres, import of raw stock, helping in developing technology, and the production and recording of video cassettes and their marketing.

K) The National Centre of Films for Children and Young Persons (NCFCYP): Earlier known as children's Film Society of India, this has been set up with the objective of promoting films suitable for the children and young persons. It concerns itself with providing clean entertainment by producing, acquiring and distributing such films and organizing the children's film festivals.

L) The Directorate of Film Festivals was set up to promote good cinema and Indian films in India and abroad. It helps this by organizing film awards, film festivals within India, and by participating in International Film Festivals.

M) The Publications Division produces, sells and distributes books and journals on matters of national importance for internal as well as external publicity. It is one of India's largest publishing houses in the public sector. Yojana, a fortnightly, is devoted to planning and development.

N) The Directorate of Field Publicity is the largest rural oriented publicity set up in the country, operating at the grass roots level. Through its field units, located in different parts of the country, it organizes publicity programmes to educate the people. The public reaction to government policies and programmes are also collected and feed back to the concerned ministries and thus the Directorate serves as a two-way channel of communication.

O) The Directorate of Audio Visual Publicity (DAVP) acts as the central agency for dissemination of Government programmes in economic and social development through advertising and the visual media of communication via advertisements, printed publicity materials, exhibitions, and other outdoor publicity.

P) The Song and Drama Division utilizes the entertainment media for fulfilling national objectives. The media includes the drama, folk recitals, ballets, etc., on themes of national need and relevance.

The Research and Reference Division of this centre was set up in 1950 to
provide Research and Reference material to ministries, media units, and other public agencies, mainly in the form of backgrounders.

The staffing of all these units is elaborate as it penetrates into almost every nook and corner of our vast country. East unit designs its own requirements guided by the national objectives.

### Activity 1

Examine the advertisements appearing in any national daily, and examine how many advertisements have been released by DAVP in one week. Use the following chart to help you to tabulate.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Name of Newspaper</th>
<th>Size of Ad.</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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</table>

### 2.5.4 The State Government PR Machinery

Let us now briefly examine the state of the PR machinery in the state governments.

As in the case of the Central Government, the States also have their own media units to disseminate information for public. The District PROs are the key persons in this structure.

Each of the States has a Directorate of Information and Public Relations which coordinate activities at the State level through field publicity offices. The strength of these units is not very large. It is dependent on specific needs.

Each directorate may have sections like:

1) The scrutiny section to watch out for public reaction;
2) The planning and development wing;
3) The cultural development section;
4) The information wing to feed the press;
5) The publications wing;
6) The field publicity and exhibition section;
7) The advertisement wing;
8) The special campaign wing;
9) The research and reference wing; and
Activity 2

While reading through the day's newspapers pay careful attention to the news items based on press releases issued by the various ministries. On an average day try to count how many such items appear issued by the Central Information Machinery and how many by the State Information Bureaus.

2.6 STRUCTURING OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENTS IN THE PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS

a) The Public Sector, since independence, has witnessed tremendous growth in terms of size, depth, generation of internal resources, turnover and total investment. The Public Sector in India comprises utilities, such as the railways, road transport services, posts and telegraphs, power and irrigation, various defence establishments and departmental undertakings such as the Integral Coach Factory. The Central Public Sector Undertakings also include companies with 51% of the Central Government share holdings. These may be categorised as:

1) those producing goods, such as coal, petroleum, steel, engineering, pharmaceuticals and agro-based industries; and
2) those rendering services like transportation, trading, technical consultancy, tourist services, and financial services.

The nature and special features of the public sector—like the large work-force employed, chronic losses, its policies and quality of products—often evoke more public interest than the private sector does. In view of this, the PR personnel should be fully committed to the philosophy of the public sector; and public sector units must have professional set-ups, with adequate staff and functional facilities. The PR Chief must have direct access to the primary sources of information in the organization, and know the basic philosophy of the government's industrial policy.

B) The Private Sector: The Public Relations in private sector have to flow over all departments, like personnel, sales, production, etc. Here the PR activity includes relations with the shareholders, distributors, dealers, suppliers, customers, government, local community, press, and the employees' relations. The task is mainly that of maintaining a two-way internal communication between the management and its employees as well as the external public. The projection of the image of the organization being the important function, the activities, objectives and size of the organization would determine the PR department structure. As these are business organizations run on profit motives, the growth and the very existence of the organization will depend on the success of the PR activities. The growth of the PR set up in the Private Sector in India has been adhoc and unplanned. But it is important to ensure that the head of PR set up should be a professional person.

C) The personnel in Voluntary Organizations: As Voluntary Organizations are run without profit motives, they need to raise funds to fulfil their social tasks. The PR task
the workers are unpaid. The public image of the voluntary organizations needs to be promoted to attract financial support. The PR person may be a voluntary worker himself, or the organization might use officials from the headquarters only for the work. A progressive voluntary organization may also hire the services of consultants.

Check Your Progress 5

1) List the media units under the Central Information Machinery PR Departments.

2) Why should the structure of the PR Department be flexible?

2.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have examined the position of the PR and the status of the profession within organizations. We have all along emphasized that the structuring of the Public Relations is need-based, and must vary from one organization to another, depending on each one's business compulsions. In the process, we have quoted several definitions of the Public Relations, emphasizing that it is the interface of an organization with its several publics. The PR professional must act as the eyes and ears of the organization, and relate to the management in both an advisory as well as executive capacity.

Here lies the real nature of the PR function. Its role in a corporation is all-pervasive as it flows over the entire organization. It is for this reason that we have discussed the need for the function to report to the top management.

We have then discussed the relevance of the PR to the organization and society, with examples of how a company could grow keeping the public interests in mind. More and more companies will exist by societal sanction with the social audits of companies becoming the norm. This itself holds opportunities and challenges for the PR men.

We have talked about the different ideal reporting relationship and advantages of the PR consultancy services over the PR staff. The structures of the Central and State Government PR Departments have also been discussed. The vastness of our country, with its numerous complexities of language, manners, customs and superstitions, have necessitated the creation of one of the world's largest information systems, covering several Media Units. In the State Governments, the PR machinery is less complex but need-based.

And, finally, we have dwelt on the structuring of the PR in public and private sectors, in educational institutes and voluntary organizations. There is no hard and fast rule for structuring here. Much depends on the organizational priorities.

In conclusion, we have sought to draw your attention to the fact that the new liberalized open India will call for more aggressive PR skills, and the key words for the PR practitioners continue to be: 'understanding' (which implies sensitivity) and 'effective communication'.

Organization and Structure of the Public Relations Departments
2.8 GLOSSARY

SAIL : Steel Authority of India Limited.
ONGC : Oil and Natural Gas Commission
IOL : Indian Oxygen Limited
CNN : Cable News Network of the Turner Broadcasting System, USA
BBC : British Broadcasting Corporation
CEO : Chief Executive Officer
STAR TV : Satellite Television for Asian Region of the Hutchvision Company Ltd., Hong Kong.

Voluntary Organizations : An organization engaged in community and social welfare tasks with no profit motives. The staff, in such organizations, are unpaid or paid very nominal remuneration.

PR Consultants : Experienced practitioners of the Public Relations, who work on a free-lance basis, and whose services could be hired for short term assignments for specific tasks. The consultancy services might be provided by the advertising agencies and consultant firms.

Media Units : Various departments like AIR, PIB, Films Division, Doordarshan, under the I & B Ministry, the task of which is to disseminate information.

Organizational Structure : Creating of an orderly set-up by arranging the staff of an organization into various divisions, grades, and classes, or ranking them one above another. This ensures proper working order, division of tasks, and cooperation.

2.9 FURTHER READING

Black, Sam; *Practical Public Relations* ; 1972; *The Role of Public Relations in Management*; 1975.

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Cutlip, E.M; *Effective Public Relations*; 6th Ed. 1986.

Centre, A.H and Dhenkney, VM; *Public Relations in Business and Public Administration in India*; 1972.

Jefkins, Frank ; *Planned Public Relations*; 1969; *Press Relations Practice*; 1968.

Kaul, J.M; *Public Relation in India*; 1976.


D. S. Mehta; *Handbook of Public Relations in India* ; Allied Publishers Ltd., 1980 (Reprinted'91).

Publications Division ; *Mass Media in India*; 1992, compiled by Research and Reference Section (I&B Ministry).
Check Your Progress 1
1) Organization, Publics.
2) Vertical, Horizontal.
3) Conflicting reports.
4) Objectives.

Check Your Progress 2
1) Communicators are needed to create and foster mutual understanding between
an organization (whether it is a unit of the government or of the Public or
Private Sector) and its several publics.

The PR people act both in an advisory and executive capacity. They need to
counsel, deliberate and be objective in their approach. They also need to be
aware of the organizational problems.

2) It is equally important for the PR people to make their needs known to the
organization:

Their need for constant open and timely information, their need of
communication aids, their need for agreeing to collaborate with the top
management on a plan of action, and need to interact with all departments.

Check Your Progress 3
1) False
2) True
3) False
4) True

Check Your Progress 4
1) The PR, being a management function, the PRO must have full access to the
top management. He must also interact constantly with the CEO. He must also
be in a position to have free access to other departmental heads.

2) The consultants from outside the organization could bring in their richer
experience gained from various PR projects. They could have a fresh or
unbiased approach to problems. It would help to cut costs by reducing the
overheads. The contract could always be terminated easily.

Check Your Progress 5
1) The Department of Information and Broadcasting is the central agency for
publicity and information activity with the following media units: All India
Radio, Doordarshan, Films Division, Press Information Bureau, Registrar of
Newspapers of India, Publications Division, Directorate of Field Publicity,
Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity, Photo Division, Song and
Drama Division, Research and Reference Division, National Film Archives of
India, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, National Centre of Films for
Children and Young Persons, and Directorate of Film Festivals.

2) The need for flexibility in the structuring of the PR department in Public and
Private sectors is important. The department structure, as of today, might not be
warranted tomorrow. Tomorrow's demand could be different. It is sufficient to
remember that the PR means the "creation and maintenance of mutual
understanding" between an organization and its several publics.
UNIT 3 FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS STRUCTURE

Structure
3.0 Objectives
3.1 Introduction
3.2 Functional role of PR
3.3 Analysing and Predicting Issues and Opportunities
3.4 Information gathering and Monitoring Trends
3.5 Communication Planning and Information Dissemination
3.6 Advisory and Counselling role of PR
3.7 Communicating with specialized Publics
3.8 Corporate Communication
3.9 Let Us Sum Up
3.10 Glossary
3.11 Further Reading
3.12 Check your Progress : Model Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit is designed to inform you about some basic functions of the PR from which you could gain reasonable knowledge about the utility of the PR departments in organizations. After studying the unit, you would be able to:

- list and describe the four important functions of the PR;
- explain the analysis and prediction of the issues involved in the PR functions;
- describe the process of gathering information and monitoring in the PR;
- state the importance of communication planning and information dissemination; and
- explain the importance of the advisory and counselling role of the PR.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Units 1 and 2 of this block have already made you familiar with the philosophy and principles of the PR, the organization and structure of the PR departments in various organizations, respectively.

