

BARRIER OF COMMUNICATION

Quite often, miscommunication arises due to one barrier or the other. Barrier or problems can arise at any stage of the communication process. Various problems of or barrier to communication may be classified as under:

- (i) Semantic barrier
- (ii) Physical and Mechanical barriers
- (iii) Organizational barrier
- (iv) Socio-psychological barrier

12.1 Semantic Barriers

Semantics refer to the systematic study of the meaning of the words and signs. Simplicity, clarity, and brevity reduce semantic barriers of communication. Problems arising from expression or transmission of meaning are called semantic barriers. Language is the most important tool of communication. But its careless use can be dangerous.

Language barriers are as follows: -

- (i) **Words with different meaning:** - Communication is mainly carried through spoken and written words. But some words convey different meanings to different people. People interpret the same words differently due to differences in their economic, social, and educational backgrounds.
- (ii) **Denotations and Connotation:** - the literal meaning of a word is known by its denotative meaning. It just names objects without suggesting positive or negative qualities. On the other hand connotation arouses qualitative judgment and personal reaction. Some of these words are like honest and competent which have positive connotation. Due to difference in connotation, a sender's compliment may be interpreted by the receiver as insult.
- (iii) **Bad Expression:** - When the message is not formulated and presented in the proper manner, the receiver fails to comprehend it and misunderstanding occurs. Badly expressed messages lose their impact. A badly expressed message causes loss of valuable time and money as it requires further corrections and clarifications.
- (iv) **Faulty Translation:** - Often people translate words in literal sense, thereby losing the spirit behind the word. Inaccurate translation leads to misunderstanding and confusion. When different parts of the message are contradictory, the receiver gets confused over their reliability and validity.
- (v) **Unclear Assumption:** - the sender of the message often makes some assumption. When these assumptions are vague and unknown to the receiver, communication suffers.

12.2 Physical and Mechanical Barriers

Physical barriers arise due to distance, noise and defects in the mechanical devices used in communication: -

- (i) **Noise:** - Noise refers to the distracting element which breaks the communication of the sender or the receiver and prevents him from paying attention to the contents of the message. Noise can either be physical or psychological. Physical noise implies physical distraction and psychological noise means mental disturbance. Noise can lead to miscommunication.
- (ii) **Distance and Time:** - physical distance between the sender and receiver serves as barriers of communication. Time is also a barrier of communication. Delayed messages create confusion.
- (iii) **Information Overload:** - Excess communication is called as information overload. The receiver cannot comprehend and absorb beyond his mental capacity. His mind will be closed for a part of communication. Therefore we should be precise and brief in sending messages.

12.3 Organizational Barriers

Organizational barriers arise due to defect in the organization structure and the communication system of an organization. These are as follows:-

- (i) **Long Chain of Command:** - When the scalar chain is unduly long, distance between top manager and worker increases. As a result the downwards, upwards messages have to pass through several level causing delay and distortions. Long chain of command also causes the problem of filtering.
- (ii) **Poor Spatial Arrangements (Poor Layout):** - Faulty arrangement of furniture, partition, pathways, etc. prevents eye contact between the speaker and the listener. Spatial arrangement also creates emotional disturbances. Spatial arrangements may also be interpreted as status symbol causing further problem in communication.
- (iii) **Inappropriate Medium:** - there can be barrier of communication between the employees working in the organization if the unsuitable medium of communication is being selected. For instance if a boss wants to complement his employee then he must do it face to face rather than any other medium.

12.4 Socio-psychological Barriers

Social and psychological factors are the most difficult barriers to communication. These consist of the following.

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| (i) Attitude and Opinion | (ii) Emotions | (iii) Status and Fear |
| (iv) Close minded | (v) Inattention | (vi) Distrust |
| (vii) Poor Retention | (viii) Perceptual Distortion | (ix) Resistance to Changes |