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TECHNICAL WRITING

Authors

R.K. Madhukar, *Retired General Manager, Incharge of Business Communication and Public Relations Canara Bank, Bengaluru*
Units: (1.0-1.3, 1.4-1.8, 2, 3, 10.0-10.2, 10.4-10.7, 10.10-10.14)

Dr. Bhavana Adhikari, *Professor and Deputy Dean Academics, Amity University Haryana*
Units: (1.3.1, 4, 10.3)

Jaideep Majumdar, *Deputy Manager, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, Kolkata*
Units: (5-9, 11-12)

Dr. Reena Nigam, *HoD, Amity Skills Institute, Amity University Haryana*
Units: (13, 14)

Vikas® Publishing House, Unit: (10.8, 10.9)

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE
Technical Writing

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Unit 11: Categories of Technical Communication: Structure, Function and Types of Technical Communication - Definition, Purpose, Characteristics of Technical Communication

Unit 12: Technical Papers / Articles, Review Articles, Technical Reports, Monographs, Dissertations, In-House Bulletins - Information Analysis, Consolidation and Repackaging Products - Technical Digest, - Trend Reports, State-of-the-Art Reports, Annual Reports, Manuals, Handbooks and Directories

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Unit 13: Business Writing: Business Plan and Mission Writing - Terms and Condition with Book Sellers, Publishers, Venders, Service Providers - MOUs - Licensing, Contract Writing - Effective Covering Letters - Publisher, Book Seller, Binders, Users-Patrons- Clienteles

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INTRODUCTION

Technical writing is a style of formal writing used in fields as diverse as computer hardware and software, the aerospace industry, chemistry, finance, consumer electronics and biotechnology. Technical writers make a write-up explaining the technology and related ideas in operating any device or a computer program to technical and non-technical readers or even listeners. For example, this could mean telling a programmer how to use a software library or telling a consumer how to operate a television remote control. This book explains different aspects of technical writing as well as the communication process in an organization.

Effective communication is central to the success of any business organization. Communication is a pervasive activity which encompasses almost all facets of our lives. Much of our lives are spent communicating with others – be it at our work place or in our family life. When communication is referred to in the organizational or business context, it is known as business communication.

This book, *Technical Writing*, has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the Introduction followed by the Objectives for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with Check Your Progress questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit. The Summary and Key Words further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

BLOCK - I
COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

UNIT 1   PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Structure

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Communication refers to the act of conveying meanings from one group to another with the help of understood semiotic rules, signs or symbols. Communication in an organizational context is defined as a type of communication in which information is shared between people within an organization and people outside an organization. Such type of communication is performed for the benefit of the organization.

Technical writing is defined as a type of writing in which author writes about a specific subject which requires direction, explanation or instruction. It is the responsibility of an organization to impart knowledge about their services or goods in such a way that the prospective buyers could understand it.

Technical communicators or writers are hired by organizations who prepare instruction manuals, journal articles to communicate complex and technical information more easily. They also gather and disseminate technical information among customers, designers, and manufacturers.

In this unit, the meaning and objective of business communication has been discussed. The steps involved in the communication process and importance of effective communication in an organization has been explained. The unit will also highlight the importance of technical writing in the existing times and the relationship between writers and readers.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning of communication and its objective
- Identify the steps of the communication process
- Explain the importance of communication in an organization
- Interpret the meaning of technical writing and its various forms
- Identify the responsibilities of technical writers
- Describe the influence of readers opinion in a writer's work

1.2   COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication is a process that involves certain distinct steps. In its simpler form, it relates to stimulus and response. The stimulus arises from the communicator and the receiver responds. Communication is not complete till the message conveyed by the sender is properly understood by the receiver. Any communication process should necessarily have three elements—sender, receiver and the message.

Every communication has a distinct purpose, which determines the message. The stimulus emanates from the sender, and the receiver comes up with the response. The objective in any business communication, as we have seen earlier, is to elicit the desired response. To be understood, however, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition in the organizational context. When the understanding results in the intended action, the objective of the communication is achieved.

The process of communication in an organization can be illustrated with the help of Figure 1.1. It brings out the following steps involved in the communication process:

Step 1 Message is initiated.

Step 2 Sender picks up the idea and encodes it for proper understanding.

Step 3 The encoded message is then transmitted through the chosen medium or channel.

Step 4 Receiver receives the message and decodes it.

Step 5 The decoded message is used or acted upon.

Step 6 As a final step, feedback on use or action is sent back to the sender.
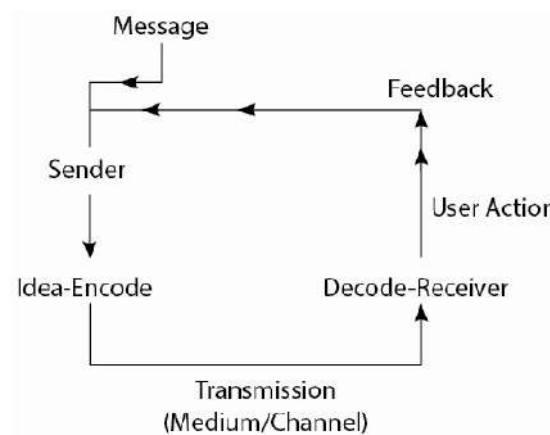
Fig. 1.1 *Process of Communication*

Communication Relates to Stimulus and Response

The starting point of any communication is the existence of a message. The process of communication starts with a purpose. There is an underlying idea that has to be put across. This idea is developed into a message. The sender gives shape to the idea he or she wants to communicate.

The next step, as is evident from the chart, is the encoding of the idea. Encoding ensures that the idea or the message assumes a communicable form. Encoding would involve choosing the right words, expressions, phrases, charts and pictures in order to facilitate complete and clear expression of the idea. In doing so, the sender of the message should keep in mind the ability of the receiver to decode and comprehend the message.

The encoded message is now ready to travel. The journey or transmission is undertaken through a medium or channel. The sender of the message has to select the medium or the communication channel—oral, written, visual, audio-visual, electronic or a combination of any of these. Each of these offers various options. The choice of the medium would be influenced by factors such as availability, cost, urgency and reliability.

The transmission is complete when the message reaches the receiver. The message has travelled from the sender to the receiver. Having received the message, it is now up to the receiver to respond as he or she pleases. If the receiver does not open the mailbox, ignores the letter, declines to take the call, refuses to view the audio-visual film or ignores the e-mail, the message gets lost, and the idea fails to reach its destination.

For the communication process to progress as intended, the receiver, on getting the message, should decode it. Decoding relates to reading, listening, viewing, understanding and interpretation of the message. Proper decoding is again a must for effective communication. It calls for earnestness on the part of the receiver. It depends on one's willingness to respond to the sender's efforts in

sending the message. Even when one responds, understanding and interpretation of the message will be influenced by one's knowledge, attitude and perception. Communication is complete and effective only when the receiver correctly comprehends the purpose of the message, uses it and acts upon it as envisaged by the sender.

In an organizational context, in particular, the communication process moves a step further resulting in relevant feedback to the sender. The quality of feedback received from the target indicates the effectiveness of communication.

The process of communication is thus, a progressive step-by-step movement. Both the sender and the receiver have a definite role to play in ensuring the success of communication. Their internal background, social status, hierarchical relationships, organizational climate, knowledge, skills and attitudes are among a host of factors that determine the effectiveness of communication. Added to that is the efficiency and reliability of the channels of communication chosen in the process. The choice of methods and channels should be such that they are capable of overcoming barriers, if any, to the process of communication.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the starting point of any communication?
2. How is communication complete and effective in an organization?

1.3 CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF TECHNICAL WRITING

Technical writing or technical documentation has evolved into a subject of growing significance in the world of written communication. Given its specialized nature, technical communication has developed into a well-defined profession, especially in the developed world. In fact, technical writing is a natural offshoot of the knowledge-based economy. Qualified technical writers are in demand in a host of industries including software, telecommunications, financial services and healthcare.

Technical writing consists of specialized writing skills whereby businesses use the services of technical writers to translate and communicate industry-related information into user-friendly documents and publications. Technical writing therefore, calls for both an insight into the industry or domain knowledge and excellent communication skills. Technical writing consists of bringing out manuals, training material, technical reports and documents, graphic designs and illustrations, magazines, journals and newsletters, indexes, web pages and text books. Technical writing covers material to be brought out for the use of employees and trainees as well as the ultimate end users.

Technical writers, to be effective, should possess a set of requisite skills. They should have good command over English, or other relevant languages and be well versed in the techniques of writing. They should be in a position to speak and write the language which the target group understands well. They should understand the complexities involved and put them in simple, easy-to-understand terms. They should be skilled at design and illustration. A technical writer's responsibilities would generally cover the following aspects:

- Developing end-user documentation for products
- Developing technical documentation/curriculum
- Creating and redefining graphics, text and layout of courseware
- Editing, rewriting and authenticating technical instructional information
- Developing and maintaining style guides
- Developing user manuals and online help systems
- Working with the localization team to deliver translation-friendly documentation

The responsibilities relating to technical communication would cover the activities relating to technical writers, curriculum developers, technical publication specialists, technical editors and even graphic designers.

Technical writing in the field of Software and Information Technology Management calls for proficiency in the relevant tools and programs, apart from strong domain knowledge and communication skills. The tools and programs appropriate for the job would include MS Word, Adobe Frame Maker, RoboHelp, Acrobat, Illustrator and Photoshop.

Bringing out technical publications of high quality with accuracy would call for knowledge and experience of page layout, publishing design, typography, graphic design principles, colour theory, proofreading and editing skills. Experts agree that today's technical communicators need to keep themselves well informed about the latest in technology to be able to write effectively for various media. As the products are becoming more and more modular and mobile-friendly, documentation too is adapting by providing flexible and re-usable content.

1.3.1 Reader-Writer Relationship

Writing is a mean which helps an individual to express oneself and is the non-verbal way to convey ideas, perception, opinion and thoughts. The need for expression is also influenced by the need for recognition and appreciation. This concept defines the writer reader relationship. Writers write with the expectation that they will be able to influence people's minds with their original thoughts and analysis. It is also affected by the human nature to create followers and lead. Thus, writing is one of the most powerful and intense form of communication. The most powerful verbal communication also loses its impact after a certain period of time unless documented in the form of writing.

Since, everyone does not possess the talent of writing their thoughts in a well defined manner, readers therefore, read with the expectation that their ideologies and thoughts will be endorsed by some other who has similar thoughts. A book, which is able to articulate the popular belief, is often the most read and appreciated form of writing. People look for ideas which can change the society's perception and must also abolish age old beliefs which hinder the growth of the society. Thus, writers are expected to be the agents of change who, through their writings, can bring about change that a common man wishes but is unable to bring due to its inability to articulate the thoughts. It is therefore, can be concluded that readers and writers complement each other. It is so because readers find in writers a thought leader who is articulating their ideas and in the same way, writers find in their readers, their followers.

Writers also reflect upon their ideas by taking the reader's position and find ways to look from their perspectives and implement changes in such a way that it complements with the audience's viewpoint. In case of technical writing, writers explore history and research which is carried out in a specific area of writing, to be able to give an extensive coverage to their subject rather than pigeon-holing the concept. It has also been observed that writers are avid readers which help them to gather their thoughts in a more comprehensive manner.

As amateur writers evolve into more mature writers, they develop an intense and strong relationship with their readers. The relationship is based on a platform of common interests, expressions, likes, dislikes and environment and so on. For instance, just as a movie director understands his or her audience, similarly the writer also tries to understand the viewpoint of the readers and targets their thought process, circumstances, insecurities and passions. It is important that a writer must not hamper the beliefs of the readers and should not contradict their ideas and opinions; if need be then he or she should opine their opinions in such a way that it does not hurt their sentiments.

Writers develop a style and pattern for which they are admired and read for and continue to enthral their readers accordingly. It is therefore, needless to say that there is a mutual dependency between writers and readers.

Here, it is also relevant to state that it is the reader who puts meaning to writer's writing. In other words, it is the match of perception of writer and reader which gives a meaning to the text. How a reader comprehends the text decides the response that the text receives. If a reader's comprehension is different from the writer's the ambiguity will surround the writing. As a result, writer and reader share the responsibility of giving a definite meaning to the text. The success of a text is the recognition of the reader's ability to create meaning for the writing akin to what the writer had desired.

Check Your Progress

3. State the premise of technical writing.

4. What are the responsibilities related to technical communication?

1.4   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The starting point of any communication is the existence of a message. The process of communication starts with a purpose. There is an underlying idea that has to be put across. This idea is developed into a message.

2. Communication is complete and effective only when the receiver correctly comprehends the purpose of the message, uses it and acts upon it as envisaged by the sender. In an organizational context, in particular, the communication process moves a step further resulting in relevant feedback to the sender. The quality of feedback received from the target indicates the effectiveness of communication.

3. Technical writing consists of bringing out manuals, training material, technical reports and documents, graphic designs and illustrations, magazines, journals and newsletters, indexes, web pages and text books.

4. The responsibilities related to technical communication involve activities which relates to technical writers, curriculum developers, technical publication specialists, technical editors and even graphic designers.

1.5   SUMMARY

- Communication is a process that involves certain distinct steps. In its simpler form, it relates to stimulus and response.

- Communication is not complete till the message conveyed by the sender is properly understood by the receiver.

- Any communication process should necessarily have three elements— sender, receiver and the message.

- The objective in any business communication, as we have seen earlier, is to elicit the desired response.

- The starting point of any communication is the existence of a message. The process of communication starts with a purpose. There is an underlying idea that has to be put across. This idea is developed into a message.

- Encoding involves choosing the right words, expressions, phrases, charts and pictures in order to facilitate complete and clear expression of the idea.

- The transmission is complete when the message reaches the receiver. The message has travelled from the sender to the receiver.

- Decoding relates to reading, listening, viewing, understanding and interpretation of the message. Proper decoding is again a must for effective communication. It calls for earnestness on the part of the receiver.

- Communication is complete and effective only when the receiver correctly comprehends the purpose of the message, uses it and acts upon it as envisaged by the sender.

- In an organizational context, in particular, the communication process moves a step further resulting in relevant feedback to the sender.

- The process of communication is thus, a progressive step-by-step movement. Both the sender and the receiver have a definite role to play in ensuring the success of communication.

- The choice of methods and channels should be such that they are capable of overcoming barriers, if any, to the process of communication.

- Technical writing or technical documentation has evolved into a subject of growing significance in the world of written communication.

- Technical writing consists of specialized writing skills whereby businesses use the services of technical writers to translate and communicate industry-related information into user-friendly documents and publications.

- Technical writing consists of bringing out manuals, training material, technical reports and documents, graphic designs and illustrations, magazines, journals and newsletters, indexes, web pages and text books.

- Technical writing covers material to be brought out for the use of employees and trainees as well as the ultimate end users.

- Technical writers, to be effective, should possess a set of requisite skills. They should have good command over English, or other relevant languages and be well versed in the techniques of writing.

- The responsibilities relating to technical communication would cover the activities relating to technical writers, curriculum developers, technical publication specialists, technical editors and even graphic designers.

- Writing is a mean which helps an individual to express oneself and is the non-verbal way to convey ideas, perception, opinion and thoughts.

- As amateur writers evolve into more mature writers, they develop an intense and strong relationship with their readers. The relationship is based on a platform of common interests, expressions, likes, dislikes and environment and so on.

- Writers also reflect upon their ideas by taking the reader's position and find ways to look from their perspectives and implement changes in such a way that it complements with the audience's viewpoint.

- Writers develop a style and pattern for which they are admired and read for and continue to enthral their readers accordingly.

- It is also relevant to state that it is the reader who puts meaning to writer's writing. In other words, it is the match of perception of writer and reader which gives a meaning to the text.

1.6 KEY WORDS

- **Communication:** It is defined as a process that involves certain distinct steps which relates to stimulus and response.

- **Encoding:** It is defined as a process which translates information into a message in the form of codes and symbols that represent certain concepts or ideas.

- **Perception:** It refers to the means to see, hear, or become aware of something or someone through our fundamental senses.

- **Technical Writing:** It is defined as a writing which is used in professional and technical fields such as aeronautics, consumer electronics, engineering, finance and so on. It is a purposeful writing which is intended to resolve a problem for a specific audience.

1.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What is the main objective of business communication?
2. How is transmission considered complete in communication?
3. What are the various mediums of a communication channel?
4. Write a short note on the importance of technical writing.
5. How do readers and writers complement each other?
6. What are the three main elements of a communication?

Long Answer Questions

1. Why is it believed that every communication has a distinct purpose? Discuss.
2. Explain the various steps of communication in an organization.
3. Identify the characteristics of a good technical writer.

4. Analyse the process of decoding a message in an organization.

5. Why is communication process considered a progressive step-by-step movement? Describe in detail.

6. Discuss the responsibilities of a technical writer.

1.8   FURTHER   READINGS

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UNIT 2   COMMUNICATION TYPES

Structure

2.0   INTRODUCTION

As you learnt previously communication is defined as an act of sending ideas via various modes such as speech, visuals, writing. It has two or more than two people involved in it that are the sender and the receiver.

The communication and its type vary according to the situation. During the process of communication, a person may use several channels to convey a message. However, the process of communication depends not only on the source but also on the type of method chosen by an individual or organization.

Communication is primarily divided into three main types, i.e., verbal, written and non-verbal. There are other methods too such as visual, audio-visual and electronic forms of communication. The communication skills determine the effectiveness of the communication.

In this unit, the main types of communication along with their merits and demerits have been analysed. The importance of sign, symbol and signal and the need for effective communication skills have been highlighted. The unit will also discuss the methods related to skill development.

2.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the types of communication

- Identify the main forms of verbal communication

- Analyse the merits and demerits of written communication

- Explain the types of non-verbal communication

- Describe the meaning of visual and audio-visual communication

- Interpret the importance of sign, symbol and signal in communication
- Discuss the importance of effective communication skills
- Identify the skills related to verbal and written communication

- Analyse the methods of skill development

2.2   TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication takes place through various methods and channels. The three main methods of communication are oral or verbal communication, written communication and the non-verbal communication. Oral or verbal communication takes place by way of talks, conversation, dialogue, speech, discussion and meetings. Written communication is carried out through letters, circulars, memos, reports, brochures and books. Non-verbal communication takes place through body language. Language constitutes the vehicle on which both oral and written communication travel. Apart from these three main methods of communication, there are others such as the visual, audio-visual and electronic. Silence is also accepted as a method of communication. Each of these methods has its own merits, demerits, channels and aids (see Figure 2.1).
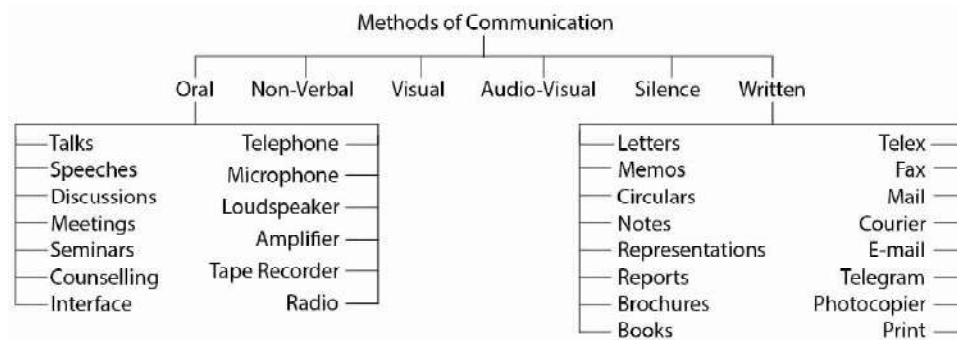
Fig. 2.1 Methods and Channels of Communication

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication refers to the spoken word. It takes the form of sounds and words. Starting out as a struggle by the early man, oral communication has had a long journey. It has developed across different regions, cultures, countries and continents. The development of numerous languages across the world has empowered oral communication.

It plays a vital role in everyday life, both for individuals and organizations. It is, indeed, the most commonly used method of communication both at the social level and at the organizational level. Everyone makes copious use of verbal communication in their transactions and interactions. For an individual, talking and speaking provide a very dependable means of communication within the family

and in social groups. Verbal communication is also extensively and gainfully used within organizations and business entities as well.

Verbal communication is also known as oral communication. It takes place between individuals with the help of words. Oral communication takes place in many ways—casual and serious, formal and informal, structured and unstructured. Verbal communication encompasses conversation, monologue, dialogue, talk, speech and chat. Some of these are pre-meditated and some are not. Formal speeches are pre-planned and well structured, whereas informal ones are unstructured and often loosely worded.

As already noted, verbal or oral communication can be both structured and unstructured. It can also be formal or informal. In other words, verbal communication comprises of both small talk and big talk. Small talk is informal and unstructured. You simply talk. Small talk is often casual. On the other hand, big talk is both formal and structured. It is a serious talk with particular concern for its impact and effectiveness. Big talk calls for planning and organizing. Small talk usually refers to conversations, chats, gossiping and the like where the speakers talk without much concern for the consequences. They are casual and often described as friendly chat, idle talk, common gossip, and so on. Figuratively speaking, when we say, 'we indulged in small talk before getting down to business', it means that we did some casual talking before discussing business. Big talk comprises of giving a speech, making a presentation, participating in a meeting, handling a negotiation, counselling, dealing with a crisis, attending an interview, making a sales talk, strengthening customer contact, discussion as a panel member, and a host of other talks which are now an integral part of the business world. Small talk may not always be aimed at achieving anything specific. It, nevertheless, helps in building rapport and paving the way for big talk. Big talk, however, is always goal oriented. Big talk is done with specific objectives. Big talk aims to inform, influence, educate, convince, promote, resolve, motivate, and attain several such objectives. Big talk, to be effective, calls for tremendous skills and persistent efforts. The world of business especially looks for those people who are good at big talk.

Direct person-to-person communication plays an important role in any organization, essentially in work situations, where there are employer-employee, superior-subordinate and service provider-customer interactions. Verbal communication is a speedy two-way process. The message conveyed through verbal or oral communication is instantaneous. The messages can travel back and forth without any loss of time. It is possible for the receiver of the message to respond immediately to the sender making the process highly interactive. The messages between the sender and the receiver can go back and forth, with role reversals taking place, till the objective is achieved.

There are many businesses and groups where spoken word carries considerable weight. There are businesses where, for various reasons, not much is documented or reduced to black and white. The verbal contracts are taken as

seriously as the written ones and are faithfully fulfilled. A promise made is a promise kept. Likewise, in organizational situations, oral instructions, appeals and messages are seldom disregarded. Oral communication, besides being interactive, can also be quite persuasive.

Another noteworthy merit of verbal communication is that it can be supplemented and complemented by non-verbal communication for greater impact. When a speaker speaks, the message is conveyed not only through the spoken words, but also by body movements and actions. When a person is talking or speaking or counselling, the warmth or otherwise of the person's feelings is also expressed through the body language. It is, however, worth noting that if this language is not used consciously to reinforce the verbal messages; it may lead to confusion and even contradiction.

Notwithstanding its several merits, verbal communication gets constrained by various physical factors. It works well in small groups—at counters, in classrooms, in meetings and conferences, in counselling and persuasive sessions. A major drawback of verbal communication is that it cannot be erased. There is a sense of finality concerning the spoken word. Any word uttered by the speaker travels swiftly and reaches the target. Any slip of the tongue can create an embarrassment and an unintended hurt. The moment a wrong or unintended word is delivered, the damage is done. Effective speakers are acutely conscious of this factor, especially in case of extempore speech. Recognizing this limitation, while resorting to any form of verbal communication, one should learn to make a careful choice of words. Until the fine art of speaking with restraint is developed, it would be desirable to make the speeches and interventions, structured and well thought out rather than spontaneous and extempore. Whenever the oral communication is intended to achieve an important objective, extra care should be taken with the choice of words.

In personal as well as organizational communication, several channels or tools are regularly used. These include the telephone, the cell phone, the microphone, the radio, the amplifier and the loudspeaker. To the extent they are well chosen and well maintained, they facilitate smooth and effective flow of communication. If care is lacking while using them, they may prove to be a hindrance rather than an aid.

Table 2.1 *Merits and Demerits of Oral Communication*

Merits	Demerits
1. It can be readily used.	1. It is not very effective when the target group is spread out.
2. It is instantaneous.	2. It is constrained by language, accent and vocabulary.
3. It can be persuasive.	3. It is also constrained by noise and other physical barriers.
4. It is cost effective.	4. It is not normally recorded or documented.
5. It facilitates effective person-to-person exchange.	5. It does not permit repeated reference.
6. It works very well in small groups.	6. It cannot be erased.
7. It can be supplemented by non-verbal messages.	7. It is often dependent on memory.

Written Communication

Written communication is another powerful method of communication. History is replete with instances where a piece of writing was involved in events of great significance—in love, war, peace, unions and betrayals. The power of writing is eloquently expressed in the saying 'the pen is mightier than the sword'. The author also communicates with the readers through his or her piece of writing. After experimenting with writing on sand, stone and leaves, man invented paper, pen, books and printing. Newspapers and journals developed as the media of mass communication.

Written communication has come to acquire great significance in the lives of individuals as well as business organizations. It reaches across vast geographic areas and targets readers around the world. The reach of written communication is limited to the literate world. However, with the literary levels steadily rising across the world, written communication can accomplish much more today than it could in the past. Writing skills and word-power of the communicator come into play in making the written communication forceful and effective.

Written communication is, more often than not, well structured. The words are carefully chosen to suit the message and the context. Be it a letter, a circular, a memo, a brochure or a report, the subject matter is carefully presented keeping in view the receptivity of the reader. This is how it ought to be. Progressive organizations make conscious efforts to ensure that people across the organization acquire well-developed writing skills. It is possible and necessary to collect all relevant facts and figures beforehand so that the communication is properly structured.

Written communication invariably creates a record that can be preserved over time. Letters, memos, contracts, agreements, documents and reports often carry time value and need to be stored and preserved. As a result, it becomes possible to access them for reference or study. Most businesses rely more on records and written documents rather than verbal contracts and oral commitments. Documentation of knowledge and experience facilitates institutionalization of individual wisdom.

Written communication, unlike verbal communication, can be erased. The words can be substituted and thoughts can be rearranged before the letter or the piece of writing is finalized and dispatched. In business organizations, people often prepare drafts and revise them till a satisfactory final version emerges, especially when sensitive and important messages are to be conveyed. Moreover, if circumstances so warrant, the letter or circular or report can be stopped in transit at any time before it is read by the target.

Unlike verbal communication, written communication takes time to reach the target. In the past, when postal delays were quite common, considerable time elapsed between the dispatch of the written message and its receipt by the target.

The invention of telephone, telex, fax, e-mail and courier has, however, reduced the time involved in message transmission. Nevertheless, they have to be viewed in terms of availability, reach and cost. Further, compared to oral communication, written communication is less interactive. It may be necessary to resort to repetitions and clarifications so that the intended message is properly understood by the reader.

In written communication too, several tools and aids are regularly used. These include telex, fax, mail, e-mail, courier, telegram, print and photocopier. Care should be taken to ensure that all such aids and gadgets are properly selected and well maintained so that they act as facilitators and not as a hindrance. In written communication, words alone carry the burden of communication.

Table 2.2 *Merits and Demerits of Written Communication*

Merits	Demerits
1. It has an extremely wide reach.	1. It takes time to reach its target.
2. It creates a record and is easily documented.	2. It is less interactive.
3. It can be erased and rewritten.	3. It depends on word power.
4. It is amenable to a high level of planning and structuring.	4. It takes more time to get feedback
5. It facilitates repeated reference.	5. It depends on the messenger and the mode of transmission
6. It depends less on memory since facts and figures can be mobilized beforehand.	6. It is constrained by language, handwriting and efficiency of the tools used.

Note: *Tables 2.1 and 2.2 are only illustrative. The merits and demerits are not absolute and present a comparative picture to facilitate a broad relative assessment.*

Non-Verbal Communication

The third method of communication relates to non-verbal communication, which is neither oral nor written. While verbal communication thrives on listening and the written communication thrives on reading, the non-verbal communication thrives on observation. Non-verbal communication may take any of the following forms—body language, gestures, postures, appearance, personal space, codes, signs and signals, facial expressions, timings, examples and personal behaviour.

Non-verbal communication may be conscious or unconscious, deliberate or unintended. It may substitute verbal communication or supplement it. There may also be occasions when the non-verbal communication may be out of line with or even contradict verbal communication. When used with full awareness, body language can create the desired impact. At the same time, unintended body movements and expressions may confuse the listener. Non-verbal communication is extremely relevant during meetings and interactions of a direct or face-to-face nature.

The greatest merit of non-verbal communication is that it has a universal appeal. Unlike both oral and written communication, which depends on a particular language, non-verbal communication can reach across to people of different regions, irrespective of the language they speak. Mother Teresa's language of love and compassion is just one example. In the organizational context, however, non-verbal language can be used effectively as an adjunct to verbal communication.

Visual Communication

Visual communication is effected through pictures, graphs and charts, as well as through signs, signals and symbols. They may be used either independently or as an adjunct to the other methods of communication. It is also useful in reaching out to an illiterate target group. It can be used in addressing groups of people who do not understand the language of the communicator. As the saying goes, 'A picture is worth more than a thousand words'. Pictures, graphs, charts and diagrams often convey the intended message quite effectively. Some examples of visual communication are given in Figure 2.2.

Fig. 2.2 Some Examples of Visual Communication

Similarly, there are pictures to convey 'No swimming', 'Danger zone' and 'Fasten seat belts'. In business communication, pictures, graphs, charts, signs and symbols are frequently used to illustrate, highlight and focus attention. The channels and instruments of visual communication include hoardings, films, transparencies, floppies and projectors.

Audio-Visual Communication

Audio-Visual Communication is an extremely sophisticated method of communication. It involves demonstrations and presentations through various audio-visual aids. Audio-visual communication is an effective blend of both verbal and visual communication. Such communications are, generally speaking, very effective and carry high retention value.

Audio-visual communications are highly skill oriented. They are pre-planned, developed with care and are often delivered at formal and structured sessions. This method of communication is particularly useful in fostering learning and in classroom sessions. Audio-visual communication is gainfully used in training colleges as also in seminars and workshops. The use of multimedia presentations is gaining popularity in the business world. Advertisements on television channels are another example of audio-visual communication.

Signs, Signals and Symbols

Signs, signals and symbols have come to acquire considerable significance in the world of communication. Having evolved over a long period of time, they date back to biblical times and mythological periods. Well before language evolved, pre-historic man had learnt to communicate with the help of signs and signals.

A sign is a mark traced on a surface or an object with a view to indicate a particular meaning. It may be a piece of paper, wood or metal that has writing or a picture on it and which gives out information, instruction or warning. It may also be a gesture, a movement or a sound to convey something specific. Let us look at some examples of sign language:

- Priests and elders convey their blessings by placing their hands on the heads of people bowing to them. (Sign of blessing)
- A player raises two of his fingers in a V sign after a game. (Sign of victory)
- A teacher puts her finger on her lips in a nursery class. (Sign that says, 'keep silent')
- Disciples and youngsters touch the feet of teachers and elders. (Sign of reverence)

Such signs are sometimes group specific and are accepted as a matter of convention. A sign may also relate to a written mark conventionally used to convey a specific meaning. Such signs may be general, as in the case of road and traffic signs or subject-specific signs, specific to a profession or body of knowledge. In mathematics, there are numerous signs specific to arithmetic, algebra and geometry as also in science and medicine. Some examples of signs, both general and specific, are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Some Examples of Signs

40 mph	Speed limit of 40 miles per hour
][	Narrow bridge
+	Addition
/	Division
Σ	Summation
=	Equal to

Apart from the set of signs, which are commonly understood, there is also the sign language. Sign language is a system of communicating, with people who are hearing impaired, by using hand movements rather than spoken words. In other words, it is the language of the speech impaired, just as Braille is the language of visually challenged.

A signal is a sound or a movement that people make to give others information, instruction or warning. A signal is also understood as an indication that something exists or something is about to happen. We are familiar with the use of a danger signal and a green signal. Similarly, there are traffic signals and radio signals.

Some everyday examples of communication with signals are signal to the waiter for a bill, signal that you are turning right and signal that one is thirsty. Signs and signals are often used with very similar meanings. There is, however, a noteworthy difference between the two. A sign is something that we find or see whereas a signal is generally used for something that is done intentionally and suggests that some action be taken in response. Signs and signals may be overt or covert, explicit or in a code language. Awareness and understanding of signs and signals makes communication more meaningful.

A symbol refers to a credo or a manner of representation of ideas. Symbols often use the power of association to convey a specific meaning. A symbol is also understood as a person, an object or an event that represents a more general quality or situation. In modern day business, the use of a logo is also very common. A logo is a printed design or symbol that a company or organization uses as its special sign. Here are some examples of the use of symbols.

Symbol of purity	– White
Symbol of strength or supremacy	– Lion
Symbol of justice	– A balance
Sex symbol	– Marilyn Monroe
Symbol of quality	– 'ISI' mark
Status symbol	– Rolls Royce

Symbols are well accepted and widely used in present day business communication. Use of symbols at the right places enhances the effectiveness of communication.

Silence is also a method of communication. It refers to a state of wordlessness or verbal abstinence. It may express anger or atonement. Self-inflicted silence conveys a powerful message. Silence may also convey a form of punishment. The word 'excommunication' refers to a state of deliberate cutting off of communication. There are indeed occasions when by keeping quiet one can 'say' a lot. Silence can also be either deliberate or unintentional. Unexpected silence sometimes results in awkward situations. In personal communication as well as business communication, silence has a definite role to play. In dealing with an irate

customer, an employee would be well advised to observe silence and listen to the customer before reacting. Even the legal system takes cognizance of silence as a method of communication.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the three main methods of communication?

2. Why is verbal communication considered as a speedy two-way process?

3. What is the greatest merit of non-verbal communication?

2.3 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills constitute an important segment of business related skills. Everyone who is a part of any business, whether he or she is an assistant, associate, supervisor, consultant, manager, executive, vendor or consumer, should acquire appropriate communication skills. Of course, the higher the responsibilities, greater will be the range and depth of skills required. Most of the employment-related advertisements seek candidates who, besides the requisite technical skills, possess good communication skills. Nobody is really born with great communication skills, be it writing, reading, speaking or listening. Skills are acquired through observation, learning and organized efforts.

A skill refers to ability which relates to a specific or particular ability. A skill also refers to the ability to do something well. When we say technical skill, we refer to the ability to apply the relevant technical knowledge in a given situation. When we refer to marketing skills, we refer to the ability to understand markets and apply the relevant marketing techniques. The skill or ability may take many forms – aptitude, competence, expertise, experience, exposure, mastery, talent, flair, proficiency, and so on. A skilful manager, therefore, would mean a manager who has all the relevant skills and abilities required to manage people and functions effectively. A skilful manager would be someone who has the ability or special training or competence to take up and accomplish his or her tasks with desired results. Similarly, when we talk of communication skills, we refer to a whole range of verbal, non-verbal and written skills which people need to master in order to effectively deal with people and situations in everyday business world.

Mastering communication skills involves answering the following pertinent questions:

1. What to communicate?

2. What is the objective of communication?

3. How to communicate?

4. Whom to address?

5. When to communicate?

6. How often to communicate?

7. How to make effective use of communication technology?

8. How to get feedback?

9. How to evaluate communication?

It is very essential that one understands the what, how, when, whom and the why of communication.

What to Communicate?

Communication skills start with a clear understanding of what to communicate. What do we really want to get across and in how detailed a manner? Are they stray thoughts and ideas or well-organized and sequenced concepts, events, achievements, developments and ideas? Are we communicating our own thoughts and feelings or are we encoding and transmitting the message, thoughts, ideas of another party, say that of a chief executive officer (CEO), planning chief, team leader or an employer?

Good communication skills involve conceptual clarity and being well informed about facts, events, intentions and expectations.

What is the Objective?

Communication is a goal-oriented process. The objective of any communication is to reach out with a message. Communication skills would also relate to the basic understanding of the purpose of communication. Is it to inform, analyse, reiterate, caution, report or remind? Is it to motivate and win over, influence, inspire and seek response? Information, analysis, persuasion, negotiation, detailing, motivation, counselling and enlisting action and support constitute varied objectives with different implications and hence need different types of communication skills.

Whatever be the nature of communication – writing a memo, drafting a letter or a report, conducting a meeting, giving a speech, making a presentation, participating in a negotiation or a panel discussion, or preparing a graph or a table – the communicator should be clear about the purpose and what he or she wants to achieve.

How to Communicate?

By this, we refer to the numerous methods, types, channels and alternative approaches. Each has its own options and the skill lies in selecting the most appropriate option in any given situation. Will it be oral, written, non-verbal, audio-visual or electronic or a mix of these? Will the communication be through a formal channel? Will it be direct and face-to-face or indirect? Will it be transmitted through letters or telex or fax or telephone or e-mail? What is the time available and what should be the speed of communication? What are the costs associated with the

available alternatives and how much can the communication budget accommodate? Is the message pre-planned or extempore? Will a soft copy or a hard copy be provided?

As a present day business communicator, one can choose how to deliver his or her message. Choosing the right delivery channel should be a well-considered decision. Sometimes a written message succeeds whereas an oral message may fail to have the desired effect. On another occasion, it may be more appropriate to talk to the person rather than put the message in writing.

Communication skills call for a thorough understanding of choices available and an evaluation of their relative costs, merits and demerits.

Whom to Address?

Communication, to be effective, has to be focused, otherwise it gets diluted. The communicator should be clear about the target group or audience and how to reach them. Quite often, they are widely dispersed across different functional, hierarchical and geographical areas. Customers and prospects may be spread across different market segments. Employees may be spread across different units and regions. Our targets may have different motivation levels. Taking into account all the relevant factors, one has to decide how to address—will it be direct or indirect communication, will it be open or confidential, will it be general or personal? Although 'To whomsoever it may concern' type of address has limited use, good communication skills involve making messages which are specifically addressed.

When to Communicate?

The sense of timing is also very important in any communication. It has to be on time, at the right moment. It should not be too early or too late. Human memory is short. The notice for a meeting or an announcement about an impending event, therefore, cannot be months or even weeks in advance, and that too without further reminders. Similarly, sharing of information about events, developments and achievements will have to be soon thereafter, for any delay would dilute the significance of the communication. The other dimension of communication concerns receptivity, i.e., when to allocate time for communication so that receptivity is ensured. Important meetings should be scheduled in such a way that people are receptive and recognize the seriousness of the agenda. Morning meetings and meetings held at the beginning of the week normally provide adequate time for action.

How Often to Communicate?

For communication to be effective, it is necessary to take into account not only the timing, but also the intensity and frequency. Will a one-time message be adequate, or is it necessary to follow-up thereafter? Should the entire message be conveyed

in one shot, or is it more appropriate to make it phased? If so, what should be the phasing? Reminding effectively too calls for skills. Too frequent reminders, without appreciating the underlying factors, would serve little purpose and undermine the person's authority. At the same time, not reminding the members about a scheduled meeting at the right time may adversely impact the presence and participation of the members.

How to Make Effective Use of Communication Technology?

Technology in general, and that relating to communication in particular, is changing fast. The conventional methods of coding, recording and transmitting messages are giving place to new methods. The contours of communication are constantly changing, thereby providing new options to the communicator. With technology enabled services such as e-mail, short messaging services, teleconferencing, voice mail, video-conferencing and sophisticated audio-visual services and computer-based aids supplementing the conventional methods, the choice has become much wider. The ability to make effective use of varied aspects of communication technology thus becomes an essential communication skill.

How to Get Feedback?

Feedback is the final step in any process of communication. It involves carrying back the effect of the communication to its source. Feedback helps to gauge the effectiveness of the communication. Feedback does not come easily. There is considerable skill involved in obtaining feedback. Often people receive the message and act on it, but may not get back to the communicator. Feedback or response is particularly relevant in market surveys and consumer surveys and studies. Good communicating skill involves understanding what makes people respond to questionnaires, get back to the sender and provide the desired feedback.

How to Evaluate Communication?

Communication is a vast and evolving process. The success rate of each method and each process is often varied. On an ongoing basis there is a need to evaluate the effectiveness of alternative methods and approaches. Based on the feedback, it is necessary to take corrective action. A good communicator will have to develop skills relevant to the evaluation of communication.

Communication skills encompass all the areas cited above and the answers to each one of these questions would be situation specific. While there are some general skills appropriate to the process of communication, there is much learning involved in developing specific skills. General skills relate to the process of communication and the why and what of it. Specific skills, on the other hand, relate to the various methods of communication which are reiterated in the following paragraphs.

Skills in Oral Communication

Some of the noteworthy skills relevant to oral communication are as follows:

- Understanding and use of the appropriate language
- Organizing and sequencing of thoughts effectively
- Vocabulary and word power
- Command over illustrations, examples, anecdotes and phrases
- Proper accent and pronunciation
- Voice modulation and reach
- Proper use of the audio and visual aids
- Listening skills
- Adherence to time specifications
- Effective telephonic talks

Each one of these skills is relevant in ensuring the effectiveness of spoken and interactive communication.

Oral communication skills in today's context need to include the ability to make effective presentations. That relates to preparing effective slides and presenting them to the target audience with the help of appropriate presentation aids.

Skills in Written Communication

Effective written communication calls for the following skills:

- Command over the language
- Word power and spelling
- Correct grammar
- Proper structuring of the written message
- Correct use of phrases, equivalents and quotations
- Use of appropriate channels like courier, telex, fax and e-mail
- Attention to handwriting, typing, printing and photocopying
- Simplicity, brevity and clarity

In today's business organizations, people working at various hierarchical levels need to write a variety of letters, reports, speeches, advertising and publicity material, resumes and covering letters, motivational and persuasive memos, office notes, notices, questionnaires, minutes, representations, suggestions, and a host of other bits of writing.

Non-Verbal Communication

Effective use of non-verbal communication through body language, postures and gestures, attire, appearance, handshake, smile, behaviour and example also needs conscious effort. Some skills relevant in this regard are as follows:

- Power of observation

- Awareness about the body movements and other expressions

- Proper interpretation of the non-verbal message

- Supplementing body language with oral communication

- Self-observation and practice

Since, non-verbal communication takes place in an intended as well as unintended manner every time people meet and speak to each other. Learning relevant skills, therefore, is essential.

Skills Appropriate to Other Methods

Other methods of communication, such as audio-visual communication and electronic communication have their own specific skill requirements. Audio-visual communication uses slides, transparencies and projectors and the communicator should be well informed about their functioning and use. It is also necessary to ensure that the audio and visual parts synchronize and combine well to convey the message. Proper communication through the electronic media like the television calls for personality-related skills, and computer-related communication involving the internet, e-mail and online transmissions needs a computer-savvy approach and appropriate learning.

Some of the communication skills relevant across all methods of communication are insight into human behaviour, removal of emotional blocks and effective use of personality. It is also necessary to develop rapport building and interpersonal skills. Communication, to be effective, calls for an understanding of and empathizing with people. Establishing a wavelength means understanding the level at which communication should take place. It should not be too high as to constitute 'overhead transmission', and at the same time it should not be too low as to sound 'elementary.'

Methods of Skill Development

Organizations can be broadly divided into three categories, viz., (a) production oriented (b) service oriented and (c) control oriented. Each of these would require some specific skills, apart from the general management skills. Production oriented firms would require largely specific technical skills, quality management skills and coordination skills. Service oriented organizations would call for more of interactive skills, communication skills, and change management skills. Similarly, in control oriented organizations like government departments and regulatory bodies, essential skills would relate typically to audit and the control functions and persuasive and

reporting skills. These are, however, broad statements and more in the nature of generalizations. There could be variations, and the management function, in particular, calls for the employee to cope with whatever the business demands. Be that as it may, we need note that essential basic communication skills are a must for every type of organization and all cadres of people in business organizations.

Skills relevant to business organizations are also classified into three other broad groups. They are (a) technical (b) human and (c) conceptual. Technical skills relate to knowledge, proficiency, expertise, speed, accuracy, and the like. These are often specific to the area of operation. These refer to what is called the domain knowledge. Technical skills are a must at workshop and junior management levels. Human skills relate to inter-personal skills and group skills. Human skills are associated with networking and managing relationships. These would include writing, speaking and presentation skills, motivational skills and team building skills. These are relevant across all levels of management. The next set of skills is conceptual skills. Conceptual skills are relatively higher order skills. They include vision building and strategy formulation skills, conflict management skills, problem solving skills and decision making skills. These are particularly essential for people at the senior and top management levels.

The development of communication skills is a continuous process. It comes from adapting a mix of approaches. It results from not only theoretical study and bookish knowledge, but also from observation, practice and real life handling of situations. Confidence comes from practice. A person who has written eight memos is more confident than the one who has written just two. Similarly, a person who has made ten presentations is better than the one who has made just three. Skill development is a process of continuous learning. Learning happens in several ways. They include (a) class room learning (b) distance learning (c) on-line learning (d) case studies and exercises (e) seminars and workshops and (f) on-the-job learning.

Check Your Progress

4. What is the final step in any process of communication?
5. Why is communication a goal-oriented process?
6. What are the three main types of skills in a business organization?

2.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The three main methods of communication are oral or verbal communication, written communication and the non-verbal communication.

2. Verbal communication is considered as a speedy two-way process because the message conveyed through verbal or oral communication is instantaneous.

The messages can travel back and forth without any loss of time. It is possible for the receiver of the message to respond immediately to the sender making the process highly interactive. The messages between the sender and the receiver can go back and forth, with role reversals taking place, till the objective is achieved.

3. The greatest merit of non-verbal communication is that it has a universal appeal. Unlike both oral and written communication, which depends on a particular language, non-verbal communication can reach across to people of different regions, irrespective of the language they speak.

4. Feedback is considered as the final step in any process of communication. It involves carrying back the effect of the communication to its source. Feedback helps to gauge the effectiveness of the communication.

5. Communication is a goal-oriented process because the objective of any communication is to reach out with a message. Communication skills would also relate to the basic understanding of the purpose of communication.

6. Skills relevant to business organizations are classified into three other broad groups. They are (a) technical (b) human and (c) conceptual.

2.5   SUMMARY

- Communication takes place through various methods and channels. The three main methods of communication are oral or verbal communication, written communication and the non-verbal communication.

- Oral or verbal communication takes place by way of talks, conversation, dialogue, speech, discussion and meetings.

- Written communication is carried out through letters, circulars, memos, reports, brochures and books. Non-verbal communication takes place through body language.

- Apart from these three main methods of communication, there are others such as the visual, audio-visual and electronic. Silence is also accepted as a method of communication.

- Verbal communication refers to the spoken word. It takes the form of sounds and words. It has developed across different regions, cultures, countries and continents.

- Verbal communication is also known as oral communication. It takes place between individuals with the help of words.

- Direct person-to-person communication plays an important role in any organization, essentially in work situations, where there are employer-employee, superior-subordinate and service provider-customer interactions.

- Verbal communication is a speedy two-way process. The message conveyed through verbal or oral communication is instantaneous.

- Another noteworthy merit of verbal communication is that it can be supplemented and complemented by non-verbal communication for greater impact.

- Written communication has come to acquire great significance in the lives of individuals as well as business organizations. It reaches across vast geographic areas and targets readers around the world.

- Written communication invariably creates a record that can be preserved over time. Letters, memos, contracts, agreements, documents and reports often carry time value and need to be stored and preserved.

- Written communication, unlike verbal communication, can be erased. The words can be substituted and thoughts can be rearranged before the letter or the piece of writing is finalized and dispatched.

- The third method of communication relates to non-verbal communication, which is neither oral nor written. While verbal communication thrives on listening and the written communication thrives on reading, the non-verbal communication thrives on observation.

- The greatest merit of non-verbal communication is that it has a universal appeal. Unlike both oral and written communication, which depends on a particular language, non-verbal communication can reach across to people of different regions, irrespective of the language they speak.

- Visual communication is effected through pictures, graphs and charts, as well as through signs, signals and symbols. They may be used either independently or as an adjunct to the other methods of communication.

- Audio-visual communications are highly skill oriented. They are pre-planned, developed with care and are often delivered at formal and structured sessions.

- Signs, signals and symbols have come to acquire considerable significance in the world of communication.

- A sign is a mark traced on a surface or an object with a view to indicate a particular meaning.

- A signal is a sound or a movement that people make to give others information, instruction or warning.

- A symbol refers to a credo or a manner of representation of ideas. Symbols often use the power of association to convey a specific meaning.

- Communication skills constitute an important segment of business related skills. Everyone who is a part of any business, whether he or she is an assistant, associate, supervisor, consultant, manager, executive, vendor or consumer, should acquire appropriate communication skills.

- A skill refers to ability which relates to a specific or particular ability. A skill also refers to the ability to do something well.

- Communication is a goal-oriented process. The objective of any communication is to reach out with a message. Communication skills would also relate to the basic understanding of the purpose of communication.

- Communication skills call for a thorough understanding of choices available and an evaluation of their relative costs, merits and demerits.

- Communication, to be effective, has to be focused, otherwise it gets diluted. The communicator should be clear about the target group or audience and how to reach them.

- The sense of timing is also very important in any communication. It has to be on time, at the right moment. It should not be too early or too late.

- Feedback is the final step in any process of communication. It involves carrying back the effect of the communication to its source.

- Communication skills encompass all the areas cited above and the answers to each one of these questions would be situation specific. While there are some general skills appropriate to the process of communication, there is much learning involved in developing specific skills.

- Audio-visual communication uses slides, transparencies and projectors and the communicator should be well informed about their functioning and use.

- Organizations can be broadly divided into three categories, viz., (a) production oriented (b) service oriented and (c) control oriented.

- Skills relevant to business organizations are also classified into three other broad groups. They are (a) technical (b) human and (c) conceptual.

- Learning happens in several ways. They include (a) class room learning (b) distance learning (c) on-line learning (d) case studies and exercises (e) seminars and workshops and (f) on-the-job learning.

2.6   KEY WORDS

- **Sign**: It refers to a mark traced on a surface or an object with a view to indicate a particular meaning.

- **Signal**: It refers to a sound or a movement that people make to give others information, instruction or warning.

- **Sign Language**: It refers to a system of communicating, with people who are hearing impaired, by using hand movements rather than spoken words.

- **Symbol**: It refers to a credo or a manner of representation of ideas. Symbols often use the power of association to convey a specific meaning.

- **Technical Skills**: It refers to skills which relate to knowledge, proficiency, expertise, speed, accuracy, and the like. These are often specific to the area of operation.

- **Verbal Communication**: It refers to the spoken word which takes the form of sounds and words.

2.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Why is verbal communication considered as the most commonly used method of communication?
2. Why does written communication takes time to reach the target audience?
3. How is small talk different from big talk?
4. Write a short note on the importance of written communication.
5. Why are audio-visual communications highly skill-oriented?
6. What are the various ways in which learning takes place?
7. How is silence a method of communication?
8. What are the various skills related to verbal communication?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the various forms of verbal communication.
2. What are the merits and demerits of verbal communication? Explain.
3. Describe the concept of non-verbal communication and its importance.
4. Analyse the importance of sign, signal and symbol in the communication process.
5. Why is sense of timing important for any communication? Discuss in detail.
6. Identify the various methods of skill development.

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UNIT 3 LANGUAGE AND BODY LANGUAGE

Structure

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Language is the human capacity of acquiring and using of complex systems of communication. It is a medium of communication and it helps people to communicate in an effective manner. Body language is a defined as a type of non-verbal communication in which physical behaviour is given more importance as compared to words. Body language comprises of various factors such as eye movement, facial expressions, gestures, body movement and so on.

Meeting is defined as a form of communication in which two or more than two people come to discuss important matters and it generally takes place in a professional set-up. Telephone communication is the transmission of information, over significant distances using a phone. Its main objective is to allow two people separated by distances to talk to each other. Presentation also is a form of *communication* which can be modified to various speaking situations, such as addressing a meeting or briefing a team and talking to a group.

Listening is considered as the main key to all effective communication. It is very important that one must listen effectively so that the meaning of the message can be well understood. If the meaning is not interpreted properly, it may cause confusion thus, hampering the process of communication. It is an important skill that underpins all positive human relationships.

 In this unit, the meaning of language as a medium for communication has been explained. The importance of body language has been highlighted. The concept

of telephonic communication and meetings in the contemporary times has also been analysed. The unit will also discuss the main forms of presentation skills and the listening process.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of language as a mode of communication
- Interpret the difference between idioms, phrases and slang
- Explain the importance of body language in communication
- Identify the things to be considered while organizing a meeting
- Analyse the merits and demerits of telephonic communication
- Discuss the types of presentation and skills associated with it
- Describe the process of listening

3.2 LANGUAGE AS A MEDIUM FOR COMMUNICATION OF THOUGHT

Language can be described as a vehicle of thought. It is a method of expression. It is a vocabulary with its usage being prevalent in one or more regions or countries. Spoken as well as written communication takes place through a language. Languages are of different kinds: spoken language, written language, body language, code language, sign language, Braille or language of the visually challenged and the more recent ones being machine language and computer language. Many languages have a long history. The Greek, the Romans, the Egyptians, the Chinese and the Indians are among those whose languages are centuries old.

The number of languages used in verbal communication is extremely large. It is said that the six billion people of this world speak about 6000 languages. Although this is true of the spoken languages, the number of written languages is much lower, with one estimate placing it at not more than 500. Further, within a language, there are sub-languages or dialects. A dialect is a form of speech peculiar to a district, class or group of people. It is a subordinate variety of language with a distinguishable vocabulary, pronunciation or idioms.

Languages are also known for their features. There is a mother tongue, a regional language, an official language, a national language and a global language. Some languages are perceived to be easy. Some others are difficult to learn. Greek and Sanskrit are considered to be languages of the gods. French is described as a romantic language. Sometimes there is one script common to several languages. There are languages that are alive and growing and there are those that are becoming extinct. Greek and Latin, which were so popular several centuries ago, are in

limited use today. Languages that absorb and adopt new words continue to grow. Greek and Latin are described as dead languages because they failed to absorb new words and lost their appeal. On the other hand, the English language has immense appeal because it regularly takes in new words that are popularly used in other languages. Allah, bazaar, guru, bungalow, divan, durbar are some of the Hindi/Urdu words that have made their way into English dictionaries.

Most languages are region specific. The vocabulary and structure of a language are often dependent on history and environmental factors. There are more or less words depending upon what the environment offers. A language spoken in a desert will have more words that describe camels and deserts. A heavy snowfall region will have many words that describe the snow. Since languages are often region specific, link languages have evolved to facilitate inter-regional and cross-cultural communication. Apart from the spoken language, there are designated official languages to facilitate the flow of communication in government and administration. Many countries have only one official language. Countries such as India, Canada and Switzerland have more than one official language.