You must have found this information interesting. Knowledge about various aspects of the PR helps you to gain insight into what the PR actually stands for, where it operates, and how the PR departments are organised in the Government and the Private Sector.

But, perhaps you still need to know what exactly the functions of the PR personnel in an organization are, and what is its scope and utility, to enable you to understand more about the PR profession. In this unit, we shall discuss this in detail.
As you know, all PR functioning is communication which is persuasive, planned, sustained and effective. You are also aware that the PR communication aims at bringing about goodwill, acceptance and trust between the organization and its publics. Therefore, we shall describe how we could achieve this.

The scope of the PR functions are extensive, and are dependent on the nature, size and type of the organization and the types of the publics and the kind of the situation at any given time. The PR is essentially a management function; it is the social philosophy of management expressed in policy decisions and actions resulting from these policies. In this unit, you would be made aware of how the PR seeks to perform its management function through effective information dissemination, which is an aid to management.

3.2 FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF PR

The most pronounced phenomenon of the past two decades, in the world of management, is the emergence of what is known as the "broad marketplace of ideas", which forms the basis of the public opinion. Any organization or corporation that chooses to ignore this does so at its own risk.

Today, the organizational management is not only confined to managing products, material, manpower, money and mobility, but also newer areas like instant communications, multiple forms of transportation, globalization of markets, computerization, automation, and active trade-unionism.

New management techniques such as MBO (Management-by-Objectives) have been developed. All these areas could be assessed and analysed through various management techniques within the enterprise. However, the new challenges thrown up by the "broad marketplace of ideas", are mostly outside the scope of the enterprise-public interest groups, activists, the government and bureaucracy, the courts and tribunals, the emerging intelligensia, the consumer and environmental advocates, and the most important of all, the media. Not only are the challenges intangible, but also not subject to easy manipulation, charting or quantifying with any kind of managerial discipline.

From the points made above, you will understand that the forces which create difficulties for any management, could be tracked down to one source - the human climate and public attitudes. Recognition of this fact has led to gradual development of approaches towards managing the human climate. Public Relations, is one such approach of managing the human climate for the ultimate benefit of the organization and its publics. This approach appears under various labels and forms, but it could be summarised as incorporating the four primary functions of the PR. These are:

a) Analysing and predicting issues and opportunities;

b) Information-gathering and monitoring trends;

c) Communication planning and information dissemination; and

d) Advisory and counselling role of the PR.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes:

i) Answer the following questions briefly in points form only in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.
### 3.3 ANALYSING AND PREDICTING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

If one were to ask the top executives of India's major organizations and corporations, what factors would have the greatest influence on the future of their organizations, predictably, a vast majority would say: The Government and the force of the public opinion on the public policy. This means that all our skills at managing financial, manufacturing, marketing, research and development (R&D), and the like put together would not influence our destiny as much as what happens in the political and economic fields. These areas are the vast playing fields of public attitudes fighting for the pros and cons of the public policy. It is in this arena of the public attitudes that the PR functions by analyzing issues of importance and relevance to the organization or predicting opportunities that have the potential to benefit the organization. Whether it be issues, crises, emergencies or any such problems, or opportunities of any kind, it is the PR function to see these early, identify their shape and contours long before they actually mature. Once an issue erupts, the organization is left with relatively fewer options than what it could have had, if it been detected early.

Take the example of the introduction of automation in India's largest insurance organization in the late 60s. The issue would not have snowballed in the way it did, (through strikes and gheraos by the employees), had it been detected early. If only an effort had been made to educate both the employees and the customers, the matter could have been solved more amicably. Instead “gradualism”, in the form of phased automation, invited suspicion, which gathered momentum, affecting the entire organization. It was a typical of I&O (issue and opportunity). While automation was an issue, (which ultimately led to a crisis and even an emergency), it was also an opportunity which the insurance corporation could have utilized to come before its customers with its proposals to give better servicing of prima collection and settlement of claims. It lost on both counts, and, in addition, over a million man-hours of work.

Before we proceed, let us differentiate among an issue, a crisis, and an emergency.

- An issue is a matter in dispute or a subject of controversy: an emerging issue is a matter that shows signs of developing into a dispute or controversy. Dispute generally involve differing points of view, between adversaries, about what should be or should not be done, or how a matter of mutual concern should be handled.
- A crisis is a stage at which all future events affecting a person or an organization are determined. It is a major turning point resulting in permanent drastic change. It is far more crucial than most issues or emergencies. Crises are of great
importance, but they are rare.

- An emergency is a sudden, usually unexpected, occurrence that requires prompt action. A crisis fits into that definition, but so do many more events. While demanding serious and prompt attention, emergencies do not indicate a major turning point in the person's or organization's existence. Issues become emergencies when they develop into challenges that require urgent decisive action.

Further, in understanding an issue, one should realize that an issue arises when one or more of an organization's publics develop a grievance, or perceive a threat or a fear. Before submitting to the natural reaction and rushing to the defence, it is wise for a PR professional to explore how the grievance, threat or fear arose, before developing plans for dealing with it. Here's seven-point action plan to handle a grievance, before it becomes an issue or a problem for the management.

1) Analyse the reasons for the grievance. Is there something wrong with the activities of the organization—a problem of quality, of explanation, of service? Is there a gap in communication?
2) Analyse the source of the grievance and the nature of people who make it.
3) Study all the facts about the subject of the grievance. Review all reports and documentation. Discuss the matter with experts within the organization.
4) Review outside reports and sources of the grievance, if any.
5) Make an objective study of the present attitudes of the concerned department, among competitors and comparable organization, among critics and in the public media.
6) If the climate is unclear, analyse further through informal opinion surveys to gather clues among groups affected by the grievance, even among those that might get involved.
7) Determine the action plan; coordinate, form a broad coalition, assign responsibilities, and inform the management for policy decision.

Therefore, rather than waiting for the new public goals to emerge into the public policy and reaction, the PR professionals devise a new approach. This is aimed at continuously narrowing the gap between emerging public goals and the goals of the organization. This is known as the interactive approach.

Sometimes, action is taken to influence public opinion, like educating and informing the commuters about the rising costs of the public transport, before announcing a hike in the bus fares. At other times, the behaviour pattern in one's own organization is changed like, issuing of monthly orders for checking the smoke-emission levels of public transport buses, even before the citizens organize a movement against the rising levels of smoke-emission polluting the city.

The two pre-requisites for successfully using the interactive approach are:

a) management's ability to anticipate external change; and
b) its willingness to adjust the organization's normal operations to minimize the gap between performance and expectations. Phillip Lesly says: "when consistently applied over time, an interactive approach tends to produce goals that the company and the public can accept".

The elements of a successful PR programme for dealing with issues and pursuing opportunities are therefore, likely to be:

- Identifying issues and opportunities,
- Evaluating their impact and setting priorities,
- Establishing the organizational's stance,
- Designing the action and response,
Check Your Progress 2

Notes: i) Answer the following questions briefly in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit

1) Explain the following:
   a) Issue :

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   b) Crisis:

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   c) Emergency :

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2) Mention the prerequisites of using the interactive approach in the PR.

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3.4 INFORMATION GATHERING AND MONITORING TRENDS

The most important force affecting all organizations today is the opinion of the people. Public opinion is constantly changing with the times and trends in society. For example, the investors, today, are not only looking at the financial gains on their investments, but, would prefer to invest in clean stocks i.e., in companies that are 'environment friendly' and are not polluting the eco-system by their activity. More important, an organization is judged by how much it contributes to society and the environment. Here, for any PR person, it becomes important to gather information and analyse the same in terms of what goes on in the minds of the investors, employers, consumers, and others.

Also, constant monitoring and gathering of information of changes in the present environment is a must. For example, the structural changes in the country's economic policies, or industrial policy may have a direct bearing on the performance and
productivity of a company. The gulf war increased the prices of petroleum products in the country, sending prices of almost all commodities soaring in the market. This resulted in bringing about major policy decisions in organizations, in terms of laying off employees, increasing prices, among a host of other things. These changes generated a lot of friction or negative attitude about an organization among the employees or consumers of the products or services of that organization.

Information gathering and monitoring trends have been the fastest growing and the most significant facets of the development of the PR in the last decade. It involves the identification, evaluation, and communication inward to the organization of information about the outside world that may be value to the organization in managing its affairs, i.e., the business equivalent of military intelligence.

While deeply engaged in the day-to-day operations of an organization, its management often has neither the opportunity nor the inclination to stay fully abreast of the outside developments of interest to the organization. Through close association with public agencies, the media, links with other fraternal societies, through clippings service, professional journals and allied publications, even reports of allied or competitive interests in the field, the PR department can often detect trends or anticipate events of relevance to the organization. Or else, it may seek out and measure the tide of public opinion that may affect an organization's operation. This is particularly true in the case of government legislation or regulation issues from time to time. It also applies in the case of socio-politico pressure and/or expectation. The information-gathering network immediately mops up the "intelligence" so gathered, passes it through the relevant departments, for measuring its applicability and relevance, documents the same in terms of an action plan for the management to take a decision.

Further, while keeping track of the changing public attitudes towards an organization or its publics, the PR provides an information base for the management to act upon. This need not be confined to feeling the pulse of the outside world. Even in the case of internal information, the PR departments could provide the necessary support by monitoring trends among the different publics of the organization.

A classic case of misunderstanding and loss of trust is depicted by this example. All the workers in a particular consumer product manufacturing organization felt that advertising their products on the TV was a 'big waste' of money and resources. Being ignorant of the importance of promotion in today's competitive environment, the employees felt that the huge advertising budget was cutting into the overall profits of the company, thereby resulting in a smaller bonus for them. This led to the formation of a negative opinion about the company's management and its policy on advertising and promotion. This internal information or grievance was based on wrong or incomplete facts. Corrective action based on the PR information strategy to educate • the concerned opinion leaders among the employees led to greater appreciation of the TV advertising, and mitigated their fears of getting cheated of a higher bonus.

The above example given above show us that determining the attitude of any public towards an organization and analysing the state of opinion, generally helps the organizations in anticipating potential problems and needs. Monitoring trends in the environment also helps in modifying certain policies, and in chalking out relevant communication strategies to improve the attitude of the public, thereby avoiding misunderstanding and loss of goodwill.

