CHAPTER - 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Public relations research has grown exponentially over the past 100 years. Currently, the number of companies offers services that measure and evaluate public relations activities. During this period, the industry has seen growth that is best represented by the multitude of companies specializing in this area, as well as a growing academic literature in the field. Yet, even with the increased attention paid to the discipline, significant variations continue to exist with the varying range of approaches to public relations measurement and evaluation. These variations result in a lack of standard measures that can be used to gauge the success of a public relations program as well as in an uneven overall quality of the research being conducted. (Michaelson & Macleod, 2007)

The formal origins of public relations research can be traced to the 1950s. During that period, Hill & Knowlton acquired a company called Group Attitudes Corporation. The primary focus of Group Attitudes Corporation was to function as a standalone company that was a captive arm of the parent agency. Its work included research for the Tobacco Institute, as well as for other Hill & Knowlton clients. The primary focus of this research, taken from a review of several published reports, was to assess reaction to communications messages and vehicles using processes that appear similar to the research methods employed by the advertising industry during this same period. This industry model was followed over the next 25 years with the establishment of research arms at several other public relations agencies. During this period, the primary function of these agency-based research departments was similar to the work initially conducted by Group Attitudes Corporation.

During the late 1970s, however, it became increasingly apparent that public relations differed considerably from advertising in its ability to be measured and evaluated. At the time, advertising testing was dominated by a variety of measurement and evaluation systems of which the “day after recall” method (DAR), popularized by Burke Marketing Research in its work with Procter & Gamble, was one of the most common systems in use. These advertising-focused methods assumed that the message was completely controlled by the communicator. Therefore, the ability to test message
recall and message efficacy were highly controllable and, in theory, projectable as to what would occur if the advertising were actually to be placed.

With the recognition that public relations needed a different set of measurements, the senior management at several major public relations agencies charged their research departments with the task of finding a way to measure the effectiveness of public relations activities. While a number of experiments were undertaken at that time, the primary benefit that was derived from this experimentation was a heightened awareness of the overall value of measuring public relations. This heightened awareness, along with advances in specific technologies, led to the founding of a number of research companies that specialize in measuring the effectiveness of public relations activities. For the most part, these companies specialize in the content analysis of media placements with little emphasis placed on programmatic or diagnostic research or research that evaluates the impact of public relations activities on the target audiences for these communications.

The legacy of these companies, as well as the services they wish to provide the public relations industry is noteworthy—particularly when the history of the profession is taken into consideration. Nonetheless, for the most part, these organizations have typically failed, in the fullest sense, to advance either the science or the art of public relations measurement and evaluation. The question arises as to why this is the case. (Michaelson & Macleod, 2007)

In India public relations research started with motive of getting glimpses of public opinion and to evaluate the success of public relations efforts of the concerned units. At present public relations research can be categorized into three categories – research conducted by professional organizations and corporate, government research and academic research. A number of initiatives can be mentioned in the area of public relations research.

Bardhan & Patwardhan (2014) The Public Relations industry has grown rapidly but still it needs to be established as a regular and important practice. The growth of Public Relations in India needs to be channeled in a more focused manner.

Raina (2013) found after studying the functioning of PR department of DDA that DDA never had a PR strategy or never updated/oriented its PR departments work even
though it had been around for 53 years. It continued to work in a routine fashion and was responsible for media relations with no effort directed at gauging the belief or convictions of the public or resorting to timely communication so that any wrong perceptions could be checked right in the beginning. This was coupled with the customer dissatisfaction as delivery of services at the reception was very poor and procedures cumbersome. Study shows that public undertakings adopt stereotype practice of public relations so a mere press agentry model is prevailed.

Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg (2013) pointed out importance of public relations in educational institutions. ‘Educational institutions are usually nonprofit organizations as well, but they may be either public or private. The private institutions generally conform to the nonprofit organizational pattern. Although they have significant dealings with government, their work is quite unlike that of public institutions, which, being a part of government, are more open to the scrutiny of taxpayers and the whims of politicians. The type of PR practiced in state educational institutions is often suited to a person who enjoys dealing with the government.

PR people in all educational institutions are likely to be involved in development, which includes fund-raising. The functions of PR and of development are separate, but the two groups must work closely together. In fact, the two functions are often lumped together under the umbrella term institutional advancement (a term used by CASE, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education).

The title “vice president for development” or “director of university relations” is commonly assigned to the individual who supervises both the PR and the fundraising functions. Sports information may be included under public relations or kept separate from it in an athletic department; in the latter case, the person responsible for it reports to the athletic director, who in turn reports to the president. However, this arrangement can cause problems because university sports can be involved in controversies that affect university relations’.

Upadhyay (2013) concludes that Public Relations as a function too has evolved in the country as is evident from the data of her thesis that separate public relations departments have come up and the public relations practitioner is slowly getting the credibility due to him/her for a long time. Two very important roles emerge of the PR practitioner: the crisis manager and the media relations manager. Managing the media
is very important in India and it is observed that most of the time the PR practitioner is engaged in managing the print media, a very crucial day-to-day activity. Even in the current times, preparing press invites, maintaining press clips and making press doockets is an important public relations activity.