When a language is not a native language but one adopted from outside, it acquires mixed characteristics. The widely used English language has variations from country to country. The Indian way of speaking becomes Indian English and the American way of speaking becomes American English. They stand apart from the original English which is also referred to as the Queen's English and is associated with England. Those who want to communicate effectively and reach out to other sections of people will have to familiarize themselves with the expressions peculiar to those types of languages. There are also other kinds of differences within a language, like the formal and the informal, language of the rich and the poor, the old and the young.

Each profession or subject will have a language with its own idioms, phrases, expressions and nuances. An expression or a particular word in one language may mean something very different in another language.

Idioms, Phrases and Slangs

Idioms, phrases and slangs are an integral part of a language. English language has a fair share of these and an effective business communicator should be informed about these. Idioms are described as a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of individual words. For example, 'to sail in the same boat' means to be in the same difficult situation. Likewise, 'birds of the same feather' mean people who are alike. Idioms are of different varieties and are used widely in business communication. The proper use of idioms makes the written or spoken text more impactful.

Phrases, likewise, are a group of words which have a particular meaning when used together. In fact, the word 'phrase' is used to denote various types of expressions. Writers and speakers, over a period of time, develop their own favourite phrases and tend to use them often. Examples are 'be that as it may',

'sooner rather than later', 'in a manner of speaking', 'all said and done', etc. Phrases are so common that we keep referring to memorable phrase and catch phrase. The particular way in which words and phrases are arranged in either written or oral communication is known as phraseology.

Words or phrases in common use that are generally considered in some or all aspects to be outside of Standard English are called slang. Slang consists of words and phrases that are either entirely peculiar to or used in some special context by some class or profession. Slang may also refer to abusive language. Slangs also vary depending upon cultures, although the language is the same. That way, we refer to British Slang, American Slang, Australian Slang, etc. It relates to the use of casual and inappropriate words. The use of slang diminishes the dignity of the language and should be avoided in formal business communication.

Spoken languages are often highly accommodative. Sometimes, people who have not mastered a particular language still attempt to communicate through a mixed language. This language is referred to as pidgin. Pidgin is a simplified form of a language, especially English, Portuguese or Dutch, where a limited number of words are used together with words from a local language. In other words, it is used for communication between speakers of different languages. There can be Pidgin English, Pidgin Portuguese and Pidgin Hindi. The words and forms used here are simple and spoken by a person who does not speak the language well, or when the person is talking to someone who does not know the language, e.g. a Kannada, a Tamilian and a Bengali communicating with each other in pidgin Hindi. Pidgin is a language that people develop out of necessity. It develops when people who do not speak a particular language are required to communicate in order to live or work together.

The most important component of a language is vocabulary or word power. Since the expressions take place through words, vocabulary refers to all the words that a person knows or uses. Most of the popular languages possess a well-developed vocabulary. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, for example, gives around 80,000 references covering British English as well as American English. It also lists out a core vocabulary of 3,000 English words. Active vocabulary covers words that a person not only understands but also uses. Passive vocabulary, on the other hand, relates to the words which a person understands. To make an effective use of words while speaking and writing, the power to bring the right words into play assumes particular relevance.

The world of words is wonderful and fascinating. Old and new, big and small, easy and difficult, every language has an abundant range of words. As the saying goes, it pays to enrich one's vocabulary or word power. Reading enables a person to increase word power. Such reading should be a conscious effort, with the intent to pick up new words, nuances or shades of meaning and the context in which it is used. Periodical or ongoing efforts to enrich vocabulary facilitate the

communicator in developing his own distinctive and appealing style of writing and speaking. Any person, who builds up an abundant source of active vocabulary will not be at a loss for words and, will thus, be a forceful and impressive speaker. Great speakers master the skill of using the right words at the right time. Equally important, they refrain from using words that may cause hurt or have a scope for misunderstanding.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the most important component of a language?
2. How are idioms different from phrases?

3.3 BODY LANGUAGE

There are many ways in which a human body expresses itself. These expressions may be obvious or subtle, conscious or unconscious and complementary or contradictory. It is said that bodies do not lie and body language, therefore, tells the truth. If you are tired, you can't sit erect; if you are sleepless, your eyes tend to shut or if you are bored, you tend to yawn. Skilful communicators can express themselves in many ways as long as they are conscious of the fact that various parts of the body may intentionally or otherwise carry a message. Similarly, a keen listener or an observer carries and makes sense from the body expressions as well. Facial expressions, eye movements and the state of the eyes and the variety and intensity of the human voice can and do convey different meanings. Innocence, anger, wonder, shock, grief, terror, indifference, seriousness, friendliness, approval, disapproval, exasperation and many other feelings can be expressed through body language. In some professions, where the facial and body expressions are important, they are consciously cultivated. Let us consider drama artists, movie stars, actors and people in show business. The success of their performance often depends on their ability to cultivate and display a wide range of expressions as the situation demands.

The head, the gait, the walk, the carriage are also various facets of body language. Ramrod straight, bolt upright, hunchback, stoop and slouch are some of the words associated with the body and its movements. Nodding of the head to convey consent or approval and vigorous shaking of the head to convey dissent are also common.

Facial Expressions

It is said that the face is the index of the mind. The thoughts of the mind and the feelings of the heart often find expression on the face. There are people who are good at reading facial expressions. Good communicators, whether they are

speakers or listeners, learn to read and interpret facial expressions. Some of the idiomatic phrases used in connection with facial expression are as follows:

- The face that launched a thousand ships
- To make a face
- The smile of acknowledgement or recognition
- To carry a wooden expression
- To carry a mask on one's face
- The facial make-up, if any, can also be subjected to interpretation.

Eyes

The eyes are indeed the most expressive part of the human face. The eyes of a person are often said to tell a tale. In fact, the eyes are the most commonly described part of the body. The feelings of the heart quite often find expression through the eyes. In the expression of love, affection and sincerity the eye contact becomes crucial. Romantic literature, over the years, has seen copious references to the eyes. Some of the words and expressions used in common parlance while reading the eyes are as follows:

- Twinkle in his eyes
- Furtive glance
- Eyes emitting fire
- Worried look
- Sad look
- Wary look
- Unsettling stare
- Hurried glance
- Cold stare

Since eyes are considered to be highly expressive, there is considerable significance attached to the presence or absence of eye contact. In legal cross-examinations, in counselling sessions, in negotiations and other such business situations, the quality of eye contact comes in for particular scrutiny. In dealing with customers at the counter, in facing interviews for recruitment and promotion, in making presentations and in sales talk, eye contact assumes considerable significance.

Voice

Human voices, through their variations, convey different meanings. Speech or oral delivery reaches the audience better through voice modulation. Voice modulation refers to the adjustment or variation of tone or pitch while speaking. Voice has many characteristics and the social scientists have studied these characteristics in

detail and given generally accepted interpretations to them. It is generally understood that when studied closely, voice has the following distinct features, viz.:

- Tone—harsh, soft, whisper
- Volume—loud, soft
- Quality—controlled, uncontrolled
- Pace—rapid, slow
- Force—intensity
- Range—wide, narrow
- Articulation—precise, imprecise
- Rhythm—smooth, jerky
- Resonance—resonant, thin

Voice-related features are particularly relevant in spoken communication, either face to face or through telephone.

3.3.1 Common Gestures

Yet another component of non-verbal communication relates to postures and gestures. Posture refers to the carriage, state and attitude of body or mind. Gesture refers to any significant movement of limb or body and a deliberate use of such movement as an expression of feeling. Gesture can also be understood as a step calculated to evoke response from another person or to convey intention. Gesture includes gesticulation. Like other aspects of body language, posture and gesture should also be read along with the verbal and other messages. The posture of a person may be described as erect or upright or reclining. Posture may be physical or mental. Gestures in human interfaces are many and varied. People read and interpret gestures and hence these are extremely important in the organizational context.

Nodding, shaking of head, smiling, patting the back, putting the hand over one's shoulder, clasping hands, shrugging, touching, frowning, scowling, blinking, yawning and crossing and uncrossing of legs are among the various types of physical actions and gestures that are used to convey meanings and messages and are likewise interpreted by others receiving the message. The message conveyed through these actions can be both positive and negative, and therefore, the communicator has to be quite conscious of his actions. Again, to be effective, these postures, gestures and actions have to complement the spoken word. If not, the communication results in contradiction and confusion.

Postures, gestures and actions are of much significance in the organizational context. Understood properly, they can be of great help in conveying the right message. Ignored, they can cause considerable unintended damage and misunderstanding. In a meeting where the chairman is addressing, or a promotional interview, or even when an important customer is being attended to, people

concerned should be conscious of their body movements and actions. They should convey the proper message that they are both physically and mentally alert and responsive. A smile at the wrong time may be taken as a sneer and, therefore, may irritate a person. Slouching, yawning, swinging of arms and legs and such other actions which give a message of indifference and carelessness will have to be scrupulously avoided in all serious business-related and organizational interactions. In an organizational context, leaders and good communicators make effective use of gestures such as a smile, a touch and a pat on the back. They come in very handy for motivation, morale building and clearing misapprehensions.

Check Your Progress

3. What are the distinctive features of voice?

4. Define gesture.

3.4 MEETING

Meetings are the most popular method of interactive communication. They facilitate direct, face-to-face communication and are essential at various levels in all organizations. When there are two or more persons, there is a meeting, structured or otherwise. They serve the valuable objective of facilitating exchange of information, fostering of team spirit and commitment to common goals and objectives. More importantly, they help in elaborating ideas, clarifying concepts and clearing confusion, if any, created on account of ambiguous and incomplete verbal or written messages. Misunderstandings arising from unclear memos, circulars, directives and targets can be cleared through meetings with the people concerned.

Meetings are of wide variety and serve numerous objectives. In everyday business world, meetings are conducted for the following purposes:

- Sharing, exchanging and evaluating information

- Discussing complex issues and solving problems

- Obtaining periodical updates – weekly, monthly, quarterly meetings

- Deliberating on matters of concern and taking decisions

- Bringing together different sections and resolving conflicts

- Describing goals and obtaining commitments

- Inspiring and motivating people to achieve common objectives

Thus, meetings may range from routine information-sharing meetings to the decision making and conflict resolution types.

With the advent of technology, meetings in the corporate world are not necessarily across-the-table face to face meetings. While such meetings are indeed quite ubiquitous and commonplace, we also have meetings in which people are not necessarily in one room. We may have telephone meetings and meetings through teleconferencing and video conferencing. These are very useful when participants in the meetings are spread across different offices and locations.

There are also online meetings conducted with the use of information technology. With the help of computers and internet, the users indulge in their own private conversation through online meetings; these users exchange typed messages in real time. They can hold chat sessions with the help of in-house computer networks. Online meetings are also held by way of exchanging instant messages. This way, the exchanges can be done easily and quickly.

Meetings of marketing executives with prospective customers while launching a new product or service help in clearly bringing out the significant features of the product and clarifying finer points. Similarly, meetings with the computer or electronic data processing (EDP) personnel facilitate detailed and effective planning of connectivity and networking. These are just two examples of the ways in which meetings can be of use to serve a vital communication need in an organization. In fact, on a regular basis, there can be customer meets, supplier meets, investor meets, and dealer meets, managers' meets, staff meetings, association meetings, business meets and review meets.

Like their Western counterparts, Indian executives too, in most organizations, spend a large part of their working day in company meetings. In the United States, it is pertinent to note, decisions are made by groups of managers or executives rather than by individual top management functionaries. Similarly, in India too, we have various committees in the organizations such as the Purchase Committee, Audit Committee, Executive Committee, Management Committee, Promotions Committee, Systems Committee, Credit Committee, Recovery Committee and Legal Committee which take decisions, and that is why it becomes necessary to organize so many meetings.

Given the ubiquitous, or present everywhere, nature of meetings in the world of business, the ability to plan, organize and conduct meetings effectively becomes a valuable asset for the business communicator. Anyone who becomes adept at conducting meetings purposefully is bound to be rewarded, recognized and respected in business organizations and institutions.

While meetings, which are effective, contribute to decision making and result in positive outcomes, ill-conceived and indifferently conducted meetings entail enormous waste of time, effort and resources. They may even lead to chaos and confusion. It would, therefore, be imperative to give attention to certain details while convening meetings. The preparation for an effective meeting starts well in advance and there is much that needs to be attended to on the day of the meeting, during the meeting and thereafter, till the minutes are drawn up and sent.

Before the Meeting

We will in the following section discuss some of the prerequisites which are necessary before calling or organising a meeting.

Agenda: Agenda is the list of items to be taken up for discussion during the meeting. It provides the reason for calling a meeting. It should be ensured that there are adequate numbers of worthwhile issues which need deliberation at the meeting. All topics and issues that will be taken up at the meeting call for advance efforts. The items stated in the agenda should be relevant and appropriate, keeping in view the purpose of the meeting and the expertise of the members who will be participating in the meeting. If the agenda is not properly drawn up, the meeting may not serve any useful purpose. The agenda should be such that an adequate number of issues that merit the attention of members are listed for deliberation so that the duration of the meeting is gainfully spent. Agenda is important for any meeting because organising a meeting for the sake of it, without any serious agenda, or just to ensure that the predetermined periodicity is met, entails a waste of time and resources.

Background Papers: Every meeting of some importance will have a set of background papers, which are sent in advance to the members who will participate in the meeting. These background papers relate to the items listed in the agenda, and provide glimpses of the issues involved. Background papers are normally prepared by the concerned functionaries or departments seeking a decision on the issue or a deliberation on the subject matter. Background papers should cover all relevant details that are germane to effective deliberation. This would normally include facts, figures, different views, expert opinion and the latest position. Minutes of the previous meeting are also sent along with the first lot of background papers since they are always the first item on the agenda. They are taken up for confirmation before proceeding to the other items. Background papers ensure that deliberations are focused and cover all relevant dimensions of the subject under discussion.

Background papers should clearly state what is expected of the meeting and members. Board notes and office notes put up for meetings should state clearly whether the note is submitted for 'consideration and orders' or for 'information'. It is also a common practice to state the 'resolution' covering the type of orders sought to ensure abundant clarity. The board or the committee, in its wisdom, will decide whether the resolution has to be passed as it is, or with any modifications.

It is to be kept in consideration that background papers must be sent to all the members and invitees well in advance to enable them to come prepared with their views and suggestions. In fact, if the subject matter is of a serious nature and if sufficient time has not been provided for advance consideration, there is every likelihood of the agenda item being deferred by the committee for consideration in the next meeting. At the same time, it is worth noting that whenever there are some important developments which are to be brought before the committee members,

or when there are urgent decisions called for, and the matter is so urgent that it is not desirable to wait till the next meeting, there is a system of submitting what are called 'table items'. Such items are tabled at the time of the meeting and are not sent in advance. If the chairperson and members agree, such items are also taken up for deliberation at the day's meeting. As a general rule, however, table items should be put up as an exception and only when warranted.

Whom to Invite: To be effective, deliberations at the meeting should involve all the concerned functionaries. Regular members of the committees, wherever formally constituted, will have to be invariably invited. At the same time, in the absence of a formal list, it would be essential to identify people whose presence would be of significance when subjects are taken up for deliberation. In some cases, senior functionaries will have to be necessarily invited to lend authority to the decision-making process, whereas some junior-level functionaries and subject matter specialists will have to be present to provide technical details and other relevant papers. Persons to be invited to the meeting, wherever not specifically stated, are best decided in consultation with the chairperson and other senior functionaries on whose behalf the meeting is convened.

Invitation for the meeting is to be clearly drawn up indicating the day, date, time and venue of the meeting. Invitations have to be sent well in advance to ensure that outstation participants have sufficient time to make appropriate travel plans. Meeting notices will have to clearly indicate who should attend the meeting. Sometimes people in organizations receive notices, which do not clearly indicate whether they are sent as an invitation or just as intimation. The addressee, in this case, is likely to be confused and will have to start making enquiries. More so, when one is not a formal member of the committee or has had no prior intimation about it. The meeting notice should also state, wherever appropriate, whether the addressee may bring one or two other colleagues dealing with the subject or, in the alternative, if one is not in a position to attend, whether someone else can be deputed on one's behalf. Though most of these requirements look obvious, they are often overlooked.

Timing and Venue: It is important that care should be taken in fixing up meetings in a manner that is convenient to most of the members or participants. A notice, well in advance, will ensure that participants get adequate opportunity to schedule or reschedule their engagements. The date and time should be fixed taking into account holidays, other important events and functions which may clash with the meeting dates and time, and make it difficult for the members to choose between one and the other. It is generally expected that the person convening the meeting will take some trouble to ensure that most of the members, if not all, are in a position to attend and contribute. While it may not be possible to totally avoid overlapping in all cases, some advance planning and enquiries will certainly help achieve better attendance at meetings. Indication of the duration of the meeting will also be helpful so that participants would know how much time they have to

allot for attending the meeting. Further, details such as arrangements made, if any, for breakfast, lunch, accommodation and travel need to be mentioned.

It is pertinent to mention here that while reasonable advance intimation for any meeting facilitates better attendance, any notice sent too much in advance will have to be necessarily followed up with subsequent reminders. It is desirable to remind the members and ascertain their participation on the day of the meeting or a day prior to the meeting. This becomes even more essential when formal, structured meetings need to have a quorum or minimum number of members.

The venue of the meeting should be fixed up well before the meeting notices are dispatched. With so many meetings taking place in organizations, there is bound to be considerable demand for meeting halls and conference rooms. The meeting venue should have all the required physical facilities—fans, air conditioners, microphones, projectors and toilets that ensure minimum comfort for the members and facilitate uninterrupted deliberations. As we have seen in the earlier chapters, physical barriers such as non-availability of sound systems, extraneous sounds, cramped seating and stuffy rooms hinder the effectiveness of communication. It is not uncommon in organizations to come across instances where the availability of the venue is not confirmed, or there is some misunderstanding in the date or time, as a result of which either meeting is delayed or participants are made to move from one venue to the other. A little extra care will avoid embarrassment and inconvenience at the time of the meeting.

There are occasions when the chief executive or other senior functionaries may decide to convene impromptu or emergency meetings with very short notice, in which case the availability of the venue, physical facilities and other arrangements for refreshments will have to be attended to on priority. Any meeting where the deliberations have concluded, and yet refreshments or lunch is not ready, speaks of poor planning and has to be assiduously avoided. The participants' time, it is to be noted, is valuable and cannot be taken for granted.

Punctuality: Starting the meeting on time is an area that calls for conscious effort. Keeping the venue open and ready well in time, reminding the chairperson and other members, ensuring that all papers have reached the participants, making sure that the table items are placed and that the conveners and organizers are at the venue well before the scheduled time are all a must in making meetings time-bound and purposeful. A situation where the convener is still in consultation with the chairperson of the meeting well past the scheduled starting time, while the participants are waiting in the venue, unattended and not knowing when and if at all the meeting would start, is the kind of situation that speaks of indifferent attitude towards the meeting and must be avoided.

Time Management: Time management is of essence in ensuring the effectiveness of meetings at all levels. Meetings, which start on time, end on time and provide adequate time for purposeful deliberation of all the listed items, ensure cost effectiveness. On the contrary, meetings that start with undue delay, take up

items which are not on priority and run out of focus, entail waste of time and effort and prove to be costly to the organization. One can, indeed, assess the level of efficiency of the organization in terms of effectiveness of the meetings conducted at various levels.

At the planning stage of the meeting itself, the Chairman/Secretariat should estimate how long it may take to discuss each item on the agenda, and add extra time for the unexpected yet relevant issues that might come up during the discussion. Advance assessment of time for various agenda items would not only help in time management, but also in keeping the meeting focused. People invited to make presentations should be told in advance the time allotted for their presentation. It would be meaningless to call for a full day meeting, if the business can be completed by lunch time. Similarly, convening a half a day meeting and extending it till evening would thoroughly inconvenience the participants. Time required for the meeting should be properly assessed and adhered to.

Breaks are an essential part of the time management exercise. The organizers should decide when and for how long the breaks should be allowed. Lengthy meetings held without breaks may not be desirable, because people are normally known to concentrate well for about forty-five minutes or so. Breaks are required for refreshments and rest room visits. At the same time, frequent and long breaks may hinder effective deliberations and come in the way of continuity of deliberations.

Business communicators responsible for meetings should give no room for such adverse comments. Any meeting is an investment in time. More the number of participants, greater the man-hours spent. This investment pays out only when meetings become productive. Business meetings, if not properly administered, can lead to indiscriminate wastage of time. For meetings to be a success, effective time management and productive utilization of available time are a must.

Minutes of the Meeting

Minutes refer to a summary or record of what is said or decided at a formal meeting. Minutes, in fact, constitute a written record of everything important that transpires in all formal meetings. Minutes are prepared and maintained in company files or records to facilitate future reference. Copies of the minutes are sent to all the participants and even the absentees.

Since minutes constitute authentic and official record of the deliberations and decisions of the meeting, these have to be drawn up in a diligent and error-free manner. The minutes should also be clear and complete, and should not omit anything important. That is why; the job of preparing the minutes is entrusted to a responsible person, usually the secretary of the meeting. In order to prepare the minutes efficiently, the secretary has to be attentive throughout the deliberations and take down thorough notes. It is the secretary who has to decide what is important and what is insignificant and note all the important and noteworthy deliberations. Any such draft minutes prepared by the secretary should be submitted

to the chairperson of the meeting for approval. On approval by the chairperson, the minutes are sent to all the participants. In fact, as a matter of good practice, minutes of every meeting are also approved by the members in the next meeting, and revisions if any are made.

The manner of recording the minutes of the meetings may vary from organization to organization, and depending upon the nature of meetings. While the deliberations of routine and periodical information-sharing minutes are sometimes recorded in a summary form, more formal meetings such as the Board Meetings, Management Committee Meetings, Audit Committee Meetings and such other meetings with a statutory significance are recorded verbatim and follow a prescribed procedure. The statutory and regulatory organizations follow a very meticulous procedure in preparing minutes.

A resolution refers to a course of action decided upon after due deliberation. It refers to a decision taken in a meeting after discussion or voting. It is recorded in the minutes of the meeting. A resolution is recorded as 'Resolved that'. In general, the following details are covered in drawing up the minutes:

- The name of the organization.
- The date, time and place of the meeting.
- Periodicity and nature of the meeting.
- The Presiding Officer or Chairperson of the meeting.
- The members present and/or absent. Leave of absence granted. Changes, if any, in the composition of the Committee/Board.
- A reference to the previous meeting and the approval of the minutes.
- References to the agenda items taken up one by one, the key points that came up, reports submitted, motions made, decisions taken and the resolutions passed.
- The date, time and venue of the next meeting.

Although we have noted the key aspects that must find a mention in general in all the formal meetings, it should be noted that depending upon the nature, importance and level of participation, the meetings prescribe the standard procedures to be followed in drawing up the minutes. In fact, in conducting formal meetings, such as the Board Meetings, Managing Committee Meetings and so on, there are well laid down procedures that have to be followed. Thus, parliamentary procedures are laid down for conducting such meetings and recording the minutes, and they need to be followed scrupulously.

Parliamentary Procedures for Conducting Meetings

Over the years, a set of rules, customs and ethics have been worked out for conducting meetings in an orderly and result-oriented manner. This set of rules is known as the parliamentary procedure. This body of rules aims to protect the

rights of members, and at the same time enable the organizations, institutions and legislative bodies to conduct the meetings effectively and efficiently. These parliamentary procedures are widely prevalent across the world.

The basic principle behind the parliamentary procedures is to allow the majority of the members to make decisions (majority rule), while providing a fair opportunity to the minority/individual members to voice their opinion. These parliamentary procedures have been well documented and act as guidelines for conducting business meetings purposefully. Five well-accepted principles to be followed while conducting formal meetings as per the parliamentary procedures are as follows:

- Ensure courtesy and justice to all members. Each member has equal rights and responsibilities.
- Consider one item at a time.
- Follow the rule of majority.
- Hear the voice of minority.
- Freely discuss and debate every proposal. Work towards facilitating action.

Parliamentary procedures cover details relating to convening, conducting and minuting meetings. Some of the specific rules mentioned include, (a) how to make a motion, (b) how to postpone indefinitely, (c) how to amend a motion, (d) how to call a question, (e) how to table a discussion and (f) how to adjourn a meeting. Procedures have also been laid down for recording the minutes of the meetings.

Good business communicators should familiarize themselves with these procedures by studying the standard documents on the subject.

Minutes and Proceedings

Both minutes and proceedings relate to the official record of deliberations. There is not much difference except that sometimes the proceedings are more elaborate than the minutes. While the term 'minutes' is mostly used with reference to meetings, the term 'proceedings' is used with reference to the record of deliberations in a conference, seminar and workshop. Both these terms are used in actual business practice by business organizations.

After the Meeting

Having conducted the meeting successfully, there are some steps to be taken after the meeting. The minutes have to be drawn up promptly, approval of the Chairman has to be obtained for the same, and these minutes or proceedings have to be dispatched to the members and participants promptly. If during the meeting, any specific tasks have been assigned to any member or any department that is to be promptly recorded in the minutes and communicated to the concerned in writing.

Checklist for Meetings

The convenor or the secretariat for the meetings will have to take responsibility for the success or effectiveness of the meetings. They have to invariably give attention to every small detail and ensure that everything is in order. It would be desirable to maintain a checklist of items relevant to various stages, i.e., before, during and after the meeting.

The checklist should include, among others, the following items:

1. Confirming that the meeting notice and all the sets of background papers have reached all the members and invitees.

2. Ascertaining the participation of the chairperson and the members, and the availability of the quorum.

3. Venue arrangements such as ensuring that the meeting hall is ready and open well in time, checking whether all equipment such as microphones, air conditioners, fans and projectors are functioning properly and pens and pads are provided.

4. Refreshments and catering as are appropriate to the meeting have been arranged.

5. Checking flight arrivals, room bookings and conveyance for the chairperson and others wherever required.

6. Reminding the local and other members about the time and venue of the meeting.

7. Ensuring that the table items for the day's meeting, if any, are put up.

8. Briefing the chairperson and other key members about the issues to be taken up at the meeting.

9. Where the meetings are very formal, such as the Board Meetings and Audit Committee Meetings, the rule book of procedures to be followed should be made available to the Chairperson or Board Secretary for ready reference.

10. Entrustment of responsibility concerning the recording of minutes or proceedings.

11. Timely intimation of postponement, cancellation or change of venue.

12. Changes to be effected in the composition of the members or participants and special invitees.

13. Reminding the chairperson, if need be, about the priority and urgency of various items which have to be necessarily taken up.

14. Probable dates for the next meeting.

15. Preparation of minutes or proceedings on time, obtaining approval of the same and their dispatch.

This kind of attention to all relevant details by the convenor or the secretariat brings in a professional approach in conducting meetings.

3.5   TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION

Another important facet of oral communication is telephone conversation. With a telephone set on every table in most offices and the presence of mobile phones, it is obvious that phone talks have become an integral part of business communication, and invariably people at various levels have to learn to talk effectively over the telephone. In service organizations such as banks, the emphasis nowadays has been on providing services at the doorstep of the customers, and reducing the need for visits to branches and offices. One important means of responding to customer enquiries is through telephones. Tele-banking and tele-contact services are now gaining popularity. Tele-marketing and making sales calls on the telephone are becoming popular, especially in metro centres.

It is imperative; therefore, that everyone in the business or any other organization is capable of making effective telephone talks. Even the subordinate staff should be taught telephone manners. The caller at the other end may not know who is responding. Many organizations, therefore, make it a point to train their employees on 'telephone manners' and even bring out literature on this topic for the benefit of their staff.

Some noteworthy points relating to telephone talk, though elementary and yet often overlooked, are as follows:

- Lift the receiver before the second or the third ring.
- Announce your name/the organization and greet the caller.
- Be polite, avoid a barking tone.
- If the call is to be directed, make sure the caller is not made to wait on the line for long.
- If the person called is not available, make a note of the caller's name, telephone number and message and communicate to the person concerned at the earliest.
- Make sure that the calls are returned promptly.
- End the conversation with a 'thank you' or a 'good day'.
- Replace the receiver gently back in its right place.
- Keep personal talk on the official line to the minimum.

- Calls cost money, especially long distance ones. Make your talk cost effective.

- Remember that the telephone is not a status symbol; it is a means of communication.

- Teach yourself to speak slowly but think quickly.

- Do not speak about the caller, especially derogatory remarks, without fully disconnecting the line.

- Most importantly, smile when picking up the phone, the caller will hear it in your voice.

In business, a caller often sizes up the efficiency of the organization in terms of the type of response one gets to the calls made. It should be ensured that the person who responds to the calls does so promptly and is in a position to respond to the caller's queries. The caller will obviously get a poor impression if the call changes four or five hands at the other end before the information sought is made available, entailing much wastage of time for the caller. While a telephone talk has its merits as a means of direct communication in business dealings, it is not meant, in the normal course, for long conversations, which are best done in person. One should consciously avoid cultivating an obsession for telephone talk. Further, when the caller at the other end has a foreign or unfamiliar accent, the receiver should take extra care to understand and respond. Also, if a person has come on business or with due appointment, it is ill mannered to indulge in a lengthy telephone talk and keep the visitor waiting. The other point worth noting is that when calls are made on a mobile number, sometimes the receiver of the call is also charged. It is unfair to make the receiver pay if the receiver is not keen on taking the call on the mobile.

With the advent of mobile phones, people have started spending much greater time on telephone talk than when only landlines were prevalent. Reaching out to people has become much easier. This is acting both as a boon and a bane. While mobile phones should be used for making the essential calls, the temptation to make business calls, at odd hours and when the caller does not want to be disturbed, should be resisted. That too is good telephone manners.

3.6 PRESENTATION SKILLS

Presentations constitute an extremely popular method of interactive communication, especially in the world of business. Presentations are so much a part of the business world today that it is hard to think of a profession or business that does not make use of presentations. Speeches and presentations have become an integral part of business transactions and relationships. The ability to make a good speech and an effective presentation adds value to a professional or anyone associated with the world of business. Both speeches and presentations are a part of oral communication

and are often used interchangeably. However, while a speech refers to an act of speaking, a presentation relates to the act of presenting. In that sense a presentation is, generally speaking, a more formal act. It is done with much preparation and there is nothing casual or sudden about it. More importantly, a presentation relates to oral communication with the help of audio-visual aids.

A presentation is described as an act of showing, explaining or describing something to a group of people. Its objective may be to inform, explain, convince or win over the audience. It is an important communication skill that must be mastered for professional and business success.

Since a presentation, such as a speech, is also a method of oral communication, most of the aspects which we have already covered under good speaking would be valid for a good presentation as well. All the three aspects relevant to a speech, viz., verbal, visual and vocal dimensions impact any presentation. A presentation should also be structured such as a speech to cover three main parts, viz., introduction, body and conclusion. The choice of words, appropriate use of jargon, fluency of language, presentation style, audience analysis and such other concerns relevant in connecting with and engaging the audience are also very relevant for an effective presentation. Without repeating what we have already covered under speeches, we shall now discuss aspects specific to understanding and acquiring presentation skills.

Presentations are made in classrooms, seminars, conferences and to groups of persons on certain scheduled topics. The topic for presentation is predetermined and there is nothing rambling or disorganized about it. Presentations have a specific objective. Quite often, the objective is not just to inform, but more importantly to influence, persuade, motivate and amplify. The verbal message is supplemented with the help of audio and visual aids for greater impact. Seeing plus hearing has greater impact than mere hearing. The objective of a presentation is to present all relevant details to the interested target audience on a specific topic or concept or area of interest in a participative manner. Any good presentation is well structured, properly packaged and presented to create high impact.

Presentations are of various kinds. Whenever a presenter feels that he has to reach out to an audience, influence their thinking and create an impact to achieve a certain objective, he may gainfully make a presentation. The presentations may range from a simple classroom presentation to amplify a concept or idea to a sales presentation to a very high-level strategy presentation. The venue for a presentation may be as varied as a classroom or a conference room or an executive cabin or even a boardroom. Apart from concept or idea presentations, product or sales presentations and strategy presentations are very common in the world of business. During any presentation on products and services, demonstrations covering the functioning and operation of new products are also introduced. Let us look at some examples of how presentations are used in business:

- A salesperson makes a presentation on a new product.

- An advertising agency makes a presentation on an advertising campaign to a client.

- A management consultant makes a presentation on organizational restructuring to a large business organization.

- An economist makes a presentation on the impact of global recession in a business seminar.

- An event manager makes a presentation to a chamber of commerce on a major trade fair.

- A CEO makes a presentation to his top management team on their business strategy plan for the ensuing year.

As we can see, these are just some random thoughts and there could be any number of presentations such as minor and major, short and long, technical and non-technical, routine and path-breaking presentations in business situations. A salesperson or a junior-level person to the chief executive or a highly placed person may be required to make a presentation. Likewise, a presentation may be made by one individual or a group of persons. Presentations help when technical as well as non-technical aspects have to be neatly and forcefully presented by means other than mere written or verbal.

Presentations are emerging as a popular means of communicating various concepts and ideas, features of gadgets, technology-based products, business results, analytical studies, status reports, strategic plans and a host of such items. Presentations help in simplification, amplification, analysis and reiteration. Presentations facilitate putting forth issues in proper perspective. Presentations are extremely useful in covering the subject emphatically within a given time. Presentations are helpful from the standpoint of time management, so crucial in business management.

Keeping in view all these advantages, in most business organizations, presentations, scheduled on various relevant topics, are made to CEOs and top management teams, decision-making authorities and even to board members. Whenever a selection is to be made for any assignment or task, the contenders are normally asked to make a presentation. Based on the presentations, evaluations are made. For example, short listed vendors of any software or hardware product may be asked to make a presentation. Similarly, short listed advertising agencies may be called upon to make a presentation before a panel before a selection is made. Obviously, in all such cases, the quality of the presentation and its impact on the target audience influence the final decision concerning the product or assignment. When such presentations are made, apart from the merits of the product or the proposal, the manner in which it is presented often assumes critical importance. Under such circumstances, presentation skills of the people concerned

assume great significance. No wonder, people with good presentation skills are in great demand in the world of business.

Let us now look at the skills relevant for making a good presentation. The person keen on making an effective presentation has to necessarily develop various types of interactive skills:

- Essentially, one should be a good communicator and should learn to express oneself clearly and forcefully.

- He or she should be comfortable in facing the target audience and should build requisite confidence.

- The communicator should be familiar with the various techniques for holding the audience's attention.

- The presenter should be well versed in presenting various types of audio-visual aids to heighten the impact of presentation.

- The person should be able to synchronize the verbal delivery or narration with the visual message.

- The presentation should not appear rehearsed or stereotype. The person should make the presentation within the allotted time.

- The presenter should be looking at the visual message as well as the audience and should not miss eye contact with the audience.

- The presenter should develop good fluency of language and also use familiar and appropriate words.

- The presenter should know which parts of the visual message or slides should be emphasized or elaborated and which should be skipped or rushed.

- The person should be alive to the response from the audience and know how to sustain it.

- The presenter should also know how to make effective use of the vocal and visual aspect of body language to make the presentation effective.

- Good presentation skills thus constitute good speaking skills plus effective use of visual and other aids to create a total impact.

- The person making the presentation should know how to manage the Question and Answer session effectively.

Check Your Progress

7. What is the main objective of presentation?

8. What are the advantages of presentations?

9. State any one demerit of telephonic conversation.

3.7 LISTENING SKILLS

We have already learnt that communication is essentially a two-way process. It is a process that involves at least two parties—the sender and the receiver or the speaker and the listener. The purpose of any communication is not achieved till the receiver receives the message which the sender puts across. There is often an expectation that the receiver will not only receive the message, but also interpret it, understand it, use it and provide the requisite feedback about having received the message and acted on it. It is essential to note that sender and receiver are not always fixed permanent positions. One is a sender or a receiver for a particular piece of communication or message transmission. However, communication is by and large an interactive process and the roles are seldom fixed. A receiver becomes the sender and the sender becomes the receiver. Good communication, therefore, calls for listening skills. A good speaker must necessarily be a good listener.

In an interactive communication, listening accounts for about 50 per cent of verbal communication. Both the parties keep changing their roles so that objectives of the communication are achieved in full, as intended. If it is an organized speech or lecture, listening should be full-time. That is why it is said that good listening is as much hard work as good speaking. While good listening leads to proper understanding, poor listening can lead to misunderstanding and incomplete understanding.

Are you a good listener? The importance of listening skills in business and work places is often under-estimated. Yet, the fact remains that at work places, on an everyday basis, you will have to listen to other people constantly: to your customers, your superiors, your subordinates and your associates. Good listening creates a positive environment and motivates the communicator. In order to be a good listener, it is necessary to appreciate the listening process and master the listening skills.

Listening attentively and completely is much more than a casual hearing. An attentive listener is the one, who hears not just the words the speaker utters, but also the feelings and intent of the speaker. As author, Jiddu Krishnamurthy notes, an active listener is one who listens to the whole of what is being conveyed, not just part of it. Listening is a comprehensive act that takes place at different levels.

Ronald Adler and Jeanne Elmhorst, the authors of the book, *Communicating at Work* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 2005) note that listening takes place at four different levels as mentioned below:

1. Listening for Content
2. Listening for Feelings
3. Listening for Intent
4. Listening for Context

Therefore, listening is a comprehensive exercise where the keen and intent listener tries to listen not just to the content, but also to the feelings as well as intent and concerns of the speaker. Moreover, a good listener is always conscious of the context in which the speaker speaks and makes every effort to interpret the words and the content of the message within the overall context in which the speaker speaks out. Picking up words and interpreting them out of context is obviously bad listening.

Listening Process

More than an act, listening is a process. It is a lot more than hearing. It starts with hearing but goes beyond. In other words, hearing is a necessary but not sufficient condition for listening. Listening involves hearing with attention. Listening is a process that calls for concentration. Hearing refers to the perception of sound with the ear. Hearing is a physical act. One hears a noise, whether one wants to or not. If hearing is impaired, a hearing aid is used. Hearing aids amplify the sound. Listening is more comprehensive than hearing. Listening is done not only with the ear, but also with the other sense organs. While listening, one should also be observant. In other words, listening has to do with the ears, as well as with the eyes and the mind. Hearing is physical, while listening is intellectual, involving both the body and the mind.

Listening is to be understood as the total process that involves hearing with attention, being observant and making interpretations. Good communication is essentially an interactive process.

Listening calls for participation and involvement. It is quite often a dialogue rather than a monologue. It is necessary for the listener to be interested and also show or make it abundantly clear that one is interested in knowing what the other person has to say. Good listeners put the speaker at ease. Indifferent and inattentive listeners, on the other hand, disturb the speaker and make it that much more difficult for him or her to reach out with the message. The listener can and should help the speaker in establishing a wavelength through which communication traverses smoothly.

The listening process can be understood best by looking at various words which are associated with listening. These are hearing, decoding, sensing, understanding, comprehending, filtering, absorbing, assimilating, empathizing, remembering and responding. Each one of these plays a role in making listening complete and effective. There is also another set of words which can be associated with the listening process. These are attentiveness, focus, willingness, patience, attitude and concentration. The process of listening, to be effective, should encompass all these. The process of listening involves the following:

- Hearing
- Decoding

- Comprehending
- Remembering
- Responding

Together, these components ensure that the listening part of the communication process becomes meaningful and effective. We will in the following section discuss the components in detail.

Hearing

Hearing is the first essential step in listening. It relates to the sensory perception of sound. The communicator expects the receiver to 'lend his or her ears'. There should be a certain attentiveness or concentration in receiving verbal messages. Hearing relates to receiving the words sent out by the speaker for further processing by the listener.

Decoding

The next step relates to decoding. It involves sensing and filtering of the verbal messages. Hearing the words apart, other sensory perceptions come into play. Decoding takes place as a conscious exercise. Listening also involves filtering, whereby the message received is classified as wanted or unwanted, useful or otherwise. That which is considered useless or unwanted is discarded. This filtering process is subjective in nature and a person chooses to retain only that which makes sense to him. Sense of appeal and sense of judgment come into play during sensing and filtering the message. The message is thereafter sent to the next process.

Comprehending

The next level of listening consists of comprehending or understanding. The filtered message assumes a meaning. This activity can also be described as absorbing, grasping or assimilating. The listener has now understood what the speaker has tried to convey. The message received has been heard, sensed, filtered and interpreted. In doing so, the listener has brought into play the listener's own knowledge, experience, perception and cognitive power. The listener has used not only the body, but also the intellect in grasping the meaning of the message. The verbal message apart, the non-verbal communication has also been studied and noted.

Remembering

Remembering is another important facet of listening. Messages received are meant, quite often, not just for immediate consideration and action, but also for future use. In fact, very often, although the absorption takes place in the present, its use may take place sometime in the future. Memorizing the message, therefore, assumes significance. Remembering relates to a process whereby the assimilated message is stored in memory to facilitate future recall.

Responding

Response of the listener may take place at the end of the verbal communication or even earlier. When it is intended to provide feedback to the communicator, response occurs towards the end. If however, there is a need to seek clarification or a need to empathize with the speaker, it may take place earlier. This may take the form of prodding, prompting or reassuring that the message is being well received.

3.7.1 Good Questioning Skills

Gathering information is a basic human activity – information is used to learn, help solve problems, to aid decision making processes and to comprehend each other with more clarity. One vital way of gaining more information is through questioning. Questioning is fundamental to successful communication - all individuals ask and are asked questions when they engage in conversation.

An effective communicator is one who is able to ask questions in a suitable manner. It also depends on what the purpose of questioning is. One this purpose is established, the questioner should also ask himself/herself the following questions:

- What type of question should be asked
- Is the question appropriate to the person/group?
- Is this the right time to ask the question?
- How do I expect the respondent will reply?

Based on these, one can effectively improve one's questioning skills.

Check Your Progress

10. Why is listening more comprehensive than hearing?
11. What are the main components of the listening process?

3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The most important component of a language is vocabulary or word power. Since the expressions take place through words, vocabulary refers to all the words that a person knows or uses. Most of the popular languages possess a well-developed vocabulary.

2. Idioms are described as a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of individual words. On the other hand, phrases are a group of words which have a particular meaning when used together.

3. The following are the distinctive features of voice:

   a) Tone—harsh, soft, whisper

   b) Volume—loud, soft

   c) Quality—controlled, uncontrolled

   d) Pace—rapid, slow

   e) Force—intensity

   f) Range—wide, narrow

   g) Articulation—precise, imprecise

   h) Rhythm—smooth, jerky

   i) Resonance—resonant, thin

4. Gesture refers to any significant movement of limb or body and a deliberate use of such movement as an expression of feeling.

5. Meetings are the most popular method of interactive communication. They facilitate direct, face-to-face communication and are essential at various levels in all organizations.

6. The basic principle behind the parliamentary procedures is to allow the majority of the members to make decisions (majority rule), while providing a fair opportunity to the minority/individual members to voice their opinion. These parliamentary procedures have been well documented and act as guidelines for conducting business meetings purposefully.

7. The objective of presentation may be to inform, explain, convince or win over the audience. It is an important communication skill that must be mastered for professional and business success.

8. The following are the advantages of presentations:

   a) Presentations help in simplification, amplification, analysis and reiteration.

   b) Presentations facilitate putting forth issues in proper perspective.

   c) Presentations are extremely useful in covering the subject emphatically within a given time.

   d) Presentations are helpful from the standpoint of time management, so crucial in business management.

9. One disadvantage of telephonic conversation in that when calls are made on a mobile number, sometimes the receiver of the call is also charged. It is unfair to make the receiver pay if the receiver is not keen on taking the call on the mobile.

10. Listening is more comprehensive than hearing. Listening is done not only with the ear, but also with the other sense organs. While listening, one should

also be observant. In other words, listening has to do with the ears, as well as with the eyes and the mind. Hearing is physical, while listening is intellectual, involving both the body and the mind.

11. The main components of the listening process are hearing, decoding, comprehending, remembering and responding.

3.9 SUMMARY

- Language can be described as a vehicle of thought. It is a method of expression. It is a vocabulary with its usage being prevalent in one or more regions or countries.

- The number of languages used in verbal communication is extremely large. It is said that the six billion people of this world speak about 6000 languages.

- Languages are also known for their features. There is a mother tongue, a regional language, an official language, a national language and a global language.

- Greek and Latin are described as dead languages because they failed to absorb new words and lost their appeal. On the other hand, the English language has immense appeal because it regularly takes in new words that are popularly used in other languages.

- When a language is not a native language but one adopted from outside, it acquires mixed characteristics.

- Idioms, phrases and slangs are an integral part of a language. English language has a fair share of these and an effective business communicator should be informed about these.

- Idioms are described as a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of individual words.

- Phrases, likewise, are a group of words which have a particular meaning when used together.

- Words or phrases in common use that are generally considered in some or all aspects to be outside of Standard English are called slang.

- Pidgin is a simplified form of a language, especially English, Portuguese or Dutch, where a limited number of words are used together with words from a local language.

- The most important component of a language is vocabulary or word power. Since the expressions take place through words, vocabulary refers to all the words that a person knows or uses.

- Facial expressions, eye movements and the state of the eyes and the variety and intensity of the human voice can and do convey different meanings.

- Voice has many characteristics and the social scientists have studied these characteristics in detail and given generally accepted interpretations to them.

- Gesture refers to any significant movement of limb or body and a deliberate use of such movement as an expression of feeling.

- Nodding, shaking of head, smiling, patting the back, putting the hand over one's shoulder, clasping hands, shrugging, touching, frowning, scowling, blinking, yawning and crossing and uncrossing of legs are among the various types of physical actions and gestures that are used to convey meanings and messages and are likewise interpreted by others receiving the message.

- Meetings are the most popular method of interactive communication. They facilitate direct, face-to-face communication and are essential at various levels in all organizations.

- While meetings, which are effective, contribute to decision making and result in positive outcomes, ill-conceived and indifferently conducted meetings entail enormous waste of time, effort and resources.

- Minutes refer to a summary or record of what is said or decided at a formal meeting. Minutes, in fact, constitute a written record of everything important that transpires in all formal meetings.

- The basic principle behind the parliamentary procedures is to allow the majority of the members to make decisions (majority rule), while providing a fair opportunity to the minority/individual members to voice their opinion.

- Another important facet of oral communication is telephone conversation. With a telephone set on every table in most offices and the presence of mobile phones, it is obvious that phone talks have become an integral part of business communication.

- A presentation is described as an act of showing, explaining or describing something to a group of people.

- Listening attentively and completely is much more than a casual hearing. An attentive listener is the one, who hears not just the words the speaker utters, but also the feelings and intent of the speaker.

- Listening is to be understood as the total process that involves hearing with attention, being observant and making interpretations. Good communication is essentially an interactive process.

- Questioning is fundamental to successful communication - all individuals ask and are asked questions when they engage in conversation.

- An effective communicator is one who is able to ask questions in a suitable manner. It also depends on what the purpose of questioning is.

3.10 KEY WORDS

- **Minutes:** It refers to a summary or record of what is said or decided at a formal meeting.

- **Pidgin:** It refers to a language that people develop out of necessity. It develops when people who do not speak a particular language are required to communicate in order to live or work together.

- **Resolution:** It refers to a course of action decided upon after due deliberation. It refers to a decision taken in a meeting after discussion or voting. It is recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

- **Slang:** It refers to words or phrases in common use that are generally considered in some or all aspects to be outside of Standard English.

- **Voice Modulation:** It refers to the adjustment or variation of tone or pitch while speaking.

3.11 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Why are most of the languages region specific?
2. Write a short note on the importance of body language in communication.
3. Why are spoken languages highly accommodative?
4. What are the main objectives of meetings?
5. Why are breaks an important part of time management exercise?
6. What are the main points covered in the minutes of meeting?
7. List the levels associated with the process of listening.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the main features of language.
2. Analyse the importance of gestures in non-verbal communication.
3. What are the prerequisites to be considered while organising a meeting? Explain in detail.
4. Interpret the importance of telephonic conversation in the existing times.
5. Identify the various types of presentations.
6. Describe the listening process.

3.12 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 4 CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES OF TECHNICAL WRITING

Structure

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Technical writing or technical communication is defined as a form of communication which covers technical concepts such as medical procedures, computer applications, environmental regulations and automobiles and so on. It provides instructions related to any product such as its working and uses. It also covers topics such as information about web pages and social media sites. Technical writing is done by a technical writer and therefore, is the process of writing and sharing information in a professional setting.

It is the responsibility of a technical writer to present technical information to the user in a clear and lucid way. The information is mostly complex and thus, one of their main responsibility is to process and analyse information in such a way that it is easy to understand and interpret.

In this unit, the meaning of technical writing and its features has been explained. The steps involved in the process of technical writing have been discussed. The classification of readership and the main types of audience has been highlighted. The unit will also analyse the level of technicality in technical communication.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the objectives of technical writing
- Discuss the characteristics of technical writing
- Explain the process of technical writing
- Analyse the objective of communication
- Interpret the importance of readership and their role in preparing a document
- Identify the main types of audience
- Explain the level of technicality in technical writing

4.2 FEATURES OF TECHNICAL WRITING

Technical writing is defined as a form of practical writing which is done by most of the managers in an organization and it is a part of their job. It is an inherent part of written communication in all organizations.

Objectives of Technical Writing

Technical writing has three basic purposes. They are as follows:

1. To inform
2. To instruct
3. To persuade

For carrying out various activities in the workplace, managers need to provide and receive relevant information, for example, budget allocation and agenda for a meeting and so on. It is also used to give instructions. Written instructions may involve directions for using equipment or for performing duties. Technical writing is used to persuade the readers to follow a particular course of action. For example a technical report may be used to persuade a reader to select a particular site for setting up a new plant or a business proposal may be used to generate funds for starting a new venture.

Characteristics of Technical Writing

Technical writing has the following characteristics:

- Technical writing is aimed at a specific audience. Technical writers prepare their documents keeping in mind the audience and their preferences and needs.
- Technical writing is framed in such a way that the objectives are simple. The language of such a piece of writing is lucid and easy to understand. Technical

writers' refrain themselves of using difficult language and unnecessary elaboration of feelings or emotional interpretation of the subject is avoided.

- Good technical writing is well structured, which helps the reader to assimilate the information easily.
- Technical writing is generally aided with the use of visuals such as graphs, tables and drawings. It enhances the effectiveness of the written document.

Though the basics of technical writing remain the same, there are many types of technical documents which can be generated to suit the different purposes and different audiences. These include reports, plans, proposals and minutes of meetings and so on.

4.2.1 Technical Writing Process: Readability, Text and Aberrations

The process of technical writing comprises of the following steps:

1. Pre writing : Planning
2. Writing : Drafting and Revising
3. Post Writing : Finishing

Planning is the first step of the process which involves collecting all relevant information about the communication and working out on a tentative plan to create the document. Drafting is the second step of the process which involves selecting and organizing all the information which is to be presented in the document. The last step involves finishing in which the document is editing and presented in a definite manner.

In the following section, we will discuss the process of technical writing in detail.

1. Planning

Planning is the basis of any activity and the same is true for technical writing. The more you plan the better will be the final document. There are some considerations which have to be kept in mind while planning a document. These are as follows:

i. Audience: One needs to know the following details about the audience:

- Who are the audience who will be reading the document?
- Will it be an individual or a group?
- How much does the audience know about the topic?
- How important is the topic to the audience?

ii. Goal of the writing process: It involves having an answer to the following questions :

- What is the theme of the document?
- What is the purpose of the document?

iii. **Constraints:** Constraints are the social and physical factors that affect both the ability to write the document and the readers's ability to respond to it. This involves having sufficient information regarding the following:

- The format to be followed
- The number of the pages in the final document
- Time given for preparing the material

iv. **Gist of the document:** It is important for a technical writer to plan a major theme and the sub-themes on which the document will based. He or she should develop an outline of the document by deciding the various sections and their sequence. He or she must also decide the kind of visual aids that will be used, for examples, tables, pie charts and bar graphs and maps could be used to enhance the quality of the document.

2. Drafting and Revising

Once the planning stage is over, actual writing begins. This step of the writing process takes considerable time. The first step which a technical writer will follow is to write the first draft of the document which will be based on the complete information that has been collected during the first step. However, it is important to keep in mind that one has to let the ideas flow smoothly and write them down. He or she should not worry about the correctness and style or format. Some writers rather than writing the document in a pre – determined sequence prefer to write important sections and sub-sections first and then combine them with the other sections.

After preparing the first draft of your draft, one must leave it aside for sometime as it enables one to give a fresh look to the document, however, this may not be possible if the finished document has to be provided urgently. One must look at the following aspects and revise the document accordingly:

- **Content:** One must ensure that all the relevant information has been included in the content. It should be presented in a logical sequence so that the reader is able to comprehend the text easily.
- **Style:** He or she must review the complete document from the point of view of style of writing. The style of writing should be consistent and impressive.
- **Accuracy:** The information presented should be correct in terms of content and mechanics too.

3. Finishing the document

Finishing the document is the final stage which involves editing and micro-editing the document and producing it. Editing means changing the text

till it is consistent and accurate. The document needs to be put into a format which is consistent and visually appealing. Major headings and minor headings need to be differentiated. For this, different styles, fonts and sizes can be used. Some documents have to be presented in a standard format which is provided by the concerned organization or authority. Proof reading involves checking the document for spelling, punctuation, basic grammar, formatting and accuracy of facts. A well proof read document is free from errors and provides credibility to the document. The document is then produces on the desired stationery.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the steps involved in the process of technical writing?
2. What are the purposes of technical writing?

4.3 TARGET GROUP IN WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

The basic objective of all communication which includes written communication is that it should be understood by the targeted audience. The content and style of the written communication depends on the expectations, demands and needs of the reader.

The receiver of the communication may be an individual or group referred to as the 'reader' which is likely to read the written communication. The characteristics of readers are diverse and thus, a thorough reader analysis must be carried out by an organization. It will ensure that the content meets the expectations and needs of the reader.

The readership can be classified on the basis of the following factors:

- Age
- Gender
- Literacy level
- Level of knowledge in a project
- Level of technical proficiency

The reader group can be heterogeneous which may comprise of a combination of various characteristics thereby making task of writing a complex process. It thus, becomes important that a proper analysis must be carried out by an organization which will focus on the needs of the reader. Such an analysis will make the content effective and will target the right audience. Thus various factors come into play which determines the nature of technical writing. These include objective, needs, attitude and values of the reader, capability, communication style and experience.