Activity 1
Make a list of situations in which it might become essential for the PR department to gather information of value to the organization.
3.5 COMMUNICATION PLANNING AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Communication planning and information dissemination is another important function of the PR. It involves identifying the target audiences, careful planning of messages aimed at bringing about positive opinion and dispelling misunderstanding if any. It is just not enough to frame a good public policy. The challenge lies in planning and communicating all the good deeds of an organization to its public, both internal and external in a very effective manner.

Transmitting an idea can get to be the most difficult task. At times, it can be hazardous if the communication is faulty. Choosing the right medium or mix of the media to take the message to the intended audiences is an integral part of communication planning and information dissemination.

Now, let us see what communication planning is, Edward Bernay's definition of PR says "PR is the attempt, by information, persuasion and adjustment to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement or an institution". After gaining understanding of the public opinion about the organization, and, thereby, modifying or improving the policy by influencing and counselling the policy makers, the immediate task facing a PR person is the planning of communication activities and campaigns that will explain the company, its products, and services to the publics.

All communication plans aim at bringing about a positive attitude of the public towards the organization and its performance, and promoting goodwill. Overcoming misinterpretations of the organization's policies, if any, should feature in the programming of communications.

Letting the people know programme encompasses campaigns like, projecting the corporate image, product publicity, dissemination of information about actions and motives or changes in the organization among the employees, communicating to the company's investors, campaigns to improve customer relations, are among various other programmes.

After identifying and planning a communication message the immediate task of a practitioner of the PR is to choose the right media by knowing the intended audience. The media of communication are the vehicles for disseminating messages. These could be external or internal; the television, radio, cable TV, opinion leaders or extension workers (who help through word-of-mouth communication). There may also be hoardings, posters, transit media like bus panels, bus hoardings, brochures, pamphlets, booklets, point-of-purchase and window displays, films, trade fairs, exhibitions, direct mail, etc. Information dissemination is carried out through press releases, press conferences, press briefings, video and audio news releases, conducting open house, exhibitions, special events, public service announcements, press rejoinders, letters to the editors, etc. However, information dissemination function of the PR is a far broader concept than issuing of news releases or press rejoinders. It encompasses the total process of projecting the corporate image, whether through the news media or setting a corporate citizenship example through community service. It includes assuring compliance with requirements of the public law, whether with regard to maintenance of antipollution standards, payment of taxes, or product safety information. It also includes communicating the organization's views to the leaders of the government, as well as to employees, shareholders, and other publics. In essence, it is the function of 'letting the public know' by using the means appropriate to the situation.
Check Your Progress 3

Notes: i) Answer the following questions briefly in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) What does ‘Communication Planning’ involve?

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2) Mention some ways of ‘letting people know’.

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3.6 ADVISORY AND COUNSELLING ROLE OF PR

The personnel are the eyes and ears of the policy-makers in an organization. Their success depends on the extent to which they can influence shaping of the management policy. Constant information gathering and processing helps the PR personnel in analysing trends, and in predicting consequences of policy. This gives them enough information to guide and counsel public policy-formation. Today’s administrators require the assistance and wise counsel of the skilled PR specialists in reshaping organization’s operations and policies, to promote goodwill, and increase productivity.

A scholarly and comprehensive definition of the PR by Dr. Rex Harlow, a social scientist and well known PR practitioner, clearly sums up the role of the PR as an aid to management in policy formation. It is given below:

- “PR is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its public; informs the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasises the responsibility of management to serve the public interests; helps management to keep abreast of and effectively utilise change, serving as an early warning system to anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication techniques as its principle tool”.

This advisory role of the PR is not only towards the top management of an organization, but also towards the other departments and divisions in that organization. Since the PR is a staff function, it customarily does not establish policies or make basic operating decisions. But it bears a direct responsibility to identify, and recommend to the management appropriate decisions and policies to assure the maintenance of a balanced PR perspective.

Ideally, the top PR executive does this by sitting as a member of the management’s top hierarchy, having direct contacts with the line management executives. However, lacking such a position in the organization, he or she still has the responsibility to make recommendations through whatever oral or written channels available in the organization.
The PR recommendation may be as simple as advising about the best of making a public announcement of the organization's action, likely say, rise in bus fares of the public transport corporation. It could be as complex as recommending a change in the basic corporate policy, like an automobile manufacturer setting up a tyre factory too. It is a fact that the success of the PR profession's performance of this function determines the ultimate success of the entire organization.

Activity 2

Imagine you are the PRO of a transport company which has decided to increase the bus fare. Prepare a message (about 50 words) communicating this to the public.

3.7 COMMUNICATING WITH SPECIALIZED PUBLICS

The PR communications include a variety of programmes designed specifically to build acceptance of the organization among its various specialized publics: the dealers and distributors, plant equipment producers and suppliers, investors and stock holders, members of legislatures and civic bodies, government and private auditors, market analysts. This would help to further the organization's perspectives on current issues. While all PR activities are intended to produce goodwill, a few of these are neutral or defensive designed, to maintain goodwill or protect against attack.

It is for this reason that all the PR communications are usually more comprehensive, positive and creative, especially when communicating with their specialized publics. For instance, in the case of a consumer goods manufacturing company, better PR communications with the dealers and distributors, would help in indirectly stimulating sales. Better communications with the government and its relevant department might help in averting restrictive rulings, regulations or orders. Communicating with the local Health Board or Pollution Control Board could boost the organization's standing in the local community by projecting its concern for health or pollution. Sometimes communicating with ancillaries or plant equipment suppliers helps in ensuring supply of the better quality tools and equipment. "Keeping the lines of communication open with professional training institutes and organization might attract better qualified employees.

Therefore, having an effective two-way communication with your special publics always helps. In fact, there are cases where the PR departments have gone out of the way to help these special publics in sorting some of their problems without any express understanding of reciprocal help. But the experience has shown that reciprocal help has always been forthcoming, usually unasked. What better function could one assign to PR than this, particularly in times of emergencies and crisis?

In other words, keeping yourself alert about your own organization's interests is as important as keeping a tab on the impending fortune or misfortune of your specialized publics. The professional PR personnel realize the cyclical nature of good fortune,
even in the affairs of well run organizations, and keep themselves ready to face any problems threatening their specialized publics. This cannot be done without effective two-way communication.

Check Your Progress 4

Note:  i) Answer the following question briefly in the space provided.

   ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Who are the specialized publics of an organisation?

Corporate Communication with Specialised Publics and their Utility:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Helps avert communication gaps, boosts employee morale, increases productivity, and promotes a sense of pride</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media (print &amp; electronic)</td>
<td>Help publicity through news releases, features, articles, and contribute to influencing public opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government (local, state, central)</td>
<td>Helps avert restrictive regulations, projects organisations as a responsible corporate citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Communications</td>
<td>Building up sales, through cordial relations, conveying reasons for success or failure of dealers to management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealers, distributors, agents</td>
<td>Maintaining financial support, attracting larger investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial community shareholders financial analysis</td>
<td>Helps ensure speedy supply of better quality raw material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplier</td>
<td>Evaluating consumer, reaction buying habits, aid to marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>Helps enhance image of organization attracting of talented qualified staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community local authority, opinion leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.8 CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

The principles of PR for business organizations, or the "Corporate Sector", are similar to those other organizations. The difference is only in the objectives that each organization has for itself. In the case of Corporate Sector, the PR function includes responsibility for planning and co-ordinating the corporation's interface and interaction with its publics. Stated another way, it is that function which is responsible for creating
Principles and Functions of Public Relations

The public goodwill, protecting the existing goodwill, building additional stores of it for the future, and employing it to enhance the company's position in the public affairs. The objective is to

- Protect existing goodwill of the public;
- Frame basic policy decision on its basis;
- Coordinate corporate performance with the public interest;
- Bring it to the notice of the public through communication;
- Gain further recognition and goodwill; and
- Enhance the company's reputation.

How corporate communication builds image? Corporate communications, in essence, builds acceptance for the corporation as a whole, much as marketing builds acceptance for individual products. It is based on coordinating corporate performance with the public interest, while generating public awareness, understanding and ultimate recognition, of that performance.

As has often been said in the PR circles, "No organization can be made to look better than it actually is", and that "PR cannot be a fancy window dressing for a company whose actions are unworthy of public scrutiny or acclaim". So, essentially, good corporate communications begins at the top management level, with establishment of company policies and practices, that are ethical, honest, and in keeping with the public interest. The PR staff then takes these policies and practices to the public, through various forms of communications, to gain acclaim, understanding and recognition.

The public relations, properly practiced at the corporate level, should be an integral part of the top management team, serving alongside such other staff functions as finance, the personnel, legal and long range planning. At the same time, it must be geared to provide professional communications planning and service to both the corporation and the various operating units on a broad range of subjects from management and financial disclosure to marketing and publicity.

The need for corporate communications could be gauged from one of the biggest studies made of corporate PR department’s functions. This study was conducted in the USA by Neomathics for AT&T Communications, and quoted by Phillip Lesly in his “Handbook of PR and Communications”. It revealed that:

- 30 per cent of time (after policy functions, administration and non-counting investor relations) is spent communicating with the media; 24 per cent with employees; 21 per cent with communities, 16 per cent with mass audiences; and 7 per cent with the government.
- Of time spent on financial communication: 46 per cent is devoted to annual and quarterly reports; 31 per cent to communicating with analysts, brokers, etc.; 10 per cent to annual and quarterly meetings; 8 per cent to written and phone responses to queries.
- In the media relation, 45 per cent of time is spent handling inquiries; 42 per cent preparing and issuing news release; only 4 per cent on news conferences.

Thus, the importance of the corporate communication is justified on the ground that it performs so many functions in diverse spheres. While the study mentioned above quotes the situation in USA, its significance to the Indian Corporate Sector or business organizations should not be lost sight of. Presently, in India, corporate giants have realised by the importance of corporate communications, and allotted making it a direct reporting relationship with the top management.
Check Your Progress 5

Note: Answer the following question briefly in the space provided.

1) State the basic principles of corporate communications.

................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................
.................................................................................................................................

3.9 LET US SUM UP

The most significant development during the last 20 years, in the world of management, has been the impact of public opinion expressed through public interests groups, activists, the government, legislature, bureaucracy, courts and tribunals, the growing intelligensia, and the most important of all, the mass media. Thus, the most important function of the PR is the “managing of the human climate and public attitudes for the ultimate benefit of the organization and its publics”.

This approach recognises four essential functions of the Public Relations.

a) Analysing and predicting issues and opportunities;
b) Information gathering and monitoring trends;
c) Communication planning and Information dissemination; and
d) Advisory and counselling role of the PR.

It is the arena of public attitudes, i.e., in the human climate, that the PR functions, by analysing issues of importance and relevance to the organization. It also predicts and identifies the potential opportunities which could be taken advantage of by the organization. However, such opportunities have to be recognized early so as to get the maximum benefit. Further, in understanding an issue, one should realise that an issue arises when one or more of our organization’s publics develop a grievance, or perceive a threat or a fear. We have discussed a 7-point action plan to handle a grievance. We have also explained the planning of successful PR strategy for dealing with issues and pursuing opportunities.