Pathak (2013) Rates Public Relations as essential management element for organizations. The Public Relation is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach which sever organization to manage its communication objectives into a meaningful manner. Pathak accepts impact of business pressures on PR practices and advocates ethical perspective to handle it.

Ravi kumar (2012) pointed out access to management, information collection, and dissemination of accurate information as important challenges for Public Relations Management. Public Relations needs to be focused on the contributions in decision making and control over the dissemination of information.

According to National School Public Relations Association (2012) Educational public relations is a planned and systematic management function to help improve the programmes and services of an educational organization. This indicates that activities of educational public relations is a two-way affair involving communication between the institution and its audiences.

Ilies (2011) States that ‘if in the beginning it was perceived as a way of controlling the Public (being much likened to propaganda and then with manipulation), today it is a concept that belongs to the management function .

Vilanilam (2011) has given a critical analysis of Public Relations in India and in the world with in-depth critical examination of the value of PR as an essential feature of the management function. The key focus of his analysis may be concluded what PR means for India and other developing countries in the 21st century. Building a case for citizen-centric public relations, the author argues that in India, PR must be viewed as a development tool geared towards socioeconomic progress. This argument is backed by case studies and practical examples of PR writing, PR concepts applicable to India and the latest techniques and gadgets used in PR practice. The author aims to sensitize general readers as well as PR professionals about the increasingly socially responsible
role that the PR function has to play in developing nations to help in all-round social uplift.

Stacks (2010) explains the key role and paramount importance of research in various aspects of Public Relations practice. According to him both quantitative and qualitative methods are essential to accomplish research objectives in PR. Book gives a glimps of technical aspects of data collection and analysis for public Relations.

Sasidharan (2010) found corporate social Responsibility as an emerging area of activity for Industries and Public Relations in India. PR can contribute communally in conceptualization, practice and perception of communication for social responsibility.

Gutierrez, Garcia (2009) has analyzed the impact of corporate communication practices on Spanish corporate world. Researcher has presented a view on the changing consequences and functioning of corporate communication in Spain through a case study.

Wilcox and Cameron (2009) have emphasized on the major role of public relations in all educational institutions. A college or university must maintain good relationship with its public. Public Relations contribute with varied range of activities and helps universities to develop and sustain a convivial relation with its public. In government relations, community relations, and communication with publics and dealing with contemporary issues: Public relations play a vital role with organizing, creative and coordination function. It involves in the development, fund raising and enhancing the prosperity of the institutions.

Tohnston and Zawawi (2009) have defined Public Relations as the ‘development and management of ethical strategies using communication to build relationships with stakeholders or publics.’ (Page 7) The authors have given emphasis on perceiving Public relations as mix of strategic and ethical function, which is important to build communication relationship.

Freitag, Desanto, Stokes (2009) have stressed adaptation of different approaches to communicate effectively in different contexts. Approach differentiation concept is important to liaison with external bodies, government agencies and external public. In a cross-cultural setting understanding of varied public opinion and expectations helps PR professional to establish meaningful and fruitful communication. The work
incorporates global perspectives of PR in different cultural settings and helps in understanding complexities of modern Public Relations.

Reddi (2009) in his work laid stress on the management of public information through different ages. He has successfully established public information or communication as public relations. In this work stress has given to describe public relations as an organizational, especially political or state ruled affair.

Wilcox & Cameron (2009) have described modern 21st century global public relations practice. With the help of core case studies and practice references they have focused appropriately on the contemporary public relations practices. This work is very important in the sense that it not only defines the subjects’ importance in 21st century but also mention the research and action orientation in the subject.

Sachdeva (2009) has explained various steps in development of PR industry in India. Changing practice of PR is a mix of environmental scanning, preparing holistic communication strategy and efficiency in the implementation. With increasing domain of outsourcing services, support service providers or role of PR agencies have become more important in liberalized India.

Hansen and Horn (2007) examines a range of theories—from functional, cultural, rhetorical, and critical to feminist, postmodern, and alternative—in a variety of contexts. A comprehensive examination of public relations theory as practiced has been compiled. The work presents theories in conjunction with case study applications that relate directly to the theory. These case studies, taken from diverse contexts, help the reader make connections between theories and their application in the real world.

Botan (2006) compared the changes in the Public Relations landscape in last hundred years. Public Relations here defined as a discipline with the potential to bring numerous areas of applied communication with theoretical and research bared subject. The work explores applicabilities of different theories in specific areas of Public relations.

Howard and Waveland (2006) emphasized on the importance of media relations in the corporate and non-profit sectors. According to authors establishing objectives and making strategies are essential prerequisite to develop a good media relations. It discusses the changes in impact and behavior of media with commence of
globalization and incorporation of new media technologies. They have tried to explain the changing concept of roles and shifting media expectations from organizations.

Sengupta (2006) explained the need of professional skills in PR practices. Public Relations in India have described as the changing discipline that is offering image promotion, branding and other new services along with its traditional roles.