The objective or the purpose for which the technical document is going to be used will majorly determine its content and style. The document may be a report which is going to be used to take some important management decisions. It may be in the form of a business plan being presented to the venture capitalists to attract investment or it may be a technical manual to provide information about a specific product to a user.

The attitudes, preferences and predispositions about particular topics also play a critical role in the way in which the written communication is going to be accepted. Information and content which supports perceptions and opinions of the reader are likely to be accepted more readily as compared to non-supportive material.

Similarly, values can also have a considerable influence on the choice, selection, perception, interrelation and retention of information. The competence and technical knowhow of the reader on the subject of writing determines the extent to which specialist's language and technical jargons can be used and whether they will be understood by the reader.

How useful particular information is to a reader also determines his or her interest and involvement in the comprehension of the writing. For instance, an individual who is interested in buying a bike is more likely to seek articles, advertisements reviews and other literature related to bikes.

Another aspect is the context in which an individual functions. A particular article or writing may be important at a certain time to meet a particular need and may be of no consequence to the same individual at any later of time.

Individual's habits and preference of the reader also have a bearing on the choice of material. For instance, certain newspapers and magazines are preferred over others basically because people get habituated to a certain style of reporting. Thus, it is evident that understanding of the target group through an in-depth analysis is probably, one of the important exercises which needs to be carried out before actually starting to write the document.

In an article, 'List and explanation of 5 kinds of Audience in Business Communication', Wroblewski (2018), has given a list of five types of audience in business communication. It also includes audiences of the written communication. The following are the main types of audience:

- **Experts:** Experts know the subject matter inside out. The point to be cautious about here is the risk of communicating information they already know. This may make the communication boring and too basic for them and they may lose interest in it.

- **Executives:** Executives includes individuals who enjoy both status and decision making power and their knowledge of a topic can range from that of a novice to an expert.

- **Complex audience:** Complex audience consists of those groups in which people are both experts and executives. One needs to design the content in such a way that it has something of value for each of these target groups viz experts and executives.

- **Technicians:** Technicians are the people who have 'hands-on' experience with the subject. They are technically conversant with minute details of the system. This category of audience generally seeks highly practical information.

- **Laypersons:** Laypersons possess the least amount of knowledge about the subject. It is a very impressionable group. One may need to 'build on' from the basics when one is targeting this particular group.

4.3.1 Level of Technicality in Scientific Communication

It becomes imperative for the readers to identify the difference between a technical language and ordinary language. It is not possible to distinguish between the two categories of language on the basis of some features or neither is there a set of rules which may help readers to understand the difference. It has been observed that the problem of understanding technical languages is similar to the problem of translation.

Technical or scientific language is equivalent to foreign language. It is so because it is used only by a specific group of people who share some common goal. However, their elements may be different in form but can be translated from one specific language to another. It can also be learned with the help of an expert or through proper training.

However, technical language must be compared with dialect. Dialect is the language which is spoken by a sub-group of people in a community which uses a common language. Like dialect, it is difficult to comprehend technical language but it is just slightly different from ordinary language. It may be well-spoken among people who are expertise in the section but it is not difficult to comprehend it.

The varied levels of technicality can be found not only in verbal communication but also in written communication. Languages which comprise of a high degree of technicality are referred to as 'jargon'.

The use of jargon in a language is considered to be of a confusing nature which may mislead the reader. However, the use of jargon by a technical writer may seem to him or her as a positive addition to the text. In this case the term makes an appeal to the sense of camaraderie, the understanding and the bond of common interests of the group. It therefore, becomes important that the problem of communication must be analysed and any such obstacles must be handled with care while drafting an article for the audience.

3. Why is technical language equivalent to a foreign language?

4. How is readership classified?

4.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The steps involved in the process of technical writing are as follows:

   a) Pre writing : Planning

   b) Writing : Drafting and Revising

   c) Post Writing : Finishing

2. There are three main purposes of technical writing, to inform, to instruct and to persuade.

3. Technical language is equivalent to foreign language because it is used only by a specific group of people who share some common goal. However, their elements may be different in form but can be translated from one specific language to another. It can also be learned with the help of an expert or through proper training.

4. The readership can be classified on the following basis:

   a) Age

   b) Gender

   c) Literacy level

   d) Level of knowledge in a project

   e) Level of technical proficiency

4.5 SUMMARY

- Technical writing is defined as a form of practical writing which is done by most of the managers in an organization and it is a part of their job.

- Written instructions may involve directions for using equipment or for performing duties. Technical writing is used to persuade the readers to follow a particular course of action.

- Technical writing is aimed at a specific audience. Technical writers prepare their documents keeping in mind the audience and their preferences and needs.

- Technical writing is framed in such a way that the objectives are simple. The language of such a piece of writing is lucid and easy to understand.

- Good technical writing is well structured, which helps the reader to assimilate the information easily.

- Technical writing is generally aided with the use of visuals such as graphs, tables and drawings. It enhances the effectiveness of the written document.

- There are many types of technical documents which can be generated to suit the different purposes and different audiences. These include reports, plans, proposals and minutes of meetings and so on.

- Planning is the first step of the process which involves collecting all relevant information about the communication and working out on a tentative plan to create the document.

- Drafting is the second step of the process which involves selecting and organizing all the information which is to be presented in the document.

- The last step involves finishing in which the document is editing and presented in a definite manner.

- Constraints are the social and physical factors that affect both the ability to write the document and the readers's ability to respond to it.

- Once the planning stage is over, actual writing begins. This step of the writing process takes considerable time.

- Finishing the document is the final stage which involves editing and micro-editing the document and producing it. Editing means changing the text till it is consistent and accurate.

- Proof reading involves checking the document for spelling, punctuation, basic grammar, formatting and accuracy of facts.

- The basic objective of all communication which includes written communication is that it should be understood by the targeted audience.

- The objective or the purpose for which the technical document is going to be used will majorly determine its content and style.

- The attitudes, preferences and predispositions about particular topics also play a critical role in the way in which the written communication is going to be accepted.

- Information and content which supports perceptions and opinions of the reader are likely to be accepted more readily as compared to non-supportive material.

- Technical or scientific language is equivalent to foreign language. It is so because it is used only by a specific group of people who share some common goal.

- The varied levels of technicality can be found not only in verbal communication but also in written communication. Languages which comprise of a high degree of technicality are referred to as 'jargon'.

4.6 KEY WORDS

- **Dialect:** It refers to the language which is spoken by a sub-group of people in a community which uses a common language.
- **Complex Audience:** It refers to a type of audience which consists of those groups in which people are both experts and executives.
- **Jargon:** It refers to languages which comprise of a high degree of technicality.

4.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the importance of technical writing.
2. What are the main forms of technical writing?
3. Why is important to develop themes and sub-themes for a document?
4. What are the main responsibilities of a proof reader?
5. How is technical language different from ordinary language?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the main characteristics of technical writing.
2. Discuss the process of technical writing.
3. Analyse the things to be considered while planning a document.
4. Describe the factors which influence the process of writing a technical report.
5. What are the five main types of audience in business communication? Discuss in detail.

4.8 FURTHER READINGS

Gordon, H. M. and Walter J. A. 1986. *Technical Writing* 5th ed. London: Holt.

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BLOCK - II
PUBLICATION & STYLE FORMAT

UNIT 5 ORGANIZATION AND PRESENTATION OF DATA IN ABSTRACTS, TEXTUAL MANNER, REFERENCES

Structure

5.0 Introduction
5.1 Objectives
5.2 Data Presentation in Research Documents
5.3 Presentation of Data in Abstracts
5.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
5.5 Summary
5.6 Key Words
5.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
5.8 Further Readings

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Data should be presented in research and thesis papers. More specifically, it is about writing the abstract of a research study. How well one can present data within the confines of space in an abstract is the subject matter of this study. The unit will discuss the methods of writing abstracts and how the same should be prepared and presented ideally.

In this unit, the ways of data presentation have been explained in detail. The meaning, components and steps of abstract writing have been discussed. The unit will also help you to analyse the importance of figures, facts and tables in presentation of data. It will also highlight the various forms of data presentation.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the various ways in which data can represented in research documents
- Identify the types of graphical representation
- Analyse the components and sections of abstract

- Explain the steps related to abstract writing
- Interpret the importance of facts, figures and tables in presentation of data
- Discuss the forms of data presentation

5.2 DATA PRESENTATION IN RESEARCH DOCUMENTS

Before one can go into the essentials of abstract, it is necessary to have some knowledge about research papers and its contents. It is a fact that all research papers work on a premise and proceed to conclude the study by drawing inferences. In order to present the matter in a logical manner, there is an extensive use of textual matter, tables, figures, and graphs in the content matter. An improper or inadequate presentation will make the study less effective and even defective. The actual importance of data presentation in research documents is discussed in detail in the following sections.

What is the Importance of Data Presentation in Research Documents?

Let us take a hypothetical situation where school or college report cards are presented in a textual form. The grades and remarks are displayed in a paragraph form instead of a tabular form. One can imagine how much confusion it would create. This is the reason why data must be presented in the correct format.

Presentation of data in the correct form is very important. The significance of good presentation is that it helps in quick interpretation and in a meaningful manner. Data, when presented well is easy to understand.

Data research is about the form of facts, images, measurements, and results. Data can be in the form of numerals, visuals, and textual. Data which is collected and compiled can pertain to an object or a person. The data in its original form is known as raw data. The collection of date and its presentation is one of the mainstays of any research project. It justifies the objective of the entire research in a lucid and quantitative manner.

Presentation of data is the crux of communication research as objectives are clarified with supporting pieces of evidence. Effective data presentation helps to justify and prove the conclusions of the research to the reader. Data presented in a research document briefs entire research in a systematic manner. There may be many pieces of data collected by the researcher, but in the stage of data presentation, all collected data are well organized, presented and analyzed.

Graphical Displays

Using statistical graphs, data can be presented in a more effective manner. A graphical data presentation is an important form of data depiction and presentation. There are different types of graphs which provide an interesting presentation. The types of graphical presentation are:

- **Bar Graphs**: In bar graphs, data is presented using bars which are rectangular in shape and depicts quantity on its length axis. Such type of graphs helps people to compare quantity by looking at the length or height of the bar.

- **Multiple Bar Graphs**: Multiple bar graphs are used when the researcher wants to compare two or more different data. It helps in understanding the data clearly.

- **Pie chart**: Pie chart is used to present quantities to make up a whole.

- **Line chart**: Line chart is used when a researcher wants to analyze the trend of the data.

What is an Abstract?

An abstract may be defined as a condensed version or summary of the research study. It is a means to convey what was undertaken to be done, why the particular subject was picked for further study, what were the findings from the study and the broader implications of such findings in relation to its field of study.

In other words, an abstract is an outline of the whole project. It should be well-structured which must comprise of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. It should be a well-defined paragraph, which is exact in wording, and should definitely be understood to a wide audience.

Abstracts are mostly restricted to no more than 250 words, are formatted in Microsoft Word, with single-spaced and font size 12, Times New Roman font. Abstracts highlight the major points of the research and explain why this work is important.

If the title includes any of the following such as a scientific notation, Greek letters, bold, italics, or other special characters/symbols, it is to be ensured that they appear correctly.

What should Abstract Contain?

Abstracts are a combination of 4 Cs' which are as follows:

- Complete
- Concise
- Clear
- Cohesive

Complete means that the abstract should cover all the major parts of the project, study or analysis. Concise will entail being to the point without unnecessary information and redundant usage of words. Clear is about being easy to read, well structured and not loaded with too much jargon. Being cohesive will make the abstract flow freely without any hindrance.

Importance of Abstract

An abstract which is strong and well-structured helps to decide whether a particular study is relevant for a conference or presentation. It allows the audience or reviewers to get an insight into what to expect from the abstract.

Abstracts should include sufficient information for reviewers to judge the nature and significance of the topic. It should be able to prove the adequacy of the investigative strategy, the nature of the results, and the conclusions. The abstract should summarize the substantive results of the work and not merely be restricted to the listing of topics to be discussed.

First Steps in Writing an Effective Abstract?

There are certain factors and situations that need to be carefully considered before settling down to do the actual abstract. Most of the time, the research paper will be taken up for discussion in a conference. Keeping this in mind, it is important to consider the conference goals and objectives to ensure that your research has a place there.

Once that is decided and the research is found to be a good fit for the particular conference, the process of writing the abstract may begin in the right earnest.

In case, the employer's approval is needed for submitting the research, the same should be duly taken. After that, all necessary information for a complete abstract has to be gathered.

The following steps are to be undertaken while writing an abstract:

- Clearly identify the purpose, methods, findings, and discussion points for nursing implications.
- Identify all authors whose contributions have been referenced in the work, and include their names, credentials, and work settings.
- If the writer is the project leader or facilitator, he or she may include other co-authors, if applicable.
- Strict adherence to all abstract guidelines is necessary, therefore the researcher has to identify necessary sections, headers, and other formatting requirements, particularly word counts, as outlined by the selection committee.
- Close coordination is necessary while working with co-authors to decide which parts of the research belong in each section. Selection committees will use the scoring criteria to evaluate each abstract.
- Review them to guide you in selecting the right content for your abstract.

Sections of an Abstract

The different sections of the abstract are as follows:

- The Title
- Background Section
- Methods Section
- Result Section
- Conclusion Section

The different sections of an abstract are explained in detail in the following section.

1. **The Title**: The title is the hook to a subject. It should clearly describe what the abstract is all about. An abstract should be able to trigger interest and encourage readers to want to learn more. It is often observed that the abstract decides whether the reader or audience (in case of a conference) decide whether they would go further on the subject.

2. **Background Section**: The background section should highlight the following facts:
   - Why the abstract is important or novel
   - The basic context or simple explanation for doing the study
   - The aim of the study
   - The background text should be concise and be between 1-3 sentences

3. **Methods Section**: The method section should emphasize the following details:
   - It should clearly explain what was done
   - The specific population studied should be explained
   - What methods have been used -Quantitative or qualitative, should be stated
   - The time from and duration of the study
   - Maximum of 3-8 sentences to be used.

4. **Results Section:** The results section should obviously delineate the results. It should explain the following:
   - Describe your main findings with data
   - Summarise how the results connect to the study or hypothesis
   - Avoid such statements as – 'to be completed' or 'to be presented'
   - Non-significant difference should also be reported
   - Maximum of 3-8 sentences to be used

5. **Conclusion Section**: The conclusion, should explain the major findings and why they are important with respect to the study. It should include the following information:

- It should describe the primary insight or the take-home message
- Conclusions should flow naturally from the previous sections and should be reasonable, and supported by the findings
- Such statements as 'the results will be discussed' should be strictly avoided as concluding statements
- Maximum of 2-3 sentences to be used

The content of the abstract will be based on the subject of research. However, there are some basic guidelines which could prove useful to students:

- Thoroughly read the instructions for abstract submission.
- Prepare well in advance and don't wait till the last day.
- Present findings with data and statistics; leave speculations and conclusion for the discussion section.
- Use active voice in all writings, e.g. 'We examined…We tested…We found…'.
- Use abbreviations only when necessary and only after writing out the terminology on the first reference. Use only those acronyms which have already been properly defined
- When finished, read the abstract aloud to get a sense flow and clarity and to catch errors. Be sure to do a 'human' check for spelling, grammar, and punctuation; don't rely on spellcheck programs alone.
- Keep a strict watch on the word count limitation
- Allow someone experienced to review the abstract and ask for constructive feedback and see if it is clear and understandable.
- Score your abstract against the conference scoring criteria.

Once the Abstract is Accepted, How is the Work Generally Presented?

Once the abstract is accepted, the same may be presented in any of the three ways:

1. Poster
2. Podium
3. Lecture

Most abstract submission guidelines require the presenter to specifically state whether the submission would be done for a podium or a poster. The type of presentation is determined by the subject and its relevance to the broad goals of the conference goals and the process of scoring during the review.

The process of the lectureship is different from the other two. Posters may be in the standard paper formats or a moderated (electronic) poster. Moderated posters or electronic posters include a short verbal presentation of the project. Electronic posters involve the projection of the poster on a computer or television monitor instead of printing it on paper to hang for display.

In the case of Podium presentations, each presenter is allowed 15 minutes to verbally present the work along with figures and slides. The sessions are presented subject-wise and in each session, three to five presenters speak on the subject.

What Are the Key Considerations in Developing and Executing a Presentation?

There are certain things which need to be kept in mind while developing and executing a presentation. Here are a few useful tips in this regard:

1. Review formatting guidelines before starting to work.

2. Be consistent with fonts, bullets, justification, indentation, and point size.

3. Limit the use of all capitals and italics.

4. The content and organization should reflect the sections of the abstract.

5. When reporting data, the best fit as far as a visual representation for the information is concerned, should be selected:

   a) Bar graphs show trends, similarity, or differences among groups of information.

   b) Line graphs demonstrate change over time for a group of data.

   c) Pie charts represent parts of a whole.

Check Your Progress

1. How is data presented in bar graphs?

2. What are the different sections of an abstract?

5.3   PRESENTATION OF DATA IN ABSTRACTS

For any abstract or actual presentation, the use of figures and graphs are very useful. As far as an abstract is concerned, the user may be restricted to the extent of the short presentation but for a full-fledged presentation, the tool is extremely useful.

Care has to be taken to ensure that there is no repetition of data in the text or table.

If information and data can be clearly put across to the audience without the use of a figure or graph, then no illustration is needed to be cited. However, there

are situations where only the proper use of a figure or graph can illustrate complex relationships succinctly that written word may fail to convey.

There are some dos and don'ts regarding the use of illustrations in abstracts, posters, and papers.

Information collected through research efforts can be best organized through the use of data tables. The available raw data allows the reader to quickly identify what kind of information is available and quickly see where important results are located.

Data tables should never be too complicated and should be self-sufficient by itself. For easy understanding, it is always more useful to break the large table into several smaller ones. Utmost care should be exercised while using data in an abstract. In abstracts, per se, space is limited, so the illustration in the table is meager, but making the font too would make readability a challenge.

The most important data has to be carefully selected for the purpose of placing tables and figures in the abstract. The table or figures should constitute no more than one-third of the space assigned for abstract. Usually, only one table or abstract should be included in an abstract. The choice of table or figures should be such that it succinctly puts across the essential information which can otherwise not be expressed in words.

There are three main forms of data presentation and are discussed in the following section.

Textual

Textual data is the presentation of data in the form of texts and paragraphs. This is useful in describing the key findings of the research.

Any discussion on data presentation begins at the point where it is raw, unedited, and in a vague form, and that is the textual form. In such a presentation, the data is in plain text and in a paragraph form. This is used when the quantum of data is less.

This kind of presentation is best suited when we need to supplement qualitative statements with some data. The data we are looking at here is not for presentation in large tables or diagrams, rather it should be a statement that supplements qualitative evidence and serves the purpose of acquainting the reader with the scale of the phenomenon.

For example, 'the 2001 earthquake proved to be a mass murderer of humans. As many as 10,000 citizens have been reported dead'. In order to present the data in a textual form, substantial reading is necessary as the quantitative statement just serves as evidence of the qualitative statements. One has to go through the entire text before concluding anything.

Data Tables or Tabular Presentation

Tabular presentation is used for comparing data using the table format. This is always an effective way of depicting links and relationship between different data sets. Tables accompanied with descriptive details work the best.

Tables facilitate representation of large amounts of data in a presentable, easy to read and organized manner. The organization of data is done in row and column format. This is a popular and oft used form of data presentation. Tables are easy to construct and read.

Data Table Components

The following are the components of data table:

- **Table Number**: Every table is depicted with a unique and specific table number for ease of access. This number may be referred anywhere in the text and it leads us directly to the data mentioned in that particular table.

- **Title**: Tables must contain a title that clearly tells the readers about the data contents, the place of study, the time period of study, and the nature of the classification of data.

- **Headnotes**: A headnote typically displays more information about the table. Generally, headnotes present the units of data in brackets at the end of a table title. Headnotes also aid in the purpose of a title.

- **Stubs**: Stubs are the titles of the rows in a table. They display information regarding the contents of the row.

- **Caption**: Just as stubs depict what is contained in a row, the caption does the similar things for the column. It indicates the information contained in the column.

- **Body or Field**: The body or field is the total actual content of the table. A table is made up of a set of cells in a row-column formation and each cell contains an item in the body.

- **Footnotes**: Footnotes are very rarely used and if used they supplement the title of the table if required.

- **Source**: If data used in the table has been derived from a secondary source then the same needs to be acknowledged. This source has to be mentioned before the footnote.

Construction of Data Tables

Here are some basic tips regarding the construction of a good table:

- The title should be in accordance with the objective of the study and provide a quick insight into the table.

- While comparing two rows or columns in a table it is always a prudent practice to keep them close to each other.

- If the rows in a data table are longer then the stubs can be placed on the right-hand side of the table.

- As a practice, the headings should always be in a singular form. For example, 'package' must be used instead of 'packages'.

- Footnotes are to be used only if absolutely essential.

- Size of columns should be uniform and symmetrical

- Headings and sub-headings should never use abbreviations.

- Clear specifications of units should be done above the columns

Example of Tabular Presentation

First data needs to be classified and accordingly, the tabular presentation is to be done. Data is classified as qualitative, quantitative, temporal, and spatial.

Qualitative Classification

Data in a table is classified on the basis of qualitative attributes under this classification process. Where data contained attributes cannot be quantified like rural-urban, boys-girls and so on. It can be identified as a qualitative classification of data.

Sex	Urban	Rural
Boys	200	390
Girls	167	100

Quantitative Classification

In quantitative classification, data is classified on basis of quantitative attributes.

Marks	No. of Students
0-50	29
51-100	64

Temporal Classification

Temporal classification is about data being classified on the basis of time. Thus, when data is mentioned with respect to different time frames, we term such a classification as temporal.

Year	Sales
2016	10,000
2017	12,500

Spatial Classification

When data is classified according to a location, it becomes a spatial classification.

Country	No. of Teachers
India	139,000
Russia	43,000

Advantages of Tabular Presentation

The tabular presentation has its inherent advantages. They are as follows:

- **Ease of representation**: A data table can accommodate a large amount of data and is the simplest form of data presentation.

- **Ease of analysis**: Data tables are frequently used for statistical analysis like calculation of dispersion and central tendencies.

- **Helps in comparison**: Tabular presentation of data facilitates comparison as it becomes easy to compare each value. Placing comparable data in rows and columns, next to each other helps in accomplishing this.

- **Economical**: Data tables can be easily constructed, and it is one among the more efficient ways for data presentation. It is always easy on the eyes of a reader. However, the most important fact is that saves time as well as space.

Errors in Graphical Representation

Graphs are the best way to display data, however, it is often that authors make mistakes which are overlooked by editors. The mistake pertains more to style than content.

The first common error is connecting discrete points with a continuous line. For instance, if vital capacity was measured at a time gap of 4 hours with a set of patients, it is incorrect to connect these distinct points, as by so connecting the points it implies that the representation is of continuous data, whereas in fact, no one knows what the vital capacity values may have been between the measurements.

A graph's axes can affect the reader's analysis visually. This in effect can enhance or degrade their understanding of the significance of the data. Expressing small changes as percentage change from baseline can make insignificant changes to appear as significant.

Statistics should always be performed on actual values and not percentages. Any change in axes, in the form of truncation, enlarging, or compression can make a graph look confusing and may mislead. Sometimes axes are compressed or truncated to save on space, however, sometimes it is done to increase the likelihood of acceptance of the abstract or paper.

Example of Effective Graphical Representation

Given below is an example of an ideal graphical representation. It is from a paper on the efficacy of oyster reefs as natural breakwaters.

The important points on which the graph scores over other less precise graphs are:

- The informative title that immediately conveys what to expect in the graph from the graph.

- The axes are clearly labelled.

- The key clearly identifies what each element in the graph stands for.

- A figure legend at the bottom draws the reader's attention to the graph's key point.

- A note at the bottom acknowledges the source.

- The graph is 2-dimensional, with no clutter.
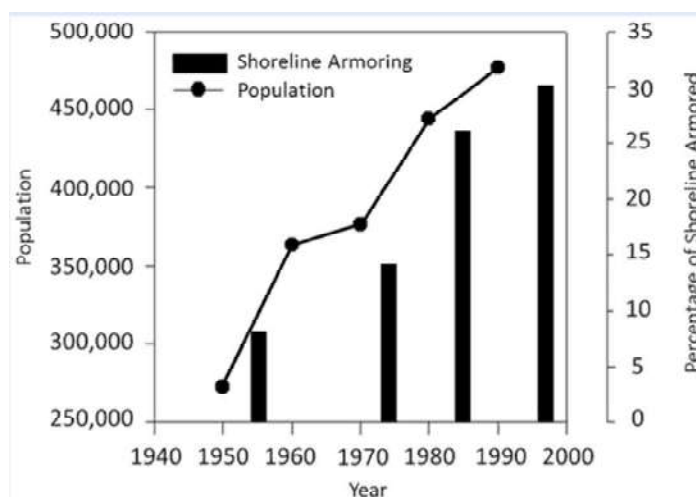
Fig. 5.1 *Population Growth and Shoreline Armoring in Mobile Bay, Alabama*

Figures and tables are powerful visual tools meant to communicate what it meant to be conveyed in a professional manner. It helps to attract and sustain the interest of readers, and efficiently present large amounts of complex information. Editors and reviewers will always go through these graphs before they begin their process of assessment and review and hence the importance of good graphical presentation cannot be exaggerated.

Summary

The whole purpose of using tables, graphs, and illustration in abstracts is to enhance the understanding of the reader and not in any way lead to any kind of confusion. The space of abstracts is limited and has, therefore, to be used with care. A single table, or figure should suffice and this will ensure more efficient use of space that is required in a manuscript.

Posters and papers have more scope and space for illustrations, however, redundancy is to be avoided. Often large tables are further broken down into multiple tables to enhance readability. Graphs should be lucid and represent facts. They should under no circumstance mislead the casual reader to assume that a difference is significant when it is actually not so.

There are a lot of books which can be referred to for learning more about graphs, figures, and tables, - Scientific Style and Format, by the Council of Biology Editors (now the Council of Science Editors) and the American Medical Association's, is one such book. The Manual of Style delineates whether specific data is better represented by table or figures and also provides insight about the organization of data, alignment, and positioning of data, format, numbering, captioning, axis labels, and production and reproduction of bar graphs, decision trees, digital images, flow charts, logarithmic scales, pie charts, and scatter plots.

Specific Inputs for Research Papers

We have had a detailed analysis of the various facets of abstract writing and the various components of abstracts in detail. It is expected that students now have a good insight into what is required for writing professional abstracts.

From writing abstracts to actual research paper there are a lot of important things which need to be looked into more thoroughly. The following sections will help students to build on what they have already learned. The effective use of tables and figures in research papers cannot be exaggerated and hence the following sections will highlight how it needs to be approached.

Tables, figures, and graphs (or display items) play a very important role in enhancing the quality of the manuscripts. They can be utilized to represent the sizeable numerical or statistical manner in a manner which is both time and space effective. Readers are often drawn towards tables, figures, and graphs as they perceive them to be easier to comprehend as compared to reading a verbose commentary regarding the content. Readers rightly assume that the visual details will provide them with a larger amount of information in a more efficient manner and in a shorter span of time.

While the manuscript is being screened, these visual representations of data offer reviewers and journal editors a quick overview of the study findings. Once the document is published, the readers too do the same. However, it needs to be kept in mind that the tables, figures, and graphs add value only if they are to the point and sufficiently informative.

The different visual tools available with authors let them plan and convey detailed results and trends in a clear and concise manner. Tables, figures and graphs are therefore an integral part of a research paper as they are well organized and help in comprehension and interpretation of research findings.

It is of utmost importance to remember that while precisely constructed tables, graphs, and well-researched figures enhance the value of the research paper, the opposite can confuse readers and cause the paper to become defective.

Producing good tables and figures require a lot of planning and it begins at the conception level of the actual manuscript. Here are some guidelines for effective use of tables and figures in research papers:

- Check specific guidelines of the journal to find if they limit the number of tables and figures and also specify design layouts.

- Decide on the best-suited option – tables, figures, text or graphs

- Follow laid down guidelines to ensure that tables and figures are well-designed.

How to Choose Between Tables, Figures, And Text to Present Data

Use a table	Use a Figure	Use Text
To show many and precise numerical values and other specific data in a small space.	To show trends patterns and relationships across data sets when the general pattern is more important than exact data values.	When the data to be presented is not extensive or complicated.
To compare and contrast data values or characteristics among related items.	To summarize the results of the research.	Where data is limited and can be displayed in a simple two by two matrix.
To show the presence or absence of specific characteristics.	For visually explaining the sequence of events, procedures and/or physical characteristics.	When the data to be presented is peripheral or insignificant to the study, or is irrelevant to the findings from the main study.

General Guidelines Related to Presentation of Tables and Figures

The following are the general guidelines related to the presentation of tables and figures:

- Ensuring that the display items are self-explanatory.

- Avoid repetition, reference is fine; the text should draw the reader's attention to the significance and key points of the table/figure without repeating the same.

- Be consistent in approach.

- Give clear, informative titles.

- Adhere to journal guidelines; the target journal's instructions regarding a number of tables and figures, the style of numbering, titles, image resolution and file formats should be strictly followed.

Guidelines for Tables

The general guidelines related to tables are as follows

- Repetitive tables have to be combined.

- While presenting large amounts of information, divide the data divide into appropriate and unambiguous categories and present them in columns titled accurately and descriptively.

- Keep a watch on the extent of data so that does not turn out to be too cluttered or long.

- The table should not look messy and unorganized, so it is necessary to de-clutter the table. Sufficient spacing between columns and rows should be allowed.

Guidelines for Figures

The general guidelines related to figures are as follows:

- Ensure image clarity

- Use legends to explain the key message

- Label all important parts

- Be specific and include scale bars in images and maps, specify units wherever quantities are listed, include legends in maps and schematics.

Check Your Progress

3. How is data in a table classified?

4. What are the advantages of using tables, figures and graphs in data?

5.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. In bar graphs, data is presented using bars which are rectangular in shape and depicts quantity on its length axis. Such type of graphs helps people to compare quantity by looking at the length or height of the bar.

2. The different sections of an abstract are as follows:

   a) The Title

   b) Background Section

   c) Methods Section

   d) Result Section

   e) Conclusion Section

3. Data in a table is classified on the basis of qualitative attributes under this classification process. Where data contained attributes cannot be quantified like rural-urban, boys-girls and so on.

4. Tables, figures, and graphs (or display items) play an important role in enhancing the quality of the manuscripts. They can be utilized to represent the sizeable numerical or statistical manner in a manner which is both time and space effective. Readers are often drawn towards tables, figures, and graphs as they perceive them to be easier to comprehend as compared to reading a verbose commentary regarding the content.

5.5   SUMMARY

- Presentation of data in the correct form is very important. The significance of good presentation is that it helps in quick interpretation and in a meaningful manner.

- Data research is about the form of facts, images, measurements, and results. Data can be in the form of numerals, visuals, and textual.

- Data which is collected and compiled can pertain to an object or a person. The data in its original form is known as raw data.

- Presentation of data is the crux of communication research as objectives are clarified with supporting pieces of evidence.

- In bar graphs, data is presented using bars which are rectangular in shape and depicts quantity on its length axis.

- Multiple bar graphs are used when the researcher wants to compare two or more different data.

- An abstract may be defined as a condensed version or summary of the research study. It is a means to convey what was undertaken to be done, why the particular subject was picked for further study, what were the findings from the study and the broader implications of such findings in relation to its field of study.

- An abstract is an outline of the whole project. It should be well-structured which must comprise of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

- An abstract which is strong and well-structured helps to decide whether a particular study is relevant for a conference or presentation.

- Abstracts should include sufficient information for reviewers to judge the nature and significance of the topic.

- The title is the hook to a subject. It should clearly describe what the abstract is all about. An abstract should be able to trigger interest and encourage readers to want to learn more.

- Most abstract submission guidelines require the presenter to specifically state whether the submission would be done for a podium or a poster.

- Data tables should never be too complicated and should be self-sufficient by itself. For easy understanding, it is always more useful to break the large table into several smaller ones.

- The most important data has to be carefully selected for the purpose of placing tables and figures in the abstract.

- Textual data is the presentation of data in the form of texts and paragraphs. This is useful in describing the key findings of the research.

- Tabular presentation is used for comparing data using the table format. This is always an effective way of depicting links and relationship between different data sets.

- First data needs to be classified and accordingly, the tabular presentation is to be done. Data is classified as qualitative, quantitative, temporal, and spatial.

- Figures and tables are powerful visual tools meant to communicate what it meant to be conveyed in a professional manner.

- The whole purpose of using tables, graphs, and illustration in abstracts is to enhance the understanding of the reader and not in any way lead to any kind of confusion.

5.6   KEY WORDS

- **Abstract:** It refers to an outline of the whole project. It should be well-structured which must comprise of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

- **Body or Field:** It refers to the total actual content of the table. A table is made up of a set of cells in a row-column formation and each cell contains an item in the body.

- **Stubs:** It refers to the titles of the rows in a table. They display information regarding the contents of the row.

- **Textual Data:** It refers to the presentation of data in the form of texts and paragraphs. This is useful in describing the key findings of the research.

5.7   SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the importance of data presentation.
2. What are the various types of graphical representation?
3. Why are abstracts important in research documents?
4. What are the ways in which an abstract can be presented?

5. List the components of a data table.

6. Why are graphs considered as the best way to represent data?

Long Answer Questions

1. Why is presentation of data the crux of communication? Discuss in detail.

2. Explain the various components of an abstract.

3. Analyse the process of abstract writing.

4. Describe any two sections of an abstract.

5. Identify the three main ways of data presentation.

6. Discuss the advantages of tabular presentation

5.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 6   PREPARATION OF POPULAR ARTICLES AND TECHNICAL REPORTS

Structure

6.0   INTRODUCTION

Articles, technical reports, monographs, and house journals are all different kinds of documents with their distinctive characteristics, contents and writing styles.

It is important that technical writers must pay special attention to all the forms of writing and follow an essential guide for producing professional documents. Therefore, it becomes essential that they must have a fair idea about the four different forms of writing. In this unit, the four main forms of technical writing have been discussed. The techniques and tools related to technical writing has been explained. The unit will also highlight the steps related to good writing.

6.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the steps related to the process of writing an article
- Identify the suggestions related to writing a good article
- Explain the meaning of technical writing
- Interpret the techniques of technical writing
- Analyse the tools of technical reports

- Describe the concept of monographs and house journals
- Identify the steps related to good writing

6.2   PREPARATION OF POPULAR ARTICLES

Among the four forms of writing, technical writing or technical reporting is more specialized than the other form of and follows strict guidelines. Since, technical reports are specific to a task, for example, while preparing a manual of standard operating procedures for the petroleum industry, a lot of technical terms has to be included and presented in a manner that combines easy readability with technical instructions.

Articles

A lot of articles are written on innumerable topics by a plethora of people. Some are for the print and web media while others are for either of them. People around the world read the articles for knowledge or out of sheer interest in the topic. However, not all such articles are popular.

So, what makes an article popular or interesting? What is it that captivates the audience while a similar another article on the same subject or topic does not garner any attention?

Well, a good, popular and interesting article needs a lot of planning. The following are the six steps which one must follow while writing an article:

Step 1: Select your topic

Selection of the topic is the first and most important step. Defining the specific thought, feeling, or action that requires to be simulated in the reader is an important aspect for writing a popular article. The area of interest maybe cooking, reading, or following sports and you may choose a topic based on your interest. Studying the topic in further detail for a week or two is a good idea.

If the topic is a general one with a broad area or perspective, it is better to narrow it done so that the focus is fixed, and the subject dealt with is more succinctly conveyed. Instead of writing how to cook a recipe of some popular dish, write about a different recipe for cooking that specific dish which might not be known to most or instead of writing how you can decorate a Christmas tree, write about how you can use articles at home to decorate the tree.

First, write out a rough draft covering all the elements that you may intend to cover. Try not to be too analytical, instead keep the narrative precise, relevant and to the point. Once the rough draft is done, keep it aside for some time.

Step 2: Address the needs of the target audience

In this step, one must look back at the draft which had been kept aside and read it like a reader from the target audience. One must examine that all the questions of the audience should have been answered. If there are some answers which are missing in the article, then list them down and follow the next step.

Step 3: Include useful instruction on the topic

A detailed research will help your article to look more authentic and will be able to deliver all the answers to the target audience. The following kind of information will help you build the article on lines of authenticity:

- Statistics
- Inputs, opinions of well-known people in the field
- Definitions
- Anecdotes (only if it improves the narrative)
- Reference to other media (web, Television or radio)
- Helpful tips, tricks, and tools
- Reference to local venues and events

One must collect all the relevant information and store it suitable in the media or write it down using pen and paper. Carefully keep a record of all the sources from the information was gathered. After this, one must fill the gaps in the article with the required information so that all the probable questions in the mind of the target audience are answered satisfactorily.

Step 4: Revise Draft

Once all the intended information has been incorporated, read and re-read the article again and again. If necessary, revise the draft extensively so that the feel and tone are just right for the target audience. One must also read similar articles in the magazine where you want to publish the article. See if there are rough edges, or the narrative is getting too boring or condescending. Polish the draft further.

Step 5: Read, revise and finalize

Read the second draft aloud. Ask a friend or acquaintance to read it and provide feedback. Ask questions as to whether the article answers all the questions it intends to reply to? Is there anything else which could be added to make it more read-worthy?

Check the article for grammar, punctuation, and simplicity of language in reading and understanding the subject. Finalize the article, rewrite the portions that one may need to change and then submit it to the intended publisher with a covering note.

Some Tips on Writing Good Articles

The following points will help one to write good articles:

1. **Read Well**: Says renowned writer Stephen King – "If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time or tools to write". The more you read the better you get at writing articulately.

2. **Eliminate theUnnecessary**: Redundant and unnecessary sentences, words and paragraphs form clutter. So, avoid them to make it more readable.

3. **Be Unique andUnpredictable**: Being predictable is passé. Try to surprise the target audience with new information, facts and methods and so on. One must include information which they do not know.

4. **Accept Criticism**: Getting criticized is a part and parcel of writing. Rejection happens more often than not. If the criticism is unjustified then just ignore it, one must not take it to their heart. If it is genuine and constructive, learn from it and improve.

5. **Keep Writing**: Quantity will ensure quality. The more one writes, the better it will get. So, it is necessary to continue writing.

6. **Discipline andplanning**: To keep writing in a disciplined manner every day is a good practice for producing quality articles. The approach to writing should always be positive and needs to be done in a planned manner. It is a good idea to create a worksheet and plan the whole process before sitting down to write.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the first step in the process of writing an article?

2. How does an article look authentic?

6.3 TECHNICAL REPORTS

We will in this section discuss the concept of technical writing.

Writing Technical Reports

Every profession has its own specialized form of writing. Doctors, company executives, managers, engineers, policeofficers write specialized reports, and someone has to learn, perform, critique and teach each one.We are living in an information age. People now believe that information can be manufactured in the sense itmust be produced in a format that is usable to a growing number of people.

Technical reports play a crucial role in the presentation of this information to the ever-expanding audience. The approach of writing a technical report is to

present the information through a special kind of text. Text forms vary between 'letters writing', 'form writing', 'article writing', 'speechwriting' and 'report writing'. Computers have ushered in a revolution and have brought about sea changes in the way of writing, especially in case of writing technical reports.

Technical Writing Techniques

The word 'technical' is derived from the Greek word *techne*, which simply means 'skill' so a technical report is a document which is written with skilled knowledge. It needs more practice than intelligence.

Technical writers present information about a product or service to the people who use the product or service. They write user manuals, web pages, online help and graphics and so on. The manuals which one gets with while purchasing software, or the books which come with carsare written by technical writers.

Technical writing is any writing that is geared toward technical and scientific audiences. Ingeneral, technical writers create text for labs, offices, and factories. They write memos,instructions, procedures, lab reports, formal reports, manuals, articles for publication, andgrant proposals. Today, technical writing is not limited to writing on a printed page. Technical writers now must be able to produce written documents, videotapes, slide shows, and a bevy of electronic messages.

Technical writing involves the production of easy-to-use information, usually from the complex, hard-to-understand source material. The resultant technical writing product can be internal (for use within the company) or external (for customers).

Here are a few examples of technical reports:

1. Instructions, Directions - for operating a machine or performing a task
2. A description of a process - operating or manufacturing
3. Company Policies/Procedures
4. Monthly/Yearly Activity Reports
5. Proposals, Feasibility Studies
6. Brochures, Commercial/Advertisement, Job Descriptions
7. Annual report for a large organization
8. Literature review

Objective of Writing a Technical Report

As in the case of other forms of writing, while writing a technical report, the writer has to keep the following things in mind:

1. Audience
2. Purpose

Let us discuss these two main things in detail.

Audience: Audience refers to the target group of people for whom the writing is meant. It could be a generalist, meaning that the technical piece is meant for the public at large, or it may be for either or all of the following groups- managers, operators, technicians, specialists, clients, customers or consumers.

The technical report should factor for the depth of knowledge of the audience, i.e. if the audience is at the basic level or very proficient about the subject. The writer would do well to find out beforehand if the target audience is internal or external.

If the report is meant to be internal, i.e. if it is for managers, operators, technicians then the report should be able to address the core purpose of the person using the report. If it is a more general report meant for the public at large, the content should be basic, with limited use of technical jargon and easy readability.

Purpose: The purpose of writing out the technical report is as important as the target audience. The purpose will determine the tone, content, detailing and language to be used. The writer needs to understand if the report is meant to inform, to educate/train, torecommend, persuade, to sell, to increase reader interest. He or she must have a clear idea as to how he or she wants his or her audience to react and build the report on those lines.

The report can just *inform* without allowing decision making; it could be also in the form of product descriptions, annotated bibliographies, instructions, process documents, or causal analysis reports.

The report can *recommend* by providing relevant information and suggesting action-proposals, feasibility studies, recommendations which may be taken/drawn based on the report.

The report can be *persuasive* by recommending a specific action or conclusion.

To report may *interest* or *sell* by feeding the audience with information to satisfy curiosity. This may be done by conveying the same through brochures, pamphlets, handbills, magazine and journal articles.

Technical Report Formats

Technical reports usually do not require any special manuscript form. The following general instructions should hold good for most such reports:

- The manuscript should be typed on one side of 8½ -by-11-inch.

- Usually,double spacing is preferred. However, single spacing between lines withdouble spacing between paragraphs is standard in letters and is often adopted for reports too.

- The margin at the top should be 2 to 2½ inches on the first page and 1 inch on other pages. Other margins should be: left, 1 inch; right, ¾ of an inch to

1 inch; bottom, 1 inch. If a manuscript is to be bound at the side, the left margin should be increased by ½ or ¾ of an inch. If it is to be bound at the top, the top margin should be increased to 2 inches.

- The beginning of each paragraph should be indented five spaces.

- The title of a paper should be placed on the first page, centered on the first line. It may be entirely in capital letters.If the author's name does not follow the title, then the title may be underlined and written in upper and lower case (capital letters to begin each important word). If the name of the author accompanies the title, it should be centered a double space below the title and should be upper and lower case. There should be three or four blank spaces between it and the text.

- Conventionally, the page number is placed in the upper right corner of each page except the first, from which it is omitted.

- The manuscript should be kept together by bunching them and fastening them with paper clips.

Use of Abbreviations in Technical Style

Technical reports, unlike other documents, use more abbreviations. There are a few rules that technical report writers need to keep in mind when they use abbreviations in their documents.

- Terms denoting units of measurement when preceded by a figure is the abbreviated form of the unit. For example, inch, pound, yard, gallon, kilogram, litre, watt, revolutions per minute. Unless it follows a figure, however, none of these terms is abbreviated. One would write 63 ft, 2300 rpm, 25 hp, 50 cc etc.

- An abbreviation for a unit of measurement is always shown as singular, meaning abbreviations such as lbs, gals should NOT be used, and instead, it is lb and gal.

- A few extremely short terms denoting units of measurement are not abbreviated. Among these arethe day, mile, an acre. Personal observation and laid down convention (if any) are the only way to ensure that the technical report adheres to the standards of theparticular profession.

- Technical reports permit the use of abbreviation; however, it is to be kept in mind that does not mean that arbitrary signs for words may be used. Technical writers write 8 in., not 8"; 12 by 15 ft, not 12' X 15'; percent, not%.

Basic Styles for Technical Reports

For technical reports, it is imperative that the text should be in the third person; the use of 'we' or 'I' is to be strictly avoided.

Using simple sentence is preferred unless the subject requires technical jargon. However, terms unfamiliar to the reader needs to be properly defined. Condense the report systematically and in a structured manner- sentence-by-sentence and paragraph-by-paragraph.

Be quantitative in approach. Avoid using words such as 'a lot', 'very', 'much', and 'significantly', as they are open to wide connotation and hence, not suitable for a technical report.

Tools for Technical Writing

Technical writing is built on the edifice of good writing, editing, and design skills. Besides these, technical writers should acquaint themselves with publishing programs; help authoring tools, web design, and graphics packages.

There are four major types of programs that new technical writers should make it a point to be proficient in:

- Publishing tools
- Graphics tools
- Help tools
- Web tools

The minimum requirement for most jobs today is 'working knowledge' of specific software tools. However, it is important to be an expert in at least one major product and familiar with some of the others.

We will in the following section discuss the three main tools in detail.

1. **Publishing tools:** Publishing tools are the basic tools for technical writers. Those with inadequate skill and exposure in the use of publishing tools cannot expect good breaks. Here are some publishing tools which are used for technical writing:

   - **FrameMaker**: Adobe FrameMaker is the most requested tool in this industry.

   - **Ms-Word**: Though not a true 'publishing' program, MS-Word is a good word-processor despite its inherent limitations. It is the basic tool needed for writing and editing text and the maximum people choose it.

   - **Interleaf**: Not a very common or oft used tool, however, Interleaf has the capability of authoring XML/SGML extensively.

   - **Adobe PageMaker**: Adobe PageMaker tool is used mainly for smaller documentation projects, but great graphics and layout features.

2. **Graphics Tools**: Technical reports need to have some graphics related displays, so the writers are expected to be able to use graphics related software and edit them for use in a manual or help screen.

   - **Illustrator**: The most popular software for technical illustration is Illustrator.

- **CorelDraw**: CorelDraw is another popular drawing program.
- **Adobe Photoshop**: Adobe Photoshop is without a doubt the best graphics photo program in the world.

3. **Web Design Tools:** Technical reports need the writers to be familiar with Web Design. There are a couple of software and mark-up languages, scripting languages that one should know, to be a good technical writer. The examples of some popular web design tools are FrontPage, ColdFusion, and DreamWeaver.

Check Your Progress

3. What is the best approach for writing a technical report?
4. What are the four main programs used by technical writers?

6.4   MONOGRAPH

As a part of the Ph.D. curriculum, research scholars have to submit research papers. These research papers need to be published in leading journals to complete the grades. Published research work enhances a research scholar's reputation and helps him or her to get admissions in reputed varsity. Monographs are the first step towards publishing a research paper in a journal.

What is a Monograph?

A monograph is an approach that combines all the researched information and presents it in the form of a journal or research paper. In this, the researcher can take the liberty of referencing from already accomplished work as a starting building block of its paper.

Jump Start is an approach which is best adopted when fellow researchers work together and provide constant guidance. Here, the research scholar seeks and receives information on a continuous basis from fellow researchers. It goes towards enriching the information pool with comments and inputs from experts. This helps to boost the confidence of the researcher regarding their work and takes a jump to start the writing process.

How to Write a Monograph?

There exists a lot of suitable software that can simulate the process involved in hands-on project work and can produce possible results. Information related to the research work is available in the form of 'Mfiles' on the internet and after minor modifications, these files can be uploaded in the software. The result provided will act as a building block towards writing the paper.

By following the mentioned steps, the researcher can write all major constructs of the research paper, and then compile them to form complete research for Peer review.

Identify, Research and Collect Idea

Among the first steps that needs to be undertaken before proceeding with any research-related writing is to organize the thought process and evaluate the viability of the same. This may be done using the following means:

- Read already published work in the same field.
- Searching the World Wide Web on the topic of the research work.
- Gather first-hand knowledge by attending conferences, workshops, and symposiums on the same fields.
- Understand the scientific terms and jargon related to the research work.

Write Down Your Studies and Findings

After the above steps are done with, it is necessary to sit down and put it down in a cohesive and articulate manner. The research work will start to take shape based on the ideas gathered in the above steps. This may be done by pursuing any or all of the following approaches:

- **Bits and pieces together**: As the heading suggests, the information gathered has to be organized in bits and pieces. The same may be combined in the form of a journal or research paper. In this, the researcher can refer already accomplished work as a starting point for the research paper.
- **Use of simulation software**: While downloading the Mfiles on the subject one can get the results organized. With a few modifications, the writer is able to customize the results in such a manner that they can write all major constructs of the research paper and then compile them to form complete research for Peer review.

Improvement as Per Reviewer Comments

Once peer review is done, the writer has to comprehend and analyse the review comments thoroughly. Necessary modifications and additions to the material may be done based on the suggestions by the reviewers. Wherever required, the writer may refer back to the reviewer for clarification regarding the suggestions. It is likely that sometimes a lot of critical comments may be given by the reviewer; in such cases, the best approach is to seek further guidance and improve the writing and presentation. Getting disheartened will not help, so it is best to stay positive and act accordingly.

This brings us to the end of the process. Usually, all International Journals are governed by an intellectual body and they select the most suitable paper for publishing after a thorough analysis of the submitted paper. Selected paper gets

published (online and printed) in their periodicals and get indexed by a number of sources.

Conclusion

Conventionally, a conclusion section is not required. However, conclusions in certain cases could value add by highlighting the importance of the work or suggest its application.

6.4.1 House Journal

House journals are business house publications that communicate to its staff about the salient achievements, activities, and events of the organization. They present the priorities and perspectives in both the commercial and social spheres. The journal also provides space to highlight the achievements of the staff and their families. This helps to foster a sense of well being among employees and they feel wanted by the organization which in turn is reflected in their productivity and loyalty towards the organization per se.

Above all, the house journal is a personality statement addressed to those without the company (customers and competitors). The personality of the journal is, in fact, the personality of the company.

What is the Content of House Journals?

Based on the above-mentioned premise it is easy to understand what kind of material is to be included in a house journal. What is important is to structure the journal in a proper manner and style. Generally, the structure should not be much different from what we see in the reports of newspapers and magazines. The style will, however, differ greatly from that of newspaper journalism. The content may be presented in a very informal style as long as it adheres to the norms of good writing.

What are the Main Aspects of a Good Report?

The start or beginning of a report, known as the lead, is the most significant part of the story. There can be two kinds of lead – hard lead and soft lead.

The hard lead is one which is more direct and comes to the point immediately. The soft lead builds a tempo slowly and creates a mood before breaking the news. Whatever the topic, it must be presented in an interesting manner so that it appeals to the reader.

Narrating the story in a chronological manner tests the patience of the readers and is considered tedious; hence is best to avoid it. The most important facts have to come first, and the rest should follow in the order of importance, i.e. the least important facts should come at the end. This structure, known as the inverted pyramid, increases readability and is always easier for readers to comprehend.

Here is an example of what should and should not be the focus while presenting a news item:

> SPIC's Biotechnology Division participated in the annual flower show organised by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Tamil Nadu at Ooty recently. Mr. Surjit K. Chaudhry, Horticulture Commissioner, was the Chief Guest and inaugurated the show. Mrs. SupriyaSahu, IAS, Collector-Nilgiris, presided.

> SPIC's Manjari range of cut-flowers lent the show their eye-catching brilliance. The novel displays and various contests organised in connection with the show were greatly appreciated. A flower arch and a flower pyramid designed with Dutch roses and Asiatic lilies were the pick of the show.

The report speaks about SPIC's participation in the flower show and how its Manjari flowers stole the show. However, given that the event was a flower show, the reader will be more interested in the kinds of flowers on display, rather than the information about SPIC's participation in the event. The sequence should, therefore, be reversed and should start with -

"SPIC's Manjari range of cut-flowers were the cynosure of all eyes at the annual flower show at Ooty." The other sentences may be re-written in an appropriate sequence.

Every house journal carries a message from the director or president of the organization. For obvious reasons, such messages cannot be restructured or reordered. Often, a report is written following the inverted pyramid structure and the major points are brought to the fore. This report is published by the side of the message and acts a good abstract for the statement. This applies to interviews with the top management in the organization.

What Style of Writing Should Be Used in House Journals?

Most books on writing dwell on the cardinal rule for writing- Keep it Short and Simple. Brevity and simplicity are the hallmarks of good report writing. Being brief and simple does not come easily though. Here are a few tips on effective report writing.

1. **Keep the sentence constructs short**: For easy readability and comprehension, short sentences are the best. In a report, there will be both short and long sentences, but it is best to keep the average length of sentences short.

2. **Avoid the complex, adopt the simple**: Think before you write. There is more than one way to express something. One can say it in simple or complex terms. For better understanding, simple terms are obviously more preferred than complex jargons.

3. **Enrich the vocabulary**: Working on the vocabulary always yields good results. The use of the right word makes a lot of difference. The better the vocabulary, the better the chance of selecting the right word for the situation. Intelligence and vocabulary size go hand-in-hand.

4. **Avoid redundancy**: Repetitive and verbose text can ruin a good article. Extra words need to be avoided. Every word has its own weight and choosing the right word goes a long way in enhancing the beauty of the article.

5. **The right use of Verbs**: The prose should be kept impersonal and in active tenses. The passive verbs often slow down the text and make reading tedious.

6. **Use identifiable terms**: The reader should be able to relate to the writing. It is therefore, imperative that short, concrete words are selected carefully while building on the text. Abstract thoughts and terms make reading a very tedious exercise.

7. **Be immersive from the reader's point of view:** A good writer will always try to engage the reader through immersive writing. They will like it when they can connect or relate to what is written.

8. **Write as youtalk**: The best way to engage a reader is to provide him with a hook to connect. An informal tone sets the stage. As far as practical writing the way we talk helps to connect. Use of words such as 'we' and 'you' should be used freely.

9. **Use variety**: Think up different ways to express a thought. The ability to correctly use the different arrangement of words provides a better choice to the writer to polish their writing.

10. **Express, not impress**: Write to express and not to impress. Readers are not interested in knowing how much you know. They are happier if the expression is right and easy to understand. The writers who make the best impression are the ones who can express the complex in simple.

11. **Check the grammar**: Last but not least, checking for grammatical errors in the document is an important aspect. Incorrect grammar can change the meaning and create doubts in the minds of the reader. It is, therefore, better to be sure that the document is free of all grammatical errors.