Public opinion is a constantly changing, evolving and developing concept, based on the progressive trends in society. Therefore, constant monitoring and gathering information about the changes in the present environment becomes crucial. Thus, the PR function involves the identification, evaluation and communication (internal) to the organization of information about the outside world that might be of value to the organization is managing its affairs. It is, therefore, essential to develop an “information gathering” network, which mops up information, passes it through the relevant departments for measuring its applicability and relevance, and documents the same in terms of an action plan for the management to take decisions.

Another important function of the PR is planning communication strategies and information dissemination. It involves identifying target audiences; careful planning of messages aimed at bringing about positive opinion by dispelling misunderstanding. The information dissemination, we have seen, is carried out through various means like
press releases, press conferences, press briefings, the video and audio news release, exhibitions, Open House, etc. In essence, it is the function of “letting the know” by channels appropriate to the situation.

The information gathering network also helps the PR department to collect relevant information which could then be passed on to the management in the shape of advisory policy. Today's administrators are in need of wise PR counselling for giving shape to an organization's policies or even managing operations. Sometimes it is said that the success of a PR professional's advisory and counselling role determines the ultimate success of the PR department.

We have also discussed, in this unit, how we need to communicate with an organization's special publics. We have also described what corporate communications is all about. Thus, in this unit you have become familiar with the functions and role of the PR in an organization.

### 3.10 GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MBO</td>
<td>Management by Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT&amp;T</td>
<td>American Telephone and Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Points in questions or important Topics for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>Giving advice to person or persons professionally on a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Maintaining regular surveillance of existing trends, situation or emerging changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>To scatter information. Dissemination refers to the process of reaching a tailored and purposeful message by use of suitable communication channels to the target audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Climate</td>
<td>The environment of public opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligensia</td>
<td>Class of intellectuals, regarded as possessing initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>General plan of action adopted by a policy organization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.11 FURTHER READING

Bernays, E.M; *The Role of PR in Management*; 1975; *Your Future in Public Relations*; 1976.


### 3.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : MODEL ANSWERS

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) a) Analysing and predicting issues and opportunities
    b) Information gathering and monitoring trends
    c) Communication, planning, and information dissemination
    d) Advisory and counselling role
2) Public interest groups, activists, government and bureaucracy, court and tribunals, the emerging intelligensia, the consumer and environmental advocates, the media, etc.

Check Your Progress  2

1) a) An issue is a matter in dispute or subject of a controversy. An emerging issue is a matter that shows signs of developing into a dispute or controversy.

b) A crisis is a stage at which all future events affecting a person or organisation will determined. It is a major turning point resulting in drastic change.

c) An emergency is a sudden unexpected occurrence that requires prompt action.

2) a) Management's ability to anticipate external change.

b) Willingness to minimise the gap between expectations and performance.

Check Your Progress  3

1) It involves identifying the target audience, careful planning of messages to bring about a positive opinion or to dispel misunderstanding and choosing the right mix of the media.

2) Radio, TV, Video, tape, magazines, opinion leaders, extension workers, press releases, press conference, hoardings, posters, brochures, pamphlets, window display, exhibition, direct mail, etc.

Check Your Progress  4

1) Specialised public may include dealers and distributors, plant equipment producers, suppliers, investors, members of legislature, civic bodies, government officials, market analysts, etc.

Check Your Progress  5

1) Protecting existing goodwill, and framing policy decision's on its basis.

Coordinating corporate performance with the public interest.

Bringing it to the notice of public through communications.

Gaining more goodwill

Enhancing the company's reputation.
UNIT 4 PLANNING PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS AND PROGRAMMES

Structure

4.0 Objectives
4.1 Introduction
4.2 Planning in PR
4.3 Need-assessment & Setting Objectives
4.4 The Planning Process : A Framework
   Tools of Planning
4.5 Target Publics
4.6 The PR Message Design
4.7 The Media selection for the PR Campaigns
4.8 Budgeting in the PR
4.9 Implementation of the PR Programmes
4.10 Evaluation the PR Campaigns and Measurement of Results
4.11 Monitoring and Midcourse Correction
4.12 Let Us Sum Up
4.13 Glossary
4.14 Check Your Progress : Model Answers

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- outline and describe the planning of a PR programme;
- describe the different PR tools needed for the PR programme;
- describe the selection of appropriate media for the PR campaigns;
- describe the budgeting of the resources in the PR programmes;
- describe the implementation of a PR campaign;
- describe the research and measurement of the impact of a PR campaign; and
- explain the stages of monitoring a PR Programme.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the earlier units, you were exposed to the principles that govern the PR discipline, the organization and structure of the PR departments in the public sector or the private sector. You have also been told about the functional aspects of the PR, including the role of information dissemination, and how the PR could be an aid to management through its advisory and counselling functions.

However, no discipline least of all the PR, could survive on just principles, or by being
adjunct and aid to the management. It needs to play a pro-active role, a tangible role, something which portrays the active representation of the PR discipline in the management effort. This is achieved by devising a PR programme or campaign, implementing it, and, thereby, achieving certain results or benefits to the organization. The Public Relations are no longer the 'white washing' activity as these were often termed to be. Nor are these, as misconceived, the Press Relations for building a favourable image, undertaken only when there is a “crisis” of any kind. In fact the PR are today an autonomous area of the discipline of communication, just like advertising and marketing. It is an activity of bridge-building between the corporation, or an organization, and its target publics which are internal and external. It is a series of professional and strategic actions and activities, used in favourable as well as unfavourable situations, as the case may be. Effective and successful PR encompass objective oriented, database-oriented, and a sustained effort evolved around a definite action plan.

The PR today penetrate into every facet of an organization to build public opinion about the organization: These concern both commercial as well as non-commercial organization, in the public as well as private sectors. It is significant to note that in developing countries like ours, where the economy is undergoing a metamorphosis, industry is booming, new services and products are being launched, lifestyles and attitudes are changing, and literacy has increased, the PR have a valuable task to perform in organizations and situations.

The PR have been defined by people differently. The one given to us by British Institute of Public Relations reads: “Public Relations practice is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics”. The two most important aspects of this definition are its emphasis on the planned public relations, and on the two-way understanding. Again, in the Mexican statement on PR it is stated that: “Public Relations practice is the art or social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organization leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organization and the public interest”.

From these two definitions, you would realize that the emphasis is on one key concept in the PR process, and that is “planning”. We shall now discuss the use of planning to define the “action charter”, while implementing a PR programme or campaign.

4.2 PLANNING IN PR

A PR programme, like any programme for production, marketing or sales, has to be planned in advance. It cannot operate on a day-to-day basis. To be successful a four stage process must be gone through:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage I</th>
<th>Stage II</th>
<th>Stage III</th>
<th>Stage IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FACT FINDING</td>
<td>PLANNING</td>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>EVALUATION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are the prerequisites of the PR planning? Strategic PR demands that certain requirements are met before the actual planning and finalization of plans takes place.

First, we need to do some “fact-finding” or research. We must have a thorough knowledge of the organization. There are many questions about organizations that one could ask. A good understanding of the company itself and of its related public is a must and most useful to determine how and what we plan. Besides, it is also important to determine how the target publics view the organization. This could be done either formally through a proper market survey, or informally by questioning key people associated with the various target public of the organization.
The second stage is "planning". There is a large, variety of techniques to choose from in the planning of PR programmes. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. The choice of the technique, or combination of techniques to use depends on the specific PR planning objectives. Two of them, most relevant in the PR, are "Management by Objectives" (MBO) and Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT). Both, in combination, are useful in the case of complex plans to ensure proper execution of the PR activities to achieve the desired results. Another technique is the well known "SWOT" analysis. The Strengths, Weakness and Opportunities of and the Threats to the organization must first be listed and then analysed threadbare.

In planning, another consideration is the duration and period of the plan. Short-term plans are designed to meet immediate needs, solve the pressing problems, and achieve modest but urgent goals. These plans are often designed to face contingency situations, or crises, and are therefore, more likely to be remedial in nature. Long-term plans are preventive in nature. These are better for providing general direction and perspectives for short-term planning. Long-term plans provide for comparison of performance over a longer period. They provide a way to measure progress over a period where succeeding campaigns could be made to supplement or reinforce one another.

In short, the techniques of planning are a means to the strategic PR, and have a direct effect on the final campaign's message, media, money, and monitoring, that is, allround effectiveness of the PR programme.

Check Your Progress 1

Note:  
   i) Answer the following questions in the space provided below.

   ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) What do the following planning techniques stand for?

   MBO......................................................................................................................

   PERT....................................................................................................................

   SWOT....................................................................................................................

2) What is the difference between the short term and long plans?

..................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................

4.3 NEED-ASSESSMENT AND SETTING OBJECTIVES

In all PR planning, whether for government or private organizations, a firm, a company or an association, determining the organizational needs, and setting objectives becomes a primary function. How do we go about doing this? Look at the existing policies. Look at the competition. Dig into the material available in your files or at the library - in magazines, government reports, trade association material. Talk to people from the chief executive down wards, inside and outside the organization. Seek basic facts about the situation of the organization.

Define the organizations publics with a specific focus. Evaluate the communications
channel. You are then ready to determine the true needs and set the PR objectives. Therefore, you plan what to do (the programme), when to do it (the timing), how much to spend (the budget), and who will do it (the staff).

Plans must be realistic in terms of the management’s overall objectives. It might not be worth doing it at all, if the results do not contribute to the management’s goals. The PR objectives must take into account the management’s overall goals. The PR objectives must not conflict with the slated corporate goals. These must actively support what the organisation wants to achieve. If possible, the objectives should be written down in a statement, simply and clearly, so that these are easily understood by all, and could be the yardsticks to measure the achievement short-term and long-term.

4.4 THE PLANNING PROCESS: A FRAMEWORK

The planning process is an analytical step-by-step programme of action, while many methods and techniques have been used by the PR professionals, a broad framework in the planning of a PR programme commonly used is:

- Appreciation (or analysis) of the situation;
- Setting of objectives;
- Identification of the public;
- Selection of the media and PR activities;
- Fixing the budget; and
- Evaluation of the results of the campaign.

The PR department in an organisation has to tailor itself to the planning and budgeting procedures of the organisation to which it belongs. Planning, thus, involves strategic thinking i.e., identifying and selecting ways in which specific objectives could be achieved. Planning must also involve and get participation of the corporate management to ensure that the plan has adequate support. Well-defined objectives provide a framework for assigning responsibilities, for detailing levels of achievement, for scheduling and timing of activities, and for assessing benefits and consequences of each line of action taken.

The planning process could be broken into other smaller steps for arriving at a targeted programme and achievable objective. Lists could be drawn up of the various steps that need to be taken. One such list involve questions that have to be dealt with in sequence. For example:

- The problem to be tackled and solved;
- The objective of the PR programme;
- How PR hopes to solve these; and
- Who will carry out the programme, at what cost, using what media.

Another list might present the following as being attributes of the planning and objective:

- Sincerity;
- Durability;
- Firmness;
- Comprehensiveness;
- Clarity/symbolism, and beneficence.
As could be seen from these two lists, there are many ways to look at the planning function and objectives for the PR campaigns. In all cases, however, it involves having to survey the costs and benefits, the advantages and disadvantages, the consequences and dangers of each course of action, including an estimate of unintended or counter-productive effects. The objectives and plans should not be over ambitious. There should be sufficient flexibility for mid-plan corrections. There should be flexibility in implementation, depending on the prevailing conditions. A good plan incorporates several “What if...” situations, and various contingencies are planned for. Plans should also be unambiguous. There should be no room for ambiguity or Jack of clarity in the objectives of the plan. Clearly defined goals contribute immensely towards the success of any plan. As far as possible, plans should be based on facts. Plans should also pose no threat to the existing groups. If any such threat is implied, these groups would work to defeat rather than to support or help the plan to succeed.

Tools of Planning

Planning styles, cycles, and procedures differ from company to company, and also between the private sector and public sector organisations. The PR plan period usually follows one financial year. But, in some cases, it might be longer depending on the PR objectives, which may be short-term or long-term. Planning in the government departments and organisations is generally more time-consuming than in individual or multi-national companies. The levels of approval of plans in public sector companies are many more than in private companies. But, in both, the approval is almost always given by the top management, usually the Managing Director or Chairman.

One tool often used by the corporate managers in planning the PR campaigns is brainstorming. The aim in this is to generate as many ideas as possible without being limited by the discussion or the need to find hurried agreement. The ideas submitted are grouped together according to concepts and then structured into a cohesive programme or campaign.

A variation of this tool is the mixed scanning. It is a method to recognize patterns among alternatives. A pattern is first formulated, then revised when additional information is available. The pattern is again changed to fit the incoming information. The process is revised again and again depending on the patterns and reformulation possible.

Another method is through sequential decision-making. Each alternative is surveyed, in turn, according to a pre-determined criteria. Each is then coded according to these standards. The coding should allow for an adding of scores and for prioritisation of the alternatives. Those that are too far from the prescribed criteria are then eliminated. Another set of scores and sequence of elimination is then worked through until the choice is made.

Creative planning occurs when solutions are found, or, at least when attempts are made to find solutions and ideas outside the normal or conventional range. These methods or tools are not widely practiced in India as yet. But with time it will be necessary to develop creative PR plans and campaigns. It is in an area which will develop, and be an integral part of the PR planning in India in the near future.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Answer the following questions briefly in the given space.

   ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) State some characteristics of a good plan.
In the PR we communicate with many different groups of people. It is necessary that we define our target publics clearly and then choose the strategy and media to reach them effectively. There are certain basic publics for any broad PR programme:

- The community—people around and outside the organization or its location;
- Opinion leaders—people who command influence, such as the politicians, bureaucrats, social workers, etc;
- The Media—the press, television, radio, etc;
- The Employees—the people who work for the organization, from the top management to the lowest workers;
- The Potential employees—people who work for rival organizations, etc;
- The Suppliers—of services and material;
- The Customer and users—present, past, and future;
- The Traders—distributors, wholesalers, agents, etc; and
- The Financial contacts—bankers, shareholders, investors, brokers, and insurers.

The list is a basic list, but, for any one organization, there will always be a special list of all the groups of people with whom the organization does or should communicate.

Another way of analysing the publics of an organization is in the form of a simple grid through which a PR planner can define and devise his organizational target publics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Shareholders</th>
<th>Customers</th>
<th>Trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Public</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Opinion Leaders</td>
<td>Politicians and Bureaucrats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A grid of this kind could be evolved for each organization, and even each situation which requires the PR, and then used for drawing up a targeted and sharp focused plan for the PR campaign.

Activity 1

List the target audience of a newspaper organization.
4.6 THE PR MESSAGE DESIGN

Designing of an effective PR campaign involves two sets of factors. One is the audience factor and the other the message factor. The audience factor consists of answers to questions, such as: What would interest this group of people? What specific need your message fulfil for them as a whole, or as smaller segments? What psychological appeal would work best with this group of people? The interests and needs of this segment will determine which parts of your message should be projected and highlighted in the PR campaign.

Message factors: These concern what should be the intrinsic content and style of the message. Many of these factors will be related to the audience. Primarily, what we are talking about here are factors like what words should or should not be used, what sources quoted would be credible, what should be the length of the message, what sort of attention-getting devices should be used, and so on. Pre-testing of message is one way in which we could sharpen the design and content of our message.

4.7 THE MEDIA SELECTION FOR THE PR CAMPAIGNS

In India some of the media are modern and effective but not all media are developed to the same extent as in Western countries especially for the PR programmes. The question, thus, is invariably whether we should use the existing media such as the Press, TV, or we use media such as the audio-visuals and video films. Do we have to go in for the non-conventional media to put across our message?

The media selection means using the media according to the objectives needed to support the campaign. The correct media selection saves time, money and effort, and helps in designing messages for special groups or audiences. Each medium has its own strengths and weaknesses. The media could also be selected so that they complement and reinforce one another. In any campaign, not all the media are used at the same stage. The media selection and decisions regarding the media mix are crucial components in the planning of PR strategy, and must be carefully selected to maximise its reach to the target publics to communicate the message. Media used in the PR are generally the same as in other communications, like advertising. Most common among these is the Press (and, therefore the Press Relations is a key function of a PR man or woman). In view of this, the objective of the PR programme or campaign should be to determine the exact media mix. If one is to categorise and list the media available for an effective programme, the following chart would be of help in making the choice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Conventional Media</th>
<th>Non-conventional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Public</td>
<td>Press, radio, TV, film, videos.</td>
<td>Exhibitions, direct mail, hoardings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Check Your Progress 3

**Note:**

1. Answer the following questions briefly in the space provided below.
2. Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) **State the important factors to be considered in the message design.**

   - ...
   - ...
   - ...

2) **How does one select the media for the PR campaign?**

   - ...
   - ...
   - ...

### 4.8 BUDGETING IN THE PR

Budgeting is an essential part of planning in the PR. A budget is given, or set, everything that is planned for must fall within the costs. If no budget is given, the planning process must incorporate budgets for all the PR activities that are to be carried out. Budgeting requires setting of priorities, and places tremendous importance on being cost-effective. Ineffective activities are quickly weeded out with well planned budgeting. Budgeting requires advanced planning, which immediately involves detailing of all steps, phases, and timing of activities. This also provides for smoother scheduling of activities and coordination of the programme when implemented.

The main division or parts of a PR Department's budget are:

1. **Salaries of the PR staff,** preferably broken down into man-hours, so you know how much work is involved:
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2) Overheads, Office expenses and costs;
3) Transport, car and travel expenses;
4) Stationery and postage expenses;
5) Printing, photography and other production costs;
6) The media costs; and
7) Other costs, like hiring of equipments, conference rooms, hospitality, etc.

It goes without saying that for these expenses proper accounting procedures have to be followed. Records should be kept of all expenditure and payments. Charges should be fair and reasonable, made known or estimated in advance, so that there would be no reason for over expenditure or cost over runs.

The budget for the PR activities is determined by the action that is proposed and the activities to be undertaken by the media. And each of these are budgeted, the total arrived at and sanctioned for implementation of the PR programme. Two basic and vital factors in budgeting, besides the departmental expenses, are the objectives of the programme campaign and the target group to be reached. This then determines the task for the organization in achieving the objectives and the media to be employed. Clarity on both these areas helps the PR person to budget the programme clearly within the required time frame. Time frame is important in the budget evolution activity. The longer the period, the larger the budget required.

Hence, the departmental expenses (organizational structure), the objectives to be achieved, the task involved, the media to be used, and the period (duration) of the programme, all go to make up the PR budget and appropriations. These are all interlinked, and require to be given the necessary attention.

Check Your Progress 4

Note:

i) Answer the following question in the space provided below.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Mention the main divisions in a PR budget.

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4.9 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PR PROGRAMMES

So far, we have looked at planning. We shall now get into other essential aspects of a PR campaign or programme, such as implementation, monitoring and evaluation of plans. The plan when put into operation must involve people—the PR and management—who are committed to achieving the objectives. Even the best conceived plans could be fouled up by the lack of involvement and effort of the personnel, like poor handling of funds, insufficient attention to details, etc. Efforts should be made to ensure that there are no lapses at any stage.
Continuous monitoring of how the plan is being executed has several benefits. Feedback provided could be used to make necessary changes and to enhance the chances of the plan being successful. This will also avoid unnecessary wastage. If, however, the feedback shows certain aspects of the plan are going very well and the success needs to be exploited, then even more money could be assigned to this part of the campaign. Such mid-course corrections are possible only if a plan is being monitored and assessed closely so that weaknesses, if any, could be corrected in time, and the successes further reinforced.

The discussion on a good PR plan could be endless. We have, therefore, to limit ourselves to discussing only those qualities which have functional value to the implementation process. And these broadly speaking are three: flexibility, timing and appropriateness. Flexibility is important so that room is provided for adjustment necessary at any stage. Flexibility is also important so that adjustments could be made for the unexpected events. Timing is important so that the plan could avoid competing with other high-publicity programmes, and also fit in the mood of the situation. Nothing jars as much as programmes which run counter to the prevailing situation and mood. Plans should also be appropriate in as many ways as possible—from the point of view of the funds provided, the prevailing image, and goals of the organization. Again, the campaigns should not be outlandishly novel or incongruous with the current positive image.

Check Your Progress 5

Note: i) Answer the following questions briefly in the space provided below.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) Why is the monitoring of execution of a plan important?

2) How are the factors of timing and flexibility essential for a good plan?

4.10 EVALUATING THE PR CAMPAIGNS AND MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Evaluation is an integral part of the PR planning process and it should be an important component of all campaigns. It is also necessary to analyse all campaigns so that, the short comings as well as the successes of each campaign could be identified and studied. Evaluation must be built into the campaigns from the initial stage to draw
Principles and Functions of Public Relations

upon whatever lessons that could be learnt from actual experience. Final results should be compared with that of the anticipated levels.