Check Your Progress

5. What are the two main kinds of lead?
6. Define the term 'house journals'?

6.5   STEPS TOWARDS GOOD WRITING

In every form of writing be it, article, technical report and house journal and so on proficient in writing is a must. Not everyone has a way with words or presentation skills. However, following certain guidelines, one can easily master the skill of writing well.

Here are some steps which will help in good writing:

Prewrite: Prewriting is the phase which precedes actual writing. Here, there are no laid down rules. One can write or scribble whatever comes to mind. It is quite likely that the writing will not be well oriented or maybe nothing will come to the mind, in such cases let the mind drift temporarily, however, bring it back to the focal point.

Some writers believe in planning beforehand and so create formal outlines. Others jot down points at random. Some start directly and proceed immediately to sentences and paragraphs. There is no single format which can be called the best fit for all situations. The only purpose of prewriting is to get off the block.

After moving on to the actual writing, a writer should review the prewritten material, and delete the parts which are redundant. Next, the material has to be structured and organized, more focused details need to be added. This is also the point in the writing process to begin looking at the audience and purpose.

It is important to remember that since this is the prewriting phase the material should be in a fluid state. This phase is basically for organizing thoughts which need to be included, formulated, developed and modified. Discussing the idea with another person, soliciting feedback, and asking for help from a collaborator, colleague, or guide is a good practice. This helps to brush the loose ends and move to the writing process to the next stage.

Write: Once the prewriting stage is over, the writer is ready to graduate to the next step of actually writing out the article, technical report and journal. The writer takes the material generated by the Prewriting and composes a first draft of the document. The primary focus in this stage is to establish the ideas, compose and impose and structure the material, choose the appropriate Wording, and add one's own style and flavour to the writing. The planning sheet, when used in conjunction with the first draft, acts as reality checks as to how the writing is progressing. This helps the writer to stay focussed.

Proofread and Edit: A first draft is nothing more than a draft and fine tuning it through constant editing and proofreading helps in refining the material. It is like heating and melting gold to remove impurities. A final draft takes a lot of perseverance and many rounds of editing and proofreading.

More often than not even very good writers confess that their first sentence and often the entire first paragraph they write is trash. Typos and grammatical

errors can plague even good writers,and, in such cases, proofreading becomes all the more important.

Hence, Proofreading and Editing are an integral part of the writing process. Proofreading involves reading and re-reading the document thoroughly for spellings, grammar, and technical issues. Only after proofreading and editing are done, the report should be passed on to a reader.

The following are useful steps, to be followed for refining the document:

1. **Step One:** The first step is to read the document thoroughly for the continuity and flow of ideas and wording.

2. **Step Two:** Go through the written document, sentence-by-sentence and word-by-word. Look for grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors

3. **Step Three:** Do a reverse read; reading the document from the last sentence backward, sentence-by-sentence. Ensure that each sentence is complete and does not leave a thought or idea hanging in a fragmented manner.

Editing: The process of editing starts once proofreading is complete. Editing is far more encompassing than a mere correction of spelling and grammatical errors, it includes adding words, sentences, paragraphs, and ideas wherever necessary and deleting redundant material. It is also about structuring the document in the most appropriate manner. Once the process of editing is done, a fresh round of proofreading is necessary. This helps to maintain continuity and enhance readability.

Rewrite: After all additions, deletions have been done and structural changes to the document have been made, it is time to rewrite the document as a fresh and clean draft. Following the above steps, one can finally prepare to pitch for the final document. A lot of practice and a disciplined approach make the process easier.

Conclusion: With every passing day, there are changes which are coming in. Most documents are now in electronic mode only. Most user manuals and online help documentation are nowadays coming in electronic form using word-processors. It is the same with procedural and reference material. Publishing them on the web increases ease of access and search.

Writers no longer limit their efforts to create and edit written text; they perform a wide array of tasks. From planning to designing, of multimedia content and testing those for new documents are also done by these writers.

A writer is now capable of creating sophisticated print publications using desktop publishing programs, various tools, and graphics applications. More sophisticated computer hardware enables writers to directly publish online documents on the World Wide Web or hard media such as pen drives, for global consumption.

As in any other field, writing too is the result of perseverance of determination and unwavering focus. There is nothing magical about writing.

7. Why is proofreading necessary after the process of editing?

8. What is the prewriting phase?

6.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The first step in the process of writing an article is the selection of the topic. Defining the specific thought, feeling, or action that requires to be simulated in the reader is an important aspect for writing a popular article.

2. An article can look authentic if detailed research is carried out by the writer. It must also deliver all the answers to the target audience.

3. The best approach for writing a technical report is to present the information through a special kind of text. Text forms vary between 'letters writing', 'form writing', 'article writing', 'speechwriting' and 'report writing'.

4. The four main types of programs used by technical writers are as follows:

    (a) Publishing tools

    (b) Graphics tools

    (c) Help tools

    (d) Web tools

5. There can be two kinds of lead – hard lead and soft lead. The hard lead is one which is more direct and comes to the point immediately. The soft lead builds a tempo slowly and creates a mood before breaking the news.

6. House journals are business house publications that communicate to its staff about the salient achievements, activities, and events of the organization.

7. Proofreading is necessary after the process of editing as it helps to maintain continuity and enhance readability.

8. Prewriting is the phase which precedes actual writing. Here, there are no laid down rules. One can write or scribble whatever comes to mind. It is quite likely that the writing will not be well oriented or maybe nothing will come to the mind, in such cases let the mind drift temporarily, however, bring it back to the focal point.

6.7 SUMMARY

- Among the four forms of writing, technical writing or technical reporting is more specialized than the other form of and follows strict guidelines.

- It is important that technical writers must pay special attention to all the forms of writing and follow an essential guide for producing professional documents.

- Selection of the topic is the first and most important step. Defining the specific thought, feeling, or action that requires to be simulated in the reader is an important aspect for writing a popular article.

- A detailed research will help your article to look more authentic and will be able to deliver all the answers to the target audience.

- Once all the intended information has been incorporated, read and re-read the article again and again. If necessary, revise the draft extensively so that the feel and tone are just right for the target audience.

- Technical reports play a crucial role in the presentation of this information to the ever-expanding audience. The approach of writing a technical report is to present the information through a special kind of text.

- Technical writers present information about a product or service to the people who use the product or service.

- Technical writing involves the production of easy-to-use information, usually from the complex, hard-to-understand source material.

- Audience refers to the target group of people for whom the writing is meant. It could be a generalist, meaning that the technical piece is meant for the public at large, or it may be for either or all of the following groups- managers, operators, technicians, specialists, clients, customers or consumers.

- The purpose of writing out the technical report is as important as the target audience. The purpose will determine the tone, content, detailing and language to be used.

- Technical reports permit the use of abbreviation; however, it is to be kept in mind that does not mean that arbitrary signs for words may be used.

- For technical reports it is imperative that the text should be in the third person; the use of 'we' or 'I' is to be strictly avoided.

- Technical writing is built on the edifice of good writing, editing, and design skills. Besides these, technical writers should acquaint themselves with publishing programs; help authoring tools, web design, and graphics packages.

- Publishing tools are the basic tools for technical writers. Those with inadequate skill and exposure in the use of publishing tools cannot expect good breaks.

- Technical reports need to have some graphics related displays, so the writers are expected to be able to use graphics related software and edit them for use in a manual or Help screen.

- A monograph is an approach that combines all the researched information and presents it in the form of a journal or research paper.

- Jump Start is an approach which is best adopted when fellow researchers work together and provide constant guidance.

- House Journals are business house publications that communicate to its staff about the salient achievements, activities, and events of the organization.

- The start or beginning of a report, known as the lead, is the most significant part of the story. There can be two kinds of lead – hard lead and soft lead.

- Proofreading involves reading and re-reading the document thoroughly for spellings, grammar, and technical issues. Only after proofreading and editing are done, the report should be passed on to a reader.

- Editing is far more encompassing than a mere correction of spelling and grammatical errors, it includes adding words, sentences, paragraphs, and ideas wherever necessary and deleting redundant material. It is also about structuring the document in the most appropriate manner.

6.8 KEY WORDS

- **Audience**: It refers to the target group of people for whom the writing is meant. It could be a generalist, meaning that the technical piece is meant for the public at large, or it may be for either or all of the following groups- managers, operators, technicians, specialists, clients, customers or consumers.

- **Jump Start**: It refers to an approach which is best adopted when fellow researchers work together and provide constant guidance.

- **Monograph**: It refers to an approach that combines all the researched information and presents it in the form of a journal or research paper.

- **Technical Report**: It refers to a document which is written with skilled knowledge. It needs more practice than intelligence.

6.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Why is it necessary to revise a draft?

2. What are the considerations to be kept in mind while writing an article?

3. How does technical form vary?

4. What are the formats of technical reports?

5. List the technical styles of technical reports.

6. What are the main aspects of house journals?

Long Answer Questions

1. What are the steps related to the process of writing an article. Explain in detail.

2. Discuss the importance of authenticity in an article.

3. Analyse the meaning of technical writing.

4. Describe the techniques related to technical writing.

5. Identify the main objectives of technical reports.

6. Discuss the rules related to the use of abbreviations in technical articles.

7. What are the main tools of technical writing? Describe.

6.10 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 7   REPACKAGING AND REVIEW

Structure

7.0   INTRODUCTION

Repackaging of information is defined as a way in which information is presented in an acceptable and understandable manner. It is readable and in usable form. Information packaging is defined as a way of improving library service. It comprises of economic, literacy, scientific and technical information. It facilitates communication, dissemination and organization and is time saving.

In this unit, the concept of repackaging of information and information packaging has been discussed. The functions of information packaging and the process related to preparing of review report have been discussed. The unit will also highlight the uses of trend report.

7.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of repackaging of information
- Identify the main functions of information packaging
- Analyse the process of preparing review report
- Explain the uses of trend report

7.2   REPACKAGING OF INFORMATION

Owing to technical advancements, the accessibility of information has increased tremendously. Readers have a plethora of information available to them however all of it may not be relevant or in usable form. Although they have electronic access

to a lot of information, they may not have the time and skills to be able to retrieve the information which is relevant to them. Thus, libraries need to include services for providing the information in a desirable form which has been processed to make it more meaningful for the user. One of the services provided by library is repackaging of information. This involves providing the user with consolidated information in a form that is more suitable and useful to the user.

Packaging of information refers to presenting the information in a usable form which comprises of steps such as physical recording, arrangement and presentation of information on a given medium in a given form. For instance, packaging the information in electronic form on a CD. Repackaging of information is the rearrangement of relevant information from the information available based on the specific requirement of the client. It is thus, basically presentation of information in a more understandable, readable, acceptable and usable form from the point of view of the user requirement. It leads to enhancement in the acceptance of the information product as it facilitates assimilation and recall of contents.

The key factor on which the repackaging of information is based is the user or client. Thus, while designing the repackaging it is very important to have detailed information about the user – characteristics, purpose of information and technological literacy level, so that the required information can be designed and repackaged accordingly.

Functions of Information Repackaging

Information repackaging is user centric aiming to provide accurate, comprehensive and timely information to the user. It serves the following functions:

- **Customization**: Customization of information to the need of the user which involves filtering out irrelevant information and focusing on information which will be more useful to the user.

- **Facilitation of dissemination and communication of information**: With the advent of technology, libraries can make the information available to user through various forms such as eBooks, CD's/DVD'sand so on.

- **Retrieve information easily**: A well created bibliography helps the user to easily select material from a sea of material that is available in the library.

- **Anywhere access of information**: Converting of physical books into e-books enables users to access information from wherever they are through the Internet network.

- **Multiple users**: Some specific information/material can be accessed by more than one person simultaneously through digital libraries.

- **Translation tool**: Library users can access information in their preferable language thereby making the library more user friendly.

- **Backup tool**: Information saved in electronic form is a kind or permanent record which can be retrieved when desired.

7.2.1 Preparation of Review Report

Review report is an examination and evaluation of a publication (article, research paper, and book) service or a company, movie and product. A review report is the systematic presentation of the reviewer's findings/opinions/suggestions based on the evaluations conducted. In this section, we will focus on the review report in the context of publications whenever a paper is submitted to a journal for publication it is subjected to a review process by experts in the field to evaluate its quality and consequently its suitability for publication.

The reviewer must prepare a review report based on which decision is taken regarding the paper which could be acceptance of the paper, revision of paper or rejection of the paper. Often the journals have a specific format of the report in which the reviewer mustsubmit his or her evaluation and comments. However, in case no report format has been produced the report can be structured under the following heads:

1. **Summary:** Begin with a brief summary describing what the paper is about and what are the major findings. It is advisable to begin with a positive feedback or focusing on the strength of the paper. Even if you are recommending rejecting the paper, do not overwhelm the author with negative feedback.

2. **Quality of work:** This section would include an assessment of the various aspects of the work by giving detailed comments and suggestions. These would include presentation aspects:

   - **Title:** Is the title adequate, concise andclear? Does the title accurately say what the study was about? If not, can you suggest a different title?

   - **Abstract:** Does it contain the important findings andother essential information of the paper? Does the abstract effectively summarize the manuscript? Will the abstract be understood by a researcher outside your specialty?Does it include enough information to stand alone? Does the abstract contain information that is unnecessary? Is there any information in the abstract that is not in the main text of the manuscript? If present, will the key words help readers to find the article? Are they specific, and do they represent the manuscript content?

   - **References:** Are they in the desired format? Are they appropriate and adequate? Some issues to be considered while creating reference section are enlisted as follows: (Source:https://www.springer.com)

     a) Are there places where the authors need to cite a reference, but haven't? (In general, citations are needed for all facts except those that are well-established, common knowledge; that come from the current study; or that are clearly phrased as the authors' own hypothesis.

b) Do the authors cite all the most relevant previous studies and explain how they relate to the current results? If not, note which references are missing.

c) Are the cited studies recent enough to represent current knowledge on the topic?

d) Do the authors cite the work of a variety of research groups? This is preferable to mainly citing papers from one or two research groups, especially if one of the most cited groups is one the authors belong to (although it is not always possible in very small fields of study).

e) Do the authors cite many review articles? It is better to cite the original studies

f) Are all the citations helpful to the reader? Note any places where the authors seem to be reviewing literature simply to show the depth of their knowledge, or to increase citations of their own previous work

g) Do the authors cite findings that contradict their own (where they exist), as well as those that support their claims? It is important that the authors provide a well-balanced view of previously published work.

- **Structure and Length:** Well structured? Logical flow of information? Too long or too short?

- **Style of writing and Language**: It includes typographical errors.

- **Figures and tables:** Are the figures and tables adequate, relevant and clearly presented. Some additional points to be kept in mind regarding figures and tables are enlisted as follows: (Source: https://www.springer.com)

a) For figures, check that the plotted parameters are clearly defined. Figures and tables should include measures of uncertainty, such as standard error or confidence intervals, as well as the sample size.

b) Table headings and figure legends should be detailed enough so that readers can understand the data without reading the main text.

c) Look for places where data is unnecessarily repeated in figures, tables or main text. The text should point out key findings or trends, not repeat data presented elsewhere. Similarly figures that present a very small amount of data can often be combined with another or deleted and replaced with an explanation in the manuscript text.

d) If a result is not central to the study's aims, it is often acceptable to summarize it but not present the data. However, failing to show important data, or too many instances of 'data not shown', are unacceptable and you can recommend that it be added into the main manuscript.

e) Interesting data that is not needed to support the study's major conclusions might be better presented as supplementary material rather than the main text of the paper; feel free to point out such data in your comments.

f) Feedback on whether the data is presented in the most appropriate manner; for example, is a table being used where a graph would give increased clarity? Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation, and of a high enough quality to be published in their present form?

3. **Technical aspects:** The following are the main technical aspects:

- Novelty and originality including plagiarism

- Importance and impact: contribution to the field

- Completeness

4. **Overall recommendation:** Overall recommendation comprises of the reviewer's opinion on the acceptability of the article. These may take the following form:

- Accepted with no revision.

- Accepted with minor revision in language or content based on comments.

- Major reversion and resubmission for review.

- Rejection of the paper.

It is important that in case of rejection of the paper, the reviewer clearly states the reasons for rejection. A people's language needs to be maintained while writings the report. Similarly, if the paper is good it is important to explain its strengths.

As far as possible, the comments should be constructive so that they are useful to the author for improving the quality of their paper. One must make the comments as comprehensive as possible so that the author makes all revisions in one go otherwise the review process can be very time consuming.

Trend Report

A trend report with reference to library information science is a comprehensive description and explanation of a subject giving chronological account of the research done and current developments subject based on detailed review of publications.

Such reports are designed to help the specialist user to get all the information related to his or her area thus, ensuring productive utilization of his or her time. A documentalist or information specialist with the cooperation of specialist/researcher can carry out this service of creating a trend report. However, the information

specialist should be well equipped with the proper knowledge required for compiling the report. Moreover he/she should be well versed with the sources of information for the subject under consideration. The report between the specialist who will be using the report and the documentalist is also important i.e. the review and approaches of the end user need to be taken into consideration.

A trend report is very useful to the specialist as it provides consolidated information related to a specific area thus, facilitating the research process. A trend report should have the following characteristics:

- It should be a comprehensive coverage of literature.
- It should be directed towards the subject.
- It should be an in-depth analysis of the subject.
- The material should be presented in a concise and compact manner.
- It should serve as an addition to the information data usage.

Progress Report

Unlike a trend report, a progress report is an assessment that takes place during a project that conveys details on what has been accomplished so far. They are used by the management to determine whether changes are necessary to an ongoing effort.

Check Your Progress

1. What is a review report?
2. How is a trend report useful to the specialist?
3. What are the main technical aspects?
4. State any one merit of repackaging of information.

7.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. A review report is an examination and evaluation of a publication (article, research paper, and book) service or a company, movie and product.

2. A trend report is very useful to the specialist as it provides consolidated information related to a specific area thus, facilitating the research process.

3. The following are the main technical aspects:

   (a) Novelty and originality including plagiarism

   (b) Importance and impact: Contribution to the field

   (c) Completeness

4. Repackaging of information leads to enhancement in the acceptance of the information product as it facilitates assimilation and recall of contents.

7.4 SUMMARY

- Packaging of information refers to presenting the information in a usable form which comprises of steps such as physical recording, arrangement and presentation of information on a given medium in a given form.

- Repackaging of information is the rearrangement of relevant information from the information available based on the specific requirement of the client.

- The key factor on which the repackaging of information is based is the user or client. Thus, while designing the repackaging it is very important to have detailed information about the user – characteristics, purpose of information and technological literacy level, so that the required information can be designed and repackaged accordingly.

- Information repackaging is user centric aiming to provide accurate, comprehensive and timely information to the user.

- Customization of information to the need of the user which involves filtering out irrelevant information and focusing on information which will be more useful to the user.

- With the advent of technology, libraries can make the information available to user through various forms such as eBooks, CD's/DVD'sand so on.

- A well created bibliography helps the user to easily select material from a sea of material that is available in the library.

- Converting of physical books into e-books enables users to access information from wherever they are through the Internet network.

- Some specific information/material can be accessed by more than one person simultaneously through digital libraries.

- Library users can access information in their preferable language thereby making the library more users friendly.

- Information saved in electronic form is a kind or permanent record which can be retrieved when desired.

- Review report is an examination and evaluation of a publication (article, research paper, and book) service or a company, movie and product.

- A review report is the systematic presentation of the reviewer's findings/opinions/suggestions based on the evaluations conducted.

- The reviewer must prepare a review report based on which decision is taken regarding the paper which could be acceptance of the paper, revision of paper or rejection of the paper.

- It is important that in case of rejection of the paper, the reviewer clearly states the reasons for rejection.
- A trend report with reference to library information science is a comprehensive description and explanation of a subject giving chronological account of the research done and current developments subject based on detailed review of publications.
- A documentalist or information specialist with the cooperation of specialist/ researcher can carry out this service of creating a trend report.
- A trend report is very useful to the specialist as it provides consolidated information related to a specific area thus, facilitating the research process.

7.5 KEY WORDS

- **Packaging of Information:** It refers to presenting the information in a usable form which comprises of steps such as physical recording, arrangement and presentation of information on a given medium in a given form.
- **Repackaging of Information:** It refers to the rearrangement of relevant information from the information available based on the specific requirement of the client.
- **Review Report:** It refers to the systematic presentation of the reviewer's findings/opinions/suggestions based on the evaluations conducted.
- **Trend Report:** It refers to a comprehensive description and explanation of a subject giving chronological account of the research done and current developments subject based on detailed review of publications.

7.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What is the basis of repackaging of information?
2. Why is information packaging user-centric?
3. What are the aspects related to quality of work?
4. How is a review report prepared?
5. What are the main uses of trend report?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the process of packaging and repackaging of information.
2. Discuss the main functions of information packaging.

3. Interpret the structure of a review report.

4. Analyse the characteristics of trend report.

5. What are the various forms of recommendation? Discuss in detail.

7.7 FURTHER READINGS

Gordon, H. M. and Walter J. A. 1986. *Technical Writing* 5th ed. London: Holt.

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UNIT 8 OVERVIEW OF THE EDITORIAL PROCESS

Structure

8.0 INTRODUCTION

In the world of publishing, editors are like pilots who guide the magazine, newspaper, or journal to its logical conclusion. While performing the duties of an editor, one needs to be thorough about the editorial tools that are available for use and have an expert idea about style manuals.

Proofreading is another area which though is not directly under the scope of an editor's work, has substantial significance in the area or field of work of the editor. However, the role and responsibilities of an editor are vast and multifaceted. For each of the elements in the publishing chain, the editor has a defined role and a different set of responsibilities that needs to be adhered to.

In this unit, the editorial process and various types of editorial tools have been discussed. The style guides and their uses have been highlighted. The role of an editor, tools available to him or her, his or her responsibilities and other related issues have been dwelt upon at length. The unit will also explain the responsibility of a proof-reader and newspaper and magazine editors.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the editorial process

- Explain the uses of various editorial tools

- Analyse the concept of style manual

- Identify the main types of style guides and manuals
- Interpret the meaning of bibliography
- Identify the main responsibilities of a proofreaders and editor

- Discuss the role of newspaper editors and magazine editors

8.2 EDITORIAL PROCESS: AN INTRODUCTION

The editorial process comprises of all the activities which are associated with editing. The process of editing comes to an end when a book takes from the point of conception to completion. The editorial process consists of four major stages. The processes, per se, are the same across publishers; however, they are known by different names at different places and can create some confusion in the mind of students. The stages are as follows:

- Rewrites/Revisions/Substantive Edit
- Line Edit/Substantive Edit/Content Edit
- Copyedit
- Proofreading

We will in the following section discuss these stages in detail.

1. Rewrites/Revisions

Rewrites and revisions are the hallmarks of good writing. The aim of any book, article, report, or any document is to remain relevant to the topic and bring out the essence of the matter under discussion. In order to get the document into just the right form, it is imperative to do multiple revisions. This suggestion to revise or rewrite comes from the editor.

Suggestions by agents and editors can be drastic to the extent that an editor can advise the author to reducethe book to half its content and change its focus. In such cases, the writer has to do a lot of work to get it ready for the proposal stage.

The editing will start only after the manuscript has been accepted in-principle and that will almost in all cases depend on the quality of that final draft which has beensubmitted to the publisher.

2. Line Edit/Substantive Edit/Content Edit

After the first stage, the manuscript is subjected to more intense scrutiny. The editor takes a closer look at the document/book closely. In case the editor again suggests major changes, substantive rewrites may need to be done. The situation is analogous to a mechanic taking apart an engine and closely inspecting the parts, and then putting it all back together again.

Again, the quality of writing will decide whether this stage will be light or heavy. Whatever it is, the author needs to trust the editor about his or her feelings and have faith in his or her desire to make the book better.

This stage can sometimes be a platform for negotiation. It is so because it is the author's name which will adorn the top of the book, and the editor should not dictate the content to such an extent that the author loses his voice. The editor is there to facilitate, it is ultimately a partnership.

3. Copyedit

The stage of copyediting can be accomplished with the help of a freelancer or can be done in-house. The nature of work associated with copyediting can be best described in the words of a publisher who calls it 'The Grammar Police'.

The copyeditor's responsibilities include checking for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and consistency. If the book's content is such that many unusual spellings are used (like characters with Polish names),it is a good idea to provide a separate document with the manuscript detailing the background, so that the copyeditor is aware that the words are to be spelled that way. Overall the key to a good document is its consistency.

This edit is more about a special skill. The document is not being read for content but to weigh each word and assess that they convey what is meant to be conveyed.

This phase can also be a place for negotiation. However, if one disagrees with the editor, he or she should be equipped well to defend their manuscript.

4. Proofreading

The proof-reader's job is to look at every letter and punctuation mark for perfection. The line editor examines the paragraph for content, and the copy editor weighs every word for accuracy, but the proof-reader goes down to the macro level to ensure that the document is absolutely error free.

Like copyediting, proofreading also requires a special skill. An expert proof-reader can spot punctuation errors in a seemingly perfect document.

Error Free Publishing

The whole process of editing is for the purpose of making the book or document absolutely error free with no typos, punctuation or grammatical errors. However, despite the best efforts and good intentions of all people connected with the process, there are chances that inadvertent errors creep in.

In such situations, it is a wise choice to make a note of such errors, (whether self-discovered or pointed out by other readers) page number, line number, and error type wise and inform the publisher immediately about the same.

The publisher usually maintains a file for every book and when it is time to reprint the book they can go in and correct the error.

8.2.1 Editorial Tools

Editorial tools are utilities which make the process of editing more organized. The modern-day world of technology has changed the ways most of the things were done in yester-years. The individual editing skill and acumen of a good editor become enhanced with the use of various tools available.

Overall, the editing process has now become efficient and effective because of the editorial tools. These tools make the job easier and allow one to do things which could not be imagined being done, a few years back.

Writers and editors now have their own personal and professional choices as regards to editorial tools. Some such tools are immensely popular and appear in the possession of most authors and editors. These tools are beautiful in the sense that it allows forming a collaborative relationship.

Some of the most widely used editorial tools in the world of writing and publishing are as follows:

- **Tool#1 Google Docs**: For a long time, Microsoft Word was about the only choice that writers and editors had for doing all the necessary chores. All that changed with the appearance of Google Docs in 2012.

  Google Docs makes formatting of documents easy and its inbuilt auto-save option saves as you type, which means you do not have to hit the save button every few minutes. The main advantage of Google Docs is that it allows collaborative work. A team can work on a single Google document simultaneously without having to bother what someone else has written or edited.

  The sharing option in Google Docs allows one to add specific people to the document with either full access or restrictive access. One may be allowed to read and view without being allowed to edit while others may be assigned permission for commenting but not editing. It is also possible to circulate a shareable link of the document with all collaborators.

- **Tool#2 WordPress**: One of the most recommended tools in the field of editing is WordPress. Those of you who have seen TED talk shows will be surprised to know that TED runs on WordPress. This tool is easy to use, very inexpensive (free basic plan) and can sync and integrate with loads of plug-ins and applications such as CoSchedule. The WordPress-CoSchedule combination is one of the most potent combinations for editorial excellence.

  WordPress comes with numerous colour themes, built-in social sharing capabilities and is immensely flexible while being customized for individual editing needs. WordPress also provides excellent customer support. So, with WordPress one has a winning editorial tool.

- **Tool#3CoSchedule**: CoSchedule is a tool that is used to schedule editorial calendar and assign tasks around client projects. This editorial calendar has excellent syncing capabilities. If one is using WordPress, they can easily sync it with CoSchedule to plan, write, schedule and publish their material.

  CoSchedule can also be synced with Google Docs, Evernote, Chrome, Google Analytics, and many other applications for integration. Basically, CoSchedule helps to all the content, which is created and edited, to one place.

- **Tool#4 Scrivener**: Scrivener is a more sophisticated form of Google Docs. This tool is useful for those who are seriously into structuring their book and not any general content. It is a useful tool for writing or editing project as Scrivener has an extremely focussed and organized approach.

  A book project can be broken down to scenes and sub-scenes with metadata, such as title, mode, and target word count using Scrivener. This tool allows one to import any research material which needs to be included.

- **Tool#5 Workflowy**: It is a well-structured outline that is needed to be creative, then Workflowy is the answer. It is one of the best tools for this purpose (of course Google Docs also has this capability) since it allows one to create lists and summaries in an organized and neat manner.

The lists can be short and brief or can be big or even gigantic; allowing the creation of lists with sub-lists and sub-sub-lists within those sub-lists. One can input the title of the article and then break it down to subheadings and sections and even further break it down with another set of subheadings and sections. This is, therefore, a great way to structure the topic even before writing a word about it.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the four main stages of editorial process?

2. State the aim of any article, book or report.

3. What is the main advantage of Google Docs?

8.3 STYLE MANUALS

A style manual is a handbook or guide that illustrates how and in what form sources (references) need to be cited in articles, theses, and term papers.

Why is it Necessary to Cite Sources or References?

Citing sources and references goes on to prove that research has been done using authoritative sources. Besides, not acknowledging sources and reference can put people in trouble for plagiarism. Moreover, bibliographies provide further reading lists and help to guide the reader of the paper to additional relevant material on the topic.

What are the Different Types of Styles?

There are a lot of different style guides and manuals. The following are the major styles that are used in the world of writing:

- **Associated Press Style (AP)**: Associated Press (AP) is the most used style by journalists and news writers. AP style was originally written with the news wire in mind, so symbols are special formats like italics are kept to a minimum. An example of this is writing Latin names in straight AP style without an accent.

- **Chicago Manual Style (CPS)**: The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) is used in the world of book publishing. This is however not the preferred style for academic and scholarly publishing. It is used in History though.

- **Modern Language Association (MLA) Style**: The Modern Language Association (MLA) style is used widely and exclusively in the world of academics. It is the most preferred style for humanities and literature. This is the first style which is introduced to undergraduates and students.

- **American Psychological Association (APA) Style**: The American Psychological Association (APA) style is used in the fields of social sciences subjects such as psychology, sociology, education, and politics. The APA style is sometimes used in engineering and business-related papers also, but instances are less.

- **Turabian:** Turabian style is named after its creator Kate Turabian, who wrote about the style in her book. This style is used for academic research related writing for various subjects. The style has similarities with the CMS style and many students are advised to use this style.

Other Writing Styles

Other than mentioned styles, the following styles are used by specified institutions or subjects:

- **The American Medical Association (AMA)**: The style by The American Medical Association is the go-to manual for health, biology and medical related subjects with some exemptions. The AMA style guide is printed by the Oxford Press and is currently in its 10th edition.

- **The National Library of Medicine (NLM)**: The National Library of Medicine style guide is an online style guide for certain AMA disciplines.

- **The Council of Science Editors Manual (CSE)**: Natural sciences such as Biology use this style manual-The Council of Science Editors Manual.

- **The American Chemical Society Style Guide (ACS)**: The style guide is specifically for chemists and is known as The American Chemical Society Style Guide.

- **The American Sociological Association (ASA)**: Somewhat similar to the APA, The American Sociological Association (ASA) is specifically used for sociological-oriented disciplines.

- **Bluebook**: Bluebook citation is used in the legal profession.

- **Harvard Style**: Harvard style is not a published style guide but is used as the Author-Date style citation.

Summary of Style Usage

The following sections shows a general breakdown of the different styles and where they are used:

- AAA:Anthropology
- APA: Business, Education, Psychology, and other Social Sciences
- ASA:Sociology
- Chicago (Documentary-Note Style): Literature, History, and the Arts
- Chicago (Author-Date System): Physical, Natural, and Social Sciences
- CSE:Science
- MLA: Literature, Arts and the Humanities
- Turabian: History

8.3.1 Bibliography

A bibliography can be described as a list of sources – books, journals, dissertations, theses, government publication and website used for reference by an author in a particular work. Depending on the style typically used for the writing, the bibliography may be referred to as the 'reference list' or the 'works cited'. Bibliographies are placed at the end of a book or chapter.

Annotated Bibliography

There is a slight difference between a bibliography and annotated bibliography. In the latter kind of bibliography, the bibliographical information is followed by a brief description of the content, its relevance as a source and the quality of the source.

How to Write Bibliography?

Using the APA (American Psychological Association) style guide, document type-wise examples of a bibliography are provided below. Students may closely notice

the use of punctuation and the use of italics and underline in the publication title (either italicized or underlined, not both). The look of the bibliography will change with the change in the style guide adopted.

Books

Books follow the mentioned format:

Format: Author Last Name, Author First Name. (Publication Year) Title. Publisher's City: Publisher. Page numbers.

Example: Alexander, Carol. (2001) Market Models: A Guide to Financial Data Analysis. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons. pp. 200-220.

Periodicals

In the case of periodicals, the publisher city and name are removed, and the title of the article and the volume or issue number of the periodical is added.

Format: Author Last Name, Author First Name. (Publication Date—could be more than a year) "Article Title." *Publication Title, Vol. #.* (Issue #), Page numbers.

Example: Salman, William A. (July-August 1997) "How to Write a Great Business Plan." *Harvard Business Review* 74. pp. 98-108.

Web Versions of Printed Material

Web sources are by nature always time-sensitive. It means that web content can change on a daily and even hourly basis and it is therefore important to include the day of retrieval and the URL from which the material has been quoted. It is necessary to be included in the retrieval statement.

The same modality is to be followed for citing online versions of print publications. This connotes that if a book is being quoted then the book format will be followed by the retrieval statement. Similarly of a periodical is being used as a source, the periodical format is to be followed by the retrieval statement.

The format for online versions of print publications should basically follow the same format as above, meaning if you are referencing an online book, you should follow the book format with the addition of the retrieval statement. If you are referencing an online periodical, you should follow the periodical format with the addition of the retrieval statement.

While citing from the web page, it is important to note that the Internet address of the link is not to be broken. In cases where the URLs a very long, the retrieval code may only be removed (The retrieval code usually consists of a long string of unintelligible letters and numbers following the end point 'htm' or 'html.' Remove everything that occurs after that point to shorten.)

Format: Author. (Date of Internet Publication—could be more than a year) "Document Title." *Title of Publication*. Retrieved on: Date from Full Web Address, starting with http://

Example:Grant, Linda. (January 13, 1997) "Can Fisher Focus Kodak?" *Fortune*.
Retrieved on August 22, 1997 from www.pathfinder.com/@@ctQzLAcAQQIIP/
fortune/1997/970113/kod.html

Check Your Progress

4. Why is it important to cite sources and references?

5. What is the Turabian style?

8.4 PROOFREADING

Those familiar with the world of writing, editing and publishing must have heard about proofreading. Even in the world of daily writing at an academic level or official front, the professor or the boss will always insist that thorough proofreading must be done before submitting work.

Proofreading and editing differ in nature in the sense that the former is not an in-depth analysis of the written matter. In simple terms the definition of proofreading is as follows:

> Proofreading is the process of reviewing the final draft of a piece of writing to ensure consistency and accuracy in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and formatting.

What is Traditional Proofreading?

Conceptually proofreading might connote different meanings for a publisher as against a university student. For those associated with the publishing industry proofreading is about an opportunity to revise a manuscript before it is finally cleared for printing and published.

The proof-reader compares the proofs of the manuscripts with an eye for details like formatting, headers and page numbers which are to be included in the final edition. The proof-reader thus, has to ensure that no errors have crept in while formatting the manuscript.

Most people, while referring to proofreading, understand it to be the process of checking a document for inadvertent grammatical errors, formatting or typographical errors. Proofreading is the last frontier that a manuscript must successfully cross in order to be eligible to be published, submitted for assessment to the professor, or otherwise shared with the intended audience.

Nature of Errors Identified and Corrected During Proofreading

The point at which a document or manuscript is taken-up for proofreading is when it is otherwise ready. This means that the document's content has been planned, written, edited and revised to the extent that it is otherwise ready to be published or handed over, as the case may be.

Proofreading, being the last frontier has to look for errors big, small or tiny. At this time, the document is already edited, and it is ensured that the manuscript as a whole makes sense. A disjointedlywritten document, however well crafted, will make no meaning, so the editormakes sure that the sum total of all the parts of the final document is a cohesive piece and is fit to be handed over to the intended recipient or publisher (if it is going to be printed and published).

It is here that the proof-reader steps in and goes about finding errors. It is his or her responsibility to see that the final document is error free from the grammatical, word-usage, punctuation, formatting and typographical point of view. It is also to be ensured that the guidelines of the chosen style format have been strictly adhered to.

Traditional proof-readers may do more than one round of proof checking if the situation so demands. However, if they feel that the changes require are too extensive then they may send back the document for another round of editing. Generally, the cost of proofreading is not much, so more than one round of such checking is always a viable option.

Inference

Proofreading may have been assigned less importance than editing; however, it is an important step when preparing a document which is to be read by other people. Errors, even if inadvertent can create wrong impressions and is likely to be viewed as unprofessional. A good proof-reader will make sure that the final document is of the best quality.

8.4.1 Role of an Editor

The editor is a person with a critical eye for detail and has a way of his or her own with words and language. Editors read through manuscripts, polish them and add value by refining and enhancing the text. An editor plays the role between the author and the reader. Whatever the writerdoes not mean that it will necessarily reach the reader, the editor steps in to cut out the irrelevant and inaccurate and gives the reader the finished product, i.e. the published book, journal or article.

Editors usually work for print publications, websites or a combination of the two. They may also be on their own and do freelance work.

The specific role of the editor will depend largely on the company or publication they work for. In most cases, the editor is responsible for developing content ideas, and assign stories to individual or team of writers. They also involve themselves in reading content submissions and check for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. Editors are also responsible for verifying the authenticity of a story and the background of facts and figures used in a story.

The editor is the one who will provide a go-ahead for a piece of writing or book and it is only after this clearance that the material will get published. In the print media, the editor will also be required to work with an art director to decide on layouts and send the approved versions to the press for final printing.

Not long ago, editors used pen and paper to go about their job, not anymore, nowadays editing is almost entirely computer-based. Editors of today need to be totally social-media-savvy, as that is how they will be able to promote their publication or website. Editors require being proficient in multimedia, expertly handling graphics, audio, and video.

What Are the Different Types of Editors?

Like any other profession, editors need to work their way up in their career. At the lowest rung, an editor is assigned copy editing and proofreading texts for errors in punctuation grammar and spellings. They may also be involved in correcting the style and modifying the text as per editorial norms while also checking for accuracy and authenticity of the facts.

At the next round in the editorial career-model, is the Assistant Editor. Assistant Editors are assigned special topics such as arts and local news. They assign stories to writers and reporters and do the first edit of the article.

At the top of the heap is the managing editor that is typically responsible for the daily operations of publications or web portals. The Managing Editor reports directly to the editorial chief. The editorial chief runs the editorial department and is responsible for anything or everything that is published by the publication or website. They can hire employees and plan budgets and campaigns.

What are the Responsibilities of an Editor?

The role of the editor varies from the form of publication – book, journal and website, the nature of work – scientific journal or book, statistical or government publications and also the publishing house, newspaper office or web portal. However, by and large, the basic nature of responsibilities broadly remains the same. However, some of the roles and responsibilities may overlap.

The editors have responsibilities primarily towards the following set of entities:

- The author who provides the material
- The peer reviewers who comment on the suitability of manuscripts for publication
- The readers
- The owners and publishers
- The public at large

We will discuss these entities in detail in the following section.

Authors

Authors are the mainstay of any writing endeavour. The editor's first responsibilities are towards the author and this is awarded the highest level of importance as because they are the source of every form of writing.

Editor's Responsibilities towards Authors

The following are the main responsibilities of the editors towards the authors:

- Issuing guidelines to authors for planning, preparing and submitting manuscripts

- Providing the policies on authorship criteria of the publication

- Treating all authors equally – in courtesy, transparency, honesty, fairness, and objectivity

- Drawing up policies on what will constitute a conflict of interest for all related parties including officers, authors, staff, and reviewers

- Protecting the confidentiality of the document with respect to the authors.

- Establishing and facilitating an effective system of peer review.

- Communicating editorial decisions in an efficient and speedy manner so that they are clear and constructive.

- Co-ordinating with editors and referees for smooth processing of manuscript without any undue delay.

- Issuing clear guidelines for authors regarding acceptable practices for sharing experimental materials and information, particularly those required to replicate the research, before and after publication

- Implementing, and reviewing policies on a regular basis for handling ethical issues and allegations or findings of misconduct by authors and anyone involved in the peer review process.

- Developing mechanisms, in cooperation with the publisher, to ensure timely publication of accepted manuscripts

- Clearly communicating all other editorial policies and standards

Peer-Review

The next interest group towards whom the editor has defined responsibilities are the reviewers. Editors are responsible for monitoring and ensuring the fairness, timeliness, thoroughness, and civility of the peer-review editorial process.

The most common form of peer review is accomplished by assigning the job of review to external referees with the proper expertise. This ensures that positive value addition is done to improve the quality of the manuscript. In certain cases, the editor may not want an external referee to review the document simply

because the external referees may not be aware of the policies and rules followed by a particular publishing house. In such cases, review is done in-house.

Peer reviewers invest a lot of time in reviewing the material or manuscript. Time is of the essence for reviewers, they are simultaneously engaged in such activities and hence, need to know exactly, what is expected of them. Therefore, extremely important to clearly define their responsibilities. The editor needs to do that and also needs to implement processes that ensure a smooth peer review to the furthest extent possible.

Editor Responsibilities towards Reviewers

The following are the responsibilities of editors towards the reviewers:

- To assign papers for review to reviewers appropriately, as per their interest and expertise
- To issue clear guidelines regarding confidentiality of document and a specific timeline for completion of review and submission.
- The editor has to ensure, by issuing appropriate guidelines, that the reviewers will not use any part of the document, or take advantage of the document in any form, before publication or submission of the document to the appropriate authority.
- The reviewers may be made aware by whatever means, about the expectations regarding the scope, quality, content, and timelines for reviews. This is for ensuring a fair constructive and informative review.
- Requesting that reviewers identify any potential conflicts of interest and asking that they recuse themselves if they cannot provide an unbiased review
- Ensure that the reviewers are allowed reasonable time for completing their review and also that they are not overtaxed with too many reviews at a time.
- Publicly acknowledging the reviewer's contribution and also providing them with opportunities to work on the editorial board or offer professional education credits.

Readers

Editors have the onerous task of educating readers too. A rational and prudent approach towards editorial decisions will ensure that the best content is selected, and the readers are enriched by the same.

Editor Responsibilities towards Readers

The following are the responsibilities of the editor towards readers:

- To evaluate manuscripts in the right spirit so as to ensure that the reader can draw necessary inferences from the author's conclusion.

- Provide references and author related information so that readers may be able to satisfy specific queries that may arise while going through the writing.

- Identifying individual and group authorship in unambiguous terms and authorship criteria has been met and verified to the best of the editor's ability and knowledge.

- Disclosing sources in entirety.

- Creating mechanisms to determine if the journal is providing what readers need and want.

- Ensuring that authors accept the responsibility for the final published material to the extent of their contribution.

- Disclosing all relevant potential conflicts of interest of those involved in considering a manuscript or affirming that none exist.

- Working with the publisher to attract the best manuscripts and research that will be of interest to readers.

- Maintaining the document's internal integrity (e.g., correcting errors; clearly identifying and differentiating types of content, such as reports of original data, opinion pieces.

Ownership

A publication's ownership may be with professional societies or associations, foundations, universities, hospitals, research institutions, libraries, governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, or commercial publishers.

Editor Responsibilities towards Publishers

The following are the responsibilities of editors towards publishers:

- Conducting peer review of submitted manuscripts.

- Complying with the guidelines and procedures of the owner organization, including any terms specified in the contract with that organization.

- Making recommendations about improved evaluation and dissemination of all material.

- Adhering to the owner's and publisher's fiscal policies towards the publication, so as not to encroach upon editorial independence.

- Adhering to the agreed-upon mission, publication practices, and schedule.

The different responsibilities referred to mentioned apply more or less to all types and forms of documents and publications. However, there are certain variations in the form and content of certain publications such as newspaper and magazines.

The following section provides a brief description of the role played by editors in newspaper and magazines.

Newspaper Editors

Newspapers come in different forms and content. Newspapers cater to different interests from the news, general topics to special-interests such as business, economy, technology, employment and communications. Some of these may be daily; others may be weekly or fortnightly. The special interest papers re more news-driven than feature driven, as in magazines.

Every editor of a newspaper is flooded with the material; they reject most and retain only a few. The larger the newspaper's circulation and area of coverage, the greater is the number of inputs. Every newspaper has a space budget, just as in case of the monetary budget, this constraint decides the allocation for advertisements and articles. The printed pages have to be divided accordingly and advertisement is the lifeline of any newspaper, they must be assigned priority. The remaining space is allocated to different departments for their respective stories assigned by the key editors.

Which news item is to be retained and which to be discarded is the absolute prerogative of the editor. The deciding factor for any piece of news finding a place in the newspaper is 'newsworthiness'. However, here again, the subject of newsworthiness is a subjective topic and depends on the way the editor views it. In general, newsworthy stories are those that offer the most information on a subject about which people are most concerned about.

There are some segments of news which might not be considered to be important enough to be released on a weekday. In such cases, the news item may appear on the weekend edition when there are more space and less emphasis on breaking news. Editors often have to encounter situations where an article needs to be pulled at the last moment or an advertisement insert is withdrawn by the client at the time of going to press. In such eventualities, the editor has to manage the space as per the need and this has to be done within a defined timeline. At the end of the day, it is the editor's call as to what goes and what does not in the next edition of the newspaper.

News items which get pulled more often than not end up in the editor's trash can, while in some cases they may find a place in subsequent issues of the newspaper.

Magazine Editors

Editors of magazine operate in somewhat the same line as that of newspapers, with different departments, space budgets, and advertisement. However, there are some major differences between newspapers andmagazines.

In the case of magazines, the time span of visibility of a news item is much greater. A particular magazine might not use the news item for a few months but ultimately when it does appear, it stays much longer than a newspaper – a fortnight or even a month. The release of the news could be within a week or two or maybe after six months.

Unlike newspapers, magazine formats work on a focus area. They are therefore more focussed in their approach than newspapers. Every month the magazine's editors decide on the focus area for the particular magazine, if it is a computer related magazine then the focus area could be the launch of new technology in computer monitors. In such a case the magazine could showcase what the new PC manufacturers are thinking and the upgraded products that they are going to launch. 'Format' refers to the manner in which the editor of the magazine chooses the news and information to be presented. It is usually a mix of regular columns, articles, cover stories, shorter pieces, and editorials (opinion pieces). Magazine stories need not be news-oriented as in newspaper stories. To a greater degree, magazines create news through researches rather than relying on current events.

General-interest caters to a larger audience and segment of the population (e.g. India Today). Contrary to this special-interest magazine target a niche group of the population who share a particular interest along with associated activities or concerns.

The editor will choose a feature, article or piece depending on the impact it is expected to have on the target audience. The more appeal the news item has for the target audience; the more likely it is for the editor to select the same for publishing. The key factors are editorial relevance and appeal to the publication's target audience.

The job of an editor encompasses a large area and from the start to finish of an editorial career people gain a lot of experience by interacting with authors, publishers, reviewers and the public at large.

Check Your Progress

6. How is proofreading different from editing?

7. What is the most common form of peer review?

8.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The four main stages of editorial process are:
   (a) Rewrites/Revisions/Substantive Edit
   (b) Line Edit/Substantive Edit/Content Edit
   (c) Copyedit
   (d) Proofreading

2. The aim of any article, book or report is to remain relevant to the topic and bring out the essence of the matter under discussion.

3. The main advantage of Google Docs is that it allows collaborative work. A team can work on a single Google document simultaneously without having to bother what someone else has written or edited.

4. It is important to cite sources and references in our work as it goes on to prove that research has been done using authoritative sources. Besides, not acknowledging sources and reference can put people in trouble for plagiarism. Moreover, bibliographies provide further reading lists and help to guide the reader of the paper to additional relevant material on the topic.

5. Turabian style is named after its creator Kate Turabian, who wrote about the style in her book. This style is used for academic research related writing for various subjects. The style has similarities with the CMS style and many students are advised to use this style.

6. Proof-reading and editing differ in nature in the sense that the former is not an in-depth analysis of the written matter. Proof-reading is the process of reviewing the final draft of a piece of writing to ensure consistency and accuracy in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and formatting.

7. The most common form of peer review is accomplished by assigning the job of review to external referees with the proper expertise. This ensures that positive value addition is done to improve the quality of the manuscript.

8.6 SUMMARY

- The editorial process comprises of all the activities which are associated with editing. The process of editing comes to an end when a book takes from the point of conception to completion.

- Rewrites and revisions are the hallmarks of good writing. The aim of any book, article, report, or any document is to remain relevant to the topic and bring out the essence of the matter under discussion.

- The stage of copyediting can be accomplished with the help of a freelancer or can be done in-house.

- The copyeditor's responsibilities include checking for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and consistency.

- The proof-reader's job is to look at every letter and punctuation mark for perfection. The line editor examines the paragraph for content, and the copy editor weighs every word for accuracy, but the proof-reader goes down to the macro level to ensure that the document is absolutely error free.

- The whole process of editing is for the purpose of making the book or document absolutely error free with no typos, punctuation or grammatical errors.

- Editorial tools are utilities which make the process of editing more organized. The modern-day world of technology has changed the ways most of the things were done in yester-years.

- Google Docs makes formatting of documents easy and its inbuilt auto-save option saves as you type, which means you do not have to hit the save button every few minutes.

- WordPress comes with numerous colour themes, built-in social sharing capabilities and is immensely flexible while being customized for individual editing needs.

- CoSchedule is a tool that is used to schedule editorial calendar and assign tasks around client projects. This editorial calendar has excellent syncing capabilities.

- Scrivener is a more sophisticated form of Google Docs. This tool is useful for those who are seriously into structuring their book and not any general content.

- Workflowy is one of the best tools as it allows one to create lists and summaries in an organized and neat manner.

- A style manual is a handbook or guide that illustrates how and in what form sources (references) need to be cited in articles, theses, and term papers.

- A bibliography can be described as a list of sources – books, journals, dissertations, theses, government publication and website used for reference by an author in a particular work.

- There is a slight difference between a bibliography and annotated bibliography. In the latter kind of bibliography, the bibliographical information is followed by a brief description of the content, its relevance as a source and the quality of the source.

- Web sources are by nature always time-sensitive. It means that web content can change on a daily and even hourly basis and it is therefore important to include the day of retrieval and the URL from which the material has been quoted.

- Proofreading and editing differ in nature in the sense that the former is not an in-depth analysis of the written matter.

- Proofreading is the last frontier that a manuscript must successfully cross in order to be eligible to be published, submitted for assessment to the professor, or otherwise shared with the intended audience.

- In most cases, the editor is responsible for developing content ideas, and assign stories to individual or team of writers. They also involve themselves in reading content submissions and check for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

- Authors are the mainstay of any writing endeavour. The editor's first responsibilities are towards the author and this is awarded the highest level of importance as because they are the source of every form of writing.

- The most common form of peer review is accomplished by assigning the job of review to external referees with the proper expertise.

8.7 KEY WORDS

- **Bibliography**: It refers to a list of sources – books, journals, dissertations, theses, government publication and website used for reference by an author in a particular work.

- **CoSchedule**: It refers to a tool that is used to schedule editorial calendar and assign tasks around client projects.

- **Journal**: It refers to a newspaper or magazine that deals with a professional activity or a specific subject.

- **Style Manual**: It refers to a handbook or guide that illustrates how and in what form sources (references) need to be cited in articles, theses, and term papers.

8.8 SELF ASSESSSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the main responsibilities of a copyeditor?
2. Write a short note on the importance of error free publishing.
3. How is annotated bibliography different from a bibliography?
4. Write a short note on the role of a magazine editor.
5. Why are web sources always time-sensitive?
6. What is the main role of an editor?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the process of editing in detail.
2. What are the various types of editorial tools? Discuss any two in detail.
3. Describe the major style guides used in the field of editing.
4. Analyse the role and responsibilities of a proof-reader.
5. Discuss the responsibility of an editor towards author and readers.

8.9 FURTHER READINGS

Gordon, H. M. and Walter J. A. 1986. *Technical Writing* 5th ed. London: Holt.

James, H. S. 2010. *Handbook of Technical Writing*. NTC Business Books.

Richard, W. S. 2008. *Technical Writing*. New York: Barnes and Noble.

Santhosh Gupta.2000. *Research Methodology and Statistical Techniques*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd.

Lancaster F.W. 1976. *Information Retrieval Systems*, Ed-2. New Jersey: Wiley.

Kumar, Krishan. 1973. *Research Libraries in Developing Countries*. Noida: Vikas Publishing House.

UNIT 9   USE OF STYLE MANUALS

Structure

9.0   INTRODUCTION

Every style manual has its own distinctive features and is guided by their own set of rules. Conventionally, the choice of style depends on the subject and also on the different types of documents. are a lot of style manuals available for students; however, among those available, the most popular are the American Psychological Association (APA) style, the Modern Language Association (MLA) style and the Chicago style. The AMA and the Harvard style also find a lot of takers. Among the others, there are styles which are used very specifically in subjects like medicine, science and law.

In the modern-day world programs such as Zotero and in-built tools make a lot of difference to our writing endeavours; they make the process of citing sources convenient and almost entirely hassle-free. The plug-in and open source programs like Zotero and capabilities of the Word in constructing bibliographical referencing will go a long way in understanding the finer nuances of referencing without having to apply much effort.

Style guides help to cite references. It may be reiterated that in the absence of proper referencing and acknowledgment, writers may be accused of plagiarism which can cause great damage to the prospect of the project report and the career of the student. In this unit, the layout and formatting has also been discussed so that students have the feel of the actual citation.

In this unit, the meaning and uses of style guides have been discussed. The guidelines related to the American Psychological Association, Modern Language Association, Chicago Manual Style have been explained in detail. The unit will also analyse the ways in which bibliography is written using different programs.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the meaning of style manuals
- Discuss the uses of various style manuals
- Explain the sections of the American Psychological Association (APA)
- Analyse the formatting of books under Modern Language Association or MLA
- Describe the guidelines related to the Chicago Style and the Notes and Bibliography (NB) system

9.2 OVERVIEW OF THE USE OF STYLE MANUALS

In order to understand the term 'style manual', it is important to understand the meaning of style. Style has been defined as a particular, distinctive, or characteristic mode of action or manner of acting.

As per convention, a defined structure or pattern of writing is preferred for a particular kind and form of writing. Such structure helps in maintaining uniformity in writing and design rules. A particular style form will have its own set of formatting styles for citations and bibliographies.