Evaluation could be undertaken at different levels of complexity. At the simplest level, evaluation process could take the form of finding answers to basic questions, like: How did the campaign go? Did we put in sufficient effort? If we had to do the same campaign again, what would we do differently? Evaluation seeks systematic answers to these and similar questions through research in terms of the impact, effect, and outcome as a result of the PR activity or programme. But a distinction is sometimes made between the summative research, formative research and non-evaluative research. The summative research is usually post-hoc, and examines events that are past or that have been completed. Formative research assesses the event while it is in progress, and feeds back its results into the on-going campaign. Non-evaluative research tests the proportions that need not necessarily examine programmes from the viewpoint of effectiveness. Certain other differences are also significant. In the case of formative research, the results should be obtained in time for it to affect the actual running of the campaign. Summative research need not gear itself to this rigid time frame.

A decision has to be taken as to which type of the evaluation should be used for a particular campaign. Certain conditions could be identified in making the decision. Formative research is useful as a way to reducing uncertainty in new communication situations in which previous experience generally is not available as a guide. Summative research should be undertaken when there is a need for more accuracy rather than timely results, or when results needed should be more universally applicable. In broad terms, the evaluation criteria for the PR falls in the following forms:

- publicity — column centimeters of write-up received in the Press;
- Reader interest/recall — through formal research of interviews and questionnaire type;
- Readability — through tests, which check attention towards and sentences used; and
- Unobtrusive indicators — ranging from replies, coupons to feedback provided by internal staff, who have contact with the public.

Since evaluation is almost always (and must be) research-based, an evaluation exercise would seldom rely on any one single method. Each method has its own strengths and weaknesses. Some methods are more suitable for certain purposes and data might also be more or less assessable to different methods. Another important criterion as to which method to choose is its cost or economics. The common research methods used in the PR are:

- Observation — selecting systematically what is reported e.g. Press coverage;
- Interviews — with people on how they feel, what they think, and what they perceive any why?
- Questionnaires — administered in person, or by mail, or coupons in advertisements and literature;
- Experimental tests — testing different campaign variations or activities in different market areas, something like test marketing; and
- Measuring event behaviour or action — visible difference or shift after the PR event or activity (bench mark studies).

4.11 MONITORING AND MIDCOURSE CORRECTION

Monitoring of the programme or campaign during the course of its implementation is
as important as pre-and post programme or campaign. One might not use specific research techniques, thought one could do so. It is crucial that a “watch” is maintained on how the elements of the programme being implemented are making the desired impact. If, for any reason the impact is weak or undesirable (as could happen) or excessive, the PR person needs to take corrective action. This could be in the form of a change in the media, the message, the frequency, or even the timing. One could slow down or hasten the PR programme, or stop it altogether, if the situation so demands. It all depends on “what” and “how” the objectives were to be achieved and with what impact. Things might sometimes go wrong, but we must be prepared and ready to change the course of our action, even mid-way, if required. Post-programme evaluation is always possible, but the effect would have already been felt, and the money spent. Being constantly involved and watchful even as the PR campaign is underway, is an important requirement at the corporate PR department level.

Check Your Process 6

Note:  
1) Answer the following questions briefly in the space provided below.

   ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) Why should evaluation be built into the PR campaign?

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2) What is summative research?

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3) What is formative research?

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4.12 LET US SUM UP

Good PR is always a planned process. All PR activities, which are successful, go through several steps. Various techniques of planning have been discussed, but the ultimate choice of action depends on the situation in which the PR man has been asked by the management to handle a particular issue or a problem. Professional organizations realize that good public relations and achieving the desired objectives through it, are mainly possible through an orchestrated planning and execution, backed by needs-assessment studies and analysis, through continuous and consistent feedback, evaluation, monitoring, and whenever required mid-course correction. Budgeting of resources and imaginative media planning, also play important roles in the successful implementation of the PR campaign.
In conclusion, the planning and implementing of a PR programme, even though being useful, are determined by some pertinent prevailing attitudes towards the PR perse.

Here are three views:

1) The Company view or the Management view:

PR is objective oriented, e.g., in crisis situation, image problem, public issues. It should be conducted only if clear objectives to be achieved exist, or are fixed. Otherwise a low profile is good. High profile could do more damage than good.

2) The PR professionals view:

The PR is essential all the time at the external (customers, press, etc.) internal (employees), and government level. A high profile is needed. The PR help build image, establish a "position" for the company, and give it a competitive advantage, especially in marketing. Public Service PR, a high profile in this area, could be beneficial to the organisation.

3) The Press man's view:

Objecting image and doing the PR are good and essential, the public must be kept informed (especially the press). The PR must be honest and sincere. The PR just for the PR sake are not required. In that respect, it is a waste of time and money for the company and the Media.

### 4.13 GLOSSARY

- **Campaign**: An organised effort to change the opinion of a group or groups on a subject.
- **Coverage**: The extent of distribution and reach of publicity or opinion affecting material.
- **House Journal**: An internal periodical or publication, published by an organization, to maintain contact with its employees.
- **Press Release**: A hand out containing information for the press.
- **Budgeting**: A plan or estimate of expenditure divided into various activity sectors based on requirements as objective.
- **Image Building Activity**: Activities directed towards removal of misconceptions and criticisms, and towards projection of the positive aspects about the company as organizations.

### 4.14 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : MODEL ANSWERS

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) Management by objectives, programme evaluation and review technique. Strength, weakness, opportunities and threats.

2) Short term plans are for immediate needs to solve the pressing problems.
These are remedial in nature. Long term plans are to provide a general direction, and are preventive in nature.

Check Your Progress  2

1) A good plan should be unambiguous with clearly defined objectives. It should be based on facts with provisions for contingencies. It should be flexible.

2) Brainstorming, mixed scanning, sequential decision making.

Check Your Progress  3

1) The audience factor and the message factor. The audience factor includes answers like the kind of public, their needs, etc. The message factor refers to the intensive content of the message, structure and length, and its suitability to the medium.

2) The media selection would depend on the objective of the campaign and its suitability to reach the desired target audience. Not all media might be suitable; sometimes a combination of the media could be the best.

Check Your Progress  4

1) a) Salaries of PR staff
b) Overheads
c) Transport
d) Stationery and postage
e) Printing, photography and production arts
f) Media costs
g) Other costs like hospitality, equipments, etc.

Check Your Progress  5

1) Monitoring could help make necessary changes and avoid wastage. Weaknesses could be correlated, and successes reinforced.

2) Timing is important, as the plan should not be competing with other high publicity programmes. Flexibility is needed to make adjustments whenever necessary.

Check Your Progress  6

1) Evaluation is necessary to analyse all shortcomings as well as success of the campaign. It helps us to compare the final result with the anticipated levels.

2) Summative research is post-hoc and examines events that are complete.

3) Formative research assesses the event while it is in progress, and feeds back its results into the on-going campaign.
UNIT 5 EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Structure

5.0 Objectives
5.1 Introduction
5.2 Methods and Stages of Evaluation and Feedback
   5.2.1 Research
   5.2.2 Planning
   5.2.3 Execution or Action
   5.2.4 Evaluation
5.3 Recycling Information for Reorganising the PR Campaign
5.4 Kinds of Evaluation Tools
   5.4.1 Benchmark Study
   5.4.2 Observation Study
   5.4.3 Perception Study
   5.4.4 Attitude Study
   5.4.5 Survey Techniques
   5.4.6 Media Assessment
5.5 Interpretation of Feedback
5.6 Communication of Results Towards Shaping New Policy
5.7 Let Us Sum Up
5.8 Glossary
5.9 Further Reading
5.10 Check Your Progress: Model Answers

5.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we shall discuss the significance of feedback and evaluation in an effective PR programme. We shall introduce you to some commonly used methods of measuring feedback. You would also learn how to apply the results of this evaluation to modify existing policies, or to frame a new one. After this Unit, you should be able to:

- List the various stages in a PR process;
- Discuss the need of evaluation in the PR programmes;
- State the importance of evaluation in the PR programmes at various stages;
- Identify the kinds of evaluation tools and techniques, and discuss their suitability;
- Explain what is meant by correct interpretation of data in the context of the PR; and
- State how to make use of interpreted results for modifying future policy.
5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the earlier units of Block II, we learnt about the principles of the PR, and the organizational structure of the PR departments, both in the government and in the Private Sector. We also discussed the function of the PR; how these aid management; and how their programmes or campaigns are planned.

In this Unit, we shall discuss the importance of evaluation and feedback in planning and executing an effective PR campaign. We shall introduce you to the technique which are commonly used in measuring the results of a PR programme. We shall also present some case studies, where evaluation has been effectively used to guide policy formulation.

Evaluation is an integral part of any PR campaign. At each stage of the campaign, during its planning as well as execution, "evaluation" should be built in. Each campaign must be planned with a clear objective in mind, so that, a proper evaluation could be undertaken to determine whether the objective has been achieved or not. If the objective is not realised, the evaluation should be able to indicate where the campaign went wrong and why.

Quite often the PR campaigns are undertaken without clear cut objectives which makes their evaluation difficult. The PR programmes which cannot identify objectives, cannot relate their achievements, and, therefore, lack credibility.

The Public Relations professionals in India have not utilised the research methods to effectively monitor their performance. And that is one of the reasons why the PR, inspite of great possibilities and strengths, is yet to emerge as an important tool of management.

In the 70s, most chief executives devoted 80% of their time to operational problems, and only 10% to communication. With the changed global scenario in trade and commerce, and revolution in the communication technology, today, the chief executives must devote a greater part of their time to communication, explaining their policies and actions to their public(s), i.e., the employees, consumers, shareholders and pressure groups spread across the world. This is equally applicable to large as well as small organizations in India, which are now dealing with a new set of knowledgeable people, exposed to new communication and information technologies, like the computers, satellite TV, digital information networks and data-bases.

In this context, a PR campaign that is based on accurate data is of paramount importance. Equally important is the use of the "feedback" mechanism to ensure that the campaign, has achieved the desired response in the target audience.

It is for this reason that the PR experts have strongly recommended that the PR budgets should include provision for analysis, research and evaluation to monitor the effectiveness of the PR programmes. IPRA Gold Paper No.7, published by the International Public Relations Association in September, 1990 reports:

Measuring the effectiveness of a Public Relations programme is never easy because it is often difficult to isolate the results of a public relations activity from environmental or other effects. Where, however, specific objectives are identified, it should be possible to measure reasonably accurately whether these objectives have been realised partially or fully. The time scale must be taken into account in this assessment.

5.2 METHODS AND STAGES OF EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

The PR process in organizing a campaign for an organization runs through four steps or stages. These are:
Principles and Functions of Public Relations

- Research or fact-finding;
- Planning of a campaign based on research findings;
- Execution of the campaign; and
- Evaluation of the campaign to determine whether it has produced the desired result.

It is to be emphasized that a constant monitoring of feedback is essential at each of these stages to ensure the success of the PR process. Hence, evaluation must be inbuilt into the entire process for effective campaigns.

Let us illustrate this with an example.

The Problem:
A company is about to declare a bonus to its employees.

- The quantum of bonus to be declared is 12% as against an expected 20% bonus;
- Consequently, the management anticipates industrial unrest;
- The company asks the PR department to defuse any potential crisis situation; and
- The PR department then launches a programme to face any eventuality arising from the declaration of a reduced bonus.

The tasks before the PR Personnel
Based on the four stages in the PR process, as mentioned above let us examine what are the general and specific tasks to be accomplished in tackling this problem at each stage. The break up of the tasks could be detailed as follows. We shall see how evaluation of feedback is built into the process.

5.2.1 Research
The first objective at this stage is to collect some basic facts or data.

- What are the expectations of the employees?
- Are they aware that the bonus this year could be less?
- Are they aware of the financial problems faced by the company due to loss of valuable orders from Russia?
- What is the attitude of the Labour Union? Do they encourage a policy of confrontation?

These data could be collected through informal interviews with the employees, supervisors and middle management staff. The data should be then cross checked and further evaluated for correct appraisal of the situation. If the data reveals an information gap regarding loss of the Russian Order, and the state of affairs in Russia itself, this fact could form the basis of the PR programme. Therefore, correct interpretation of facts is important.

Check Your Progress 1
Note:  
1) Mention the four stages of the PR Campaign.

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2) Mention the main objectives of research.

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5.2.2 Planning

After the collection of facts, the planning process begins, and the two major tasks are to:

i) specify the main objective of this campaign; and

ii) suggest strategies to meet this objective.

In this case, the main objective of the campaign could be to reduce the shock of a lower bonus by neutralizing unfavorable opinion so as to create a better understanding of the situation that forced the management to take this decision.

Planning the strategy will include decisions on how to deliver this message, and in what form so that it carries a high degree of credibility, and softens the negative element of the reduced bonus declaration.

The message to be delivered should be properly evaluated by pre-testing it among a sample group which closely resembles the target audience. A message of this kind could be delivered through different media, such as face-to-face communication; in print (which could be a letter or a house journal feature); through visual media: the video or slide presentation or a combination of the media. The appropriate medium or media should be chosen after careful consideration, to create the desired impact among the target audience.

However, it is not uncommon in the PR to completely change the choice of media at the evaluation stage, if it is found that the media chosen is not creating the desired impact. On one occasion, after evaluation, an expensive, sleek, audio-visual presentation, means for the blue collar workers, was dispensed with, in preference to a frank discussion with the union leaders. For testing an audio-visuals presentation, it should be shown to a small audience. After the show, the audience feedback should be gathered regarding the message received from the presentation. What was the focal point? Did the message appear natural and honest? Did it carry conviction? The responses to such questions would provide guidelines to further improve the message, or change it altogether. Thus, evaluation get built into the planning stage also.

Check Your Progress 2

Note:  i) Answer the following questions briefly in the space provided below.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) Why should evaluation be built into the planning stage?
5.2.3 Execution or Action

Let us assume that the company, after detailed planning and proper testing, decides to choose direct-mailing as suitable media for communication. This involves written communication. Such a letter might include the following content:

a) appreciation by the management for the continuous support of the employees;
b) difficulties presently faced by the company, i.e., loss in business due to adverse marketing conditions in Russia and hence inability to pay higher bonus;
c) the management's efforts to locate alternate markets;
d) in the meantime, seeking the employees' support and cooperation.

After the letter has been delivered to the employees at home, the evaluation and feedback processes should begin to find out:

- How many employees have read the letter?
- What percentage of the employees consider the letter positively/negatively?
- What is its impact on the labour union?
- Whether there is any different in perception between the management staff and the non-management employees?

The PR as a cyclic process

- **RESEARCH**
  - evaluation of collected data to analyse magnitude of the problem
- **PLANNING**
  - evaluation of adopted strategy for pretesting the message
- **EXECUTION**
  - evaluation of the target audience reached
- **EVALUATION**
  - Terminal evaluation of all feedback to assess the impact of the message

5.2.4 Evaluation

Let us assume that after the letter was sent to the employees' homes, the spontaneous feedback was one of disappointment. Naturally, the employees did not appreciate any
cut in their bonus earnings. But subsequent feedback was that of a mixed feeling among them. One group appreciated that the loss of the Russian market was something beyond the managements' control; but the other group, more vocal, did not appreciate that the axe should fall on their bonus. They felt that there were ways of cutting losses. However, there were no violent reactions leading to goslow tactics, partial strikes or even gate meetings etc.

The management reviewed the feedback received immediately after the letter was sent to study the individual behaviour. This was followed by another study undertaken a week later. The purpose of the second stage evaluation was to study the group opinion. There was a marked change in the second feedback. The first feedback revealed disappointment but silent acceptance of the bonus offer. But the second feedback indicated a preference for cutting losses through measures other than bonus.

As a result of the PR counselling, let us assume that the management respected the employees' opinion, and decided to restore the bonus to full 20 per cent, and to explore other ways—energy conservation, waste reduction, lower inventory—to cut losses in cooperation with the employees. **Was the PR exercise successful?**

The management thought that it was very positive. It created an atmosphere where both the management and employees could cooperate in handling a difficult situation. The bonus had to be restored, but it created goodwill, which could be put to more productive use.

Each campaign whether successful or otherwise, should be analysed and evaluated with complete objectivity. Particular care should be taken in the interpretation of data. Often the same data could be interpreted to yield from negative to near-positive results.

Let us assume a survey is conducted to assess the growth of the public interest in news about the film world. Film magazines being the chief source of the film news, we compare the readership figures of film magazines. Let us say the NRS III (National Readership Survey) shows a readership figure of 16,611,000. The subsequent NRS IV shows a readership figure of 14,179,000. In effect, there has been an 11% decline in the readership of film magazines.

This could be conveniently interpreted as a decline in interest in news about the film world. Thus the result is 'negative'. But if one takes care to assess that the television has captured some of these audiences, and, hence a decline in readership. However, as the audience are still hooked to the film news (although through other channels), there is no decline in the general and overall public interest in the film news, despite the readership figures. Hence, the same data could be interpreted positively. There is a common tendency among the planners of a campaign to interpret the data in their favour. To avoid this, and not to mislead the management, the interpretation of data could be done by a team with some competent public relations persons. It must be remembered that attitudes are difficult to evaluate and could only be measured broadly. Hence, the Public Relations research has its limitations.

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**Check Your Progress 3**

**Note:**

i) State whether the following statements are true or false.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) Research involves analysis of the problem.  
   
   (  )

2) Evaluation is only the terminal stage of PR activity.  
   
   (  )

3) It is important to interpret the data correctly.  
   
   (  )

4) Choice of the media should be changed after pretesting.  
   
   (  )

5) Attitudes are easy to evaluate.  
   
   (  )
5.3 RECYCLING INFORMATION FOR REORGANIZING THE PR CAMPAIGN

Most PR campaigns are planned on available data, feedback received from earlier campaigns, and certain assumptions of the planners. Such sources of information are, however, insufficient as the situations are constantly changing. Improved communication technologies, global television links through the satellites, scandal, the government’s liberalised policy towards the market economy, the new Exit Policy empowering organizations to get rid of excess labour force, are having their impact on the employees, consumers and shareholders.

The media coverage on these issues are constantly changing the expectations and attitudes of the public towards the organizations. The consumers are awakening to their rights. They are approaching the consumer courts to redress their grievances. Alive to the world standards, the employees are demanding a better quality of life. They are regrouping themselves to fight the exit policy. The shareholders are worried about their investments. Banks and financial institutions no longer enjoy the same trust as before.

And, then, there are other changes in the organization itself. A change in the management, substantial rise in product pricing, a change in plant location, introduction of a voluntary retirement scheme; unfavourable media coverage, inability to declare a dividend; a change in product formulation, a new policy towards diversification, and a host of other factors could have a negative or positive effect on the expectations of the relevant public towards the organization.

This information is vital, and must be recycled into a PR campaign to revitalise it. The attitudes, expectations and aspirations are constantly changing in a changing world. Therefore, yesterday’s information is not valid for today’s programme. The updating and recycling of information is a constant process. Even when a new situation may develop within a short time frame, it could completely invalidate a current campaign. The planners should be alive to these factors, and incorporate changes to reorganize a campaign.

5.4 KINDS OF EVALUATION TOOLS

The Public Relations professionals throughout the world have made extensive use of the following techniques to measure the results of their programmes. Some of these techniques were developed by the advertising professionals in the United States and Britain to study the effectiveness of their advertising campaigns. These are:

- Benchmark study,
- Observation study,
- Perception study,
- Attitude study,
- Survey techniques, and
- The media assessment studies.

5.4.1 Benchmark Study

When a researcher undertakes this study, he fixes a certain target for a particular
campaign. For example, a company wants to reduce its production waste by 2 per cent. The researcher fixes a certain time-frame for the campaign, and then measures whether the target has been reached.

Benchmark study is very common in areas where a sales target is assigned as a benchmark to study the effectiveness of a campaign. In the PR this method is applied to campaigns relating to energy conservation, zero defects, plant accidents, absentism and other areas where physical targets could be assigned.

5.4.2 Observation Study

Observation study is fairly common in areas where close observation over a certain period could reveal if the campaign is having the desired impact on the target audience. Campaigns pertaining to house-keeping, cleanliness in the community neighborhood, protection of environment with tree plantation, observation of "no smoking" signs, improvement in counter service, and several other similar campaigns could be put to observation tests. Often the main theme of a PR campaign, projected through a simple slogan, could be assessed by observing the reaction of a sample audience. The campaign slogan directed at employees or customers visiting a particular store could be assessed by silently watching their reaction.

5.4.3 Perception Study

This study is very relevant with regard to corporate image study among the consumers, shareholders, media, government, and other publics. The perception study reveals what is the perceived image of a company among the target public.

Business World MARG opinion poll conducts a similar study of India’s select large organizations among a sample of company executives in the four metro cities. The study is based on certain major criteria, such as:

a) financial performance,
b) corporate profitability,
c) plant productivity,
d) good employer, and
e) good corporate citizen

The executives in the sample are asked to rate the companies on a scale of 1 to 10, based on their own perceptions.

Perception study is strongly recommended for all PR programmes relating to the corporate image, and as basic data for other programmes directed at the consumers, government, shareholders, media and investing public. A negative perception could often be changed to positive perception with proper information.

A company known to take great care about the consumer’s complaints found to their surprise that quite a few consumers did not share this opinion. Further enquiry revealed that there had been a service deterioration in certain segments of the company. After taking appropriate steps to improve the service, the PR plan was suitably amended to communicate this development to the consumer group.