Therefore, a style guide is a formalized methodology for writing documents, so as to ensure consistency in writing and presentation. These rules which form the style guides are decided by specific organizations or publications. All these rules are periodically reviewed so that they are relevant, and they address contemporary trends.

Choice of style will vary between document types, publications, and organizations. Some subjects have a distinctive choice of style, for example, *Chicago* is the preferred style for the *History* subject. Similarly, *APA* is the style for publications which publish Comparative Political Studies.

The Style Manual

Style manuals are guides for better writing and presentations. It comprises of rules and suggestions for presenting the subject in a structured manner. The rules contained in the manual are in the following areas:

- Manuscript Structure
- Writing Suggestions
- Grammatical Mechanics
- Data and Table display rules

- Citation guidelines
- Examples on referencing

Different Types of Style Manual

There are different kinds of style manuals; however, most writers need to know two to three styles for their regular use. For students of library science, it is essential to know the basic nature of each of the different style forms and where they are suitably used.

The basic tenets of the different forms of styles are discussed in brief in the following section.

Major Style Guides

- **American Psychological Association (APA):** The APA or American Psychological Association is a set of rules and standards for use in social sciences such as education, politics, and psychology. This standard was created by the United States National Research Council. The associated manual is the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

- **Modern Language Association (MLA):** The Modern Language Association or MLA style is used mostly for academic and research works in the fields of humanities and literature. The style has two manuals:

  (a) MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing (3rd edition - 2008) – this is the advanced version and is used by graduate students and scholars.

  (b) MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th edition - 2009) – the basic version which is for use by undergraduate students and their teachers.

- **Chicago Manual of Style**: The Chicago Manual of Style was first published by the University of Chicago Press in 1906. This is primarily used particularly by students of History and generally by students of humanities. The basic characteristics of Chicago Manual Style are as follows:

  (a) Notations are represented by footnote or endnote

  (b) The use of reverse indentation in bibliography related entries

  (c) Repeated use of reference sources is done through 'Ibid'.

- **Turabian**: Turabian is very similar to the Chicago Manual of Style. It is named after Kate L. Turabian, who authored the book, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. This style form is used in research work. Academics from various disciplines prefer this style.

Other Writing Styles

There are some other writing styles which are used for specific organizations and subjects. They are as follows:

- **AMA**: The AMA guide is printed by Oxford Press and is the bible for health, biology related subjects and medicine. The AMA format is widely used for citing sources in medical research. Created by The American Medical Association, the AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors is in its 10th Edition.

- **National Library of Medicine** (NLM): The National Library of Medicine (NLM) writing style guide is used in the fields of medicine and kinesiology. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) has presented this style and the relevant information is available in Citing Medicine, 2nd edition.

- **CSE**: The CSE guide provides guidance about citing common information sources in the Council of Science Editor's (CSE) Style Name-Year system. It has three similar kinds of documentation systems, providing the same information but in different formats. The systems are - Name-Year (N-Y) system, the Citation-sequence (C-S) system, and the Citation-name (C-N) system.

- **Bluebook**: The bluebook style is used for citing legal documents in the United States of America. The guide is formally known as The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation. It is now in its 20th edition.

- **ACS**: The ACS Style Guide is a product from the American Chemical Society and is used for writing research papers in Chemistry. The ACS Style Guide edition is of 2006. Each citation has two parts – the in-text citation and the reference list.

- **ASA**: The ASA particular style sheets aim to guide students of Sociology to properly cite and reference their papers. This style is documented in detail in the American Sociological Association Style Guide (4th ed., 2010).

- **Harvard Style**: The Harvard Referencing style is used to cite information sources by University students. There is no published guide specific to this style. The reference should be ideally on a spate sheet of paper, be organized alphabetically by the author, be double spaced and contain the full reference.

We will discuss some of these styles in detail in the next section.

Check Your Progress

1. What are style manuals?
2. What are the two types of styles in Modern Language Association (MLA)?

9.3 VARIOUS STYLE MANUALS

We will in this section discuss the major styles in detail.

American Psychological Association (APA) Style

The APA or the American Psychological Association style of citation is used by the students of social and behavioural sciences. The guide was created by the United States Research Council and the detailed implementation guidelines for this style are contained in the 6th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

General APA guidelines

The write-up should be typed on standard-sized paper (8.5" x 11") in double space. A 1" margin is to be maintained all around. A clear and easily readable font is ideal, and APA recommends Times New Roam Font in size 12 pt.

On top of the sheet, a header should be used. This header is known as the running head. The header should be the shortened version of the paper's title and should not exceed 50 characters. The ideal one will have the page number on the right extreme and the title of the paper on the left.

The essay or write-up should consist of four major sections:

1. **Title Page:** The title page is the page with the title of the paper. It provides the basic data regarding the paper like the name of the author, and the name of the institution under whose aegis the paper is being written. As described above, the header on the title page, the running head is flushed or aligned left and the page number is flushed/aligned right.

   The title should be typed in upper- and lower-case letters and should be centred on the top half of the page. The APA guidelines state that the title should be a maximum of two lines, and 12 words or less. The title should not contain any abbreviations or redundant words which serve no purpose.

   As a standard APA rule, the title page and entire text in the paper should be double-spaced.

   The title should be followed by the author's name – first name, middle name and last name; no titles like Dr. or CA to be used before the name, nor should it be followed by degrees, (like Ph.D.). The author's name will come with the institution's name under whose affiliation the author is presenting the paper.

A sample page is given below for reference:

Running head: PURDUE ONLINE WRITING LAB SAMPLE PAGE

The Purdue Online Wriging Lab's Sample Title Page:

Following the American Psychological Association's Guidelines

Purdue Pete

Purdue University

2. **Abstract:** An abstract of a research paper serves as a prelude to what is to be presented in the paper per se. It is a synopsis and is expected to be between 150 and 250 words.

The abstract should begin on a new page which has the page header embedded at the top (as stated above). The word 'Abstract' should be at the top of the body of the abstract text and it should be centred. No formatting like bold, underline, italics to be used for the same.

The heading 'Abstract' should be followed by a concise summary of the salient features of the research subject. There will be no indentation in the text body. The abstract should contain – the topic of research, research questions, the methods used, results, analysis of data and the conclusions derived.

Often students and research scholars list the keywords of the research paper in their abstract so that other researchers can find the project in databases.

This is done by writing 'Keywords' and indenting it as if starting a new paragraph and then list down the 'keywords' underneath it.

General Guidelines for Organizing APA-style References Lists

As per APA style, 'References' denote the alphabetical list of works cited. While preparing the list of references, the following guidelines may be adopted:

1. Every entry should use hanging indentation (the first line of entry isn't indented, but every subsequent line in the entry is indented five spaces) and all lines are to be double spaced.

2. The list of sources should be arranged alphabetically by the name of the author's, or editor's last name. In cases where there are no authors, per se, the first word of the title (not being a, an, or the) should be alphabetized. Use initials for an author's first and middle names. Instances where there are two or more works by an author, the arrangement will be by date with the oldest work being cited first.

3. Periods, colons, semi-colons, and commas are to be separated by one space.

4. If there are eight or more authors to be cited, then 'et al' may be used; else all authors' names are to be listed. The start will be with the last name and initials to be used for the first and middle names for all authors. Ampersand

(&) should be used in place of 'and' and the names to be separated with commas.

5. The last author's name should be followed by the publication date in parentheses. The final parenthesis should end with a period. In case of books, it is alright to list the year only however for any document/material other than books, like magazines, newsletters, and newspapers, the exact date of publication is to be given (2018, December31). If two works by the same author published in the same year, need to be listed, it should be done by alphabetizing the title.

6. The title of a book should follow after the year of publication. Italics to be used for the book titles and subtitles. Capitalize only the first word and proper nouns in a title or subtitle.

7. Titles of articles need not be in quotation marks or italics, and, only the first word of the article title and subtitle and any proper nouns are capitalized, as with a book.

8. In the case of book citations, it is necessary to include the city and state abbreviation (as the case, country may be) as well as the name of the publisher in book citations. The publisher's name could be shortened, if it's well known and easily recognizable, for example New York: Harper.

9. The use of p. (pp. for plurals) is allowed only preceding page numbers of newspaper articles and chapters in edited books. It is not done for references to articles from magazines and journals. In contrast, parenthetical references in the text of a paper leading to specific pages always include p. or pp.—no matter what type of source.

10. In case of electronic sources use, retrieval information must be given listing the URL, or website address, of the source.

11. Personal communications to be cited only in text citations—they are not to be included in the reference list.

Books, Reference Books, Government Publications

Books

Rovin, J. (1979). The fantasy almanac. New York: Dutton.

Wilson, C., & Grant, J. (Eds.). (1981). The directory of possibilities. New York: Rutledge Press.

Chapter in an Edited Book

Berry, V. (1994). Redeeming the rap music experience. In J. S. Epstein (Ed.), Adolescents and their music: If it's too loud, you're too old (pp. 165- 188). New York: Garland.

Reference Books

If there is no author, the entry should begin with the title and publication date.

Dober, R. P. (1988). Campus planning In the Encyclopaedia of architecture: Design, engineering, & construction (Vol. 1, pp. 527-539). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Government Publications

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (1987). Can herbs really heal? (HHS Publication No. FDA 87-1140). Rockville, MD: Author.

Articles in Scholarly Journals Paginated by Volume

Buckley, C. E. (2006). Golden rule reference: Face-to-face and virtual. Reference Librarian, 45(93), 129-136. DOI:10.1300/J120v45n93 10

Magazines

The date has to be the date shown on publication (day and month for weeklies and month for monthlies). The volume number is to be added after the title.

Armstrong, L., Yang, D. J., & Cuneo, A. (1994, February 28). The learning revolution: Technology is reshaping education—at home and at school. Business Week, 3360, 80-88.

Newspapers

Page numbers must be preceded with p. or pp.

Adande, J. A. (1995, December 10). By George, Buckeye wins Heisman Trophy. Washington Post, p. D1.

Electronic Resources

While citing sources from the Internet, it is a conventional practice to guide readers to get the readers as close to the source as possible for the information being cited. It is, therefore, imperative that as far as possible the specific page or document is to be cited rather than home or menu pages. The listing will follow the same pattern as for a print source. Electronic retrieval information to the maximum extent possible should be cited for others to locate the cited sources. It is only necessary to include the date the information was retrieved if it is likely the source material will change over time (for example, when citing a wiki).

Full-Text Articles from Databases (Ex: Lexis-Nexis Academic, Academic Search Complete, OhioLINK EJC, etc.)

While citing articles (or other relevant material) from a database, the article to be cited as appropriate to the format (i.e. journal or newspaper). The Digital Object Identifier (DOI) in reference if one is assigned. Paris, C. (2008, March). The changing housing system in Northern Ireland 1998-2007. Ethno politics, 7(1), 119-136. doi:10.1080/17449050701847269

Internet Articles Based on a Print Source (Ex: Business Week Online, New York Times on the Web, etc.)

If you have accessed an article on the Internet website (not via a database), cite the article as appropriate to the format of the item (i.e. journal or newspaper), and then add the Web site URL at the end of the citation.

Sadeh, A., Raviv, A., & Gruber, R. (2001). Sleep patterns and sleep disruptions in school-age children. Developmental Psychology, 36, 291-301. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/ journals/releases/dev363291.pdf

Articles from an Internet-only Journal (Article does not appear in print journal or magazine)

Matthews, J. & Wiggins, R. (2001, December 3). Libraries, the Internet and September 11. First Monday, 6(12). Retrieved from http://www.firstmonday.dk/ issues/issue6_12/matthews/index.html

Non-periodical Documents on the Internet

The minimum reference required for citing the Internet source should have a document title, date (publication date or date of retrieval), and a Web address. Where there is no date, use n.d. (no date) when a publication date is not known. It is a good practice to use chapter or paragraph identifiers in the place of page numbers wherever available. For reports retrieved online, identify the publisher as part of the retrieval statement unless the publisher has been identified as the author.

Schwartz, B. (n.d.). Lyme Disease. Retrieved from the Johns Hopkins Arthritis Web site: http://www.hopkins-arthritis.com/other/lyme.html

Association of College and Research Libraries. (2001, April 17). Information literacy competency standards for higher education. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/ informationliteracycompetency.cfm

Benton Foundation. (1998, July 7). Barriers to closing the gap. In Losing ground bit by bit: Low-income communities in the information age (chap. 2). Retrieved from http://www.benton.org/Library/Low-Income/two.html

Modern Language Association or ML AStyle

Modern Language Association or MLA is used for formatting English language writings. This encompasses a system through which writers can reference their sources using parenthetical citations in the Works Cited page of their essay.

Proper use of the MLA style of referencing helps in preventing accusations of plagiarisms being levelled at the writer/scholar. This is done by building credibility by acknowledging their source material. The MLA Handbook, (8th edition) and the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing, (3rd edition), are useful resources for graduates and scholars submitting their thesis.

General Guidelines for Formatting Under MLA

The following are the general guidelines which one consider before formatting a book under the MLA style.

- Document to be typed on a computer and printed on a standard A4 size paper, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.

- All writing to be double-spaced and in a legible font with font size 12 pt. The font should be such that a clear distinction can be made between regular and italic styles.

- One space should be left blank after periods or other punctuation marks unless instructed otherwise.

- Margins on all sides of the document should be uniformly maintained at 1 inch.

- The first line of paragraphs to be indented by one half-inch from the left margin. Tab key to be used instead of the space bar to produce the indentation uniformly as per MLA recommendation.

- The page number should be displayed in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. However, if there is specific instruction from the guide/instructor to omit page number, the same should be followed.

- The titles of longer works should be in italics throughout the document.

- If there are any endnotes, then they have to be included on a separate page before your Works Cited page.

Formatting the First Page Using MLA

- Title page not mandatory; required only if specifically instructed.

- On the first page top left-hand corner, the following information is to be provided in double spacing:

  (a) Name of the student/scholar/researcher

  (b) Name of the guide/instructor

  (c) Name of the course

  (d) Date

- Where the title page is required to be given, the same has to be double-spaced and centred.Standard capitalization is the norm and no special formatting like bold, italics, underline or quotation marks are to be used.

- The title and the first line of the report text should be double-spaced.

Section Headings

Sections headings are used in documents such as reports and thesis papers for improving the readability of the paper.

The section heading could be in the form of chapters, as in books or section names as in essays.

Essays

MLA guidelines specify that an essay is to be divided into sections and depicted by using serial numbers, -with a period, space and the name of the section after the serial number.

An example is given below:

1. Introduction
2. Assumptions
3. Facts
4. Events
5. Conclusion

Books

MLA guidelines do not specify any particular format for headings to be used in books. If there are uniform sections in the book with no further subsections it is recommended that the headings are identical in nature, meaning if short phrases are used in one section, the same should be consistently used throughout.

In case, there are multiple layers of sections, the same should be clearly spelled out for the instructor to understand. Whatever best suits the text layout should be selected and maintained consistently.

Sample multiple section layout is given below:

1.0 Life History
1.1 Early life
1.2 Middle ages
1.3 Retirement
1.4 Post-retirement

Chicago Style

The Chicago Style or The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), deals in a wide range of topics from preparation of manuscript to publication and from the usage and nuances of grammar to documentation.

Two documentation styles are salient in CMOS- the Notes-Bibliography System (NB), which is used in arts, history, and literature, and the Author-Date System which is used in social sciences. The NB system and the Author-Date System are almost the same except for the fact that they vary in form.

The Notes and Bibliography (NB) System in Chicago Style

The Notes and Bibliography (NB) system allows students of humanities to reference their sources using footnotes and endnote citations in the bibliography pages while presenting their writings. Writers are also empowered to comment on the cited sources through the NB system. History is one subject where the NB system is used extensively.

Proper use of the NB system helps by protecting writers from being accused of plagiarism. This is possible by building credibility through citing of source material in a responsible manner.

Notes

Each time a source is used under the NB system it is necessary to use either a footnote or endnote. This may be done in the form of a direct quote, a summary or paraphrase. A footnote is added at the end of the page and an endnote is provided at the end of a particular chapter or alternatively at the end of the entire document.

In either the cases, it is a convention to place a superscript number referencing the explanatory note in the bibliographic information. This is to be placed at the end of the sentence in which the source is referenced.

In writings, where a full-fledged bibliography is provided, it is not necessary to provide full publication details in the notes. However, in a situation which is contrary to this, it is necessary to provide all relevant information about the source in the first note for each source. If the same source is used more than once, it is alright if the reference includes only the surname, a short form of the title and the page number. Again, if no bibliography is provided at the end, even in the case where the same source is being referred to, the entire details have to be provided.

CMOS does not encourage this practice, however, if the same source and page number(s) from a single source are cited, two or more times consecutively,the word 'Ibid.,' may be used. 'Ibid.' is the abbreviation of the Latin ibidem, which means 'in the same place', as the corresponding note. If the same source with a different page number is used, the corresponding note should use 'Ibid.' followed by a comma and the new page number(s).

In the NB system, the footnote or endnote begins with the appropriate full-sized number, followed by a period and then space.

Bibliography

In the NB system, the bibliography provides an alphabetical list of all sources used in a given work. This page, most often titled Bibliography, is usually placed at the

end of the work preceding the index. It should include all sources cited within the work and may sometimes include other relevant sources that were not cited but provide further reading.

Although bibliographic entries for various sources may be formatted differently, all included sources (books, articles and websites)are arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. If no author or editor is listed, the title or, as a last resort, a descriptive phrase may be used.

Though useful, a bibliography is not required in works that provide full bibliographic information in the notes.

Common Elements

All entries in the bibliography will include the author (or editor, compiler, translator), title, and publication information.

Author Names

The author's name is inverted in the bibliography, placing the last name first and separating the last name and first name with a comma; for example, John Smith becomes Smith, John. If an author is not listed first, this principle applies to compilers and translators.

Titles

Titles of books and journals are italicized. Titles of articles, chapters and poems are placed in quotation marks.

Publication Information

The year of publication is listed after the publisher or journal name.

Punctuation

In a bibliography, all major elements are separated by periods.

Turabian Quick Guide

Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations by Kate L. Turabian's, presents a very similar style to The Chicago Manual of Style, seventeenth edition, with slight modifications for the needs of student writers. The two basic documentation systems are- notes-bibliography style (or simply bibliography style) and author-date style (sometimes called reference list style).

Literature, history and the arts widely use the Bibliography style. This style is about providing bibliographic information through footnotes or endnotes. A bibliography is added at the end.

The less elaborate style- author-date style is used in the physical, natural, and social sciences. Here, sources are briefly cited in parentheses in the text by

the author's last name and date of publication. The parenthetical citations are amplified in a list of references, where full bibliographic information is provided.

Aside from the use of notes versus parenthetical references in the text, the two systems share a similar style.

Zotero and Word Plug-in for Citation, Referencing, and Bibliography

Research students have a good tool in Zotero which is a free, open source program that helps to collect, analyse, organize and share research material in different ways. Zotero is capable of storing details such as author, title, and publication fields and can also export this information as formatted references. Zotero is intelligent enough to detect when a book, article or any other online resource is being searched on the web, and it can automatically extract and save complete bibliographic references. Zotero can run as a web service and also as in the offline mode. It has the ability to transmit information to and from other web services and applications.

Citation Styles under Zotero

Zotero comes bundled with different citation styles for creating citations and bibliographies. As many as 8,100 additional styles are included in the Zotero Style Repository. All these styles are written in the Citation Style Language (CSL). This format is supported by many programs like Mendeley, and Papers.

Zotero Style Repository

One can install styles from the Zotero Style Repository under the Zotero Style Manager. (in the Cite pane of Zotero preferences). The Zotero Style Repository may be accessed from Chrome or Firefox with Zotero Connector Plugin.

For installing a particular style, one has to search by style name, and filter by style type and academic field of study. If the box 'Show only unique styles', is checked, duplicate styles sharing the same format are not displayed.

About Style Errors in Zotero

It is imperative that the latest version of Zotero is being run. If an older version is running it is likely that the CSL style wouldn't give the expected output. Always ensure that the most recent version of the style has been installed from the Zotero Style Repository. One can edit the style to remove errors.

Steps for Using the Word to Help with your Bibliography Formatting

A majority of the writing, around the world, is done using Microsoft Word. Students, authors, and researchers have to wade through a plethora of sources and resources to create citations and bibliography. Often, they end up spending hours doing the formatting manually for say APA references.

It may be good news for such students, academics and researchers to know that Microsoft Word is capable of managing the different sources and aid by formatting in-text citations and inserting footnotes/endnotes. All that is to be done is to feed the correct information and the job is done.

In-Text Citations

The first step towards using referencing capabilities of the Word is by selecting the style which is to be used for the bibliography, i.e. APA, MLA, Chicago or Turabian. Once that is done, one has to click on the References tab and choose the desired style form the drop-down menu.

There is however a drawback in using the Word capabilities for creating a bibliography. In case a style is desired to be used but is not included in the dropdown as depicted above, it is not easy to automatically reference or create a bibliography using that style in Word. Proficient students and writers, capable of using their XML skills, can create their own XML file for the purpose.

For the purpose of this unit-section, we will assume that the Chicago Manual of Style is being used.

While typing, when a citation needs to be added, the following steps are to be done:

- Put the cursor at the end of the sentence and then select Insert Citation from the toolbar and then Add New Source.

- Complete the source form. For adding more information, the Show All Bibliography Fields may be clicked on, at the bottom left.
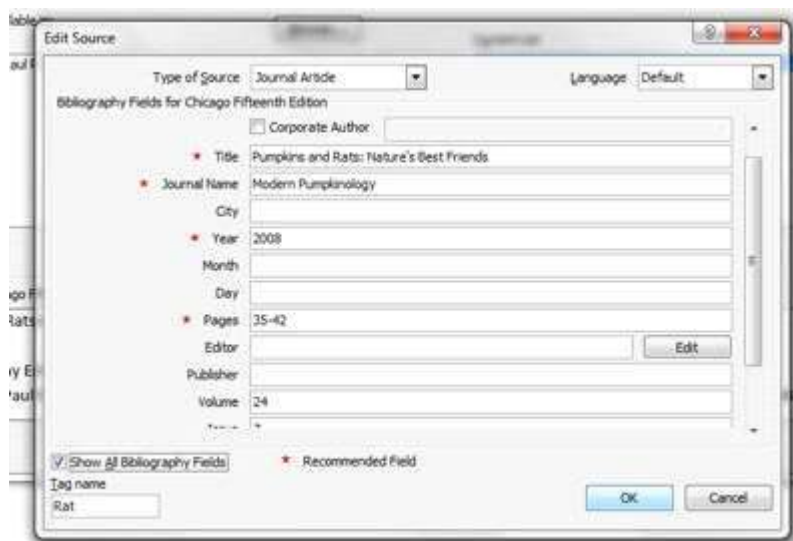
- On the next occasion when a citation needs to be added, the same will be available whenever Insert Citation is chosen.
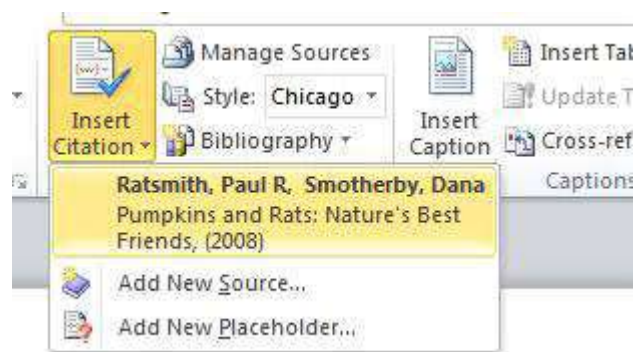
- In instances where all the relevant information is not available at one go, and an entire bibliography cannot be constructed, one can choose Add New Placeholder under Insert Citation and come back later to complete the form.

Adding Footnotes

In Microsoft Word, inserting footnotes and endnotes are easy. One needs to just click on Insert Footnote, and these are automatically numbered/updated as editing of the text is being done, or one can Insert Endnote and start typing.

Managing Sources

Word has an in-built utility, the Source Manager. This utility allows addition, deletion and editing of sources. This is also the place where one goes on to complete the placeholders, which in turn helps immensely for creating the bibliography. Word,

by default stores every source that has ever been entered, and this comes in handy, If the same sources are used both for the research proposal and academic essay. For creating a current list from the master list, all one has to do is to go to Manage Sources and copy, delete, and edit as required.It may be noted that the sources have a check mark in front, but the placeholders have a question mark; reminding writers to add the missing information wherever required.

A preview in the window at the bottom of the Source Manager can be seen below:
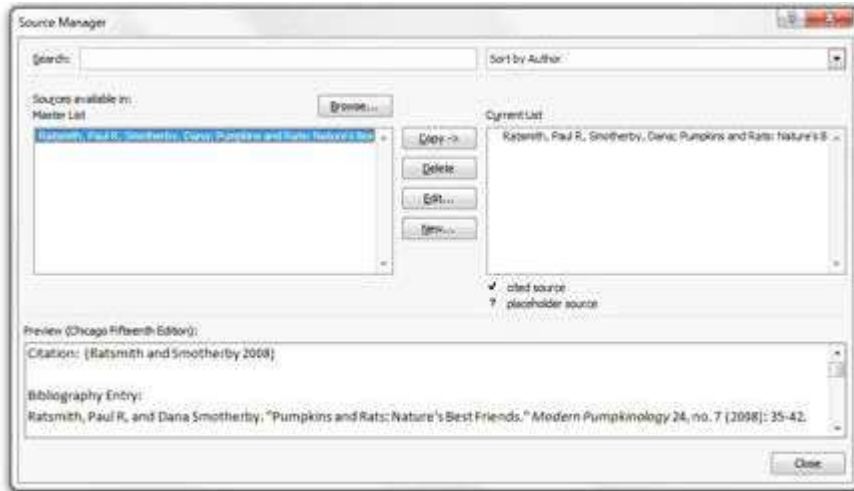
Creation of Bibliography Using the Word

For creating a bibliography using the Word, all which is left to be done is to place the cursor on bibliography and click on it. It is assumed that all the necessary information and data has already been added.

Immediately the bibliography is done. Word provides support for referencing and creating the bibliography in a very seamless manner. It is a great time saver and reduces the hassle of having to input the sources manually every time.

Check Your Progress

3. What is an abstract?
4. State any one use of the Notes and Bibliography (NB) system.
5. What are the two main documentation styles of The Chicago Style or The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)?

9.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Style manuals are guides for better writing and presentations. It comprises of rules and suggestions for presenting the subject in a structured manner.

2. The two types of styles in Modern Language Association (MLA) are as follows:

   (a) MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing (3rd edition - 2008) – this is the advanced version and is used by graduate students and scholars.

   (b) MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th edition - 2009) – the basic version which is for use by undergraduate students and their teachers.

3. An abstract of a research paper serves as a prelude to what is to be presented in the paper per se. It is a synopsis and is expected to be between 150 and 250 words.

4. One of the main uses of the Notes and Bibliography (NB) system is that it helps by protecting writers from being accused of plagiarism. This is possible by building credibility through citing of source material in a responsible manner.

5. The two main documentation styles of The Chicago Style or The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) are the Notes-Bibliography System (NB), which is used in arts, history, and literature, and the Author-Date System which is used in social sciences.

9.5 SUMMARY

- Style has been defined as a particular, distinctive, or characteristic mode of action or manner of acting.

- As per convention, a defined structure or pattern of writing is preferred for a particular kind and form of writing.

- A particular style form will have its own set of formatting styles for citations and bibliographies.

- Choice of style will vary between document types, publications, and organizations. Some subjects have a distinctive choice of style, for example, *Chicago* is the preferred style for the *History* subject.

- There are different kinds of style manuals; however, most writers need to know 2 to 3 styles for their regular use.

- The APA or American Psychological Association is a set of rules and standards for use in social sciences such as education, politics, and psychology.

- The Modern Language Association or MLA style is used mostly for academic and research works in the fields of humanities and literature.

- The Chicago Manual of Style was first published by the University of Chicago Press in 1906. This is primarily used particularly by students of History and generally by students of humanities.

- The AMA guide is printed by Oxford Press and is the bible for health, biology related subjects and medicine.

- The National Library of Medicine (NLM) writing style guide is used in the fields of medicine and kinesiology.

- The CSE guide provides guidance about citing common information sources in the Council of Science Editor's (CSE) Style Name-Year system.

- The bluebook style is used for citing legal documents in the United States of America.

- The ACS Style Guide is a product from the American Chemical Society and is used for writing research papers in Chemistry.

- The ASA particular style sheets aim to guide students of Sociology to properly cite and reference their papers.

- The Harvard Referencing style is used to cite information sources by University students. There is no published guide specific to this style.

- The APA or the American Psychological Association style of citation is used by the students of social and behavioural sciences.

- The title page is the page with the title of the paper. It provides the basic data regarding the paper like the name of the author, and the name of the institution under whose aegis the paper is being written.

- An abstract of a research paper serves as a prelude to what is to be presented in the paper per se. It is a synopsis and is expected to be between 150 and 250 words.

- While citing sources from the Internet, it is a conventional practice to guide readers to get the readers as close to the source as possible for the information being cited.

- The minimum reference required for citing the Internet source should have a document title, date (publication date or date of retrieval), and a Web address.

- Modern Language Association or MLA is used for formatting English language writings. This encompasses a system through which writers can reference their sources using parenthetical citations in the Works Cited page of their essay.

- The Chicago Style or The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), deals in a wide range of topics from preparation of manuscript to publication and from the usage and nuances of grammar to documentation.

- The Notes and Bibliography (NB) system allows students of humanities to reference their sources using footnotes and endnote citations in the bibliography pages while presenting their writings.

- Each time a source is used under the NB system it is necessary to use either a footnote or endnote. This may be done in the form of a direct quote, a summary or paraphrase.

- In the NB system, the bibliography provides an alphabetical list of all sources used in a given work.

- Research students have a good tool in Zotero which is a free, open source program that helps to collect, analyse, organize and share research material in different ways.

- In Microsoft Word, inserting footnotes and endnotes are easy. One needs to just click on Insert Footnote, and these are automatically numbered/ updated as editing of the text is being done, or one can Insert Endnote and start typing.

9.6   KEY WORDS

- **American Psychological Association (APA)**: It refers to a set of rules and standards for use in social sciences such as education, politics, and psychology.

- **Modern Language Association (MLA)**: It refers to a style of formatting in English language writings. It encompasses a system through which writers can reference their sources using parenthetical citations in the Works Cited page of their essay.

- **Style guide**: It refers to a formalized methodology for writing documents, so as to ensure consistency in writing and presentation.

- **Style:** It refers to a particular, distinctive, or characteristic mode of action or manner of acting.

9.7   SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the importance of a style guide.
2. What are the various areas covered in the style guide?
3. How are references written in the Harvard style?
4. What are the main characteristics of the Chicago Manual of Style?
5. State the use of the Bluebook style.
6. What are the main uses of the Modern Language Association or MLA style?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the general guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) Style.
2. What are the four main components of an essay or a write-up? Discuss in detail.
3. Analyse the formatting under the Turabian Quick Guide.
4. Identify the steps related to bibliography formatting.
5. Discuss in detail the uses of the Zotero Style Repository.

9.8 FURTHER READINGS

Gordon, H. M. and Walter J. A. 1986. *Technical Writing* 5th ed. London: Holt.

James, H. S. 2010. *Handbook of Technical Writing*. NTC Business Books.

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Kumar, Krishan. 1973. *Research Libraries in Developing Countries*. Noida: Vikas Publishing House.

BLOCK - III
REPORT WRITING

UNIT 10 OFFICE COMMUNICATION AND REPORT WRITING

Structure

10.0 Introduction
10.1 Objectives
10.2 Report Writing
10.3 Daily Progress Report, Event Report, Promotion Report, Confidential Report, User Satisfaction Report
10.4 Office Writing: Memo
    10.4.1   Notice Writing
10.5 Letter Writing
10.6 Application, Business and Complaint Letters
10.7 Conferences, Seminars and Workshops
    10.7.1   Book Review
10.8 Staff and Business Meeting
    10.8.1   Library Committee meeting and Condolence meeting
10.9 Training Programme
10.10   Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
10.11 Summary
10.12 Key Words
10.13 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
10.14 Further Readings

10.0 INTRODUCTION

Official communication is defined as a systematic procedure of communication which usually takes place in a professional set-up. There are some specific rules which one must follow while communicating with someone in a professional sphere. In other words, it is communication which stems from accountability, authority and responsibility of a job. This type of communication uses the formal channels of communication.

Report writing refers to a formal style of writing which is written on a specific subject. The objective of report writing is essential to inform the reader about a topic, for example, a company's annual report or a school report and so on.

In this unit, the types of report and their features have been analysed. The meaning of memorandum and memo has been discussed. The unit will also provide an in-depth knowledge about the various types of letters and application letters. The three main types of training methods have also been explained.

10.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the main types of reports
- Analyse the essential features of a good report
- Interpret the various forms of writing style
- Describe the characteristics of a progress report
- Discuss the structure of a post-event report
- Interpret the objectives of promotional reports
- Analyse the meaning of memorandums
- Identify the various types of letters used in organizations
- Explain the different forms of application letters
- Discuss the various kinds of training methods

10.2 REPORT WRITING

Report writing is, the ultimate form of business communication. It calls for a considerably higher level of writing skills. Reports are of various kinds, varying in terms of complexity and size. Reports are such a common feature that people in organizations, businesses and institutions, at various levels, are called upon to not only read related reports, but also write or associate with the preparation of the reports. It is desirable, therefore, that anyone who is keen on developing varied business communication skills acquires a good insight into the art of report writing.

What is a report? English dictionaries cover several interpretations of the word 'report'. These include, bring back account of; state as an ascertained fact; tell as news; narrate or describe or repeat especially as eyewitness and relate as spoken by another. While each of these interpretations has its relevance in the context of report writing, the most appropriate one would be, 'account given, or opinion formally expressed after investigation or consideration'. In other words, a report refers to information that has been carefully gathered and logically presented. A report is a document that presents an account of what one has learned or done.

Types of Reports

Reports are of various types and, in fact, come in endless variety. They could be big or small, individual or group, routine or special, formal or informal, internal or external, interim or final. An illustrative list of various kinds of business reports is presented below:

1. Routine reports such as monthly report, performance report, review report and progress report

2. Research reports, survey reports and special reports

3. Enquiry reports, audit reports and investigation reports

4. Status reports and progress reports

5. Sales reports

6. Confidential reports

7. Information reports and Analytical reports

8. Feasibility reports

9. Industry surveys and Marketing reports

10. Technical reports

11. Directors' reports

12. Annual reports

13. Committee reports

Viewed from another angle, reports can also be classified as either individual reports or group/committee reports or interim and final reports. While individual reports may be drafted or written by the person concerned, other reports submitted by study groups, working groups and committees are written with the help of a specialized team or a secretariat. Further, whenever the subject coverage, or terms of reference are such that fact finding and detailed presentation is likely to take a long time, interim reports are submitted by the groups or committees. Each of these types of reports has its own characteristics and the report writer should learn to present the report in its appropriate format. Some of the routine reports such as review report, progress report, survey report, sales report or credit report may even have a regular printed format in organizations which call for them on a frequent or periodic basis. As far as the other types of reports are concerned, the report writer, in consultation with the authorities concerned, should structure the report to bring out all relevant facts and figures in their proper perspective.

Essentials of Good Report Writing

As noted earlier, each kind of report has its characteristics. An enquiry report or a survey report is essentially a fact-finding report and should bring out the facts clearly. A directors' report, on the other hand, is the detailing of the developments, or the progress relating to the business organization during a particular period. A committee report, however, may not only bring out facts and figures, but also cover the alternative viewpoints expressed by the members, and also the final recommendations made by the committee. Notwithstanding these features specific to the reports, we may take note of certain features relevant to any report writing as stated in the following paragraphs.

Issue in Perspective

The first essential for any good report is to bring out the issue in its proper perspective, duly emphasizing the pros and cons. Be it a progress report, a survey

report, an analytical report or an enquiry report, the subject should be presented in an unbiased and objective manner. Both the positive and negative aspects of the issues studied should be covered in the report. The report writer should make conscious efforts to keep out any bias or exaggeration while stating facts and incidents, especially in the enquiry and investigation reports.

Authoritative Facts and Figures

Reports are sought as a fact-finding measure. The report writer should ensure that the facts and figures quoted in the report are authentic and reliable. Very often, the facts and figures quoted are from primary data sources and are taken on the basis of personal enquiries or surveys specially conducted for gathering information. The data quoted in the report are likely to be made use of by several other individuals and agencies who will gain access to the report. It is also very likely that major business-related decisions will be taken on the basis of details mentioned in the report. Even when the data quoted are taken from secondary sources, care should be taken to see that the sources are reliable and cross-verified.

Maintain a Judicial Approach

The report writer should keep to measurable facts and verifiable details. Impressionistic statements and inaccuracies will have to be scrupulously avoided. A good report calls for an effective assessment based on authentic facts and figures. Human errors, biases and any kind of selective reporting have no place in report writing. Good reports are those where the report writer maintains a judicial and non-partisan attitude.

In-Depth Analysis

It is expected that the reports provide an in-depth study. Any report that does not go into the details of the subject studied may turn out to be peripheral, necessitating one or more report, or additional information being sought. The reporting authority or the report writer, as the case may be, should make it a point to meticulously go about collecting all related information for inclusion in the report.

Alternative Viewpoints

The purpose of a report, as we have noted earlier, is to get the facts in proper perspective. When we refer to an enquiry report, an investigation report or a committee report, the intention is to get the inputs or views from different persons who are in a position to throw light on the subject or incident under study. In fact, when we talk of a committee report, a very important requirement for the report writer is to bring out alternative viewpoints. Although the final recommendations may be based on a consensus or majority view, the fact that some other views were also expressed during the course of deliberations or enquiries should also be mentioned. Further, in reporting deliberations or alternative viewpoints, the report writer should not be overly conscious of the hierarchical position of the members. In other words, the points made, or the views expressed are to be covered, even

if they are from relatively junior members, as long as they are relevant to the issue under consideration. It is worth noting here that when committees submit their reports, apart from giving a majority view, there is also a mention, in some cases, of the note of dissent.

Appropriate Annexures and Appendix

Most reports also contain relevant annexures, which cover additional information that is germane or pertinent to the matter dealt with in the body of the report. Such annexures normally include charts, graphs, relevant statistics, questionnaires, list of centers visited, agencies, institutions and individuals contacted and interviewed. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that any such charts, maps and tables are relevant to the matter under study and enhance understanding. Well thought out annexures help assess the depth of the report and the extent of representativeness of the studies/surveys made in connection with the investigation or study taken up. While major findings and statistics are furnished in the main report, the questionnaire formats, detailed statistical tables and other similar details covered in the annexures provide supplementary information which is of particular value to a more discerning reader or researcher. Reports also contain Appendix at the end. Appendix refers to a section giving relevant additional information at the end of the report.

Appendix, like the annexure, constitutes an extra section of the report or a document. Any supplemental information relating to the report is given in the appendix. Appendix generally includes the following: illustrations, photographs, maps, surveys, statistical abstracts, diagrams, questionnaires and samples, pictures, and formulae and calculations.

Glossary

Reports also contain glossary at the end. A glossary is a list of special or technical words used in the document or report. Along with the words, their meanings are also given in the alphabetical order for easy reference. Glossary helps the readers understand the meanings of key words or the jargon used in the report or book. Every domain or business has words specific to it and the glossary lists out the words and their meanings. It is particularly relevant when the readers are not familiar with the words used in the report.

Index

Voluminous reports, large documents and books carry an Index at the end. Index presents the list of names or topics that are referred to in the report or document or book. They are usually arranged in the alphabetical order. Like the subject index, there can also be an author index. It is worth noting that this book presents Subject Index at the end. In the subject index, key words with the page numbers are given in the alphabetical order. Similarly, in the author index, the names of authors and the page numbers where they appear are mentioned. Microsoft Word, the word processing software, creates an index automatically.

Appearance

Good appearance is of particular significance in presenting reports. Reports constitute an important business document. Their objective is to present a clear picture or objective account of what is learned or done or observed. Quite often, the reports tend to be lengthy. If a report has to be read by the audience, apart from the quality of contents, the manner of presentation assumes relevance. Notwithstanding the relevance and usefulness of the contents, the report may get discredited and ignored if the presentation is casual and shoddy. Good reports are those that are carefully prepared so as to present all the contents in a systematic, appealing and reader-friendly manner.

Committee Reports

Committee reports constitute another common form of business communication. Appointment of committees has become a popular method of obtaining facts and decision-making inputs in an authoritative manner. Be it the implementation of a new idea, investigation of scams or irregularities, setting up of a new institution, prescription of standards or benchmarks or assessing the scope for improvements in a particular area like customer service, the committee approach is the most preferred one. Committees are constituted by the central and state governments, regulatory bodies like the Reserve Bank of India, monitoring and controlling authorities, associations, institutions, professional bodies and chambers of commerce who are keen on gathering relevant details about any particular incident, development or issue. Committees can be set up by individuals within the organizations as well. Committees can be either standing committees or specific purpose committees. There can be a syllabus committee, publicity committee, reception committee, enquiry committee, tariff revision committee or screening committee depending on the task being addressed. Not all committees need to be high-level or high-power committees. There can be smaller committees at the unit level, which may study a specific area of concern or relevance and submit a report thereon. Reports of the committees may range from just a few pages to voluminous ones, running to hundreds of pages.

The very fact that committees generally comprise several members, ensures that the deliberations, findings and recommendations reflect collective wisdom. While constituting a committee, care is taken to ensure that people with all relevant diverse backgrounds, functional areas and interest groups that are germane to the subject under study are included. Further, as and when necessary, the committees also seek the views and services of specialists or experts on the subject. This will ensure that the committee reports are of a high order, duly reflecting the erudition of the members.

Keeping track of committee deliberations on an ongoing basis and presenting the views and recommendations in a comprehensive and cogent manner calls for tremendous skills. That is the reason why convenors, member secretaries and committee secretariats are selected with due care. They should extend requisite

support to the chairman and other members by organizing relevant data, putting up appropriate background papers, ensuring the participation of all concerned, facilitating intense and fruitful deliberations and finally preparing a worthwhile report. All this calls for very systematic and organized efforts from the very beginning, i.e., from committee formation. Some key areas that need attention in the context of ensuring fruitful committee deliberations and bringing out authentic reports are presented below.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference constitute the starting point for any committee proceedings. They lay down the scope of the study in clear terms. They provide the mandate or authority for undertaking the business of the committee. Very often, committees covering areas of far-reaching significance are created with legal sanction and are vested with substantial powers to collect data, summon witnesses and interview people. The terms of reference framed by the authority constituting the committee clearly state the specific areas which the committee has to look into. The terms of reference are generally listed out one after the other in a brief and focused manner. As far as possible, the scope of the study as enumerated in the terms of reference should be complete and unambiguous. However, if there is any doubt regarding the scope of the study, or in the absence of a specific mention of related areas, the details are to be sorted out at the first meeting of the committee. Any good report should make sure that all the terms of reference are clearly dealt with by the committee.

Steps in Committee Deliberations

As stated earlier, committee work calls for systematic and organized effort from the very beginning. Committees are usually given a time frame within which the report will have to be submitted. In order to do so, it is necessary to make a clear assessment of the work involved, and to break down the allocated time for different activities. While some activities can only be carried out sequentially, others can be done simultaneously. The time of the committee members, it should be noted, is a scarce and valuable resource, and every effort should be made to get the best out of it. Any disorganization on the part of the conveners, the member-secretary or the secretariat is likely to result in disruption or slowing down of committee work and will have to be consciously avoided. Keeping in view the terms of reference and the time frame, the deliberations and approach of the committee would be on the lines mentioned in the ensuing paragraphs.

Recognizing and Defining the Problem: It is the first step to be taken by any committee. It concerns clarifying the problem or areas, which will receive the main attention of the committee. It relates to providing some kind of status report on the subject under study. It relates to providing the backdrop against which the issue is being examined. It also involves defining the scope and objectives of the study. It clearly follows the terms of reference already stated. It involves putting the problem or issue on hand in its proper perspective. It may involve scanning of

available literature on the subject and deciding on areas that will have to be pursued further. These aspects set the direction for further deliberation and hence will have to be addressed in the initial meetings of the committee.

Selecting a Method of Solution: Having identified and defined the problem, the next logical step would be to work towards finding a solution. It involves deliberating on the methodological issues. Taking into account the time frame and other relevant factors, the committee considers the availability of various methods or approaches and their relative merits and demerits. If data collection is involved, what would be the sources—primary or secondary? If primary sources have to be tapped, it may be necessary to design samples and questionnaires and methods of interview. The following figure 10. 1 sums up the method of obtaining the data:
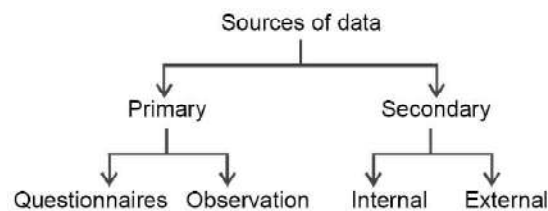
Fig 10.1 shows the Sources of Data

The methodology followed in finding a solution to the problem has a bearing on the reliability or depth of the study. If the methodology adopted is not the most appropriate one, or if there are deficiencies in sample design, the quality of information gathered, collation and tabulation of the data, the findings and recommendations which are based thereon would also be undermined.

Collecting and Organizing the Data: When primary sources of data are involved, the first step would be to design the sample and draw up a questionnaire. Having done so, the next step would be to administer the questionnaire and collect the response. Whether it will be mailed or administered in person is to be determined. Alternative sampling and statistical techniques will have to be evaluated. Similarly, wherever required, secondary data may also have to be collected with due concern for authenticity. The time factor in data collection again needs careful attention and proper planning. The data so collected will have to be properly processed. The work would involve validation, tabulation, stratification and analysis so as to arrive at meaningful observations. Sometimes it may become necessary to engage the services of external data collection and processing agencies. Such agencies will have to interact with the committee and the committee will have to give them proper briefings about the assignment.

Arriving at an Answer to the Problem: It is obviously the final and the most important step in the work of the committee. Based on the research, findings and deliberations as outlined earlier, the committee will have to arrive at its conclusions. As much as the entire exercise has been a fact-finding mission or a problem-solving effort, the committee members should put their collective wisdom in throwing light on the facts and recommending further course of action. Depending upon the nature

of issue addressed by the committees, these recommendations are likely to be widely reported and considered at various levels. The report writer should make sure that the solutions or recommendations adequately cover the problems or issues listed under the terms of reference. The committee should examine the pros and cons of alternative courses of action, if any, and make its recommendations.

Structuring the Report

For any business communicator associated with report writing, structuring the report assumes great significance. It calls for superior skills in observing and absorbing the deliberations, making notes on an ongoing basis, getting doubts clarified and putting them all in an organized and light-bearing fashion while presenting the report. Report writing is somewhat akin to writing a book. While in a book the author puts forth his own thoughts, in a committee report the author will have to remain objective and present the consensus of the deliberations. All the same, the need for a thorough understanding of the subject, command over language, organization of chapters and elucidation of ideas are all equally relevant. In structuring the report, the following aspects need particular attention:

1. Outlining and report organization
2. Length of the report
3. Formal report
4. Sequence of presentations
5. Annexures
6. Sub-committee report
7. Dissenting notes, if any

It is possible that the committee, in the course of its deliberations, may go beyond the terms of reference into unrelated areas. The report writer, while structuring the report, should clearly outline what the committee work consists of, and rule out any temptation to go beyond what is necessary, useful and relevant.

The chapter designing of the report would vary from committee to committee. However, if one were to suggest a standard format, the following chapters/coverage would be appropriate:

1. Table of contents
2. Executive summary
3. Background of the study
4. Scope and objectives of the study
5. Study methodology
6. Findings and observations
7. Recommendations
8. Annexures

The report writer should be familiar with the essentials of report writing and make it a point to refer, wherever need be, to some well recommended reports on the subject. Apart from the broad approach indicated above, there are certain other aspects to be covered, such as:

1. Acknowledgements
2. Summary of recommendations
3. Composition of the committee
4. Meetings and visits
5. Covering letter for report submission

Report writing not only puts to test the skill of the report writer, but also provides an opportunity to an accomplished writer to bring out a document of real merit by adding value.

Note-taking and Summarizing Skills

As we have noted earlier, report writing is the last step in the committee's work. A report is the end product of a committee. The report should contain the essence of all the deliberations, viewpoints, surveys and observations made by the experts who make presentations. All this implies that the report writer must be associated with the committee meetings and take keen note of all the deliberations. All the important points which emerge during the course of deliberations should be meticulously noted down. The points may or may not emerge in a readymade fashion. Not all members and participants would be articulate and cogent in expressing their viewpoints. The member-secretary, the convenor or the person who will be writing the report will have to be attentive throughout and develop the skill of identifying the points which may or may not be clearly spelt out, but yet they are made during the deliberations and give a meaningful shape to them. While members may have their own areas of expertise, any committee would look to the report writer for drafting skills. At the end of every meeting, the report writer, in consultation with the chairman, should summarize and read out the main points which come out of the deliberations. Summarizing skills thus assume significance. Such points would also help in avoiding repetition in the subsequent meetings and would ensure that the deliberations are carried forward in a progressive manner.

Another important point to be noted by the report writer is that findings and recommendations of the committee do not always arise in a sequential order. Deliberations at the committee meetings often tend to go back and forth. It is incumbent on the report writer, therefore, to present the findings and conclusions in an appropriate sequence. The report writer should also develop good reference skills. Quite often, the members of the committee would expect the report writer to scan and collect relevant material from other sources and place it before the committee to enable them to view the subject in perspective. A skilled report writer can add value to the committee's work and the reporting function in many ways. The report writer should develop not only written communication skills of a

high order, but should also be good at listening, comprehending, noting down, summarizing, structuring and making the end product a valuable effort.

The Writing Style

Committee reports are written in a certain style to make them authoritative and appealing. In writing the committee report, the report writer should give particular attention to the following:

1. Impersonal style
2. Active sentences
3. Appropriate headings
4. Proper tense
5. Accurate nouns and pronouns
6. Definition of concepts
7. Tabulation of data
8. Documentation
9. Objectivity
10. Erudition

Similarly, the list of items to be avoided would include the following:

1. Excessive jargon
2. Verbosity and involved writing
3. Personal bias
4. Factual Inaccuracies
5. Grammatical blunders
6. Pedestrian approach
7. Absence of reasoning
8. Absence of sequencing and references

In order to ensure all the above, the draft report may have to undergo several modifications and will have to be carefully vetted by the chairman and other members.

Annual Reports

Annual reports are another type of business report regularly brought out by business organizations. As the name suggests, these reports are brought out every year detailing the progress achieved during the reporting period. Annual reports are brought out by a variety of institutions—commercial, charitable, educational, supervisory and regulatory as well as associations and bodies. The idea in bringing out such reports is to reach out to their members, clients, patrons and the public in general, and share the progress achieved, and developments of significance and performance highlights.

In accordance with the company law, every registered company is required to publish its balance sheet and profit and loss account within a prescribed period. Public sector banks are required to publish their balance sheets within six months of the year end. Balance sheets and profits and loss accounts are generally published as part of the annual report booklet and distributed among all concerned. While the balance sheets and profit and loss accounts are figure oriented and follow generally accepted accounting principles and standards, the annual reports additionally contain narrative statements, comparative analyses, charts and pictures and all such presentation values aimed at putting the balance sheets and profit and loss figures and ratios in their proper perspective.

Annual reports, besides being mandatory, are also relevant as information sharing and image-building documents. A well brought out annual report that is widely distributed, can help create a favourable image or impression about the organization and its progress and performance during the year.

A typical annual report of a large organization would cover the following details:

1. Board of directors
2. Top management team
3. Names of auditors
4. Progress at a glance
5. Performance highlights and working results
6. Directors' report
7. Accounting policies adopted
8. Balance sheet
9. Profit and loss account
10. Schedules to be annexed to the balance sheet
11. Notes on account, wherever necessary
12. Auditors' report
13. Commentary on the financial statements
14. Ratios and statements
15. Remuneration paid to the top management
16. Changes in the board
17. Acknowledgement

There could be some additions or deletions to this list depending upon the nature of the organizations and the regulatory requirements. The annual reports, it should be noted, cover not only the mandatory details, but also what the organization itself wishes to share. For example, chairman's statement or message is often included in some annual reports. In fact, some chairman's statements, like that of

Hindustan Lever, are so erudite and insightful in terms of providing economic and industry status reports and even management thoughts and HRD dimensions, that they are quite often looked forward to and widely read, including by those not connected with the industry or that particular institution. Recognizing this, such statements and highlights are also published in the newspapers for facilitating a wider readership. Nowadays, they are also put on the websites, facilitating greater access.

As a business communicator, one's concern would be with the entire document or the booklet, covering the contents as well as the overall get- up. Progressive organizations all over the world devote considerable time, effort and resources in bringing out their annual reports. In many organizations, the task of bringing out the annual report is entrusted to a specialized team of people in the economic research, public relations or communications department, facilitating continuity and dedicated efforts. Apart from the substance or the content, much attention is also directed at the design, printing, layout, pictures and charts all of which form part of the booklet. Like in any serious effort, here too, much advance planning needs to be done in obtaining performance details, verifying their accuracy, deciding on the layout and other presentation values concerning the report.

The following are some relevant tips which, when followed, would help make the annual report elegant and appealing:

1. Clearly bring out the progress/strengths relevant to the reporting year. Avoid repetition of the previous year's sentences and paragraphs.

2. Take a re-look at the headings and sub-headings and make appropriate changes.

3. Good annual reports are distinctive in terms of language and expression used. One has to learn the skill of narrating even routine developments in a forceful manner.

4. Avoid using long sentences and combining several developments. Make the sentences brief and specific.

   Given below is a verbatim reproduction of an opening sentence in a directors' report of a nationalized bank.

   The satisfactory performance of the Indian economy during the year 1994-95 bears testimony to the inner strength of the fundamentals of the Indian economy to imbibe and digest structural changes emanating from the reform process after successfully negotiating transitional bottlenecks on the background of a stagnant growth rate of 4.3 per cent for the previous years.

   The sentence is so complex and winding. In fact, it is a maze of thoughts. The writer has made it too difficult for the reader to comprehend so many developments, and that too in the opening sentence of the report.

5. Ensure proper grouping of various sub-heads under each main heading like business growth, profitability, HRD, international operations and subsidiaries.

6. Check the correctness of all figures, amounts and dates. If the figures are to be repeated under different columns, it should be ensured that they all agree with each other, and that there are no inconsistencies.

7. While reporting of relevant figures and ratios is inevitable for any such report, too many figures, repetitive ratios and percentages running into several decimals tend to hinder readability and comprehension. Wherever appropriate, figures should be rounded off.

8. In quoting figures relating to economic environment, industry-related progress and market developments, authenticity of the figures should be ensured. Further, the data quoted should be the most up-to-date. Stale data are best avoided, unless they are absolutely relevant.

These are some of the general guidelines. As one develops proficiency, there is considerable scope to make annual reports innovative and appealing. It would be a good idea to scan model reports or reports of organizations which are generally widely acclaimed. With conscious effort and attention to all the relevant areas, annual reports can become not only informative and enlightening, but also aesthetically appealing. Business communication can indeed find a very meaningful expression in imaginatively brought out annual reports.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the various types of business reports?
2. State the purpose of a report.
3. What are annual reports?

10.3 DAILY PROGRESS REPORT, EVENT REPORT, PROMOTION REPORT, CONFIDENTIAL REPORT, USER SATISFACTION REPORT

As we have discussed previously progress report is a document that gives the details on a regular basis of the various activities and tasks that are being carried out in relation to a particular project or assignment. A progress report may be needed to be given on a monthly, weekly or daily basis depending on the nature of the project and the extent to which it needs to be monitored. For instance, a project where meeting the deadline is a prime consideration may need a daily progress report to be sent so that the timelines are loosely monitored.

The progress report may be typically written for a boss, client or a colleague. It may be written in an individual capacity or maybe a team progress report giving the details of the work being carried out by the team.

A progress report provides information on the following aspects:

- How much of the work is complete?
- What part of the work is in progress?
- What are the challenges being faced?
- What is the gap that exists between what has been planned and what is being done?

A progress report is important for the following reasons:

- It brings everyone on the same page. All the team members who are executing the project and those who are a part of monitoring the project know what has been accomplished. There is no duplication of tasks and confusion regarding what has been done and what needs to be done is avoided.
- It facilitates collaboration. When various teams are working on a project it helps in identifying areas where they can offer support to each other.
- It improves transparency and accountability. Progress report create an official documentation by placing on record what has been accomplished and what are the results.
- It helps in reviewing and evaluating a project. Progress reports throw light on what went right, what went wrong and what can be improved. It helps in keeping time lines and schedules and provides information in case midcourse correction is required.
- It provides insight for future planning.

Daily progress reports have to be created on an everyday basis. It is thus, imperative that not much time is wasted in creating them. They should be brief and concise and convey the complete information. Opinion should be avoided. The report should provide facts. The language should be simple. Technical jargon should be used only if needed. If the report is being read by an audience who understands the specialized language like team members or a project leader it may be beneficial to use specialized language.

A daily progress report includes the following things:

- The tasks planned for the day
- The tasks accomplished
- Reasons for the gap if any between the above two
- Challenges encountered in performing tasks

It is also important to review the progress respect before sending it to ensure that it is free from typographical errors and conveys to the reader what the writer intends to convey.

Event Reports

As the name suggests these are reports which provide information about the events organized. They may take the form of pre event reports or post event reports. A pre-event report is more of a planning report which besides containing the basic details of the event such as nature, venue, date and timings also contains the objective, expected outcome, expected audience and the activities that are going to be accomplished. A pre-event report is generally made with the purpose of creating awareness and disseminating information about the event. It can also be used for evaluating whether the event has taken place in a way in which it is planned.

A post event report gives details about the event after it has occurred thus providing the stakeholders valuable insights about the effectiveness of the event. It also helps in more effective planning of future events. A matching of the objectives of the event and the on-ground outcomes determine the success of the event.

Like all other forms of communication, the size and content of the report is largely determined by the target audience i.e. who is going to read it and what is going to be the purpose. Event reports can range from those giving an overview which would include some salient features to comprehensive reports which would include a detailed account of the event. Some of the headings and sub headings which can be included in a post event report are as follows:

   (i) Title of the event, Dates and Venue.

   (ii) **Summary**: The report should contain a half page summary that gives an overview of the event and the key highlights. It can also include the key recommendations. This section of the report is generally written after writing the entire report i.e. it is the last thing that is written.

   (iii) **Key personnel**: The key personnel section would include the list of the people involved in the event viz. the Patron, Chairperson, Organizing secretary and members on the various committees.

   (iv) **Objective and Outcomes**: It includes the event objectives, the key deliverables and the key performance indicators. These can be used to measure the success of the event.

   (v) **Budget:** The budget section provides a summary of the amount spent against the initial budget. It can include information on why variances occurred. The final budget can be attached to the to the report as an appendix.

   (vi) **Details of the event**: It includes all aspects related to the event like the registrations /participation details and information about the programme including various sessions, activities. A minute to minute programme of the various activities with time schedule can be attached

   (vii) **Photographs and media coverage**: It include all relevant photographs and media coverage about the event. Details of the social media engagement can also be included in this section

(viii) **Feedback**: The results of any feedback or survey as regards the event are presented in this section

(ix) **Suggestions and recommendations**: It is based on what went right and what went wrong during the event recommendations can be given to aid in organizing similar events in the future. The suggestions can be based on inputs received from various stakeholders like sponsors, speakers, attendees and the staff who were a part of the organizing team.

Confidential Report

A confidential report is a document generally prepared by a superior to assess the work performed by a subordinate for the purpose of serving as an important decision-making tool for issues related to promotion, confirmation and training and development.

It also provides basic vital inputs for assessing the performance of an employee. This helps in giving feedback to the employee for improving his / her performance in the current job and also his / her potential for other jobs which he can be assigned in future. The structure of the confidential report in generally specific to the organization. However, some of the common contents include inputs on the following aspects pertaining to the employee – performance, achievements, interpersonal conduct, behavioural aspects such as attitude, punctuality , honesty and integrity and disciplinary action if any.

Periodicity of Writing

Writing of a confidential report is generally an annual exercise, aligning with the performance appraisal cycle period applicable in the organization. There may be instances wherein the employee has served under the reporting officer for a period of less than a year. In such cases the period covered needs to be specifically mentioned. Since the confidential report provides important inputs for other activities such as training, promotion and timely submission of these reports is very essential.

Writing of a Confidential Report

Important career decision pertaining to an employee are dependent on the confidential report hence, it is imperative that it be prepared carefully. Objectivity to the maximum extent possible should be maintained by the reporting officer while writing the report. There is a tendency to hurriedly write a number of reports in a short period without giving much thought to each employee's report. This should be avoided. Strengths and weakness of the specific employee need to be clearly brought out in the report.

To minimize the subjective bias which may intentionally or unintentionally creep into the report writing a two their system for generating the report is in practice in most of the organizations. The confidential report is prepared by the

Reporting officer but is further reviewed in the next stage by the Reviewing officer. Errors like personal prejudice, stereotyping, halo effect and projection bias need to be avoided. The comments should be based on factual information and directly related to the aspects being reviewed.

Adverse comments have the potential to harm the interests of the employee therefore due care must be taken while penning down any adverse comments. Such comments should be specified and justified preferably backed with evidence and not be based on rumour.

Similarly, 'Excellent' and 'Outstanding' ratings are given to exceptional performance and these should be justified. They should not merely be given to gain popularity or avoid conflict with the subordinate. To sum up, a good well written factual report not only projects and assesses the employee but also shows the capacity and character of the reporting officer.

Promotion Report

Organisations use promotional strategies to achieve their short term and long-term objectives in an effective and efficient manner. A comprehensive detailed document which lays out the promotion campaign along with-it operationalisation strategy constitutes a promotion report. The objective of promotion need not only be restricted to promoting sales as it is generally interpreted. It may have multifold objectives which include the following:

- Creating awareness about the product/service by dispensing product information. brochures, catalogues, sales letters, advertisement and social media posts are commonly used methods to create awareness and educate customers on various product feature and benefits.

- **Increasing customers traffic:** Discounts, loyalty programs and coupons are some of the methods organizations use to increase the customer base and traffic.

- **Build brand awareness**: Another objective of the promotion strategy can be to create brand awareness so that customers get more inclined towards choosing the brand. This is a long-term objective as it takes considerable time for organization to build a brand which customers perceive as favourable. Repeat advertising is common technique to achieve this objective.

- **Increasing sales and profit:** The primary objective of all promotional efforts is to drive sales and profits. More than short term measures such as discounts or buy one get one offer it is the quality, customer services, after sales service which have an impact on long term sales and profit .

Whatever be the objective of the promotion campaign being described in the promotion report it is imperative that it be well structured to convey efficiently to the planners and decision makers what it intends to convey. The following are some of the headings which a promotion report can include:

- Introduction
- Objective of the promotion campaign which would include the methods, channels of communication, audience targeted and duration of the campaign
- Budget allocated
- Expected outcomes
- Conclusion

The above report is a pre campaign promotion report and can be considered to be a largely a planning document which provides guidelines for effective implementation of the campaign. In addition, another report can be prepared post the promotion campaign. This post event report provides information about the effectiveness of the project and would include

- Results of a feedback survey: Figures and graphs can be used to better illustrate the results.
- Key outcomes and benefits
- Deviation from plan if any
- Challenges faced
- Recommendations and suggestions

User Satisfaction Report

The user satisfaction report refers to a report which summarizes how and to what extent the products / services being offered by an organization meet the expectations of the user. Such a report generally presents the result of customer user satisfaction survey. It is beneficial tool as it provides information regards the following:

- Data backed evidence to identify areas where users were satisfied as well as areas where they were dissatisfied.
- Expectations of the users i.e. identifying the area which are important to the users.

This information is very useful to carry out product/service/process improvements so as to enhance the experience the user has with the product/ service. Maintaining high customer satisfaction is important for customer retention. A user satisfaction report should serve the following objectives:

- Present the user feedback which can be used to initiate strategies that will retain customers.
- Generate actionable reports for the management
- Provide an understanding of the expectations and requirements of the users and the extent to which the organization is meeting these expectations.

The way the information is presented assumes great significance as it determines to a large extent how the information is going to be interpreted. Some of the factors to be borne in the mind while structuring the report include length of the report sequence of content, annexures to be include and figures and diagrams to be included to complement the information. The format for a user satisfaction report would vary from organization to organization depending to a large extent on the product/service being offered and the end user of the report i.e. the audience which will be utilizing the report. However, some of the contents/coverage which would be appropriate includes the following:

- Table of contents
- Executive summary
- Scope and Objective
- Methodology
- Findings and Observations
- Recommendations
- Annexures

User satisfaction survey results would form the basis of a user satisfaction report. The survey will contain questions related directly to the product/service (quality, design, range, consistency), delivery of the product (on time delivery/accessibility/availability), staff and service, organization and price. User satisfaction surveys can be conducted through online/email surveys, face to face interviews, telephonic interviews or observation. Some of the points to be kept in mind while designing the survey include the following:

- Keep the questions specific and simple.
- The questions should be based on the objective of the survey
- Avoid phrases that are left to the respondent's interpretation such as most, many and several.
- The survey should be designed to collect information which is suitable from a data analysis point of view.
- Avoid double barreled questions i.e. two questions in one sentence. Example- Is the product easy to operate and aesthetically satisfying?
- The questionnaire should be as short as possible, at the same time it should be comprehensive.

Check Your Progress

4. What are the main components of a daily progress report?
5. State the primary objective of all the promotional efforts.

10.4 OFFICE WRITING: MEMO

A memorandum is a written statement or record, especially one circulated for the attention of colleagues at work. It is principally a means of sharing information internally. It relates to a note of something to be remembered and acted upon. The word memorandum came from the Latin word 'memorare' which means to remember. In law, a memorandum means a document recording terms of contract. The plural of memorandum is memorandums or memoranda. It is commonly known by its abbreviation, viz., memo.

A memorandum is a means of inter-office correspondence. Memos are sent within an organization from office to office or department to department. In large organizations, memorandums are sent from head office to regional offices, branches, divisions and so on. Of late, memos are sent using the email and the bulky ones and those inappropriate for email have to be sent as printed copies. Memos are intended to be read and acted upon by executives, branch managers, supervisors and all staff members as and when they are addressed to them. Memos may also be referred to as circulars or inter-office memorandum or spiral communication. Large organizations spread across numerous functional departments and geographical areas regularly issue a variety of memos every day or at frequent intervals. In a large organization like a bank, there are many departments such as personnel, credit, accounts, marketing, international business, planning and so on and all of them communicate with the branches, offices and staff through memos and such other internal communication. Memos are used routinely for making announcements, giving instructions, giving reports and conveying policy decisions.

Memos may be typed or printed and dispatched to the target groups and offices across the country and even abroad. For easy reference, memos are often printed in different colours with different departments using specific colours. With the advent of electronic communication, memos are now being sent across by e-mail and are also put on the internal network or intranet for the use of offices and staff. Large organizations like banks may also differentiate between memos and circulars and use them for specific messages.

It would be difficult do draw a precise distinction between circulars and memos. Both are often identical in approach and reach. Some organizations use circulars as a means of specific, subject-related instruction whereas memos are used to cover events and developments.

Circulars are in the form of instructions or guidelines and are expected to be mandatorily followed. Memos are generally a matter of information. Circulars are of a permanent nature, of long-term relevance and may be modified as and when instructions have to be revised. Memos are generally of short-term relevance. Any

such distinction, however, is only a matter of internal arrangement and in most books on business communication published abroad, there are references to memos and no discussion on circulars.

Memos contain vital details of relevance on functional areas and may have to be referred to frequently by the personnel working in the organization. Due to their importance and reference value, memos are often carefully indexed, filed and preserved, facilitating ready sourcing and reference. Although memos are like business letters there are some noteworthy differences.

Business Letters and Memos—Noteworthy Differences

- Business letters are addressed to outsiders and constitute external communication. Memos are addressed to employees and constitute internal communication.

- Business letters are generally formal in nature, whereas memos are more informal.

- Business letters are sent out on a company letterhead whereas memos need not be written and sent on the letter head.

- Business letters should necessarily have inside address, salutation and complimentary closing.

- Business letters must be necessarily signed whereas memos do not carry any signature.

- Business letters should not use unfamiliar jargon whereas memos can use internally accepted jargon and specialized terms.

- Business letters should start by providing the context and preparing the reader whereas the memos can come straight to the subject and come to the heart of the matter. In internal communication, there is a presumption that the reader knows the basic facts.

- Business letters should aim at building goodwill and relationship besides sharing information, whereas memos are focused on sharing information and communicating for action.

- Business letters are largely addressed to individuals whereas memos are largely addressed to groups, teams or a large number of recipients. Memos formally addressed to individuals, however, should be typed/printed and signed.

In writing a good memo, the following points need particular attention.

Take Time to Plan Your Memos

Any office memorandum constitutes a piece of official communication. There are many types of memos. Some are aimed at providing information. Some are aimed

at eliciting feedback or other relevant details. Some may talk about goals, objectives and action points. In that sense, they may be seeking specific action. Memos are sent across to inform, motivate, persuade, educate, and galvanize people, groups and teams into achieving results.

Given such varied objectives, the memo writer should sit down and plan out the contents of the memo before actually drafting it. He or she should collect relevant information, figures and details which have to be shared with the readers. The memo-writer should be clear about his target groups—an employee or branch manager or sales personnel or unit heads or executives. The contents/language and the tone should be appropriate to the targeted readers of the memo. The memo should have the right tone and emphasis. The memo-writer should also decide about the length of the memorandum keeping in view the details to be shared. The memorandum may have to have some relevant annexures and tables or charts, if need be. It may have to make some references to the earlier memos or other relevant communication. All this involves proper planning.

The memo writer should also plan how to reach out to the target groups. Memos can be sent out in a typed format and if the number is large, sufficient copies of the memo may have to be printed. In this case, the writer has to keep in mind the time taken for getting the memo copies printed and the actual travel time before the memo despatched from the office reaches the recipient. Memos often carry a sense of urgency and as such should reach the addressee expeditiously or within the shortest possible time. The advent of electronic channels of communication has made it possible for the memo to reach out instantaneously. That is why organizations today resort to email or internal network or company website to convey internal communication.

Drafting the Memorandum

Memos are drafted keeping in view the context of the communication as well as the recipient of the message. Memos are written in the second person with a direct approach. Every effort is made to involve the recipient and the word 'you' is used often. The message is conveyed in clear terms using a simple and direct language. There is no need to spend time on niceties like a salutation (Dear sir) or a complimentary close (Yours faithfully, etc.) or a signature at the end of the letter. Since the memo is meant to be read by colleagues within the office, the writing should be to express, and not to impress. The tone should be neither too casual nor too formal.

Examples of Good Communication—Memos

Let us now look at some examples of memos used in business organizations.

Example 1.

To: All Departmental Heads in Head Office

From: General Manager, General Administration, Head Office

Date: 11 Jan 2018

Subject: Meeting with Courier Agencies

A meeting has been scheduled at 11.00 A.M on Monday, 15 Jan 2018 in the Committee Room on First Floor to meet with the short-listed courier agencies and discuss the modalities of cost effective and timely despatch and delivery of out bound mail and merchandise.

You are requested to brief me about the despatch needs of your department and your experience in dealing with the short-listed agencies well in advance.

Attachment: List of participating courier agencies

Example 2.

Superior Bank   Memo 16/2018

Personnel and HR Department   11 February 2018

Mumbai

To: All Branches and Offices in India

Subject: Dearness Allowance

The confirmed All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (Base 1960-100) for the quarter ended December 2017 is as follows:

October 2017   3378.23

November 2017   3378.23

December 2017   3355.41

All our branches and offices are advised to be guided by this memo while effecting salary payments to our staff for the months of February and March 2018.

                                                    Personnel Officer

Example 3.

Premier Motors Ltd.

Commercial Vehicles Department, New Delhi.

Memo 5/ 2018 – 8 February 2018

To: All Showrooms in the Eastern Region

Subject: Special Discount for Commercial Vehicles for March 2018

The Company has decided to offer a special discount of 2 per cent on the sale price of various types of Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) sold at all our Showrooms during March 2018.

The applicable price for different categories of LCVs before and after the 2 per cent discount is listed in the annexure to this memo.

All our Showrooms should note that this special discount of 2 per cent will be applicable ONLY TO CASH SALES made during March 2018 and will not be extended beyond this period.

All our Branch Heads are requested to prominently display the Special Rates on their Notice Boards and take full advantage of this special offer in maximising the sale of LCVs during March 2018.

Branch Heads are also requested to send the details of LCVs sold during March by FAX on 1st April 2018, without fail.

Director – Sales

Attachment: List of Special Rates for LCVs

Copy: General Manager, Eastern Region.

Memos, as we have already noted, often reach out to a large section of people spread across the organization. Since memos are taken seriously by people to whom they are addressed and also acted upon as directed therein, every care should be taken in drafting and despatching memos. Quite often, memos are not drafted by the person under whose authority they are issued. Hence, if any miscommunication occurs on account of the negligence or callousness of the person drafting the memo, the authority or the department issuing the memo would have to face considerable embarrassment. The drafting of memos, especially the important ones, is entrusted to persons with good communication skills. Memos should necessarily possess the usual characteristics of good written communication such as clarity, brevity, cogency, completeness and readability. In view of their importance, quite often the draft of memo passes through several levels or tiers for approval. The method of despatch is also decided keeping in view the target sections and the urgency of the message. Sometimes memos refer to several previous ones on the subject making the comprehension and access difficult for the reader. It would be necessary to bring out a comprehensive memo to facilitate easy and all-in- one-place reference. Sometimes instruction, directives or guidelines issued by external agencies such as government organizations, regulatory bodies, legal entities, etc., may have to be reproduced through the memos. In doing so, care should be taken to clarify the message in terms of internally understood terms, phrases and abbreviations.

Drafting of office memos thus, calls for good communication skills. When the subject matter dealt with is complex or specialized in nature, such as clarifying legal aspects or announcing the features of a new product or a pricing policy, all relevant facts and figures will have to be covered in an organized manner. There is often a need to give examples and instructions and also append relevant annexures so as to amplify and clarify the message. Memos carrying ambiguity, inconsistency or incomplete details may end up creating confusion and result in avoidable clarifications being sought by the readers. On the other hand, a clearly worded, logically consistent, unambiguous and complete memo gets well understood, facilitating prompt response.

10.4.1 Notice Writing

Office notes are another form of internal communication popular within business organizations. Office notes are put up by sections, departments or units to the higher authorities, head of the unit, department or institution. Office notes are put up for 'consideration and orders' or for 'information' where there are specific delegated powers for various sanctions, incurring of financial expenditure, changes in placements and assignments. Office notes incorporating all relevant details and seeking such sanctions are put up to the appropriate sanctioning authority. Such sanctions, through office notes, constitute a record of due permissions obtained before duly communicating or acting on them.

Office notes are put up to the president, general manager, executive director, managing director or chairman, as the case may be. Alternatively, they may be put up to the Executive Committee, the General Managers' Committee, the Management Committee, Audit Committee and the Board of Directors as well. Some organizations also have some specific functional committees like the Legal Committee, Premises Committee, Credit Committee, Promotions Committee, Procedures and Systems Committee to whom office notes seeking deliberation and orders or reporting developments are put up.

Although there may or may not be any specific written instructions on the drafting of office notes or the details to be furnished therein, in practice, one can observe a well-established and widely followed method in putting up such notes. Sometimes, the size and colour of the paper, the nature of typing (single space or double space), the authority who should sign and time schedule for submission are clearly stated. Office notes often refer to policy guidelines or important sanctions and generally pass through various tiers and incorporate views or comments of different functionaries. Whenever inputs are sought from different departments such as legal, personnel and inspection, their views are incorporated in the office notes as well. Office notes are prepared and filed in serial order and serve as authoritative documents confirming sanctions or orders. While in some cases copies of the office notes are dispatched to the implementing units, in other cases the gist of the order or observations made by the authority concerned on the note are conveyed to the implementation levels.

Preparation of office notes too calls for relevant skills, as all relevant facts and figures will have to be furnished sequentially. Wherever necessary, other related matters and previous decisions will have to be cited for reference. The actual recommendation has to be clearly stated. In the end, the specific decision or instruction sought, or development being reported, has to be clearly mentioned. Unless the office note itself is clear, the observations or orders thereon may also become vague and unimplementable. This will create uncertainty at various levels and may necessitate the putting up of the note once again with additions and

modifications. It is necessary, therefore, that the office notes prepared cover all relevant information and facilitate consequent decision making and orders by the authority concerned.

Check Your Progress

6. How are business letters different from memos?

7. What are memos?

10.5 LETTER WRITING

Business letters, to be good and effective, must contain certain essentials. In other words, business letters should conform to certain minimum standards of letter writing. One can look at these essentials from different angles—language, content, context, length, structure, layout, taste, tone, impact and purpose orientation. Any letter is amenable to description in terms of these characteristics or features. To qualify, the letter should measure up as good when viewed from any of these considerations. It may or may not encompass all these features. Nevertheless, a good letter writer should have a clear understanding of all the characteristics that make the letter effective. In order to be clear about what is a good letter, it is also very necessary to know what a bad letter is. While a good letter can be good on many counts, a bad letter may have one undesirable feature which can mar the beauty of the entire letter.

A bad letter stands out like a sore thumb for any of its deficiencies, which might be any of the following:

1. Lack of clarity

2. Poor use of words and expressions

3. Incorrect spelling and grammatical errors

4. Too short or very lengthy

5. Too many ideas crowded into one letter

6. Not accurate or factually incorrect

7. Fails to convey the main purpose

8. Not to the reader's wavelength

9. Too much jargon and technical words

10. Lacking in aesthetic sense

11. Language used not familiar to the reader

12. Lengthy paragraphs

13. Offensive in nature

14. Absence of personal touch

15. Lacking in courtesy

16. Creates ill-will

17. Written out of context

18. Absence of relevant information

19. Use of poor-quality paper and ink

20. Wrong address

21. Absence of address

Business is all about creating goodwill, favourable impressions, attracting attention, creating interest, wooing customers, reaching prospects and building relationships. All this call for conscious efforts, concerted action and correspondence on a regular basis. As this has to be done in a world that is full of competition, one bad letter can cause avoidable damage to the reputation of the business. Badly written letters cause embarrassment to the people behind the business and show the organization in poor light.

Types of Letters: Publisher, Book-sellers, Binders users and Client-patrons

Businesses letters are of numerous types. They may be big or small, old or new, local or national, public or private, proprietary or partnership, monopolistic or competitive and manufacturing or service units. Nevertheless, by and large, all these businesses have certain common concerns and approaches within any given business environment. They deal with people internally as well as externally. They have their stakeholders in owners, employees, customers and the community. Businesses are also organized into various functional areas such as personnel, marketing, sales, purchase, accounts, administration and secretarial. Business letters are of a wide variety and emanate from all these sources. Similarly, people who deal with these businesses also correspond with all these departments at some stage or other. To be able to correspond effectively with all these departments under various business situations, one has to familiarize oneself with various types of letters and their features. Although the general principles of good letter writing discussed earlier hold good, the approach will have to vary depending upon the functional area to which the letter relates.

When we refer to various types of business letters and their replies, we are covering letters that move both ways, i.e., letters from business organizations to various other agencies as well as individuals and other agencies to business organizations.

Some common areas of business correspondence or the specific types of letters with which a business letter writer should be well versed with are as follows:

From the Purchase Department:

1. Calling for quotations for products and services
2. Inviting tenders for jobs and supplies
3. Asking for samples and drawings
4. Placing test orders
5. Placing orders
6. Status enquiries
7. Technical bids and commercial bids

When we refer to tenders, quotations and orders it must be emphasized that there are financial implications. The subject matter and the details of the quotation, tender or order have to be specifically and clearly stated such that there is no ambiguity.

From the Sales/Marketing Department:

1. Sales letter
2. Circular letters
3. Preparation of sales letters with the conditions of sale on the reverse
4. Preparation of market survey reports
5. Reports from salesperson to sales executives
6. Offer of discounts and business concessions
7. Launch of a new product or scheme
8. Mailing of company literature
9. Letter of acknowledgement

In this category, there are two types of business letters. One set relates to the letters emanating from within the sales departments, or from sales persons and marketing personnel in the field to other departments or to their own executives. The other set of letters relates to letters written by people in sales and marketing to people outside the organization—customers, prospects, agents and distributors and other agencies. It is the latter category that needs particular attention. Letters to the customers and prospects either substitute or supplement personal contacts and as such can make or mar the business promotion efforts. They carry the image of the organization and the people behind the letters. Sales letters should also be elegant and appealing. The presentation should be such that it elicits the attention of the addressee.

From the Accounts Department:

1. Dues and collection letters to various agencies and customers
2. Follow-up letters
3. Correspondence with banks

4. Opening/closing of accounts

5. Regarding overdrafts, cash credit and current accounts

6. Stop payment instructions

7. Request for issue of letters of credit (LCs)

8. Protest for wrongful dishonouring of cheques

9. Letters relating to interest payments and service charges

10. Complaint letters covering wrong credits and debits and delays in realization of instruments

11. Correspondence with insurance companies regarding payment of premium, renewal of policies, claims and settlements

12. Correspondence with agencies such as the Telephone Department, Post and Telegraph authorities, the Provident Fund Office, Income Tax Office and Commercial Tax Department

By their very nature, these types of business letters should be accurate, brief, simple and to the point. In particular, letters relating to collection of dues and recovery of money need to be drafted with a keen sense of understanding and sensitivity. Such letters should necessarily vary in terms of terseness or intensity and choice of words depending upon the nature of dues, age of dues and other such relevant factors. Some of them have to be polite, some persuasive and some firm.

From the Personnel Department:

1. Calling candidates for written tests

2. Interview call letters

3. Offer of appointment

4. Provisional and final appointment orders

5. Confirmation in service

6. Changes in emoluments

7. Disciplinary matters—show cause notices, charge sheets, calling for explanation, discharge, other punishments and letters of dismissal

8. Leave and travel sanctions

9. Training programs and deputation

10. Reference letters

When we refer to personnel department letters or employee-related letters, we are indeed discussing a very wide variety of letters. These letters may be general or specific, routine or special, pleasant or unpleasant. Letters from HRD department are normally pleasant or otherwise motivating and training related, whereas letters from the Industrial Relations Department or from the Disciplinary Authority are normally of the none-too-pleasant category. These two are obviously

widely different in nature and the letter writer must use the appropriate language and approach. While HRD and training-related letters should carry a positive, encouraging and developmental stance, disciplinary letters will have to carry an authoritarian and even a legal or procedural approach. It is necessary to acquire adequate familiarity with the terms and ensure that there are no inadvertent inadequacies in the letter.

From the Administration and Secretarial Departments:

1. Change in management
2. Changes in business hours
3. Opening and shifting of branches and offices
4. Invitations and public notices
5. Correspondence with directors and shareholders
6. Agenda and minutes of company meetings
7. Correspondence with shareholders and debenture holders pertaining to dividend and interest payments, transfer and transmission of shares
8. Correspondence with agents and transport companies
9. Representations to trade associations, chambers of commerce and public authorities
10. Letter seeking appointments/personal interviews

Correspondence relating to directors and shareholders and matters concerning company meetings, especially in listed companies and larger organizations, are often handled by qualified company secretaries. The point to be noted here is that such correspondence is generally specialized in nature and will have to be attended in a systematic and organized manner. The business letter writer keen on acquiring such letter-writing skills will have to necessarily understand secretarial functions.

Other Types of Business Communication:

1. Job applications
2. Preparation of bio data and curriculum vitae
3. Export- and import-related correspondence
4. Preparation of bill of exchange, promissory note and hundi
5. Telegraphic and fax messages
6. Mild and strong appeals
7. Correspondence with foreign institutions and agencies
8. Advertisements of various types—newspapers and print media, hoardings and banners
9. Press releases

10. Questionnaires and opinion polls

11. Legal correspondence

12. Publicity literature such as brochures and booklets

13. Newsletters and house journals

14. Preparation of charts, graphs and stickers

Letters of Social Significance:

1. Social letters in business

2. Inviting a guest

3. Congratulatory letters on achievements

4. Letters that say, 'Thank you'

5. Letters of appreciation

6. Accepting or declining invitation

7. Condolence letters

8. Letter of introduction

9. Goodwill messages

We have generally listed in the foregoing paragraphs various types of letters and correspondence that emanate from a business on a regular basis. While most of it is routine involving primary level of writing, there are some, as we have noted, which call for specialized and cultivated skills. The objective in listing various types of letters from different departments and functional areas is to give an idea of the expanse of business communication. Like in other areas, in letter writing too, conscious efforts and willingness to learn are a must. A good business letter writer has to appreciate the essential characteristics of each such letter and develop relevant skills.

Instead of providing drafts or models of various types of business letters, we have thought it appropriate to present a fairly comprehensive list of business letters for all occasions. We have also highlighted the significant features and principles to be borne in mind while drafting some letters such as orders and quotations, sales letters, and collection and recovery letters. Models tend to inhibit learning. Skills are acquired through attentive learning, application and practice. We are also giving in the following paragraphs some more useful tips or guidelines that should help in developing letter-writing skills. Notwithstanding the routine nature of most business correspondence, it is possible, and indeed desirable, to develop variety and style in writing the letters. Letters must have certain intensity or depth depending upon the situation, and it is not possible to bring out such variations in one or two 'draft models.' Students and practitioners desirous of improving their skills in letter writing are advised to practice drafting a variety of such letters, i.e., letters for all occasions, taking note of the following additional guidelines and compare them with standard drafts or models available from authentic sources as confidence-building measures.

10.6 APPLICATION, BUSINESS AND COMPLAINT LETTERS

The most common types of application letters, depending on the amount and kind of information to be furnished, are as follows:

- **Objective letters**: Objective letters are generally very brief. They identify the position being sought, indicate an interest in facing an interview and call attention to the fact that the resume is attached. They also mention any other special matters that are not included in the resume, such as dates and times when you will be available for an interview. These letters do not exhibit any sales promotional intentions. (They actually represent the true meaning of a 'cover' letter.)

- **Highlight letters**: Highlight letters try to summarize the key information from a resume. The letter emphasizes the point that the sender is a good candidate for a particular job. In other words, these applications highlight the key information in a resume, or anything else, to establish the suitability of the sender for the job applied for.

Thus, the sender first needs to decide which type of application letter will suit his or her needs. This decision in part depends on the requirements that employers may have and, in part, on the background of the sender and on the employment needs. The sender can decide on the type of letter either by calling the prospective employer or by scanning for clues in the job advertisement.

A complaint letter is one which requests some sort of compensation for defective or damaged goods or for inadequate or delayed services. Though many complaints can be made in person by a call, some circumstances require formal business letters. A complaint letter may be so complex that a phone call may not effectively resolve the problem, and the writer may prefer the permanence, formality and seriousness of a business letter. Maintaining poise and diplomacy is the essential rule of a complaint letter, no matter how justified the problem is. Making the recipient an adversary should be avoided. The steps of writing a good compliant letter are as follows:

1. Reasons for writing should be identified first to register a complaint and ask for some kind of compensation. Leaping into details of the problem should be avoided in the first sentence.

2. Desired compensation should be exactly stated either before or after the discussion of the problem or the reasons for granting the compensation. Delay in this statement in some cases may be more tactful and less antagonizing.

3. Evidence is provided in a fully detailed narrative or description of the problem.

4. Explain the reason why the request should be granted. Enough reasons should be stated against the evidences for the request to be granted.

5. The recipient should never be threatened. The letter should appeal to his sense of fairness and desire for continued business resulting in granting the request. Forcing the recipient to admit having committed an error or that the company has no concern for the customer should be avoided. At the end of the letter, confidence should be expressed that the recipient grant request and view the problem as an honest mistake.

Adjustment Letters

Adjustment letters, reply to complaint letters, must be handled carefully when the requested compensation cannot be granted. Skills for diplomacy and tact as a writer are tested after receiving refusal of compensation letter. Following are suggestions that help to write either type of adjustment letters.

1. It should begin with a reference to the date of the original letter of complaint and to the purpose of the letter. Never state the refusal right away unless done tactfully after the denial of the request.

2. There should be appreciation for writing back along with the response. Also, the concern over the writer's troubles should be expressed.

3. Explain the reasons why the request cannot be granted in as cordial and non-combative manner as possible if the request is denied. Never sound that the request is granted in a grudging way.

4. While denying the request, some partial or substitute compensation or some friendly advice should be offered (to take the sting out of the denial).

5. The letter should be cordially concluded, expressing confidence of the continuity of the business.

Inquiry Letters: Types and Contexts

A letter of enquiry is a type of letter in which an individual ask someone for some specific information. The cases in which the request is for promotional material, the recipient will have a clear interest in responding to the letter. While in other cases in which the request is for specific information on a product, the recipient may or may not be as motivated to respond quickly. However, the tone of the letter should always be friendly and made easy for the recipient to identify and provide the required information.

Format of a Letter of Inquiry

Following is the format to be followed while writing a letter of inquiry.

1. The first paragraph of the letter should start with identifying the writer and, if appropriate, the position and institution or firm.

2. The second paragraph should briefly explain the reason of writing and the use of requested information. If the offer seems reasonable then the response should be confidential.

3. Offering readers some incentive for responding would be a better idea while concluding the letter.

4. Specific information required should be listed out. Phrasing requests as questions or as a list of specific items of information should be done making each item clear and discrete.

Solicited and Unsolicited Inquiry Letter

Inquiry letters are those letters where a person enquires about some product or wants to have extra knowledge of some process. There are two types of inquiry letters: solicited and unsolicited.

Solicited inquiry letter

When a business or agency advertises its products or services, a solicited letter of inquiry is written. An inquiry letter to a company involved in a particular technical subject may put a person on the right track if he/she is not able to find any information on that. For example, a solicited letter asking specific questions can be written to a software manufacturer who advertises of some new package which it has developed, and one cannot inspect it locally. In fact, much more help is received than expected if, of course, an inquiry letter is written in a good manner.

Unsolicited inquiry letter

A letter of inquiry is unsolicited if the recipient has done nothing to prompt the inquiry. For instance, if an expert writes an article and one goes through it and requires further questions or information one can seek help from them in a slightly different form of inquiry letter. The steps and guidelines of solicited and unsolicited inquiry letters show that one must construct the unsolicited type more carefully, because recipients of these letters are not ordinarily prepared to handle such inquiries.

Inquiry Letter: Content and Organization

The purpose of the letter should be identified in order to obtain help or information. In case of a solicited letter, information about an advertised product, service or programme should be identified first.

The list of questions or information needed should be written in a clear, specific and easy-to-read format. If the number of questions is more, then a questionnaire should be made and a stamped self-addressed envelope or a pre-paid envelope should be included.

In case of an unsolicited letter, one can start by introducing oneself, the working areas, the need of requested information and the way the particular individual found out the cause for inquiry. The source that prompted inquiry must be included in an unsolicited letter, such as a magazine advertisement.

While closing an unsolicited letter, one must express gratitude for any help that the recipient can provide and acknowledge the inconvenience of the request. However, the recipient should never be thanked in advance. One should tactfully suggest the recipient that they will be benefited by helping (e.g. through future purchases from the recipient's company).

Various types of ways should be found out to compensate the recipient for the trouble in an unsolicited letter. For example, one can offer to pay copying and mailing costs, to accept a collect call, to acknowledge the recipient in report or to send him or her a copy of the report. The recipient can be suggested to send brochures or catalogues in case of solicited letters.

Check Your Progress

10. State the objective of highlight letters.

11. What are the two main types of inquiry letters?

10.7 CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

It is imprudent to draw a rigid line of distinction between meetings and conferences. Organizations do have 'conference halls' where meetings take place regularly. Conferences, as well as meetings, also take place in hotels and other large venues. The word conference is normally used to describe meetings of a larger scale. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a conference is a large official meeting, usually lasting for a few days, at which people with same work or interest come together to discuss their views. One usually refers to annual conference or bi-annual conference, zonal or regional conference or two-day conference, suggesting longer duration and larger participation. Business plan conferences are regularly held in business organizations. Several topics of relevance are discussed in such conferences. Background papers and posers and audio-visual presentations are prepared in advance to facilitate meaningful deliberations. Conferences, such as meetings, are a means of direct, face-to-face interactive communication. The

advent of innovative methods like teleconferencing and video conferencing have facilitated interactive communication between participants, without necessitating physical presence of all concerned at one venue.

The type of preparations and attention for details in relation to the conferences are, by and large, the same as those of meetings. Sometimes, the conferences may also have the features of a function, in which case, the presence of a chief guest, introduction of the speaker or the dignitary, invocation, lighting of the lamp, presentation of bouquets, distribution of brochures and other details become relevant. The checklist for meetings suggested earlier will have to be suitably modified to plan for and accommodate all details. In organizing any such events, it would be desirable to choose the word that fits the occasion. For example, when senior functionaries participate, the programme may be referred to as a 'seminar' or a 'conference' rather than a training programme. We also normally come across words like 'summit' to describe a meeting of the heads of the states and 'retreat' to describe temporary retirement from serious business meetings. Viewed in that context, meeting, meet, conference, workshop, seminar and study circle are, by their nature, platforms facilitating interactive communication and the most appropriate term may have to be used.

Seminars, Workshops and Symposia

Seminars, workshops and symposia are very common and popular means of interactive fora in modern day business world. Used effectively they can play a vital role in the dissemination of knowledge and build-up of skills. They facilitate intense deliberations through participation and interaction in an organized manner.

Seminars relate to any meeting set up for the discussion of one or more topics of interest to groups of persons. Seminars may cover small or big groups and may be held in classrooms or meeting halls or larger auditoria. They may be organized by institutes of learning or business organizations or chambers of commerce and the like. Seminars may be for a day or longer, ranging from 3 to 5 days. Seminars on banking and finance, information technology, agriculture and food processing and business management are just a few examples of interactive business communication. Seminars achieve the objective of bringing together a group of interested persons on a common platform for facilitating exchange of views, ideas and developments relating to specific topics. Seminars are generally organized around a particular theme and may include several related topics. They normally include an introductory session, a keynote address, different sessions, panel discussions and concluding sessions. While the specialist speakers and experts make their presentations, the participants interact and benefit from the question-and-answer sessions. Considering that substantial time, effort and resources are involved in organizing seminars, the seminar organizers, coordinators, resource persons and participants should collectively endeavour to make the deliberations focused and worthwhile.

Workshops are of a similar nature and relate to a course of study or work, especially of an experimental or creative kind. Workshops bring together a group of people working on a particular project or area of interest. Workshops are highly participative in nature. They facilitate skill building through hands-on participation. Normally conducted in smaller groups, where attention is given to every participant, workshops help make learning easier. Examples of a workshop are a theatre workshop, carpentry workshop, horticulture workshop, etc. Workshops normally involve demonstrations and how-to-do tips. Depending upon the mix of participants, workshops may be basic or advanced. It is expected that people who attend such workshops learn basic skills on such specific activities.

Symposia refer to the plural of symposium. A symposium is also a conference organized to cover a particular subject in detail, especially relating to an academic subject. One can think of a symposium on renewable energy or distance learning or Vedic mathematics and so on. It is another valuable means of disseminating knowledge.

All these interactive methods of communication help add value to the participants. More often than not, fees are charged from the participants. The participants emerge wiser and better informed about the subjects discussed. Lack of adequate planning, absence of well-informed specialists or experts and not providing adequate opportunities to raise questions and get the doubts clarified will undermine the effectiveness of such events. Every effort should be made to make them worthwhile.

10.7.1 Book Review

Book reviews in newspapers and magazines are published with different perspectives. Most of the book reviews are in fact there to inform the readers about the recent happenings in the world of books, new arrivals and much discussed books of the week or the month. Some reviewers also feel that they must not only inform the readers but should advice or warn them before they take a plunge on them.

But one must draw a line between the criticism and a review, because many writers at times tend to write from the point of view of literary criticism or social science analysis, which in any case is a writing to be performed in a literary magazine or an academic journal.

Check Your Progress

12. What is a symposium?

13. Why is it necessary to understand the difference between criticism and review?

10.8 STAFF AND BUSINESS MEETING

Meetings are vital for management and communication. The planning and running of effective meetings for business, sales, strategic planning and team-building are crucial for effective functioning of organizations. Properly planned and conducted meetings help save time, increase motivation and productivity, solve problems and create new ideas. There is no substitute for physical face-to face meetings.

What is a Meeting?

Meeting is a term to describe the process of people getting together to talk and share their knowledge, opinions, experiences, views and suggestions. Meetings may be of many kinds and may serve many purposes but some the characteristics common to all meetings are the following:

(i) All meetings have a definite purpose.

(ii) Interaction has to take place between the members attending the meeting.

(iii) Certain rules have to be observed during the meeting.

(iv) Generally, a chairperson is in control of the proceedings of the meeting.

Objectives of a Meeting

Meetings need to be held for a definite purpose. Meetings without a purpose are a waste of time and resources. Only if absolutely necessary should a meeting be held. The broad objectives for which meetings may be held are as follows:

- To obtain information
- To provide information
- To solve a problem
- To persuade or sell an idea

Meetings may also be held to serve a combination of the above purposes.

To obtain information

The aim of such a meeting is to obtain facts, figures, opinions and viewpoints from those attending the meeting. This information is important to take decisions, and to plan or to complete tasks. Meetings to discuss how to improve sales or to assess the progress of a newly launched product are examples of a meeting held to obtain information.

The chairperson needs to stimulate members to readily voice their opinions. He should be a good listener and encourage the members to speak. He should create an atmosphere wherein the participants willingly cooperate and contribute information and do not do so out of fear or coercion.

To provide information

Here the aim is to convey facts, figures and viewpoints to the members attending the meeting. The purpose is to disseminate information. A meeting held to brief the members of a new policy or procedure is an example of such a meeting.

The chairperson has an important role to play as a speaker. He is required to provide participants with clarifications in case they need any. The participants in this case primarily need to listen but they have to be active listeners voicing their doubts and seeking clarifications if need be.

To solve a problem

This type of meeting is held to arrive at a solution to a problem being faced by the organization, department or section. A meeting held to find measures to boost up the declining sales of a product is an example of a meeting held to find solutions to a problem

The chairperson has to ensure that a viable practical solution is arrived at by the active contribution of all the members attending the meeting. A chairperson with considerable experience and expertise in a related area will be suitable for conducting such a meeting.

To persuade or sell an idea

This kind of meeting is held to convince the participants that a particular idea or course of action has to be accepted. The aim is to make the participants believe in the suitability of the idea/decision. A meeting held by the sales department with select customers to launch and advertise a new product is an example of such a meeting.

Here the chairperson should have the ability to sell. He should have a well-developed persuasive ability and should sound convincing.

10.8.1 Library Committee Meeting and Condolence Meeting

A library committee is a group of people who are responsible for matters related to efficient library management. This committee is responsible for various activities required for smooth functioning of the library like acquisition of books, recruitment of library staff, framing of library policies and rules, budgeting, fund raising, and increasing membership. The size of the library committee varies depending on the size of the library and its activities and operations. The extent to which the library committee is empowered to take decision also varies. It can range from the committee being merely a recommending committee (wherein the members can make recommendation regarding various proposals and the real powers of taking the decision and implementing the lies elsewhere) to a committee which is independent and has the complete authority as regards control and management of the library.

To discuss the various issues related to library management that comes up from time to time, the library committee meetings need to be held. These meetings are an important platform for taking decisions related to library aspects. The periodicity of these meetings can be fixed–biannually, thrice a year or on a quarterly basis depending on the requirement as mentioned in the library policy. However, apart from theses fixed meetings there can be meetings organized on 'need basis 'whenever some important and urgent decision needs to be taken'.

The agenda of the meeting can include the following:

- Formulating or revising general library policies, rules regulations which govern the functioning of the library.
- Take decisions regarding procuring new titles for updating the library collection.
- Reviewing of library readership.
- Modernization and process improvement decisions pertaining to the library.
- Strategizing to enhance readership.
- Budget of the library.
- Selection of personnel for the library.

Check Your Progress

14. What are the characteristics of a meeting?

15. What is a library committee?

10.9 TRAINING PROGRAMME

Some trainers classify training methods into the following categories:

  (i) Teacher-centred methods

 (ii) Student-centred group methods

(iii) Individual-student centred methods

(I) Teacher-centred methods

The following are teacher-centred methods:

  (i) Lecture

 (ii) Lecture and discussion

(iii) Mentoring

 (iv) Guided discussion

 (v) Demonstration

(vi) Controlled discussion

(vii) Tutorial

(II) Student-centred group methods

The following are student-centred group methods:

(i) Brainstorming	(ix) Buzz group
(ii) Case study	(x) Debate
(iii) Fish bowl	(xi) Group discussion
(iv) Interview	(xii) Listening and observing
(v) Panel	(xiii) Project
(vi) Role play	(xiv) Simulation and games
(vii) Snowballing	(xv) T-groups
(viii) Field tours	(xvi) Work shops

(III) Individual student-centred methods

(i) Assignments

(ii) Computer-assisted learning

(iii) Personal tutorial

(iv) Practicals

(v) Projects

M. Armstrong classifies training techniques into the following categories:

1. **On-the-job techniques:** Demonstration, mentoring, coaching and planned experience.

2. **Off-the-job techniques:** Lectures, discussions, case studies, role playing and simulation.

3. **On or off-the-job techniques:** E-learning, instruction, assignments, projects, guided reading and computer-based training.

Blanchard and Thacker divide the various training methods into cognitive and behavioural approaches.

1. **Cognitive methods:** These are used for knowledge and attitude development. The method focuses on providing information and attempts to stimulate learning by affecting the cognition process of the trainees. Cognitive methods are very effective for knowledge development but in case of skill development, cognitive methods are found wanting.

2. **Behavioural methods:** These methods are used by trainers to develop skills and for affecting behavioural change.

Whatever may be the method, the aim is to help the trainee learn and be a part of the learning process.

On the job: Apprenticeship, Working and Mentoring

On-the-job training (OJT) is one of the oldest types of training methods. It refers to recruits learning at work under the supervision of a line manager or supervisor. According to P. Swamidass, 'OJT is the preferred method for training employees for new technology and increasing skills in the use of existing technology.' OJT is a useful method for training fresh recruits, newly promoted employees, for orienting transferred employees, and for skill enhancement. For training, OJT uses skilled workers who double up as trainers. OJT is considered to be informal and unstructured as most of the instruction is at the work site and OJT is characterized by the following points:

(i) Unstructured instruction pattern

(ii) Lack of specific training objective

(iii) Lack of systematic learning contents

(iv) Absence of formal trainers as training is given by skilled employees

Despite its unstructured and informal nature OJT has some advantages such as the following:

(i) It can be adapted to suit the capabilities of the trainees.

(ii) Since training is at job site, it can be immediately applicable.

(iii) Companies save on trainer cost and training site cost.

(iv) Since trainees learn on actual job task, skill transferability becomes smooth.

The only issue with OJT is its unstructured nature which can contribute to ineffective employees. Hence for OJT to be effective, it has to be structured and systematic. Structured OJTs are planned programmes which achieve learning through the following steps:

(i) Trainee observes the skilled worker perform.

(ii) Trainee is explained the procedure throughout the performance.

(iii) Trainee practices under the supervision of trainer.

(iv) Continuous feedback is provided by trainer.

(v) By practising repeatedly, trainee learns the task.

OJT has numerous forms. Some of them are discussed in detail as follows:

(i) **Apprenticeship:** According to professor, R. W. Glover, 'Apprenticeship is a work study training method with both on-the-job and classroom training.' In India, the definition of apprentice is provided by the Apprentices Act, 1961. According to this Act, apprenticeship training means, 'a course of training in any industry or establishment undergone in pursuance of a contract of apprenticeship and under prescribed terms and conditions which may be different for different categories of apprentices.' In an apprentice programme, the duration of training is clearly specified, for instance, Indian Navy has an

apprentice programme where the trainee spends four years learning the specific skill. Most apprenticeships are in skilled trade such as machinists, welders, electricians, and so on. Apprenticeship training does involve some amount of classroom instruction as well. According to A. H. Howard, OJT aspect of apprenticeship programme can be made effective by including modelling, practice, feedback and evaluation. Apprenticeship programmes are attractive to trainees because they are paid stipends during the apprenticeship and most apprenticeships result in full employment.

(ii) **Coaching:** 'Coaching' as a term is closely associated with OJT. This implies that coaching was for middle and upper level employees, while OJT was for lower level workers. The term coaching refers to one-on-one instruction for improving knowledge and ability. Coaching is normally used to deal with problems associated with performance deficiency. Coaches can be outside specialists or experienced workers from within the organization. Outside specialists are used to deal with specific issues related to middle and upper management. According to Evered and Selman, the main difference between coaching and OJT is that in coaching the coach continues to guide the subordinate for some time even after the latter's performance levels have increased. Coaching by nature is more collaborative than other methods of OJT. Coaching as a training method is used where skill development is the learning objective.

(iii) **Mentoring:** This refers to the relationship that develops between a senior and junior employee. As a mentor, the senior guides the junior and explains him the nuances of organizational functioning. In fact, mentoring facilitates the junior's adjustment within the organizational set-up. Unlike coaching that focuses on the performance aspects which are more technical in nature, mentoring focuses on attitude development. Mentors advise their juniors on what to do, how to do it, how to manage organizational politics, etc.

(iv) **Job Instruction Technique (JIT):** The original job instruction technique was first used with World War ™™ production workers as a systematic method to train people as quickly as possible to meet the war demands. Components of the original World War ™™ JIT are still used. JIT consists of the following four steps:

    Step 1: Plan or preparation

    Step 2: Present

    Step 3: Trial

    Step 4: Follow-up

These have been discussed in detail as follows:

Step* 1: *Plan or preparation: Since OJT is normally delivered by a skilled worker doubling up as a trainer. The skilled worker cum trainer looks at the training from his point of view, thereby failing to understand the needs of the trainee. For instance,

while teaching a trainee the skilled worker may not explain some of the operations because he thinks they are extremely simple. The point is, in an unstructured OJT, the job to be learnt is not written down and understood systematically. This prevents the trainees from receiving effective OJT. Hence the first step in JIT is preparation which includes systematic analysis and documentation of the job. On the basis of the documentation, the trainer prepares a specific instructional plan for the trainee. For learning to be successful, the learning environment is significant; hence, the next step in this stage is the creation of a conducive learning environment. This is done by providing the trainee with orientation, familiarizing the trainee with the training programme and steps of OJT.

Step* 2: *Present: According to L. Gold, this stage consists of four activities: tell, show, demonstrate and explain. The trainer first starts by verbally explaining the job, the nature of the task and as he explains the job, he shows the trainee the different aspects of the job. Note that showing is not actually doing the job or demonstrating the job. When the trainer shows the job, he is actually pointing out to the trainee, the location of the equipment, the raw materials, the spare parts and other such aspects of the equipment. After familiarizing the trainee with the job and equipment associated with it, the trainer proceeds to demonstrate how to perform the job. The trainer at this stage actually performs the job for the visual observation of the trainee. At this stage the trainee is expected to watch and learn. As he performs the job, the trainer explains the importance of the job, why it is done and speaks about the safety regulations, etc.

Step* 3: *Trial: During this stage, the trainee displays his retention and recall ability by first, verbally recalling the method of doing the job and then by actually performing the job in the presence of the trainer. This stage of trying out allows the trainer to give constructive feedback after observing the trainee perform the job. Mistakes committed by the trainee are rectified at this stage.

Step* 4: *Follow-up: This refers to the efforts made by the trainer to keep track of his trainee's job performance. The trainer follows the job performance of his trainee even after the latter's training programme is over. The motive behind such a follow-up effort is to prevent the trainee from developing bad work habits or practices.

OJT is an effective method for skill enhancement, but the issue of competent trainer raises questions regarding the method's efficiency. Broadly speaking, the qualities of a good trainer are technical and training competence, and the ability to motivate. OJT reliance on skilled workers to train inexperienced workers raises questions about the trainer's competency. Organizations tend to use structured OJTs to negate the issue of the trainer's competency.