5.4.4 Attitude Study

Most PR campaigns are directed towards the target public to change their attitudes towards an organization, a product, an idea, a scheme, a person, or a group. For this, they need to know their existing attitudes.
For instance, political parties, before they launch their campaign, are known to conduct extensive attitude surveys to focus the negative and positive attitudes of the voters. While this has been used quite extensively in the West, by John Major for his Conservative Party in U.K. and Bill Clinton in his election in the USA, such studies have also been used in India by various political parties, particularly the Congress and the BJP. In the late sixties, the IBM India discovered that the Indian attitude towards the computer was totally negative. The public feared that the computer would render many people jobless. This information was then fed into the IBM’s Public Relations campaign, which was designed to counter this myth.

India’s Cancer Society, before mounting a public education campaign, interviewed 600 people in the city of Bombay from three different socio-economic groups. The research revealed the following attitudes:

1) Lower income group—fatalistic;
2) Middle income group—pessimistic;
3) Upper Income group—hopeful.

Overall, there was a clear tendency to shy away from the problem, and keep it to oneself in case of doubt.

The Society developed a communication strategy to educate the audience about the disease, to fight the fear of cancer, and to bring about a change in the attitude so as to encourage regular checkups.

Currently, on the Indian scene some of the known attitudes towards current issues are as follows:

"Exit policy is harmful to labour."
"Sardar Sarovar Project on the Narmada will bring untold misery to local residents."
"Nuclear Power Plants are harmful to the community near which they are situated."

The Public Relations professionals engaged in these projects would benefit by conducting extensive attitude surveys to understand the extent to which these "known" attitudes are deep-rooted and what communication strategy should be adopted to allay fears against these projects.

Activity 1

Design a small questionnaire to find out the attitude of the consumers to a new washing powder that your company has introduced.

5.4.5 Survey Techniques

Most of the surveys are conducted by interviewing a cross-section of the target public. It is customary to have these interviews on a predetermined questionnaire. For sensitive issues, the questionnaire avoids a direct question; respondents select a response of their choice from a number of statement offering different viewpoints. For a homogenous public, such as a group of the employees in a plant, a more informal method of interview, without a structured questionnaire, is preferred. Many national newspapers and magazines often seek the services of professional research groups to determine public opinion or attitude towards a government policy in connection with
broadcasting, job reservation, privatization, or any other matter of public importance. Group discussions and depth interviews are other forms of survey techniques commonly employed to reveal the public attitudes towards persons or issues, which could not be easily identified through direct questions.

5.4.6 Media Assessment

Besides these surveys, the media assessment studies, both quantitative and qualitative are important evaluation indicators, the PR campaigns making extensive use of the media relations to reach the target public through the news media would find a media assessment study extremely revealing.

i) In the media relations, normally the following strategies are employed to achieve the media coverage:
   - Press release issued to the national and regional press;
   - Press conferences held at the corporate headquarters or in plant townships;
   - Backgrounders issued to the press media;
   - Video clips sent to the electronic media; and
   - Press interviews by special correspondents.

The Media assessment study would audit the following:
   - Clippings received against each press release;
   - Clippings received from the press conference;
   - Mention in the electronic media; and
   - Mention of corporate related news in articles and features.

Total column centimeters of all the media coverage could be tabulated in the form of a pie chart.

ii) The media assessment should further analyse the total number of clippings in terms of;
   - negative coverage and
   - positive coverage.

iii) In the qualitative aspect of the measurement the following factors must be considered;
   - Appearance of the news in the front page.
   - Appearance of the news in the page facing the editorial.
   - News appearing as a box item.
   - The corporate name editorially mentioned.
   - Appearance of the corporate name in the headline.
   - A negative headline with a corporate name.
   - Appearance as a cover story in leading magazines.
   - Publication of a photograph relating to a plant or product.
   - News coverage of the Doordarshan and All India Radio; both visual and audio coverage in the news.
   - Duration, in terms of seconds, covered in each news, Regional and National.
   - Any other TV coverage related to the corporation.
   - Coverage of the corporate logo in sporting events.
5.5 INTERPRETATION OF FEEDBACK

Interpretation of feedback is often neglected. This is, however, not so simple, particularly where the feedback is not negative. This does lead to the conclusion that the feedback is positive. Let us study an example.

A company, proposing to launch a voluntary retirement scheme undertook a PR campaign to create a favourable response situation among the employees. The campaign was very effective in creating awareness. A large number of the employees wanted to know more about the scheme. They were particularly interested in the compensation package. They showed a lot of interest in the schemes, where they could invest their money. The feedback given to the management was very positive and it recommended launching of the scheme. But when the actual scheme was launched, it was a flop as very few employees responded.

The campaign was highly successful in creating interest which was interpreted as a desire to opt for the scheme a clear case of misinterpretation.

In our earlier case, with regard to the declaration of a 12 per cent bonus, the campaign correctly interpreted the employees response. Although the employees were not happy with a reduced bonus they appreciated the situation. Based on this result, the management could have declared the proposed 12 per cent bonus. But the management interpreted the employee opinion being as one of "understanding", while also being one of "disappointment". In the interest of the long-term employees relations, the management decided to restore the full bonus of 20 per cent. This is a case of correct interpretation. However, the task in not easy.

In opinion and attitude surveys the interpretation of the result is rather difficult. The interpretation arrived at from these surveys should be further cross checked to eliminate any doubt and possible error. As we noticed in the voluntary retirement scheme, the scheme was novel, and it offered a large sum of money which was a great attraction but mere interest in the scheme was not enough to suggest that the employees were ready to take the plunge. Perhaps a second stage evaluation, after a certain interval, would have produced the right response.

Dr. Edward J. Robinson suggests in Publications and Survey Research, the following approach in the PR research:

1) the researches know the problem;
2) they know what information is needed to solve the problem;
3) they know where to look for the information;
4) they apply pertinent previous knowledge to the present problem; and
5) finally, with the past and present information, they arrive at a decision.

In more sensitive issues like relocation of a plant to a less expensive district or
relaunching of a product which earlier met with a stiff consumer resistance, the interpretation of feedback should be based on intensive cross-checking of data, and, if still in doubt, further evaluation should be taken.

5.6 COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS TOWARDS SHAPING NEW POLICY

We have so far discussed the stages of evaluation in a PR campaign, kinds of evaluation techniques, and the importance of correct interpretation of feedback.

In the ultimate analysis, the evaluation and feedback are the tools which help us judge the success or failure of a PR campaign. The results of the measurement tell us whether our campaign objectives have been fulfilled or not. But, sometimes, the results of our measurement indicate a situation which is of great significance, and needs closer examination to formulate a new management policy.

Let us take the case of a company manufacturing tractor tyres with good reputation among tractor distributors, tyre dealers and the ultimate users of tractors. The company, normally, carries out informal surveys among the target audience to keep a close check on the tyre performance. Based on the feedback, the company plans its PR strategies for communication of the farmers (users of tractors) mainly during large farm fairs, or examinations of the farm technology, which the farmers usually attend.

On one occasion, the spot interviews at the fair site revealed a note of dissatisfaction, though not well pronounced. Only a few farmers complained of faster wearing out of the tyres on their new tractors. Further investigation revealed that the fast wear-out complaint originated from the owners of the new tractors.

At the production site, the tyres to be fitted to the new tractors, directly delivered to the tractor manufacturers were not exposed to the same quality checks, as those earmarked for the replacement market.

The feedback given by the farmers at the farm fair brought a significant change in the company's policy relating to quality control. All tractor tyres, whether for the tractor manufacturers or the tyre dealers, were brought under uniform quality control checks.

Let us also examine our earlier case relating to the employee bonus. The results of the campaign gave us the following feedback:

1) The employees understood the situation in which the company was placed, that compelled the management to declare a reduced bonus of 12 per cent.

2) However, the employees received this announcement with a certain degree of disappointment, as it was contrary to their expectations.

3) The employees also felt that there were ways other than a reduced bonus to cut the losses.

The company could have still declared a 12 per cent bonus with a promise for better bonus the following year. "However, the company noted the "employees disappointment" as a danger signal, and taking the long-term employee interest in view, it decided to declare the full bonus. This is a very good example of utilizing the research results to modify an existing policy or shaping a new policy to gain the employees confidence in the management.

5.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have examined the role of evaluation and feedback in the assess a PR campaign.
We started with the premise that each PR campaign must have a clear cut objective so that it could be assessed. To ensure the success of the operation, evaluation is necessary throughout the Public Relations process, as the campaign runs through the 4 steps of research, planning, execution and evaluation.

With a specific example, we saw how evaluation was inbuilt in all stages of the PR process for effective PR activity.

While conducting evaluation, we came across some new data, which could be recycled to reorganize our PR campaigns. We discussed various evaluation tools, including a) Benchmark study, b) Observation study, c) Perception study, d) Attitude study, and Media assessment, both qualitative and quantitative. We discussed briefly the survey techniques, sample surveys with questionnaires, informal interviews, group discussion and in depth interviews.

We stressed the correct interpretation on feedback, and examined a case of misinterpretation, where an interest in the Voluntary Retirement Scheme was interpreted as a desire to opt for the scheme. Interpretation of feedback of the opinion and attitude surveys is rather difficult. And, when in doubt, it should be cross-checked with the secondary data, and if necessary, a further study could be undertaken with the specific issue in mind.

We also observed that the results of evaluation have far-reaching effects. It not only reveals the extent of successful achievement of a campaign objective, it also reveals useful information which could be utilized for reshaping policies towards better and harmonious relations with the publics concerned.

5.8 GLOSSARY

Public Opinion Research: investigation carried out to assess the attitude of a given public to a given issue, idea, person or situation.

Communication Strategy: the structuring of message with reference to context, timing and selection of suitable media to convey content to target audience.

The Media: Channels through which the PR messages are transmitted e.g., the radio, newspapers, etc.

Campaign: an organised effort to convert the opinion of any group on a subject.

Questionnaire: a pre-structured set of questions framed with the intention of eliciting answers from the target audience to find out their reaction to a given issue.

This technique is used in survey study.

5.9 FURTHER READING

IFPR Volume I; Public Relations Case Studies (Indian Scene).

5.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Research or fact finding;
   Planning of Campaign;
   Execution of Campaign;
   Evaluation of Campaign.

2) Collection of data,
   Cross checking,
   Interpretation of data,
   Results of interpretation to form the basis of a programme.

Check Your Progress 2

1) To check if the message is understood by the sample audience, and has the correct impact; also to test the suitability of the media.

2) Planning includes decision on what to say and how to say, that is, choice of the message and the media.

Check Your Progress 3

1) True
2) False
3) True
4) True
5) False

Check Your Progress 4

1) Benchmark study, observation study, perception study, attitude study, survey technique, the media assessment study.

2) Perception study reveals the perceived image of the company among the target publics like the consumer, shareholders, media, etc.

Check Your Progress 5

1) Quantitative, qualitative;
2) Survey;
3) Attitude;
4) Benchmark.