Off the job

There are several management development strategies which offer off-the-job training to an employee. A few of these methods are as follows:

- **Sensitivity Training**: Sensitivity training helps people understanding themselves and others in a reasonable manner by developing behavioural flexibility and social sensitivity. Behavioural flexibility enables an employee to behave in a suitable manner by developing a sense of understanding. Social sympathy, synonymous with empathy, is the ability of an employee to understand and sense the feelings of others and think from their point of view. Sensitivity training consists of the following three steps:

  a) Unfreezing old values
  b) Developing new values
  c) Refreezing new values

- **Transactional Analysis**: Transactional analysis helps trainees by providing a realistic method for understanding other's behaviour. In a social interaction, one person provides motivation while the other gives a reaction to that motivation. The reaction of motivation between the two people is known as a transaction. Transaction analysis is done by the ego states of an employee which is a system of feelings along with a related behavioural set. There are basically three ego stages:

  a) Child
  b) Parent
  c) Adult

- **Straight Lectures**: Straight lectures is one of the oldest training methods used to create an understanding for a topic or influencing attitudes and behaviour by lecture. Lecture can either be in a oral or a printed form and tells someone about something. Lectures help in increasing the knowledge of a person listening to it and giving them a theoretical aspect of the lecture's topic. The task of training is usually not complete without a lecture. A trainer or instructor begins their training session by informing the trainees of the goal, processes, aim, agenda or methods used in the training with the use of the lecture method. Straight lectures consist of lectures in the form of printed texts such as notes, books, etc. An effective lecture consists of the topic's introduction, lecture's purpose and preferences and priorities of the topic. There are some main features of the lecture method, as mentioned below:

  a) Can be reached large number of people at once
  b) Less effective because lectures require long periods of trainee inactivity
  c) Less expensive
  d) Inability to identify and correct misunderstandings
  e) Knowledge building exercise

Case Study Method

A problem or an issue regarding a company is written and given to the trainees. The issue may be anything from a marketing problem to a decision-making situation.

The trainees are given the entire background of the problem including facts, figures and company history. They are then required to analyse and respond to the issue given to them. After finishing the analyses, the trainees put forward their suggestions which are then discussed by all the trainees. Learning takes place through the trainees' participation in the discussion. Trainees also learn by criticizing the suggestions put forward by other trainees. By participating in case study discussions, the trainees realize that there is more than one solution to most problems. Case study method essentially teaches skill rather than knowledge. It is used to develop the trainees' analytical abilities.

In the case study method, it is the case/problem which is the source of learning rather than the trainer. All the same this is not to suggest that the trainer has no role to play, as it is the trainer who selects the cases and directs the discussion in a specific line of enquiry. The learning objective of this method is to encourage the trainees to participate, and to apply the knowledge which they hitherto have learnt or acquired.

The case study method has developed a variant known as the incident process. Unlike case study where all the relevant details of the case are provided, the incident process method only provides a brief and sketchy detail of the problem. The trainees are expected to gather other relevant details from the trainer or do their own research. This method focuses on developing information gathering and sorting skills of the trainee, as it is information on which most of the decisions are made. As a training method, case study method is very effective for skill development. Organizations often use it to train their managers and other employees.

Lecture Method

Lecture is the most formal of training methods and in training terms it means a verbal presentation given to the trainees for instruction and it may be accompanied by visual aids such as flip charts or projections. Lecture requires the audience to sit still and listen and the only interaction between the trainer and the trainee is limited to questions and answers, usually at the end of the lecture. It is a one-way presentation of training message by the trainer. Lecture is a formal presentation of information in a clear logical sequence, which is interspersed with illustrations and examples. Authors, Blanchard and Thacker give a list of essential components of a lecture which are as follows:

  (i) **Orientation:** Giving introductory information with regard to the direction and content of the presentation.

 (ii) **Enthusiasm:** Elaborating the importance of training content to generate enthusiasm among the audience.

(iii) **Variety:** Illustrating the presentation with visual images or projections or audio-visuals to add variety to the presentation.

(iv) **Logical organization:** Presenting the topic in a sequential order.

(v) **Explanations:** Explaining factual and conceptual ideas in an unambiguous manner.

(vi) **Directions:** Providing systematic instruction and direction in case of procedural knowledge.

(vii) **Illustrations:** Giving relevant examples to substantiate a topic or to explain an idea.

(viii) **Compare and contrast:** Discussing the strengths and limitations.

(ix) **Questions and discussion:** Responding to questions of the trainees and raising questions to elicit response from the trainees.

(x) **Summarize:** Concluding the presentation by briefly discussing the important aspects of the topic.

The lecture method has many variants. These are as follows:

1. **Standard lecture:** Presentation made by the trainer for giving information to the trainees.

2. **Team teaching:** Presenting topic by two different trainers to provide different points of view. This method can also be used to present two different topics by different set of trainers. For instance, a psychologist can deliver a lecture on body language while a communications specialist can deliver the nuances of verbal language.

3. **Guest speakers:** Specialists from related fields can be invited to make a presentation so as to give trainees an expert's point of view.

4. **Panels:** Two or more trainers present a topic and discuss it with the trainees.

In a lecture, the trainees are overtly passive which may reduce their attention span and receptivity. To counter the problem of attention span, trainers at times use short lectures or *lecturette* lasting for about 20 minutes. During a lecture, the trainee observes, listens and if necessary, takes notes. In other words, in a lecture the trainee is expected to play the role of an information collector. Lecture per se is not a very effective technique for learning but is useful for giving specific information to a large number of trainees. The ineffective aspect of lecture comes from its lack of two-way communication or interaction with trainees. To make lecture an effective method of learning, some trainers combine it with discussion. When combined with discussion, the lecture method becomes interactive and more responsive to trainees' misunderstandings. Discussions after a lecture help in consolidating and clarifying the information. Lecture-cum-discussion makes learning of conceptual knowledge very thorough, as the trainees have an opportunity to discuss and clarify their doubts.

The focal point in a lecture is the trainer. Hence, it is the trainer who controls the session and its contents. In the absence of two-way communication, the lecture method lacks trainee involvement and feedback. Despite the lack of trainee

involvement, organizations prefer using lecture method when it comes to knowledge development or filling the gaps in a trainee's knowledge. To make lectures more effective, the trainer can give printed versions or handouts of his lectures. From attention point of view, if the trainer is charismatic and knows the subject he is dealing with, he will be able to get the attention of the trainees. Getting attention is the first step towards effective learning and lectures are a good method to get the attention of the trainees. But retaining attention of the trainees is an entirely different aspect of training. It is here that lecture on its own becomes ineffective and the trainer has to turn to training aids for support. An effective trainer uses illustrations, examples and real situations to explain the subject he is dealing with. Illustrations are an important component of lecture as they provide verbal cues that can be used by the memory to code the information. This in turn enhances retention. Another way to enhance retention of a lecture is to provide audio or video tapes of it. One of the ways to make learning effective is to stimulate multiple senses, but in case of lecture the stimulation is only auditory and this at times can hamper the learning process.

Demonstration Method

Literally the word demonstration means 'a talk or explanation by someone who shows you how to do or use something, or how something works.' (*Collins Dictionary*). From training point of view, demonstration as a training method is most effective for showing trainees how to use equipment or how to use a software. Demonstration method is used when the training objective is knowledge enhancement and skill development. The skills can be anything ranging from technical to software, from decision-making to marketing presentation. For instance, medical representatives are trained in presentation skills so as to enable them to make effective presentation to doctors. A demonstration serves the following purpose:

- To show how the equipment works or procedure functions.
- To present visually how the procedures are linked.
- To simplify the procedures by recreating them in front of the trainees.
- To reveal the cause and effects. For instance, unsafe handling of equipment and its consequences.
- To explain how the product functions. For instance, demonstration of how washing machines work.
- To explain the problems associated with product functioning.
- To encourage trainees to perform the procedure.
- To display the efficiency of a product or procedure.
- To display product capabilities. For instance, new software is always demonstrated to show its capabilities.
- To enable the trainee to 'watch and learn'.

There are three types of demonstration used in training: performance demonstration, teaching demonstration and interactive demonstration.

(i) **Performance demonstration:** It is a very effective method for imparting training in using new equipment or technology. In this method, an operator or expert demonstrates the whole operation or works on the equipment and the trainees are expected to watch and learn. This method is primarily used in factories to train trainees in handling equipment. The demonstration is not only related to using an equipment, but it can also be related to safe handling of equipment and correcting small mechanical faults. Performance demonstration has very little element of lecture or verbal presentation, because the focus is on the operation of the equipment and the operator.

(ii) **Teaching demonstration:** It is a method which combines lecture and demonstration. This method is effective in situations where the training objective is knowledge and skill development. In this method, the trainer first verbally explains the process or procedure, and then goes on to demonstrate the same. The advantage of this method lies in the fact that the trainees get a verbal introduction to the process or procedure before they practice or work on it. This method is commonly used in pharmaceutical industry to train personnel working on the manufacturing processes.

(iii) **Interactive demonstration:** It is a training method used for introducing new skills and to correct faulty skills of the existing employees. In this method, the trainer first allows the trainees to work on the equipment and after observing them work, suggests corrective measures. This method is very effective for building on the already existing skill set of the employees.

For a demonstration to be effective in achieving learning objectives, it has to provide enough practice time to the trainees, and it has to have a very constructive trainer feedback. When it comes to the learning process, attention span is important because lengthy demonstrations can be tedious. Hence, it is advisable to keep demonstrations short and relevant. With regard to retention, demonstration encourages observation on part of the trainees because the trainees are expected to practice the procedure or task after the demonstration is over. And as the trainees practice the same procedure over and over, the whole work procedure gets codified in the memory for further recall without any memory lapses.

Check Your Progress

16. How are training methods classified?

17. What are cognitive methods?

18. What are the different purposes of demonstrative method?

10.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The various types of business reports are status reports and progress reports, sales reports, confidential reports, confidential reports, information reports and analytical reports, feasibility reports, industry surveys and marketing reports, technical reports and directors' reports and so on.

2. The purpose of a report is to get the facts in proper perspective. When we refer to an enquiry report, an investigation report or a committee report, the intention is to get the inputs or views from different persons who are able to throw light on the subject or incident under study.

3. Annual reports are another type of business report regularly brought out by business organizations. As the name suggests, these reports are brought out every year detailing the progress achieved during the reporting period.

4. A daily progress report includes the following:
   (a) The tasks planned for the day
   (b) The tasks accomplished
   (c) Reasons for the gap if any between the above two
   (d) Challenges encountered in performing tasks

5. The primary objective of all promotional efforts is to drive sales and profits. More than short term measures such as discounts or buy one get one offer it is the quality, customer services, after sales service which have an impact on long term sales and profit.

6. Business letters are addressed to outsiders and constitute external communication. On the other hand, memos are addressed to employees and constitute internal communication.

7. Memos are drafted keeping in view the context of the communication as well as the recipient of the message. Memos are written in the second person with a direct approach. Every effort is made to involve the recipient and the word 'you' is used often. The message is conveyed in clear terms using a simple and direct language.

8. The types of business letters related to purchase department are as follows:
   (a) Calling for quotations for products and services
   (b) Inviting tenders for jobs and supplies
   (c) Asking for samples and drawing
   (d) Placing test orders
   (e) Placing orders
   (f) Status enquiries

9. The business letters relating to collection of dues and recovery of money need to be drafted with a keen sense of understanding and sensitivity. Such letters should necessarily vary in terms of terseness or intensity and choice of words depending upon the nature of dues, age of dues and other such relevant factors. Some of them have to be polite, some persuasive and some firm.

10. The main objective of highlight letters is to try to summarize the key information from a resume. The letter emphasizes the point that the sender is a good candidate for a particular job. In other words, these applications highlight the key information in a resume, or anything else, to establish the suitability of the sender for the job applied for.

11. The two main types of inquiry letters are solicited and unsolicited letters.

12. A symposium is a conference organized to cover a particular subject in detail, especially relating to an academic subject.

13. It is necessary to understand the difference between criticism and review, because many writers at times tend to write from the point of view of literary criticism or social science analysis, which in any case is a writing to be performed in a literary magazine or an academic journal.

14. The following are the main characteristics of a meeting:
    (a) All meetings have a definite purpose.
    (b) Interaction has to take place between the members attending the meeting.
    (c) Certain rules have to be observed during the meeting.
    (d) Generally, a chairperson is in control of the proceedings of the meeting.

15. A library committee is a group of people who are responsible for matters related to efficient library management.

16. The training methods are classified into the following categories:
    (a) Teacher-centred methods
    (b) Student-centred group methods
    (c) Individual-student centred methods

17. Cognitive methods are used for knowledge and attitude development. The method focuses on providing information and attempts to stimulate learning by affecting the cognition process of the trainees. Cognitive methods are very effective for knowledge development but in case of skill development, cognitive methods are found wanting.

18. The following are the different purposes of demonstrative method:
    (a) To show how the equipment works or procedure functions.
    (b) To present visually how the procedures are linked.
    (c) To simplify the procedures by recreating them in front of the trainees.
    (d) To reveal the cause and effects.

10.11 SUMMARY

- Report writing is, the ultimate form of business communication. It calls for a considerably higher level of writing skills.

- Reports are of various types and, in fact, come in endless variety. They could be big or small, individual or group, routine or special, formal or informal, internal or external, interim or final.

- Viewed from another angle, reports can also be classified as either individual reports or group/committee reports or interim and final reports.

- The first essential for any good report is to bring out the issue in its proper perspective, duly emphasizing the pros and cons.

- Reports are sought as a fact-finding measure. The report writer should ensure that the facts and figures quoted in the report are authentic and reliable.

- The purpose of a report is to get the facts in proper perspective. When we refer to an enquiry report, an investigation report or a committee report, the intention is to get the inputs or views from different persons who are in a position to throw light on the subject or incident under study.

- Appendix, like the annexure, constitutes an extra section of the report or a document. Any supplemental information relating to the report is given in the appendix.

- Voluminous reports, large documents and books carry an Index at the end. Index presents the list of names or topics that are referred to in the report or document or book.

- Reports constitute an important business document. Their objective is to present a clear picture or objective account of what is learned or done or observed.

- Committee reports constitute another common form of business communication. Appointment of committees has become a popular method of obtaining facts and decision-making inputs in an authoritative manner.

- The report should contain the essence of all the deliberations, viewpoints, surveys and observations made by the experts who make presentations.

- Annual reports are another type of business report regularly brought out by business organizations. As the name suggests, these reports are brought out every year detailing the progress achieved during the reporting period.

- A progress report is a document that gives the details on a regular basis of the various activities and tasks that are being carried out in relation to a particular project or assignment.

- Daily progress reports have to be created on an everyday basis. It is thus, imperative that not much time is wasted in creating them. They should be brief and concise and convey the complete information.

- A confidential report is a document generally prepared by a superior to assess the work performed by a subordinate for the purpose of serving as an important decision-making tool for issues related to promotion, confirmation and training and development.

- The user satisfaction report refers to a report which summarizes how and to what extent the products / services being offered by an organization meet the expectations of the user.

- A memorandum is a written statement or record, especially one circulated for the attention of colleagues at work.

- Memos contain vital details of relevance on functional areas and may have to be referred to frequently by the personnel working in the organization.

- Memos refer to written statements or short notes covering matters and developments to be noted, remembered and acted upon.

- Office notes are another form of internal communication popular within business organizations. Office notes are put up by sections, departments or units to the higher authorities, head of the unit, department or institution.

- Business letters, to be good and effective, must contain certain essentials. In other words, business letters should conform to certain minimum standards of letter writing.

- Businesses letters are of numerous types. They may be big or small, old or new, local or national, public or private, proprietary or partnership, monopolistic or competitive and manufacturing or service units.

- Objective letters are generally very brief. They identify the position being sought, indicate an interest in facing an interview and call attention to the fact that the resume is attached.

- Highlight letters try to summarize the key information from a resume. The letter emphasizes the point that the sender is a good candidate for a particular job.

- Seminars, workshops and symposia are very common and popular means of interactive fora in modern day business world.

- Meetings are vital for management and communication. The planning and running of effective meetings for business, sales, strategic planning and team-building are crucial for effective functioning of organizations.

- On-the-job training (OJT) is one of the oldest types of training methods. It refers to recruits learning at work under the supervision of a line manager or supervisor.

- Lecture is the most formal of training methods and in training terms it means a verbal presentation given to the trainees for instruction and it may be accompanied by visual aids such as flip charts or projections.

- Demonstration method is used when the training objective is knowledge enhancement and skill development. The skills can be anything ranging from technical to software, from decision-making to marketing presentation.

10.12 KEY WORDS

- **Appendix**: It refers to a section giving relevant additional information at the end of the report.

- **Confidential Report**: It refers to a document generally prepared by a superior to assess the work performed by a subordinate for the purpose of serving as an important decision-making tool for issues related to promotion, confirmation and training and development.

- **Glossary**: It refers to a list of special or technical words used in the document or report.

- **Progress Report**: It refers to a document that gives the details on a regular basis of the various activities and tasks that are being carried out in relation to a particular project or assignment.

10.13 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the essential features of a good report?
2. State the difference between appendix and annexure.
3. What is the main use of an index?
4. Why is pre-event report more of a planning report?
5. What are the aspects related to structure of a report?
6. Why is progress report important for an organization?
7. What are the details covered in annual reports?
8. Why is memorandum a means of inter-office correspondence?

Long Answer Questions

1. What are the various types of reports? Explain any two of them in detail.
2. Discuss the steps related to committee deliberations.
3. Explain the structure of a post-event report.
4. Identify the steps related to confidential report writing.
5. Discuss the importance of office notes in organizations.
6. Describe in detail any three types of business letters.

10.14 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 11 CATEGORIES OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

Structure

11.0 INTRODUCTION

In the field of writing, technical writing is considered to be a niche area as it requires a lot of skill in mastering an unknown subject and then writing it out for the target audience in a manner that it makes sense to them. The piece of technical writing should be able to guide the reader in case they encounter a problem, in the same way as a layman will approach the help manual when they find their air-conditioner or microwave is not working.

In this unit, the various aspects of technical communication, their utilities, form, and style of presentation have been discussed. The importance of communication in organizations and the main characteristics of technical communication have been explained. The unit will also provide an in-depth knowledge about the basic elements of technical communication.

11.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning of technical communication
- Analyse the importance of communication in business communication
- Identify the characteristics of technical communication
- Explain the process related to preparation of a technical report
- Describe the basic elements of technical communication

11.2 TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION: DEFINITIONS, PURPOSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

Communication at its most basic level is about the transmission of information. This transfer of information may be done through elements like words, images or sounds. We put together these elements, either singly or in combination to form coherent and meaningful pieces of information that are shared with others. These elements or strings are combined depending on the audience and the context. The way of communication will vary with the audience, just as our texts, messages, and emails vary in content, context and language from friends to colleagues or co-workers or superiors.

Just as in case of any meaningful communications, technical communication also aims to transmit information as meaningfully, efficiently, and effectively as possible. Ultimately through the interpretation of such communication, people around us can perform their duties well.

In a typically traditional academic setting, the writing will tend to focus on knowledge—expansion of ideas or documentation of traditional types of papers or essays with the instructor being the audience. In a technical communication workshop, the activities are similar to that of any writing workshop - organizing paragraphs effectively, following the writing process. However, unlike general forms of writing, technical writings emphasize the professional context for communicating information with a thrust on concision, clarity, and accessibility.

Traditional writing is more focused on the writing and presentation of the subject, however, in the case of technical communication, it is different. Along with the writing and presentation, the focus is more pronounced on the aspect of transmitting technical information effectively and lucidly at the same time. The different written forms- reports, emails, proposals, and instructions, are to be done with the help of text, videos, infographics, and diagrams used in tandem. Web and social media offer professionals a variety of opportunities to communicate in a wide variety of formats. An effective communicator knows exactly how to deal with the audience and they strategically deploy (or blend) these modes depending on the end user and the desired response.

The most important strategy in the design aspect of technical communication is about focussing on the audience and purpose. There is a plethora of information all around, but as an expert, or a professional in the field, it is equally important to consider **who** is being communicated to, **why** at all the communication is at all taking place and of course **what** is being communicated.

Why is Communication Important?

It is the primary task of professionals to communicate in their day-to-day work schedule. In a professional environment, communication becomes a thread that

ties together the expertise, the duties to be executed and the professional relations to be maintained. It is the foundation which allows one to find a job and then develop it further to fulfil their duties, learn new skills, and maintain good work-relationships with colleagues.

Sometimes incredibly knowledgeable people forget to consider the **who** and **why**, focusing only on the **what**, and this can lead to gaps in communication.

If we imagine a situation where a class of new students having no knowledge of chemistry attend a lecture on organic chemistry with structures of organic compounds containing carbon in covalent bonding, being taught. They would be clueless about the subject and would try to keep up with the professor's lecture rather than trying to assimilating knowledge on the subject. The professor assumed that all the students in the class were familiar with the subject and this caused a gap in communication due to lack of audience awareness. One of the basic tenets of being an effective communicator is to know how to avoid these communication gaps. By understanding the audience's education level, background knowledge, values and needs beforehand an effective communicator will develop communication in the best-suited format, to minimize the possibility of communication breakdown.

In fields like engineering, it is essential for an engineer to possess the ability to communicate within their teams and also to be conversant with the technique of communicating complex information to a variety of audience with different knowledge backgrounds.

As Stephen Pinker, professor of psychology (2014) explains, 'The curse of knowledge is the single best explanation of why good people write bad prose. It simply doesn't occur to the writer that her readers don't know what she knows—that they haven't mastered the argot of her guild, can't divine the missing steps that seem too obvious to mention, have no way to visualize a scene that to her is as clear as day. And so the writer doesn't bother to explain the jargon, or spell out the logic, or supply the necessary detail.'

It is of utmost importance for people with different knowledge level expertise to assess the situation and understand that not everyone among them is on the same plain with regards to information and knowledge. An effective communicator will acknowledge that the process of information communication is diverse, dynamic, creative and at the same time is sensitive to the needs and understanding level of the audience.

While in the short run the communication requirements will be common and specific workplace-related documents, however over time, in the professional life on an individual, the communication process and requirements will evolve and change. People whose work life cycle began in the 1980s' did not consider email writing to be an important skill but today it is commonplace and one of the most-used genres of workplace communication. In the future, a nuanced, audience-focussed communication strategy will allow one to evolve and thrive. By the end of this chapter, it is expected that students will be able to develop an awareness about the need and importance of adaptability of communication.

Defining Technical Communication

Technical communication is a wide field and it encompasses all those forms of writing that exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- Communicating about technical or specialized topics such as computer applications, medical procedures, or environmental regulations.

- Using technology while communicating –for example, Web page, help files or social media sites.

- Communicating 'how to do' something irrespective of the degree of difficulty involved in the task and if technology has a role to play in the distribution of that communication.

Technical communicators share the common approach of being user-centered by providing the right information, in the right way, at the right time to make someone's life easier and more productive.

Technical communication delivers two-fold values:

1. They process information and make it more usable, amenable and accessible to those who require such information.

2. In doing the above, they promote the goals of organizations that employ them.

The following examples demonstrate the products and services produced and provided by technical communicators:

- Instructions related to software products make them more familiar to the customer thereby improving chances of acceptability in the marketplace and reducing costs to support them.

- Medical instructions help patients and care-providers to follow clinical procedures related to medical treatment thereby reducing costs and risks associated with incorrect care.

- Functional specifications and proposals help technical experts to communicate effectively amongst themselves. This promotes understanding and helps by speeding up development cycles, and eliminating risks associated with miscommunication.

- Training programs help people to value add new or improve skill sets to their existing set of skills thus fostering an environment of confidence building.

- Well-constructed websites make it easier for users to find information thus driving up user traffic to the satisfaction of the associated websites.

- Technical illustrations clarify the procedures in detail and/or identify the parts of the products letting the user to accurately execute the task at hand.

- Usability studies uncover problems with how products present themselves to users, helping those products become more user-friendly.

The jobs associated with technical communication are as follows:

- Technical Writers and Editors
- Indexers
- Information Architects
- Instructional Designers
- Technical Illustrators
- Globalization and Localization Specialists
- Usability and Human Factors Professionals
- Visual Designers
- Web Designers and Developers
- Teachers and Researchers of Technical Communication
- Trainers and E-Learning Developers

Check Your Progress

1. What are the various jobs associated with technical communication?

2. What are the two-fold values associated with technical communication?

11.3 TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION: STRUCTURE

The moot point to be considered while undertaking to write a technical report is the target audience. In the field of engineering, the target audience can be a client, a colleague, a management or subordinate staff. In the case of academic writing, the target is the examiner. The examiner is an external agent and is independent of the work being executed. The author of the report has to, therefore, provide adequate information to convince the examiner.

In the case of academic writing, the expected outcome is based on the assessment criteria and the same needs to be strictly adhered to. The process of the technical report begins with the planning of the work based on the report. At the commencement stage itself, the work may be broken down to elements like chapters or sections of the report.

The final sequence of the sections and chapters may not correspond with the order in which the work is done but it will be driven by the defined structure of the report. It is always a good practice to begin writing the sections of the report as early as possible. The table of contents should be drafted early. Regardless of

the order of the report, a chapter or appendix, consisting of figures and table, should be written as soon as the part of work is completed.

It is always a good way to share the report with fellow students or a supervisor early so that make a critical assessment of the same. Some appendices written at the start are going to remain that way while there may be other parts that may or may not find a place in the final report.

It is important to note that the whole process of report writing stems from the mind; it helps to define and organize ideas and arrive at conclusions which are based on provable premises so that further planning of the work can be done.

External Structure

Professional technical reports are defined and structured with a scientific approach and a formal style. The recommended external structure and the way in which the scientific approach is reflected in the structure is discussed in this section.

The elements of a technical report and their prescribed sequence is as follows:

- Cover page
- Title page
- Abstract
- Dedication
- Acknowledgments
- Table of contents
- List of tables
- List of figures
- Nomenclature
- Introductory chapters(s)
- Central chapters
- Conclusions
- Tables
- Figures
- Appendices
- References
- Bibliography

It may be relevant to mention here that tables and figures may be placed in the main text instead of clubbing them at the end. Further, reports with few or no appendices can place the list of references immediately after the conclusion.

The external structure does not only relate to the sequence but also with the relationships that exist between elements and in relative importance and size of

each. It is important that the emphasis is on the main central chapters. All reports are typically characterized by a beginning, middle and an end, however, the heart of the report lies in the middle chapters.

The introductions should be short and to the point, the central part should always be more potent than the appendices. The conclusion should be drawn from the central chapters in a relatable and justifiable manner. Thus, the central chapters must present the major arguments which will be summed up in the conclusion as a logical consequence. We will in the following section discus about the structure in detail.

Title Page: As the name signifies, the title page contains all the relevant information as specified for a cover page and the status of the report (terms of reference). In case the report is being done under the aegis of a supervisor, then the name of the supervisor should be shown on the title page.

Abstract: A short summary or abstract of approximately 100 to 150 words should appear on the page after the Title page. An abstract is supposed to summarize the contents and conclusions so that the reader can decide whether it is of relevance to them.

A few tips on the structure of abstracts is mentioned below:

- The abstract should not be mistaken as an introduction to the report. It merely summarizes the contents and most of the time does not provide background information.

- Since there is a word restriction it is important to weigh the meaning of words and use them judiciously. Discard words which are redundant. An example- do not write 'In this report, the failings of a compost turner are investigated', instead write "The failings of a compost turner are investigated'.

- Convey the key elements of the objective and context, and the most important methods, findings, and recommendations.

- The abstract should be written at the end. Is should be the last part of the report to be written.

- Include in the abstract the keywords; this will facilitate the search process for the report in a literature database.

Executive summaries are restricted to one page and they provide sufficient quantitative information for identifying the important decisions arising from the report and grasp the extent and impact.

Dedication: This is in the form of a short crisp sentence in the middle of a separate page, that essentially dedicates the report to a family member, friend or acquaintance. In short technical reports, it is mostly left out.

Acknowledgments: As the name of the section signifies, this page is about acknowledging the contributions made by various people and institutions in the

preparation and execution of the report. Those directly involved in the preparation, presentation, and financing of the project or report are duly acknowledged.

Table of Contents: This section should start on a new page and the heading is usually 'Contents' of 'Table of Contents'. This is followed by the different levels of headings and their page numbers.

List of Tables and List of Figures: These lists arranged according to the table and figure number begins on a new page and displays the page numbers in the right-hand column. The titles of tables and figures should be descriptive so that the user can identify a specific figure or a table by browsing through the titles denoting the particular table or figure.

Nomenclature: The list of symbols that are used must be at the beginning of a new page. The ordinary symbols should be arranged first, followed by the superscripts and the subscripts. At the end comes the auxiliary symbols like the overbar and underscore which are listed.

Introduction: The introductory chapters are supposed to convey the following information:

- The context in which the report is being presented - i.e. the work from which it emanates and how it combines and links with other similar work.

- The basic purpose of the report - the problem that was taken up for analysis and the specific objective of the study.

- The motivating factor for undertaking a particular report or project.

In some cases, the introduction will contain a brief synopsis of previous work accomplished in the area along with the definitions of words or expressions having specific meaning in the document. An overview of the rest of the report is also provided.

The process of formulating the objectives should be done carefully. The objectives should be stated in such a manner that the conclusions flow naturally. The objectives should be distinctly detached from the strategy to achieve the objectives.

Central Chapters: How the central chapters will be structured will depend on the content of the report. The general guidelines for the central chapters are as follows:

- Each chapter should limit its focus to one particular topic only. The title of the chapter usually conveys the purpose and contents contained therein.

- The contents of the central chapters should have a direct bearing and connection to the purpose of the report. Contents that contain only fringe information should ideally be placed in the appendices.

- The following structure of chapters or within chapters can usually be followed and corresponds to a scientific approach:

a) Introduction: The purpose of the chapter, and its links to the purpose of the report.

b) The assumptions made for the study.

c) The procedure of investigation and data collection and the analytical or numerical theory used.

d) Measured results, results of the analysis or observations (verifiable results).

e) Methods of processing of results and answers thereon.

f) Interpretation of results.

g) Conclusions: Usefulness and importance of results and how they tie up to the purpose of the report.

- It is not necessary for the central chapters to follow the chronological sequence of the project.

- A consequence of the scientific approach is that each statement must satisfy one of the following:

a) The statement is obviously true.

b) The statement is proven in the report.

c) The statement is motivated in the report.

d) A reference to a source that has made the statement before is given with the statement.

- Each conclusion drawn in the conclusions must be corroborated in the central chapters.

Conclusions: This section will specifically state to what extent the purpose of the report has been achieved and what are the final findings made. All claims made in the conclusion should have been amply justified in the report.

The general guidelines for writing the conclusion are as follows:

- Summarise the purpose of the project or document.

- Specifically, state the extent to which the purpose was fulfilled. A summary of each section of the report is to be provided and it should contain how that section has contributed to the attainment of the purpose. The most important findings, methods or techniques are also to be listed.

- The implications of the findings need to be discussed and the contributions made by the report to be stated with an emphasis on the most important findings.

- Provide suggestions for further work, if appropriate.

Tables and Figures: Figures can be better interpreted by the reader than tables and therefore they are more preferred when the qualitative nature suffices. Tables are used for quantitative comparisons.

The following are the general guidelines for tables and figures:

- Each table and figure must have both a number and a caption.

- The text in the report must make a reference to each and every table and figure.

- As a uniform practice, tables and figures referred to in the main text should be placed on the page where the first reference occurs, or as soon as is logically possible thereafter.

- If the layout of the table or figure is such that it needs to be rotated to fit on the page, the bottom of the table or figure must be placed on the right-hand side of the page.

- Tables and figures in the main text must be separated from the text by at least 2 open lines above and below the table or figure.

- The text in the tables and the writing in the figures must not be smaller than 3 mm.

- It is a good idea to repeat the data used for all the graphs in the report, in tabular form in an appendix, for future use. The following are general guidelines for the tables:

- Each column, and sometimes also every row, must have a title, with units if applicable.

- Tables in the main text usually do not have more than a few rows because they otherwise contain too much information and can impede the comfortable reading of the report.

Appendices: Details that do not form an integral part of the main text should be provided in the appendices. Anything that has the propensity to disturb the flow of the main text should be in the appendices. Complicated technical derivations, computer programs, descriptions of apparatus, sample calculations, lists of unprocessed data, and concise commercial information are examples of such unrelated but necessary data that need to be consigned to the appendices.

References: The purpose of references is to provide a link to the statements which are not original, rather derived from other sources. This is to acknowledge the work of others and to provide additional information and links to additional information for readers to quench their thirst for further knowledge.

No reference should be included in the list, that has not been mentioned somewhere or the other in the report text. There are different methods of referencing (they have been included in the other sections of this course). Usually, an alphabetical system of reporting is used if there is nothing specified as per the report guidelines.

Bibliography: A bibliography is a list of sources (basically books) that provide a broad background on the topic but to which no direct reference is made. Some thesis and technical reports contain a bibliography.

Basic Elements of Technical Communication

A lot of people assume that technical communication is all about typing out sentences. However, it is far from mere typing and there are three basic elements that all technical communications must include. These elements are discussed in detail in the following section.

Understanding the Content: Understanding what is being written is of importance for any form of writing, more so for technical writing. If one does not understand what he or she is writing, then one can rest assure that the reader will not make much sense out of that writing. Technical documents are not written or red for the pleasure of appreciating literature. It is more of a necessity. When someone gets stuck executing a task or running software, turning to the manual or technical literature is the most likely reaction. It is therefore very important that the information provided is correct, concise and easy to read and comprehend. However, a large portion of technical communication doing the rounds nowadays is badly written, unfortunately.

Writing Well: It is often that technical people like engineers are not very good at explaining their creation or development through written words. Actually, they are keener on what they are doing than putting it down on paper in a clear and comprehensible manner. Technical writers who are not engineers, therefore, need to thoroughly understand the subject matter before they hit their keyboard. Before a writer can start writing instructions he has to make sure that he understands how the product works or how a service is to be maintained. He has to sit down with the engineer to gather first-hand information and then do what he is supposed to do best - write well.

Making it look presentable: Any document needs to look neat and presentable to the reader. This applies to technical writing too. A badly crafted document is of little value as it is not able to deliver the required knowledge to the targeted audience. Well-structured writing is produced after layers of editing and proofreading and even if the information covered is great it needs to be properly polished through multiple rounds of thorough checking of grammatical and punctuation errors.

Types of Technical Communication

Technical communication is essentially of three types:

- Traditional: Repair manuals, medical studies
- End-user documentation: Electronic, consumer products
- Technical marketing content: Press release, catalogues

Check Your Progress

3. What is the main objective of an abstract?
4. What are the general guidelines related to central chapters?

11.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The following jobs are associated with technical communication:

    a) Technical Writers and Editors

    b) Indexers

    c) Information Architects

    d) Instructional Designers

    e) Technical Illustrators

    f) Globalization and Localization Specialists

    g) Usability and Human Factors Professionals

    h) Visual Designers

    i) Web Designers and Developers

    j) Teachers and Researchers of Technical Communicatio

    k) Trainers and E-Learning Developers

2. The two-fold values associated with technical communication are as follows:

    a) They process information and make it more usable, amenable and accessible to those who require such information.

    b) In doing the above, they promote the goals of organizations that employ them.

3. The main objective of an abstract is that it is supposed to summarize the contents and conclusions so that the reader can decide whether it is of relevance to them.

4. The general guidelines for writing central chapters are as follows:

    a) Each chapter should limit its focus to one particular topic only. The title of the chapter usually conveys the purpose and contents contained therein.

    b) The contents of the central chapters should have a direct bearing and connection to the purpose of the report. Contents that contain only fringe information should ideally be placed in the appendices.

    c) It is not necessary for the central chapters to follow the chronological sequence of the project.

    d) Each conclusion drawn in the conclusions must be corroborated in the central chapters.

11.5 SUMMARY

- Communication at its most basic level is about the transmission of information. This transfer of information may be done through elements like words, images or sounds.

- In a typically traditional academic setting, the writing will tend to focus on knowledge—expansion of ideas or documentation of traditional types of papers or essays with the instructor being the audience.

- In a technical communication workshop, the activities are similar to that of any writing workshop - organizing paragraphs effectively, following the writing process.

- Traditional writing is more focused on the writing and presentation of the subject, however, in the case of technical communication, it is different.

- The most important strategy in the design aspect of technical communication is about focussing on the audience and purpose.

- It is the primary task of professionals to communicate in their day-to-day work schedule. In a professional environment, communication becomes a thread that ties together the expertise, the duties to be executed and the professional relations to be maintained.

- An effective communicator will acknowledge that the process of information communication is diverse, dynamic, creative and at the same time is sensitive to the needs and understanding level of the audience.

- Technical communicators share the common approach of being user-centered by providing the right information, in the right way, at the right time to make someone's life easier and more productive.

- Professional technical reports are defined and structured with a scientific approach and a formal style.

- The external structure does not only relate to the sequence but also with the relationships that exist between elements and in relative importance and size of each.

- The introductions should be short and to the point, the central part should always be more potent than the appendices.

- The conclusion should be drawn from the central chapters in a relatable and justifiable manner.

- An abstract is supposed to summarize the contents and conclusions so that the reader can decide whether it is of relevance to them.

- Executive summaries are restricted to one page and they provide sufficient quantitative information for identifying the important decisions arising from the report and grasp the extent and impact.

- The process of formulating the objectives should be done carefully. The objectives should be stated in such a manner that the conclusions flow naturally.

- Figures can be better interpreted by the reader than tables and therefore they are more preferred when the qualitative nature suffices. Tables are used for quantitative comparisons.

- The purpose of references is to provide a link to the statements which are not original, rather derived from other sources.

- A bibliography is a list of sources (basically books) that provide a broad background on the topic but to which no direct reference is made. Some thesis and technical reports contain a bibliography.

- Understanding what is being written is of importance for any form of writing, more so for technical writing.

11.6 KEY WORDS

- **Appendix**: It refers to a section or table of subsidiary matter which is provided at the end of a book or document.

- **Conclusions:** It refers to a section in a book or report which will specifically state to what extent the purpose of the report has been achieved and what are the final findings made.

- **Nomenclature:** It refers to the list of symbols that are used must be at the beginning of a new page.

11.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on traditional writing.
2. What is the most important strategy of technical communication?
3. State the basic approach of technical communication.
4. What is the kind of information conveyed by introductory chapters?
5. How are chapters structured in a technical report?
6. What is the main purpose of the reference section in a technical report?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the characteristics of technical communication.
2. Explain the services provided by the technical communicators.

3. Describe the elements of a technical report in detail.

4. Analyse the recommendations to be considered while writing an abstract.

5. Why is it important to formulate the objectives carefully? Discuss in detail.

6. Identify the guidelines related to the use of figures and tables in technical reports.

11.8 FURTHER READINGS

Gordon, H. M. and Walter J. A. 1986. *Technical Writing* 5th ed. London: Holt.

James, H. S. 2010. *Handbook of Technical Writing*. NTC Business Books.

Richard, W. S. 2008. *Technical Writing*. New York: Barnes and Noble.

Santhosh Gupta.2000. *Research Methodology and Statistical Techniques*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd.

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Kumar, Krishan. 1973. *Research Libraries in Developing Countries*. Noida: Vikas Publishing House.

UNIT 12 WRITING TECHNICAL PAPERS AND ARTICLES

Structure

12.0 Introduction
12.1 Objectives
12.2 Articles
12.3 Consolidation and Repackaging Products: Information Analysis
12.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
12.5 Summary
12.6 Key Words
12.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
12.8 Further Readings

12.0 INTRODUCTION

The many forms of writing-reports, articles, manuals, handbook, journals, directories and progress reports are an important form of communication in organization. Information repackaging and documents are used by researchers and the public in general. The unit will discuss the forms of writing in this unit, however much of the material covered here has already been dealt with in further details in the preceding units.

In this unit, the different types of ways in which an organization can represent itself has been discussed such as article, handbook, house journals, directories, monographs and so on. The unit will also help you to analyse the importance of trend reports and concept of information repackaging in detail.

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify the steps related to article writing
- Discuss the meaning of technical report, monograph and house journal
- Explain the concept of information repackaging
- Analyse the objective of trend report and its requirement
- Identify the purpose of progress report and state-of-the arts report
- Discuss the meaning of annual report, directories, handbook and manual

12.2 ARTICLES

Every day a lot of articles are written on innumerable topics by a plethora of people. Some are for the print and web media while others are for either of them. People around the world read the articles for knowledge or out of sheer interest in the topic. Not all such articles are popular. Some are very good, some bad and others ugly.

So what makes an article popular or interesting? What is it that captivates the audience while a similar another article on the same subject or topic does not garner any attention?

Well, a good, popular and interesting article needs a lot of planning. Not everyone has the gift of the gab or the flair for writing but following a few rules could help them grab eyeballs. We have already discussed the steps of article writing in the previous units in detail, let us just look at the steps involve in writing an article.

The following are the steps of article writing:

1. Step 1: Select your topic
2. Step 2: Address the needs of the target audience
3. Step 3: Include useful instruction on the topic
4. Step 4: Revise Draft
5. Step 5: Read, revise and finalize

Technical Reports

Technical reports play a crucial role in the presentation of this information to the ever-expanding audience. The approach of writing a technical report is to present the information through a special kind of text. Text forms vary between 'letters writing', 'form writing', 'article writing', 'speechwriting' and 'report writing'. Computers have ushered in a revolution and have brought about sea changes in the way writing, especially writing Technical Reports are done presently.

Technical writing is any writing that is geared toward technical and scientific audiences. In general, technical writers create text for labs, offices, and factories. They write memos, instructions, procedures, lab reports, formal reports, manuals, articles for publication, and grant proposals. Today technical writing is not limited to writing on a printed page. Technical writers now must be able to produce written documents, videotapes, slide shows, and a bevy of electronic messages.

Technical writing involves the production of easy-to-use information, usually from the complex, hard-to-understand source material. The resultant technical writing product can be internal (for use within the company) or external (for customers).

Here are a few examples of Technical Reports

1. Instructions, Directions - for operating a machine or performing a task
2. A description of a process - operating or manufacturing

3. Company Policies/Procedures
4. Monthly/Yearly Activity Reports
5. Proposals, Feasibility Studies
6. Brochures, Commercial/Advertisement, Job Descriptions
7. Annual report for a large organization
8. Literature review

Monograph

A monograph is a detailed written study on a specialised subject or related to an aspect of it.

In library cataloguing, it includes a broader perspective which means that it comprises of a non-serial publication which consists of a number of volumes. It is different from a journal, newspaper or magazine. Books such as novels are monographs, in this case.

House Journal

A house journal is a medium of communication which shows an image of an organization with a two-fold objective i.e., promotion and employee morale.

Check Your Progress

1. What is a monograph?
2. State the premise of technical writing.

12.3 CONSOLIDATION AND REPACKAGING PRODUCTS: INFORMATION ANALYSIS

Information repackaging is done to repackage the data derived by analyzing consolidated information so as to make it usable for library users. The aim of re-packaging is to enhance the possibility of acceptance of information and assimilating it in a manner that helps in the easy recall.

Saracevic and Wood (1989) and bunch (1984) were the first to use the term in their publication in describing 'how an information service select appropriate materials, reprocessing and packaging the information, and arranging the materials in way that is appropriate to the user those two types of information and the communities that use them are still the basis for information repackaging today, which is part of both rural development and highly industrialized setting.'

Process of Information Repackaging

There is a plethora of information all around us. This is the age of information explosion and information overload in every sector of society. Proper repackaging of information can save time, labor, and cost of the user. It is a systematic process of adding value to information services.

Information repackaging is a paradigm shift, from documents to their contents and from collections to their users. For addressing specific needs, bundling of product and services in the form of information becomes necessary. This can be achieved through the following steps:

- Reformatting and synthesizing raw information
- Combining expertise on a subject with access to relevant information sources
- Providing training or assistance to a user in accessing an information product

The process of repackaging to a large extent depends on the availability of materials. Materials are available in research institutes, government sources, online services and networks, and indigenous knowledge.

Information repackaging can also be seen as part of a process of information consolidation. The process of repackaging begins with the selection of information and the evaluation of content.

There are three requirements for information repackaging;

1. The material should be collected and organized efficiently
2. There should be the capacity to their content and create new information packages from them,
3. The new package should be disseminated freely.

Library services, including the packaging and repackaging of information, have been provided in libraries and information centers from time immemorial. All around us technological advancements are happening on a daily basis and this has posed challenges that call for bringing about conceptual changes in the services of a library. It is needless to mention that information is the driving force in contemporary society. Libraries play a vital role in preserving and contributing to intellectual, social and cultural life.

Information Repackaging and the Rising Information Setting

In contemporary society, information has become one of the most important resources. This is truer for business and commercial ventures. Every business creates its own market for the products and services that they produce through innovation, quality management, strategic planning, improved customer service, and a lot of other techniques. In order to be successful in such endeavour, businesses need access to information that is accurate, comprehensive and current. In today's

world, there is an overload of information but the need of the hour is to properly retrieve, interpret, synthesize and apply such information or better decision making.

Managers need information in a 'capsulated' form which can then be further processed and rendered meaningful in the context of decision making. Librarians have the role of designing information for the clients based on the specific needs inferred from:

- The roles they perform
- The structure of such roles with respect to an organization or a specific work environment
- The patterns, traits, and characteristics of information use

Such a diagnosis will help to generate composite data that can be customized or repackaged to need the convenience and needs of the user. Repackaging of information is thus a systematic process of value addition to information services. This process of value addition will entail analysis of information, translating, editing, synthesizing, and transforming its symbolic and media formats. Information repackaging services are in congruence with the shifting needs of the library and information professions, from the contents of documents, and the intended use of the end users.

Library literature has been undergoing a paradigm shift during the last decade or so and customized information service has been made a part of such literature. However, guidance on the subject of systematic design and provision of services is still being worked upon. Certain questions like- What principles, for instance, underlie the choices involved at each stage of Information Repackaging and what is the correct sequence to its elements? These are still being probed.

The Context of Information Repackaging

The process of information repackaging begins with collating, assimilating and assembling relevant information from different sources. These sources can range from internal records like the company's previous budgets, performance appraisals, and projected goals and plans; or from external sources like market surveys, government gazettes and intelligence on competitor performances and statistics.

Once the information compilation has been completed, the contents are synthesized and properly edited to match the management's philosophy or style. Based on this exercise, the necessary information is coded or documented in the format that best suits the information processing modality and the cognitive and learning style of the manager.

Thus, primary information contained in books, literature, annual reports, and AV (audio-video) recordings may be processed to produce charts, tables, graphs, and explanatory notes. The mode and time for delivery of the package would also be designed to gain the manager's attention and meet his/her constraints in time and other facilities e.g. effectiveness of operations, thereby increasing the profit margins of the corporation.

Trend Report

A trend report is an account on a subject taken up for research, stating the general directions that the research is taking based on documents and current developments.

In the current age of information overload there are innumerable number of documents available and a plethora of different reader requirements. Such a varied array makes the task of documentation through older procedures like indexing and abstracting, grossly inadequate. This is where Trend Reports come in handy. Such reports acquaint the reader about recent developments and researches conducted on the particular subject. With the help of trend reports the analyser or specialist reader is able to utilize his time more fruitfully and effectively in research.

The main aim of the trend report is to fulfil the requirement of a specialist user for specific information on a particular subject. This is an extremely useful tool for analysing and consolidation of research work.

Requirements for Preparation of Trend Report

The person preparing the trend report, sometimes referred to as the documentalist, should possess the following qualities for preparation of an effective report.

- Proper knowledge regarding the method of compiling a trend report
- Familiarity with sources of information with respect to the concerned subject is essential.
- Should be in touch with the analyser or specialist reader to be in sync with his views and approach on the subject.

How to Create a Trend Report?

A trend is basically a change in course which holds and persists. It is a set of indicative data that shows a clear pattern of increase, decrease or being constant. When it is possible for non-data analysts to interpret and relate data trends based on some form of presentation, it becomes a powerful tool for making informed decisions.

Once established data trends are found, it is easy to build arguments which support the data. The crux lies in the making on identifying what is to be analyzed and setting up the report. Deciding and working on this beforehand will ensure that the report and process are more efficient. An ideal trend analysis report is comparing costs to sales. The trend report needs to spell out the goal and analysis in the first few pages of the trend report.

The more the quantum of research and analysis on the topic, the better the quality of the report. Trends will use historical data and information and digging deep into history will help gather relevant information on costs and sales (as mentioned in the example above). The historical data has to be in the same unit as in the currently reported data. The date range of the data has to be mentioned in the trend report.

Graphs and charts are useful tools for analyzing trends in the data. The trend can be forward moving, backward moving or constant. Trends may be short-term or long-term. The graphs need to be displayed in the trend report as exhibits at the end of the report.

A summary of the trends observed in the graphs or charts may be summarized. The report should comment on the reasons a particular trend is occurring. Definite pronouncements should be there in the trend report stating whether the trend is short or long term, or whether the trend is currently going strong but may not remain so in future. Clear recommendations on the trends are to be mentioned in the report.

Progress Report

A progress report explains in details how near or how far one is from completion of the project. It delineates the activities carried out, the tasks completed, the targets reached with respect to the project plan.

A typical progress report is prepared for a supervisor, client or even a colleague. Such reports may be self-written for own projects or may be written for a team in the form of a 'team progress report'. Depending upon the complexity and expanse of the project, reports may be prepared on a duration or percentage-completion basis, for example, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or 25%, 50% etc.

During our work life-span, we need to build and deliver innumerable reports. In fact, in some professions, people spend the majority of their time putting together numbers into graphs than actually working.

Why is the Progress Report Important?

Sometimes it may seem that the whole process of putting together the report is an exercise in redundancy, especially when one is regularly in touch with supervisors, teammates, and clients. However, this kind of report is actually very useful for a number of reasons.

- It helps to get everyone on the same page. Each person receiving a copy of the report knows exactly where he or she stands. This removes any doubt about the status and progress of the project and helps to put everyone on the same plane.
- It facilitates collaboration. It is quite common that multiple teams are working on a project and knowing the position of each team vis-a-vis the project is a useful piece of information. This help to prevent redundancy and at the same time identify areas which need more work, or if one team needs any assistance in accomplishing their task.
- It provides a paper trail for accountability and transparency. By submitting the report there remains a clear record of what has been accomplished and what remains to be done. It also tracks the changes from one report to another and records the variations in results obtained. Once a report is filed

it becomes a part of official documentation. Later if some reference is needed or any dispute arises, the report can be referred to for clarification. The report is an authentic piece of written evidence in case the project is nominated for an award and validators seek documentary evidence as to how the project accomplished what it did.

- It improves project evaluation and review. In the future when an individual or team decides to work a similar project, the report will come in as a handy reference. It will value add to the process and procedures of the new project by eliminating the errors in the original one. Previous reports are always a good place to look for with respect to system related issues, loopholes, deficiencies, causes of delay or failure, that can be eliminated and the processes which can be improved upon.

- It provides inputs for future planning. The report provides a clear status report as to where things stand. Supervisors can now plan the tasks needed to be accomplished in the future. Reports point out the delays which have been caused and the project-in-charge or supervisor can analyze the causes of the delay and take steps to eliminate them altogether. Since the supervisor has a clear picture of the status of the project through the report, he can plan ahead and instruct his teams accordingly.

How to Write a Progress Report?

There are instances where one is unable to put pen on paper and chart out a progress report on the fly. This is a natural phenomenon due to the fact that people do not have the habit of writing out long reports.

Most people are not in the habit of putting together words, however, for report writing, it is not essential to have great writing skills. It is primarily the record of facts and events written in simple language.

State-of-the-art Reports

State-of-the-art reports provide consolidated information on specific subjects as a solution to the problem of plenty that researchers face while trying to keep track of all publications and current trends on research. The indexing and abstracting services cannot cope up with the specific subject requirement of the specialist readers. Besides state-of-the art reports, others like reviews and trend reports can help solve this problem.

The utility of these form of documents are two-fold:

1. From the point of view of historical development of the subject
2. From the point of view of the individual researcher

From the point of view of the historical function, these publications provide:

- Evaluation of the published literature
- Collection of information from the various sources

- Extraction of the necessary information
- Identification of the emerging specialists

From the user point of view, the following functions are served:

- Notification of the published literature
- Current awareness about the subject and other related fields
- Back-up for literature searching to be carried out in future

Annual Report

An annual report is a financial summary of a company's activities during the year. It also includes the management's analysis of the company's current financial position and future plans. Annual reports are prepared at the end of the fiscal year for external users to gain financial information about the inner workings of the company and what management plans to do in the future.

Example

A typical annual report includes several different sections that help investors and creditors understand the company more than they would by simply looking at a set of general-purpose financial statements. A standard report includes the following sections:

- Letter to Shareholders
- Financial History and Highlights
- Management Discussion and Analysis
- Management's Report on Financial Statements and on Internal Controls
- Report of Independent Accountants sometimes called the Auditor's Report including a section on internal controls
- Financial Statements including a:
  1. Balance Sheet
  2. Income Statement
  3. Statement of Stockholders' Equity
  4. Cash Flows Statement
- Notes to Financial Statements
- List of Directors and Officers

The report in its entirety provides external users a much more holistic view of a company's financial position, market standings, and ability to improve than a simple set of comparative financial statements.

The report is directed at external users per se, however, it's often used as an advertising and marketing tool to showcase the company's robust financial

health. Management can focus on new products and innovations as well as discuss new markets that they expect to enter in future periods.

This report is typically issued with graphics, photos, illustrations, graphs, and diagrams. It packs a lot more information in a more attractive manner than a simple set of financial statements can do. In a sense, this is the report that management can use as a hook to entice new investors to join the company. Even though there are marketing-type elements in the report, the actual purpose of it is to convey financial information to the outside users.

Handbook

The dictionary defines a handbook as:

- A book of instruction or guidance, as for an occupation; manual,
- A guidebook for travellers,
- A reference book in a particular field, or
- A scholarly book on a specific subject, often consisting of separate essays or articles.

Examples:

- Family Planning: A Global Handbook for Providers
- Inventor's Handbook
- Television Production Handbook

Manual

The dictionary defines a manual as a small book, especially one giving information or instructions.

Examples:

- The Merck Manuals of Information
- The United States Government Manual

Directory

In the simplest form, a directory refers to a book containing an alphabetical index of the names and addresses of persons in a city, district, organization, etc., or of a particular category of people.

However, in computer parlance, a directory refers to a folder or an organizing unit in a computer's file system for storing and locating files. In a hierarchical file system, directories can contain child directories (subdirectories) as well as files.

Check Your Progress

3. State the aim of re-packaging of information.
4. What are the three main requirements of information repackaging?

12.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. A monograph is a detailed written study on a specialised subject or related to an aspect of it. In library cataloguing, it includes a broader perspective which means that it comprises of a non-serial publication which consists of a number of volumes.

2. The approach of writing a technical report is to present the information through a special kind of text. Text forms vary between 'letters writing', 'form writing', 'article writing', 'speechwriting' and 'report writing'.

3. The aim of re-packaging is to enhance the possibility of acceptance of information and assimilating it in a manner that helps in the easy recall.

4. The three main requirements of information repackaging are as follows:

    (a) The material should be collected and organized efficiently

    (b) There should be the capacity to their content and create new information packages from them,

    (c) The new package should be disseminated freely.

12.5 SUMMARY

- Technical reports play a crucial role in the presentation of this information to the ever-expanding audience. The approach of writing a technical report is to present the information through a special kind of text.

- Technical writing is any writing that is geared toward technical and scientific audiences. In general, technical writers create text for labs, offices, and factories.

- Technical writing involves the production of easy-to-use information, usually from the complex, hard-to-understand source material. The resultant technical writing product can be internal (for use within the company) or external (for customers).

- A monograph is a detailed written study on a specialised subject or related to an aspect of it.

- In library cataloguing, it includes a broader perspective which means that it comprises of a non-serial publication which consists of a number of volumes.

- A house journal is a medium of communication which shows an image of an organization with a two-fold objective i.e., promotion and employee morale.

- Information repackaging is done to repackage the data derived by analyzing consolidated information so as to make it usable for library users.

- Information repackaging is a paradigm shift, from documents to their contents and from collections to their users.

- Information repackaging can also be seen as part of a process of information consolidation. The process of repackaging begins with the selection of information and the evaluation of content.

- Library literature has been undergoing a paradigm shift during the last decade or so and customized information service has been made a part of such literature.

- The process of information repackaging begins with collating, assimilating and assembling relevant information from different sources.

- A trend report is an account on a subject taken up for research, stating the general directions that the research is taking based on documents and current developments.

- The main aim of the trend report is to fulfil the requirement of a specialist user for specific information on a particular subject.

- A trend is basically a change in course which holds and persists. It is a set of indicative data that shows a clear pattern of increase, decrease or being constant.

- A progress report explains in details how near or how far one is from completion of the project.

- State-of-the-art reports provide consolidated information on specific subjects as a solution to the problem of plenty that researchers face while trying to keep track of all publications and current trends on research.

- An annual report is a financial summary of a company's activities during the year. It also includes the management's analysis of the company's current financial position and future plans.

- A typical annual report includes several different sections that help investors and creditors understand the company more than they would by simply looking at a set of general-purpose financial statements.

12.6 KEY WORDS

- **Annual Report**: It refers to a financial summary of a company's activities during the year. It also includes the management's analysis of the company's current financial position and future plans.

- **Directory**: It refers to a book containing an alphabetical index of the names and addresses of persons in a city, district and organization or of a particular category of people.

- **Manual**: It refers to a small book, especially one giving information or instructions.

12.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the steps of article writing?
2. State the two-fold objective of house journals.
3. What are the various kinds of technical reports?
4. State the main objective of a trend report.
5. What is the basis of information repackaging?
6. Why are progress reports important?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the importance of technical reports in organizations.
2. Discuss the process of information repackaging.
3. How is library literature undergoing paradigm shift? Describe in detail.
4. Identify the requirements of trend report.
5. What are annual reports? Discuss.

12.8 FURTHER READINGS

Gordon, H. M. and Walter J. A. 1986. *Technical Writing* 5th ed. London: Holt.

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BLOCK - IV
BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

UNIT 13 OVERVIEW OF BUSINESS WRITING

Structure

13.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about the various forms of technical communication which takes place in an organization. In this unit, the forms of business writing are discussed. Business writing is defined as a type of professional writing which includes memorandums, reports, proposals, emails, and other forms of writing used in organizations to communicate with internal or external audiences.

In this unit, the meaning of business and mission writing has been discussed. The importance of terms and condition and drafting of the MoU have been explained in detail. The main components of licensing agreement have been analysed. The unit will also highlight the steps related to contract agreement and importance of cover letter.

13.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of business writing and mission writing
- Identify the components of terms and conditions
- Explain the meaning and purpose of Memorandum of Understanding

- Analyse the elements of licensing agreement

- Describe the steps of writing contract agreements

- Discuss the importance of cover letter

13.2 BUSINESS WRITING AND MISSION WRITING

Business writing demands strong and effective communication skills which should be informative, transactional, persuasive and instructional. Success of an organization depends a lot on its communication as it effects the whole environment of the establishment and the interpersonal relationship of the employees who work there. Business communication thrives on written communication. The communication that goes to the people in the organization should be result oriented and also the sound of it should energetic and motivational.

Business plan and Mission statement: A mission statement is a documented plan of the organizations that succinctly articulates the essence, business goals, ethics, philosophies and concept of a particular business. It also defines your business's relationship with its clients, employees and stakeholders. The mission statement should reflect every aspect of your business and should be able to reflect the standards, creativity and objectives of the business. In other words, it is the statement which is a window to the image of the organization.

How to Write a Mission Statement?

As stated earlier, mission statement can be a useful tool to create an image for the Business organization therefore, it should be carefully and meticulously written. A generic and loosely written mission statement without any unique feature will fail in its objective. Therefore, mission statement should very clearly define the company's objective and with what specific purpose the company was incorporated.

A proper mission statement should consist of the following:

1. Company's unique goals and objectives

2. Company's objectives for the employees

3. Company's objectives for the customers

4. Company's objectives for its stakeholders

5. Company's objectives for the community and the world

While writing the mission statement the question to ask is, how different and unique it is from the mission statements of other companies. If it is one of those statements which can apply to just about any company's mission statement then one needs to rethink and reframe. Therefore the mission should state the objectives in a very unique manner which should also define how different your business is from others in a subtle and refined manner.

The mission statement should contain what good you do and how special you make your customers feel. This can be simply put by highlighting your vision towards your customers and unique policies that make you trustworthy. Also if the business is contributing to welfare in any way, especially if the words like 'clean' and 'green' can be used justifiably, it should definitely make it in the statement.

The mention of company's environment and a good culture will always matter. What special policies have been chalked out for the good of employees and how their health, welfare and security matter to the company should make an important part of the statement. Inclusion of quality practices in training, empowerment, respect for diversity, fair compensation, health will not only make it an impressive statement it will also act like a reminder for owners, management and supervisors.

If the company is conscious of its relationship with its employees and goes to the extent of creating a friendly environment for their families it should be included in the mission.

Apart from that, although al companies are incorporated for the profit, a mission statement should also consist of the fact that it cares for its shareholders, share value and return on investment. The mission, that cares to grow along with a steady growth in profit, is bound to create impact. That would mean that the mission of the management is to enhance the value of its stock which, subtly put, would mean the care for the shareholders.

Most mission statements target only the customers and are outward facing. Incorporating internal aspects give it a broader outlook.

Checklist before the revision of the mission: Before we start giving it a final touch, we should see that our mission statement should clearly define some of the points mentioned below. As we all know that mission statement is also a useful tool for the management and owners to stay glued to the principles and concepts with which the company was incorporated. It will be always a point of reference and reminders for the stakeholders whenever their belief or trust, in the company, dwindles.

1. The reason for you to be in the business
2. Your target customers
3. The nature of the product/services you provide
4. Is it true to the image of the company you want to convey?
5. How different you are from your competitors
6. Inclusion of technology
7. The underlying philosophies and best practices
8. Employees and management roles and their relationship.

As far as the language part of the statement is concerned, it should be based on the clear concept of writing, making it more concise, lucid, energetic, accurate

and resonating. One needs to see that no unnecessary words are used making it looking cluttered and bulky. At the same time it should make it lively and energetic. A dull and dry statement will be a difficult statement to be read and the whole concept of writing the statement would be defeated if it is not able to create a buzz. A resonating language will have a lasting effect and will create an impression.

If possible some of the points can be written in bullet points. Also, it is important to remain honest throughout the statement. Using hype words, without meaning them, will be bad for the future image of the company. So, cut out the words that do not apply for your policies and culture and use words that apply specifically for your company. Words like unique and exclusive should be used sparingly unless they really, judiciously apply for the company. Words such as 'World class' 'great' 'best services' 'state-of –the-art' mean little because every mission statement uses them.

In the end make sure that it is read carefully for the edits. Review and revision is as important as the writing of the statement.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the components of a proper mission statement?
2. State the main objective of a mission statement.

13.3 TERMS AND CONDITION

Legal documents should be written with utmost care in order to safeguard the company's interest in times of disputes. These documents also define the work relationship between the parties as both the parties are bound by the content of the documents.

The terms and condition in business govern the transaction and relationship of the parties. They are kind of guidelines under which both the parties will function. They are instructional in nature and also define the dos and don'ts for the parties during their business transactions. Not having written terms and condition would result in delay of payments and other discomforts which can hinder the smooth functioning of business.

To protect a business it is important to establish an actual arrangement between the parties so none of the parties can go back on their word during the course of transaction. So writing terms and condition provides a proof of the agreement between the parties and can be produced in the court if there arises a need. Terms and conditions should ideally include duties, rights, roles and responsibilities. It should act like a manual to provide clarity in case of an unwarranted situation.

Components of Terms and Condition

The terms and condition should include the following:

1. The details of product and services to be provided
2. Payment terms
3. Timelines of deliveries and any other transaction
4. Penalty in case of default
5. Termination of agreement or relationship
6. Appellate authority in case of dispute

One may get tempted to copy the terms and condition of a similar business but the thing to realize is that this practice may result in you omitting something vital which is specific to your organization. Therefore, it is important that you consider every minute detail of your business and the environment prevalent in the market before you write the terms and conditions. Understanding the market condition to a particular business will help one know the major problems and hindrances that the traders feel in day to day business and having a term related to that specific problem will help one deal with that problem more easily because one has already catered to it. If the situation is complicated one may seek the advice of a lawyer.

Some Tips for Writing Terms and Conditions

The tips related to formation of terms and conditions are as follows:

1. Take into consideration everything that can be a point of confrontation
2. The language should be easy to understand
3. The specific business terminology, as used by parties in a particular business
4. s should be used
5. Take professional help whenever required

Terms and Condition for Vendors and Other Service Providers

A supplier terms and conditions will have the following:

- **Change:** It should contain the terms of change in packing, testing, design appearance of the product and the change in price in consequent to such changes
- **Price:** Any change in price cannot be administered without the prior consent and acceptance of both parties
- **Delivery:** It should be clearly notified what action will be taken in case delivery of order could not be completed within the stipulated time
- **Shipment:** In normal circumstances the shipment is considered complete once it has been delivered and the buyer signs the acceptance. It should be clearly specified as to who will bear responsibility in case of loss or damage.

- **Warranties:** Certain warranties, regarding the quality, specifications, designs etc are to be undertaken

- **Quality:** The products meet and abide by the quality standards

- **Inspection:** A clause that all goods acceptance would be subject to inspection from the buyer and acceptance thereof

- **Rejection:** It should contain that in case goods do not conform to quality standards buyer has the right to reject the goods

- **Termination:** It should be clearly defined in what condition buyer has the right to terminate the order

- **Payment:** Number of days within which the payment should have been received by the supplier.

- **Discount:** Any discount should be clearly mentioned, if applicable

- **Intellectual property rights:** The rights regarding copyright, patent, trade secret or other property rights should not be infringed either by buyers or its customers. A clause should clearly mention that.

- **Indemnification**: It is assumed that suppliers take entire responsibility for all damages occurring during the supply of the goods.

- **Insurance:** If the goods are subject to some provision regarding insurance it should be clearly mentioned

- **Confidentiality:** If required, a confidentiality clause can be included to avoid misunderstanding regarding any disclosure or lack of it

- **Compliance with law:** Compliance to certain applicable law should be mentioned.

- **Use of buyer's name:** There can be a clause for not using buyer's name, by the supplier, without prior approval.

Terms and Condition for the Publisher and Book Sellers

In case of publishing some more attention needs to given in writing terms and condition which are specific to publishing company.

1. **Content:** What content should make part of the publishing should have the agreement of both the parties. A writer can be asked to refrain from using the content which can be termed objectionable.

2. **Intellectual property rights:** A writer has to safeguards its content from being reproduced or from being assigned to someone else. Therefore a clause for the protection of intellectual property and any misuse of content makes a very vital part of terms and conditions of publisher

3. **Royalty:** The author receives a certain amount of royalty for its intellectual property. A royalty clause, with the conditions thereof, is to be included in the terms and conditions. It mostly contains the percentage of the profit that the author will receive against the sale of its books

4. **Requirement for publication:** The author needs to adhere to the instruction of the editors which is communicated to them in the beginning. This clause contains instructions regarding, the form, pattern and the scope of the content.

5. **Indemnification:** Sometimes publisher put this clause to indemnify themselves from any subsequent response generated in terms of the content of the intellectual property.

The parties in publishing are author and the publisher. Both have to be in total agreement regarding the content of the written material as the publisher becomes the buyer of this intellectual property.

Check Your Progress

3. Why is it important to establish an actual arrangement between the parties?

4. What are the main constituents of the terms and conditions?

13.4 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoU)

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) is a simple document signed by parties involved. It is a nonbinding agreement which outlines the terms and details of an understanding along with each parties' requirements and responsibilities. MoU is the first stage of agreement at the beginning of a work relationship.

Although, not a legally binding document, nevertheless, it is considered a serious document which paves the way for more legally binding documents for the partners. In international and non financial relations MoU is considered more desirable because it is more convenient and easy and yet provides gravity to a contract.

MoU is a lengthy document but may differ in complexity. It is able to create a good understanding of expectations between people and organizations and also the roles and responsibilities. In other words, it opens a vista for future collaborations and cooperation between organizations. It helps people, in collaboration, move in the right direction. It is not legally binding but signals at a legal ramification, in case there is a violation of agreement.

Drafting an MoU

For drafting the MoU, both parties will have to decide the areas of collaboration, extent of collaboration and the outcome expected from their collaboration. It also conveys the roles and responsibilities of each party and also the period of time within which it will be effective. There can also be a cause regarding the resolution of dispute, in case there is a dispute. The reason and method of termination is also mentioned in the MoU.

The MoU begin by stating the date, the names of the parties, their details, addresses and date of incorporation. The body of the document mostly begins with the main points of the deal which the parties agree to. This can be done through bullet points or through numbered paragraphs, as per the wishes of the parties involved. After that, roles and responsibilities of the parties are mentioned in separate paragraphs.

Once deal points are complete one can include standard boilerplate clauses which are also called miscellaneous provisions. The miscellaneous provisions may include choice of law, jurisdiction, costs and attorney's fees, notices, assignment and amendments.

The date of termination or validity is also mentioned. The parties can decide whether they want to add some disclaimers or any such statements in the MoU. The length of the MoU does not matter as even a short and concise MoU can also convey the full purpose precisely.

Signing of MoU

The signing of MoU is done by whosoever is the signing authority designated by the parties. MoU can also include signature of the witnesses if they so wish to. The signing date and place is also mentioned in the MoU.

The signature can happen either simultaneously at one place or separately at different locations. It is required for both the parties to have a copy of the MoU with them and therefore it is signed in duplicate.

Template of MoU

The template of a MoU is show below:

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

ABC

AND

XYZ

ABC corporation, having its Registered office in ………is a leading construction company of India which was established in 1936, ABC carries out Pilling, Ground improvement, Civil, Structural steel, Architectural, MEP works in India and in other countries for industrial, Marine, Transport, Building, Utility and Power transmission projects.

AND

XYZ with its registered office in ……is involved in training and research projects both in India and abroad. Which expressions shall, unless it be repugnant to the subject or context thereof, include its permitted assigns, associates and successors assigns) acting through it's recognized authority

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Objective

The purpose of coming together of these two premier Institutions is to train students and bridge the gap between learning at work site in a self-financing economically viable mode and make the students ready for employment in the industry.

Whereas both the parties have certain commonality of interest to enter into this MoU with a view to undertake knowledge and skill up-gradation as well as information & knowledge dissemination program in the field of design, development, engineering and construction of civil, structural, geo-technical and other associated works.

Whereas to accomplish these objectives the obligation of respective parties, under the MOU shall be as follows

Both the parties agree that there shall be joint programmes covering the following types of activities:

- Students' Awareness programmes.
- Research and Development in fields related to construction.
- In house Seminars and workshops on selected topics for information and dissemination.
- Short term refresher course for practicing Managers and Engineers.
- Development and Training of students.
- Visits and Exchange of teachers and students.
- Any other activity, to the attachment of the objective of this MOU.

The relationship also aims at enhancing the technological, social and cultural ambience of both institutions/Organizations. This document presents a general framework for such a relationship. It also includes some specifically identified areas of cooperation, which may be updated from time to time.

Competent Authority

Competent authority shall mean Head of institution or person authorized officially by these Institutions to act as competent authority on their behalf.

Coordination

Each institution shall nominate one representative for coordination on their behalf between the committee and competent authorities. These coordinators may be changed from time to time as decided by the competent authority of the respective institutions.

Scope Distribution

The prime role of ABC shall be:

a) To provide necessary infrastructure for conducting training programmes

b) To nominate the experts/ specialists/ faculties in the concerned field.

c) To publicize the programmes and ensure adequate participation.

d) To nominate a coordinator for each of the events.

e) To provide exposure to students at construction site through other construction agencies.

f) To nominate a coordinator for each of the events.

g) To provide exposure to students at construction sites through other construction agencies.

The prime role of XYZ shall be:

a) To nominate the experts/ specialists/faculties in the concerned fields.

b) To assist ABC, in providing course/ presentation material as required for the event.

c) To assist ABC in publicizing programmes.

d) To provide exposure to trainees at construction sites and in sites of other construction companies.

e) XYZ may provide technological expertise in developing state-of-art labs at ABC in mutually agreed selected areas that will help in conducting cutting edge research in the respective fields.

Finance and Commercials

Efforts will be made by both the parties to make the programmes financially self-supporting covering all expenses incurred individually by each party. The modalities can be decided on case to case basis.

Legal Status

This document is a statement of intent to foster genuine and mutually beneficial cooperation and is not legally binding on both the parties. Any disputes shall be resolved by the committee through mutual discussion. If these disputes cannot be resolved by the committee, the matter would be referred to the competent authority of both the Institutions for a solution.

Validity

This MOU is valid for an initial period of Five Years and between effective from the date it is signed by the partners. The partnership period may be extended by mutual consent. In case on partner wishes to terminate the MOU, intimation will have to be sent at least six months in advance. However, specific commitments made prior to such intimation shall be honored by both partners.

Working Agreement

A detailed working agreement will be prepared and signed between the Institutions based on this MOU within thirty working days of signing of this MOU or on any other date mutually agreed upon.

(Authorized Signatory)	(Authorized Signatory)
Name:	Name:
Designation:	Designation:
ABC corporation	XYZ
Witness 1	Witness 2
Name	Name:
Place:	Place:

Check Your Progress

5. What is the purpose of a legal status document?

6. What is a memorandum of understanding?

13.5 LICENSING AGREEMENT

A licensing agreement is like a legal contract between two parties who are known as the licensor and the licensee. In the licensing agreement, the licensor grants the licensee a right which could be related to production and selling of goods, a brand name or trademark, or to use patented technology owned by the licensor. The licensee in turn accepts some conditions and also agrees to pay an amount as agreed upon by them. The amount is known as royalty.

Licensing agreements can be related to many situations. A license can be obtained to use a logo, a technology, or sometime a name of a commercially successful product for branding.

Elements of Licensing Agreement

A licensing agreement will cover the following:

1. **Scope of license:** The scope includes to what extent the license can be used and which may include territorial restrictions**.** The licensor may restrict the licensee to use it only in certain area and may also restrict its use for certain products. There can also be an exclusivity clause by either of the party. The agreement will also include which party will maintain control of copyright, patent and trademark.

2. **Financial arrangements**: Financial arrangements between licensor and licensee include, minimum payment, duration of payment, royalties, royalty

rates, advances, guarantees, calculation of royalties, minimum sales and return and allowances.

3. **Licensor's right to monitoring:** As the ownership of the product or brand remains with the licensor, It retains the right to monitor licensee for quality control and other aspects

4. **Provision for renewal and termination:** The licensing agreement should include the provision about the renewal and termination of licensing agreement.

5. **Arrangement for unsold merchandise:** Sometime the leftover products can be sold by licensee on a cheap knockoff which can hurt licensor's reputation in the market. To deal with this issue licensor and licensee include the provision for leftover or unsold goods in the agreement.

Other than the mentioned provisions there are some other elements that can be included which are specific to the requirements of the parties.

Contract Writing

Business contracts are written to protect the business interests of the contracting parties and should be written cautiously and thoughtfully. Contract should have no room for ambiguity and every possible situation, that may arise, should be kept in mind during writing a contract. Having a contract in writing is a proof of the agreement that has been entered into by two or more parties and that is why it is imperative that parties should have a written contract. Also, in case of dispute, court will be able to intervene only if the parties have a written contract as a proof of their agreement.

The following points should be considered while writing a contract:

1. **Simple language:** People find legal language to be intimidating and therefore, contract writing is considered a difficult job. Contrary to this belief, contract should be written in very simple and plain language. The simplicity will ensure the understanding of the contract by everyone including those who are not very well versed with the language.

2. **Should cover all details:** The contract should take care of the minutest details of the agreement in very specific language. It is advised that the points are specifically numbered and are in systematic order. The words should be carefully chosen so that they can't be interpreted in a manner which is not intended. If there is any room for amendment in future, it should be mentioned in the contract. No oral commitment or agreement will be admissible in law unless it makes a part of the contract.

3. **Financial details to be included:** Most disputes arise due to financial reasons. The details about how payments are to be made, their deadlines and penalty to the defaulters should be clearly mentioned in the contract.

4. **Privacy and termination clause:** It is completely the discretion of the party whether they want to use a confidentiality or privacy clause in the contract. Mostly the clause is required to protect any trade secrets which the parties would not want to disclose to any third party. Similarly, how and in what conditions the contract will expire, or will deemed to be expired, should also be mentioned in the contract. It should include the notice period or any such provision to clearly state the terms of termination.

5. **Governing law:** Contract should also state which state law will govern in case of dispute if the parties belong to different states. Also other legal provisions such as attorney's fees etc can also be stated in the contract

6. **Mediation and Arbitration:** Some petty disputes can be resolved through mediation and arbitration instead of getting into a legal battle. The contract can state the list of disputes which can be resolved through mediation and arbitration. This way, their small disputes will be resolved without much trouble and lengthy procedures.

7. **Make it legal and enforceable:** Just writing a contract is not enough. It is for the benefit of both parties that an attorney reviews and endorses the contract before it becomes a legal and binding document.

Cover Letter

A cover letter is a written way to introduce you, in a compelling way for various purposes but mostly for hiring. The intent is to create an impressive first impression for the concerned person or authority so that they cannot ignore you and are compelled to go through your resume or any other document. Since it is about the first impression, cover letter should be impressively worded and should hit the nail specifically where it was intended to be hit.

First and foremost, cover letter should be custom made for the position or work you are targeting and not be generic. It should not appear to the hiring party that the similar letter has gone to several others.

The following are the steps of cover letter writing:

1. Greeting and beginning
2. An impressive opening line
3. Do not repeat the content of your resume
4. Highlight your skills
5. No apologies
6. Tone of the letter
7. Keep it short
8. Strong finish
9. Review and edit

Cover letter to the Publisher

Cover letter with intent to publish some text needs to highlight not only your written work but also your writing ability because it is the first sample of your writing as a writer. Therefore, the language and tone of your cover letter should reflect your skills in writing.

Other than that it should give a crisp description of the content of the material to be published. It should describe the concept, subject matter, objective and outcome of the book in a very concise and precise manner.

The cover letter should also include any previous writing or past work and how well it was received by the readers.

Cover Letters to Booksellers, Binders, User-Patrons and Clients

A cover letter to the above would not be too different from a normal cover letter, the only difference in them would depend on the purpose of writing the cover letter.

Check Your Progress

7. State the main objective of a cover letter.
8. What is the scope of a licensing agreement?

13.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The following are the main components of a mission statement:
   a) Company's unique goals and objectives
   b) Company's objectives for the employees
   c) Company's objectives for the customers
   d) Company's objectives for its stakeholders
   e) Company's objectives for the community and the world

2. The mission statement should reflect every aspect of your business and should be able to reflect the standards, creativity and objectives of the business. In other words, it is the statement which is a window to the image of the organization.

3. To protect a business it is important to establish an actual arrangement between the parties so none of the parties can go back on their word during the course of transaction. So writing terms and condition provides a proof of the agreement between the parties and can be produced in the court if there arises a need.

4. The main constituents of the terms and condition are as follows:
   a) Company's unique goals and objectives
   b) Company's objectives for the employees
   c) Company's objectives for the customers
   d) Company's objectives for its stakeholders
   e) Company's objectives for the community and the world

5. The legal status document is a statement of intent to foster genuine and mutually beneficial cooperation and is not legally binding on both the parties. Any disputes shall be resolved by the committee through mutual discussion. If these disputes cannot be resolved by the committee, the matter would be referred to the competent authority of both the Institutions for a solution.

6. Memorandum of understanding is a simple document signed by parties involved. It is a nonbinding agreement which outlines the terms and details of an understanding along with each parties' requirements and responsibilities.

7. The main objective of a cover letter is to create an impressive first impression for the concerned person or authority so that they cannot ignore you and are compelled to go through your resume or any other document.

8. The scope of the licensing agreement includes to what extent the license can be used and which may include territorial restrictions**.** The licensor may restrict the licensee to use it only in certain area and may also restrict its use for certain products. There can also be an exclusivity clause by either of the party. The agreement will also include which party will maintain control of copyright, patent and trademark.

13.7 SUMMARY

- Business writing demands strong and effective communication skills which should be informative, transactional, persuasive and instructional.

- The communication that goes to the people in the organization should be result oriented and also the sound of it should energetic and motivational.

- A mission statement is a documented plan of the organizations that succinctly articulates the essence, business goals, ethics, philosophies and concept of a particular business.

- The mission statement should reflect every aspect of your business and should be able to reflect the standards, creativity and objectives of the business. In other words, it is the statement which is a window to the image of the organization.

- While writing the mission statement the question to ask is, how different and unique it is from the mission statements of other companies.

- The mission statement should contain what good you do and how special you make your customers feel. This can be simply put by highlighting your vision towards your customers and unique policies that make you trustworthy.

- Most mission statements target only the customers and are outward facing. Incorporating internal aspects give it a broader outlook.

- Legal documents should be written with utmost care in order to safeguard the company's interest in times of disputes. These documents also define the work relationship between the parties as both the parties are bound by the content of the documents.

- To protect a business it is important to establish an actual arrangement between the parties so none of the parties can go back on their word during the course of transaction.

- Terms and conditions should ideally include duties, rights, roles and responsibilities. It should act like a manual to provide clarity in case of an unwarranted situation.

- Memorandum of understanding is a simple document signed by parties involved. It is a nonbinding agreement which outlines the terms and details of an understanding along with each parties' requirements and responsibilities.

- MoU is a lengthy document but may differ in complexity. It is able to create a good understanding of expectations between people and organizations and also the roles and responsibilities.

- For drafting the MoU, both parties will have to decide the areas of collaboration, extent of collaboration and the outcome expected from their collaboration.

- The signing of MoU is done by whosoever is the signing authority designated by the parties. MoU can also include signature of the witnesses if they so wish to. The signing date and place is also mentioned in the MoU.

- Licensing agreement is like a legal contract between two parties who are known as the licensor and the licensee.

- In the licensing agreement, the licensor grants the licensee a right which could be related to production and selling of goods, a brand name or trademark, or to use patented technology owned by the licensor.

- Business contracts are written to protect the business interests of the contracting parties and should be written cautiously and thoughtfully.

- A cover letter is a written way to introduce you, in a compelling way for various purposes but mostly for hiring. The intent is to create an impressive first impression for the concerned person or authority so that they cannot ignore you and are compelled to go through your resume or any other document.

13.8 KEY WORDS

- **Legal Document**: It refers to a type of document which defines the work relationship between the parties as both the parties are bound by the content of the documents.

- **Licensing Agreement**: It refers to a legal contract between two parties who are known as the licensor and the licensee.

- **Memorandum of Understanding**: It refers to a simple document signed by parties involved. It is a nonbinding agreement which outlines the terms and details of an understanding along with each parties' requirements and responsibilities.

- **Mission Statement**: It refers to a documented plan of the organizations that succinctly articulates the essence, business goals, ethics, philosophies and concept of a particular business.

13.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the steps of mission statement writing?
2. List the tips related to the terms and condition document.
3. What are the terms and condition for the publisher?
4. Why is MoU the first stage of a working relationship?
5. What is the main objective of a Memorandum of Understanding?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the importance of legal documents in organizations
2. What are the terms and conditions for vendors? Explain in detail.
3. Analyse the procedure of drafting a Memorandum of Understanding.
4. Describe the elements of licensing agreement.
5. Discuss the steps related to the framing of contract letter.

13.10 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 14 LEGAL ISSUES: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IN INDIA

Structure

14.0 INTRODUCTION

The Right to Information Act is the Act which provides for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities, in order to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority, the constitution of a Central Information Commission and State Information Commissions and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Intellectual property is defined as a category of property which consists of intangible creations of the human intellect. It includes two forms of rights which is industrial property rights and copyright.

In this unit, the provisions of the Right to Information Act, its history and features have been discussed. The importance of Intellectual Property Right and the legal remedies of the Trade Mark Act have been analysed. The unit will also explain the Law of Patent and the various ethical issues of publishing.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the provisions of the Right to Information Act
- Explain the history and features of the Right to Information Act
- Describe the Intellectual Property Right
- Analyse the legal remedies of the Trade Mark Act
- Explain the law of patent in India
- Discuss the quality and ethical issues in the field of publishing

14.2 RIGHT TO INFORMATION

In India, freedom of information can be discussed in the context of the right to information act.

The term 'Right to information' is known as 'Freedom of Information' in many countries and even in India since it was first passed as Freedom of information Act in parliament in the year 2002 but, was soon replaced with RTI due to some inherent flaws. Therefore, 'RTI' in its present avatar became an act in the year 2005.

The Right to Information (RTI) is act of the Parliament of India to provide for setting out the practical regime of the right to information for citizens and replaces the erstwhile Freedom of information Act, 2002.

The act provides that any citizen of India may request information from a 'public authority' -a body of Government or 'instrumentality of State'. The public authority is obliged to provide the required information within thirty days. This law was passed by Parliament on 15 June 2005 and came fully into force on 12 October 2005.

The act makes it mandatory for all public authority to keep their records in such a way that the public needs minimum recourse to ascertain the information The aim is to promote transparency in the public works domain so that the public authority becomes more accountable in the way they function and there is no misuse of their authority and funds.

RTI extends to the entire country including both states and Union Territories except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

The history of RTI can be tracked down to early 1990s when Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathana (MKSS) started a movement to demand transparency in the functionality of village panchayats. The movement was a huge success and inspired several activists to demand from the government to establish records about the employment and payment records and bills and vouchers relating to

purchase and transportation of different materials. The information was then crosschecked against the actual testimonies of workers. As a result, the vast cases of corruption and malfunctioning were exposed. This inspired the government to enact a parliamentary bill for the same, especially when activist like Anna Hazare demanded a strong rule in his home state Maharashtra.

The RTI Act has empowered citizens of India with the right to seek information whenever in doubt. Here are the following ways through which citizens can exercise their rights, as per the Act.

- Request any information from any public office
- Take copies of the documents
- Inspect those documents
- Inspect the progress of works and
- Take samples of materials used at work sites

The act also demands all authorities that come under the ambit of RTI to appoint a Public Information Officer who will be responsible for dealing with issues arising from the act. The PIO is responsible for providing the information, to any citizen, within the stipulated time, who may submit a request to the PIO for information in writing. If the information does not fall into PIO's ambit and pertains to any other public authority, it PIO's duty to forward the concerned request to a PIO of the other department within 5 working days.

Steps to Invoke RTI

The following steps form the part of the procedure for filing RTI:

1. Identifying the public authority from which to seek information
2. Writing the application
3. Attach payment with application
4. Send application

There is no formal application format for sending the application. However, if application is filed on the RTI online portal then an online form can be found on their portal which can be used for the purpose.

The applicant who seeks the information does not have to furnish any other information than their names and contact details.

If the information is not provided within the stipulated time it is considered as deemed refusal. The refusal to information is a ground for further appeal or complaint.

The act also provides that the inability to provide information within the stipulated time frame binds the authority to provide information free of charge.

The fee for invoking RTI is different in different states. In central government it is INR 50 for filing the request, INR 2 per page of information. If any investigation

needs to be conducted INR 10 will be charged for the first hour and Rs 5 for every fifteen minutes thereafter. In central government the first hour is free. Similarly, if a disc or floppy is required by the applicant, regarding the information, the cost is INR 50 for the disc. If any certified sample is required during the investigation, the cost will be decided by the PIO. However, if the applicant is a 'Below Poverty' Card holder, then he/she needs not pay any fee at all.

Thus, it is very clear that RTI is a very powerful tool in the hands of the citizens to seek information and to maintain privacy in the functionality of 'Public Departments'. However, it can result in too much of wastage in terms of time and material. Therefore, RTI should be used as the last resort by the person concerned so as not to further burden the public authorities. It must also be ensured that it does not slow down the efficient working of various public offices and concerned measures must be taken regarding the same.

Privacy

Privacy means the right of an individual to keep their personal matters secret. In India, privacy is a fundamental right covered under Article 21.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the ways in which citizens can exercise the Right to Information Act?

2. State any one feature of the Right to Information Act.

14.3 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

With the advent of technology and rapid globalization 'Intellectual capital' has become one of the most important wealth drivers today. With the result, the disputes related to intellectual property are also becoming rampant. Indian laws have enough provisions to protect people against the infringements of their rights regarding intellectual capital.

India also ratified the agreement for establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO) which contains the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Indian Statutes, enforcement provisions and methods of dispute resolution with respect to intellectual property (IP) protection are now fully TRIPS-compliant.

The various Indian laws covering various areas of intellectual property are enumerated herein below:

1. Trade Marks Act, 1999

2. The Patents Act, 1970 (as amended in 2005)

3. The Copyright Act, 1957

4. The Designs Act, 2000
5. The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999
6. The Semiconductor Integrated Circuits Layout Design Act, 2000
7. The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Right Act, 2001
8. The Information Technology Act, 2000

14.3.1 Trademarks

The new, amended, Trade Mark Act 1999 is WTO's TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) complaint and conforms to international standards, systems and practices. In view of the rapid globalization, India needed a law that protects the intellectual rights and is recognized under the TRIPS. After an extensive review, the old Indian Trade And Merchandise Marks Act, 1958 was repealed and the new Trade Marks Act, 1999 was enacted. The act provides, among other things, registration of service marks, filing of multiclass applications, increasing the term of registration of a trademark to ten years as well as recognition of the concept of well-known marks. The act provides for actions against infringement and violation of trademarks. Section 135 of the Trade Marks Act recognises both infringement as well as passing off actions.

Legal Remedies

Under the Trade Mark Act, both civil and criminal remedies are simultaneously available against infringement and passing off intellectual property.

As per the law, infringement of trademark is violation of the exclusive rights granted to the registered proprietor of the trademark to use the same. A trademark is said to be infringed by a person, who, not being a permitted user, uses an identical/similar/deceptively similar mark to the registered trademark without the authorisation of the registered proprietor of the trademark. However, it is pertinent to note that the Indian trademark law protects the vested rights of a prior user against a registered proprietor which is based on common law principles.

Passing off is a common law tort used to enforce unregistered trademark rights. Passing off essentially occurs where the reputation in the trademark of party A is misappropriated by party B, such that party B misrepresents as being the owner of the trademark or having some affiliation/nexus with party A, thereby damaging the goodwill of party A. For an action of passing off, registration of a trademark is irrelevant.

Registration of a trademark is not a pre-requisite in order to sustain a civil or criminal action against violation of trademarks in India. In India, a combined civil action for infringement of trademark and passing off can be initiated.

Significantly, infringement of a trademark is a cognizable offence and criminal proceedings can be initiated against the infringers. Such enforcement mechanisms

are expected to boost the protection of marks in India and reduce infringement and contravention of trademarks.

Relief Granted by Courts under the ACT

The relief which a court may usually grant in a suit for infringement or passing off includes permanent and interim injunction, damages or account of profits, delivery of the infringing goods for destruction and cost of the legal proceedings.

The order of interim injunction may be passed ex parte or after notice. The Interim reliefs in the suit may also include order for:

Appointment of a local commissioner, for search, seizure and preservation of infringing goods, account books and preparation of inventory.

Restraining the infringer from disposing of or dealing with the assets in a manner which may adversely affect plaintiff's ability to recover damages, costs or other pecuniary remedies may be awarded to the plaintiff.

Offences and Penalties

In case of a criminal action for infringement or passing off, the offence is punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months, but which may extend to three years and fine which shall not be less than rupees 50,000 but may extend to rupees 2,00,000.

Procedure of Registration of Trademark in India

Anyone can apply for the registration of a trademark for a good/services. As per section 9 of the Act, following procedure needs to be followed for registration of trademark:

1. An application for registration of a trade mark shall be made to the Registrar in such form as may be required pursuant to section 54 and be accompanied by the prescribed fees.

2. The application shall contain:
   a) The name and address of the applicant
   b) A request for registration of a trade mark;
   c) A statement of the goods or services in relation to which registration of the mark is sought
   d) A representation of the trade mark
   e) Such other particulars as may be prescribed

3. The application shall state that the trade mark is being used by the applicant or with his consent in relation to the goods or services or that he has a bona fide intention that it should be so used.

As per an amendment in 2010, a clause was added to allow Indian entities to register their trademarks in 97 countries by filing a single application and in the same way also allows the foreign entities of the member countries of the Madrid Protocol to register their mark in India

In the same amendment the words, 'within eighteen months of the filing of the application' have been inserted. Now the Registrar is under an obligation to complete the registration process for a mark in a time bound manner.

Renewal of Registration

The trademark is initially registered for a period of 10 years, which is calculated from the date of filing of the application and in case of convention application, from the date of priority. The registration is required to be renewed within 12 months before the date of expiry of the registration, i.e., 10 years from the date of the application or subsequent renewals.

The failure in renewing the trademark within the stipulated period of time and a grace period of maximum one year granted for restoration of the trademark, automatically leads to removal of the trademark from the Register of Trademarks.

Rectification of Trademark

An aggrieved person may file an application before the Registrar of Trademarks or to the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) for cancellation or varying the registration of the trademark on the ground of any contravention or failure to observe a condition entered on the Register in relation thereto.

The application for rectification can also be filed for removal of an entry made in Register, without sufficient cause or wrongly remaining on the Register and for correction of any error or defect in any entry in the Register.

14.3.2 Law of Patent in India

The present Patents Act, 1970 came into force in the year 1972, after amending and consolidating the provisions required. The Patents Act, 1970 was again amended by the Patents (Amendment) Act, 2005, wherein product patent was extended to all fields of technology including food, drugs, chemicals and micro-organisms. After the amendment, the provisions relating to Exclusive Marketing Rights (EMRs) have been repealed, and a provision for enabling grant of compulsory license has been introduced.

Law of patents deals with an invention relating to a product or a process that is new, involving inventive step and capable of industrial application. However, it must not fall into the category of inventions that are non-patentable as provided under sections 3 and 4 of the (Indian) Patents Act, 1970. In India, a patent application can be filed, either alone or jointly, by true and first inventor or his assignee.

Procedure for Grant of a Patent in India

Filing of the application for the grant of patent involves a request for examination. The request id made for examination of the application in the Indian Patent Office within 48 months from the date of priority of the application or from the date of filing of the application. After which the first examination report is issued. The applicant is given an opportunity to meet the objections raised in the report. The applicant has to comply with the requirements within 6 months from the issuance of the first examination report which may be extended for further 3 months on the request of the applicant. If the requirements of the first examination report are not complied with within the prescribed period of 9 months, then the application is treated to have been abandoned by the applicant. After the removal of objections and compliance of requirements, the patent is granted and notified in the Patent Office Journal.

Filing of Application for Grant of Patent in India by Foreigners

India is a signatory to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, 1883 and the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), 1970. Under the treaty, a foreign entity can adopt any of the aforesaid treaties for filing of application for grant of patent in India.

Pre-Grant Opposition

A representation for pre-grant opposition can be filed by *any person* under section 11A of the Patents Act, 1970 within six months from the date of publication of the application, as amended (Patents Act) or before the grant of patent. The grounds on which the representation can be filed are provided under section 25(1) of the Patents Act. There is no fee for filing representation for pre-grant opposition. Representation for pre-grant opposition can be filed even though no request for examination has been filed. However, the representation will be considered only when a request for examination is received within the prescribed period.

Post-grant Opposition

Any *interested person* can file post-grant opposition within twelve months from the date of publication of the grant of patent in the official journal of the patent office.

Ground for opposition:

Some of the grounds for filing pre-and post-grant opposition are as under:

    a) Patent wrongfully obtained.

    b) Prior publication.

c) The invention was publicly known or publicly used in India before the priority date of that claim.

d) The invention is obvious and does not involve any inventive step.

e) That the subject of any claim is not an invention within the meaning of this Act or is not patentable under this Act.

f) Insufficient disclosure of the invention or the method by which it is to be performed.

g) That in the case of a patent granted on convention application, the application for patent was not made within twelve months from the date of the first application for protection for the invention made in a convention country or in India.

h) That the complete specification does not disclose or wrongly mentions the source and geographical origin of biological material used for the invention.

i) That the invention was anticipated having regard to the knowledge, oral or otherwise, available within any local or indigenous community in India or elsewhere.

Term of Patent

The term of every patent in India is 20 years from the date of filing the patent application, irrespective of whether it is filed with provisional or complete specification. However, in case of applications filed under the Patent Cooperative Treaty (PCT), the term of 20 years begins from the international filing date.

Payment of Renewal Fee

It is important to note that a patentee has to renew the patent every year by paying the renewal fee, which can be paid every year or in lump sum.

Restoration of Patent

A request for restoration of patent can be filed within eighteen months from the date of cessation of patent along with the prescribed fee. After the receipt of the request, the matter is notified in the official journal for further processing of the request.

Patent of Biological Material

If the invention uses a biological material which is new, it is essential to deposit the same in the International Depository Authority (IDA) prior to the filing of the application in India in order to supplement the description. If such biological materials are already known, in such a case it is not essential to deposit the same. The IDA in India located at Chandigarh is known as Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTECH).

Rights Granted by a Patent

The following rights are granted to patentee by the law of patents:

- Right to prevent others from making, using, offering for sale, selling or importing the patented product in India.
- If the patent is for a process, then the patentee has the right to prevent others from using the process, using the product directly obtained by the process, offering for sale, selling or importing the product in India directly obtained by the process.

Non-patentable Items

The following items cannot be patented:

- Any invention which is frivolous or obvious.
- Anything which is contrary to well established natural laws, contrary to law, morality.
- Anything which is injurious to public health.
- Things which are a mere discovery of a scientific principle, the formulation of an abstract theory, a mere discovery of any new property or new use for a known substance or process, machine or apparatus, a substance obtained by a mere admixture resulting only in the aggregation of the properties of the components thereof or a process for producing such substance, a mere arrangement or rearrangement or duplication of known devices.
- A method of agriculture or horticulture and inventions relating to atomic energy, are not patentable in India.

Secrecy by the Indian Patent Office (IPO)

All patent applications are kept secret up to eighteen months from the date of filing or priority date, whichever is earlier, and thereafter they are published in the Official Journal of the Patent Office published every week. After such publication of the patent application, public can inspect the documents and may take the photocopy thereof on the payment of the prescribed fee.

Compulsory Licensing

One of the most important aspects of Indian Patents Act, 1970, is compulsory licensing of the patent subject to the fulfilment of certain conditions. At any time after the expiration of three years from the date of the sealing of a patent, any person interested may make an application to the Controller of Patents for grant of compulsory license of the patent, subject to the fulfilment of following conditions, i.e.,

- The reasonable requirements of the public with respect to the patented invention have not been satisfied;

- That the patented invention is not available to the public at a reasonable price; or

- That the patented invention is not worked in the territory of India.

An application for compulsory licensing may be made by any person notwithstanding that he is already the holder of a licence under the patent.

For the purpose of compulsory licensing, no person can be stopped from alleging that the reasonable requirements of the public with respect to the patented invention are not satisfied or that the patented invention is not available to the public at a reasonable price by reason of any admission made by him, whether in such a licence or by reason of his having accepted such a licence.

The controller, if satisfied that the reasonable requirements of the public with respect to the patented invention have not been satisfied or that the patented invention is not available to the public at a reasonable price, may order the patentee to grant a licence upon such terms as he may deem fit. However, before the grant of a compulsory license, the Controller of Patents shall consider following factors:

- The nature of invention.

- The time elapsed, since the sealing of the patent.

- The measures already taken by the patentee or the licensee to make full use of the invention.

- The ability of the applicant to work the invention to the public advantage.

- The capacity of the applicant to undertake the risk in providing capital and working the invention, if the application for compulsory license is granted.

- As to the fact whether the applicant has made efforts to obtain a license from the patentee on reasonable terms and conditions.

- National emergency or other circumstances of extreme urgency.

- Public non-commercial use.

- Establishment of a ground of anti-competitive practices adopted by the patentee.

Appeal Against Infringement

Under the (Indian) Patents Act, 1970 only a civil action can be initiated in a Court of Law. Further, a suit for infringement can be defended on various grounds including the grounds on which a patent cannot be granted in India and based on such defence, revocation of Patent can also be claimed.

Licensing and Assignment of Patent

An assignment in a patent or a share in a patent or a mortgage, license or the creation of any other interest in a patent is permissible. In the case of patents,

assignment is valid only when it is in writing and the agreement is reduced to the form of a document embodying all the terms and conditions governing the rights and obligations of the parties to the agreement. The application for registration is required to be made by the transferee in the prescribed form.

Check Your Progress

3. How is a trademark infringed?
4. What is the time period of every patent in India?

14.4 QUALITY ISSUES AND ETHICS IN PUBLISHING

While dealing with intellectual property, trust is a great factor. Publishers mostly have their own guidelines for ethics and policies which the authors and publishers both are needed to adhere to. We will now discuss some of the ethical issues in publishing.

Due Credit to all the Authors

It is the duty of the author to give credit to each contributor and the published work should be properly attributed to the author/authors who contributed. The inappropriate authorship such as ghost writers and guest writers should be discouraged due to zero recognition to the original author.

Published/Unpublished Work

To avoid repetition and clutter from publishing, the work that has been published earlier, elsewhere, is considered redundant. To avoid republishing, publishers should take an undertaking from the authors that the work has not been published earlier and is the original work of the author.

Maintaining Integrity

If it is suspected that there has been the lack of integrity regarding data fabrication, falsification or plagiarism and image manipulation, it should be ensured that such malpractices are dealt with stringent actions.

Protecting Animal's Rights

The published work should adhere to the highest standards of ethics in terms of animal protection and rights. Publishers should ask authors to state that the study they are submitting was approved by the relevant research ethics committee or institutional review board. If human participants were involved, manuscripts must be accompanied by a statement that the experiments were undertaken with the understanding and appropriate informed consent of each.

Confidentiality

Editors should only consider publishing information and images from individual participants/subjects or patients where the authors have obtained the individual's explicit consent.

Respecting Cultures and Heritage

It is important to exercise sensitivity when publishing images of objects that might have cultural significance or cause offence. Any comment or remark on a particular person based on his or her culture, region, caste and colour, which can prove to be offensive, should be discouraged.

Errata, Retractions, Expression of Concern

If there is a chance that errors can lead to wrong interpretation of data or information, publishers should publish errata. Likewise, if work is proven to be fraudulent a retraction should be published. While publishing errata, retraction or expression of concern the original article should be cited.

A Fair Peer Review System

Editors have a responsibility for ensuring the peer-review process is fair and should aim to minimize bias. Journals should have clearly set-out policies to explain the type of peer review they use (for example, blinded, non-blinded, multiple reviewers) and to explain whether peer review varies between types of article. Editors should apply consistent standards in their peer-review processes. Editors have a responsibility to ensure a high standard of objective, unbiased, and timely peer review.

Conflict of Interest

Editors should adopt a policy about conflicts of interest that best suits their particular publishing environment and should describe this in their editorial policy. Editors should require statements about conflicts of interest from authors. Editors should describe the detail that they require from conflict of interest statements, including the period that these statements should cover.

Editorial Independence

Editorial independence should be respected. The owner should not interfere in editor's job in terms of ideologies, ideas, opinions, political views and allegiance. Editor should not feel any pressure from the owner regarding the choice of material to be published. Owner should also not interfere in decision making process. Editors, journal owners, and publishers should establish processes that minimize the risk of editorial decisions being influenced by commercial, academic, personal or political factors.

Protecting Intellectual Property

Publishers, owners and authors have a right to protect their intellectual property. Different systems are available to protect intellectual property and journals must choose whichever best suits their purpose and ethos. Licence, copyright agreement, among other things, enables the owners of intellectual property to retain copyright in their articles; Publishers or the journal owner retains the commercial publishing and journal compilation rights.

Authors are entitled to expect that peer reviewers or other individuals, who have access to their work, to the work, will not steal their research ideas or plagiarize their work.

Every publisher should ensure that highest standards are met while publishing a written work. Articles published reflect the state of the culture of a nation and also become instrumental in creating general views and opinions. Apart from that protecting the intellectual rights of the author is also the duty of the publisher more so because it has financial repercussions.

Check Your Progress

5. What are the various ways in which intellectual property can be protected?
6. What are the main responsibilities of the editors towards peer review process?

14.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The following are the ways in which citizen can exercise Right to Information Act:

    (a) Request any information from any public office

    (b) Take copies of the documents

    (c) Inspect those documents

    (d) Inspect the progress of works and

    (e) Take samples of materials used at work sites

2. The RTI Act provides that the inability to provide information within the stipulated time frame binds the authority to provide information free of charge.

3. A trademark is said to be infringed by a person, who, not being a permitted user, uses an identical/similar/deceptively similar mark to the registered trademark without the authorization of the registered proprietor of the trademark.

4. The term of every patent in India is 20 years from the date of filing the patent application, irrespective of whether it is filed with provisional or complete specification. However, in case of applications filed under the Patent Cooperative Treaty (PCT), the term of 20 years begins from the international filing date.

5. Publishers, owners and authors have a right to protect their intellectual property. Different systems are available to protect intellectual property and journals must choose whichever best suits their purpose and ethos. Licence, copyright agreement, among other things, enables the owners of intellectual property to retain copyright in their articles; Publishers or the journal owner retains the commercial publishing and journal compilation rights.

6. Editors have a responsibility for ensuring the peer-review process is fair and should aim to minimize bias. Journals should have clearly set-out policies to explain the type of peer review they use (for example, blinded, non-blinded, multiple reviewers) and to explain whether peer review varies between types of article. Editors should apply consistent standards in their peer-review processes. Editors have a responsibility to ensure a high standard of objective, unbiased, and timely peer review.

14.6 SUMMARY

- The term 'Right to information' is known as 'Freedom of Information' in many countries and even in India since it was first passed as Freedom of information Act in parliament in the year 2002 but, was soon replaced with RTI due to some inherent flaws.

- The Right to Information (RTI) is act of the Parliament of India to provide for setting out the practical regime of the right to information for citizens and replaces the erstwhile Freedom of information Act, 2002.

- RTI extends to the entire country including both states and Union Territories except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

- The RTI Act has empowered citizens of India with the right to seek information whenever in doubt.

- The RTI Act also demands all authorities that come under the ambit of RTI to appoint a Public Information Officer who will be responsible for dealing with issues arising from the act.

- The applicant who seeks the information does not have to furnish any other information than their names and contact details.

- The RTI Act also provides that the inability to provide information within the stipulated time frame binds the authority to provide information free of charge.

- With the advent of technology and rapid globalization 'Intellectual capital' has become one of the most important wealth drivers today.

- India also ratified the agreement for establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO) which contains the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

- The new, amended, Trade Mark Act 1999 is WTO's TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) complaint and conforms to international standards, systems and practices.

- Under the Trade Mark Act, both civil and criminal remedies are simultaneously available against infringement and passing off intellectual property.

- A trademark is said to be infringed by a person, who, not being a permitted user, uses an identical/similar/deceptively similar mark to the registered trademark without the authorisation of the registered proprietor of the trademark.

- Registration of a trademark is not a pre-requisite in order to sustain a civil or criminal action against violation of trademarks in India.

- The trademark is initially registered for a period of 10 years, which is calculated from the date of filing of the application and in case of convention application, from the date of priority.

- The first law on patent was enacted in the year 2011. The present Patents Act, 1970 came into force in the year 1972, after amending and consolidating the provisions required.

- Law of patents deals with an invention relating to a product or a process that is new, involving inventive step and capable of industrial application.

- India is a signatory to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, 1883 and the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), 1970.

- A representation for pre-grant opposition can be filed by *any person* under section 11A of the Patents Act, 1970 within six months from the date of publication of the application, as amended (Patents Act) or before the grant of patent.

- One of the most important aspects of Indian Patents Act, 1970, is compulsory licensing of the patent subject to the fulfilment of certain conditions.

- While dealing with intellectual property, trust is a great factor. Publishers mostly have their own guidelines for ethics and policies which the authors and publishers both are needed to adhere to.

- Publishers, owners and authors have a right to protect their intellectual property. Different systems are available to protect intellectual property and journals must choose whichever best suits their purpose and ethos.

14.7 KEY WORDS

- **Law of Patents**: It refers to a law which deals with invention relating to a product or a process that is new, involving inventive step and capable of industrial application.

- **Patent**: It refers to a form of intellectual property which gives its owner the right to exclude others from making, using, selling, and importing an invention for a limited period of time, usually twenty years.

- **Right to Information Act**: It refers to an act which provides that any citizen of India may request information from a 'public authority' -a body of Government or 'instrumentality of State'.

- **Trademark Act**: It refers to an act which provides registration of service marks, filing of multiclass applications, increasing the term of registration of a trademark to ten years as well as recognition of the concept of well-known marks. The act provides for actions against infringement and violation of trademarks.

14.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. State the premise of the Right to Information Act.
2. What are the various laws covered under the Intellectual Property Right?
3. What is the main aim of the Right to Information Act?
4. How is a trademark registered?
5. Why is infringement of trademark a legal offence?
6. How is a patent restored?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss in detail the importance of the Right to Information Act.
2. Analyse the procedure of filing the Right to Information Act.
3. Explain the legal remedies of the Trademark Act.
4. What is law of patent? Discuss in detail.
5. Analyse the concept of compulsory licensing.
6. Identify the ethical issues in publishing.

14.9 FURTHER READINGS

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