Lancaster (2005) opinioned that medium use in communication can provide the necessary information that can inspire confidence and thrust is an organization. Educational public relations officers serve as information stations by providing information to students, employees, and general public through mass media publications, leaflets and brochures on the university programmes.

Bernays (2004) clears that public relations is not publicity, press agentry, promotion, advertising, or a bag of tricks, it is a continuing process of social integration. It is the field of adapting private and public interest. Bernays has tried to set down the broad principles of public relations important for professional excellence and performance. This work laid foundation of systematic Public Relations in modern world and described importance of public opinion in organizational functioning. The understanding of public opinion and understanding of motivational principles are essential for successful PR.

Beines, Egan and Jefkins (2004) have defined Public Relations as management discipline, which is very important to understand consumer and to win their loyalty. Financial PR, Internal PR and Crisis management are core areas of Public Relations and communication management perspective of organizations place demand for Public Relations units.

Fernandez (2004) focused on contemporary theory and defines public relations activities under the nomenclature of corporate communications.

Sriramesh (2004) reviewed eighteen organizations in Bengaluru in 1991. This study led to the development of the personal influence model of public relations. This model describes how development of significant relationships with strategically placed individuals was considered crucial to public relations in India. The practitioner maintains personal relations with important persons such as members of the media, officers and secretaries of key government departments, airline and railways
employees, workers in municipal and tax offices. He also identified a technique he
called hospitality relations in the personal influence model. Hospitality relations
included giving away gifts, hosting dinners and lunches to significant publics, thus
keeping channels open in the future to seek favours from them. The overall purpose of
hospitality relations was to build a long-term relationship with journalists or other
individuals at important decision-making positions. He also studied various public
relations activities, which indicated if a strategic two-way communication was
followed.

Reddi (2003) states in another effort that Public Relations professionals must always
keep their eyes and ears open to take a deeper look into the emerging trends to update
their knowledge and skills. Public Relations is building relationships between the
organization and its publics through communication and result-oriented action to
engineer public relations activities.

Day (2003) extended Bernays’ definition of public relations to include two distinct
philosophies of the role of the industry’s practitioners. The first philosophy categorizes
the practitioner, while paid, as a person simply advocating a principle that he/she
already believes in. This is no different than expression of an opinion on the grounds
of First Amendment freedom of speech protections. The second philosophy sees the
public relations representative as a hired conduit for a point of view that he/she may
not personally condone. This role similarly operates under a First Amendment
premise, but is instead concerned with the person/s receiving this opinion. In
advocating a particular viewpoint into the marketplace of public opinion, a public
relations representative offers the public a chance to hear the message his/her client’s
message, even a controversial one.

Pirozek & Heskova (2003) examined Public Relations practice and found that two-
way symmetrical tactics of research and feedback systems helped the university gain a
better understanding of the attitudes of its key publics.

Holtz (2002) has described Internet as strategic and tactical for public Relations. A
broad picture of how the Internet can be helpful in an overall Public Relations
programme is drawn in the book. Holtz believes the Internet has revolutionized public
Relations, and mentioned it as an important tool for quickly and effectively delivering
messages to the online communities. Holtz stresses the needs to integrate its use with
other more traditional communications tools that are extensively used for Public Relations.

Gregory (2001) has argued that there is a major strategic role for public relations in organizations. As expert boundary-spanners, public relations professionals can play a key role in the dominant coalition by gathering and interpreting information from the external and internal environments and presenting this as strategic intelligence. On the basis of this, organizations can adapt and change or initiate a dialogue so that the continued support of their key stakeholding publics can be assured. It has also been demonstrated that public relations practitioners’ roles vary according to the remit they are given in organizations. If restricted to the tactician role, they will never provide the full benefits that an organisation can derive from public relations, that is, intimate knowledge of key stakeholder attitudes and behaviour, issues management and a proactive stance towards a changing environment.

Ghosh (2001) describes public relations as the constant adjustment with the changing requirement of a society in ferment. Public Relations stimulates discussions and encourage changes in attitudes, behavior and public perception. It is a creative task of dissemination of public information through multi-media approach.

Zawai (2001) found that while PR practitioners claimed high hit rates of coverage of material sent to the media, journalists were ill-conceived and with little or no news value. Further it is concluded that PR is not going away and its growth is evident that needs to be recognized.

Henderson (2001) suggested a four-step process for managing communication in universities i.e. research, planning, communication, and evaluation.

Health (2000) states principle role of Public Relations as building relationship between companies, their markets, customers and other stakeholders and all other publics. Public Relations is explained as a major task in making good reputations by performing job of storytelling, establishing communication and helping marketing in accomplishing goals of the organization. With detailed examination of review of literature and examination of performance of PR work throw lights on the practical aspects of Public Relations practices in present scenario.
Sriramesh(2000) mentioned that still press agentry or publicity model is predominantly used by most of Indian organizations for managing their public relations. In addition personal influence model is also practiced as an emerging model. More ever, two-way symmetrical model for communicating with in and outside found with empirical evidence in the study. In the view of Sriramesh Public Relations is taking a more organized shape in developing nations as they are fast becoming the emerging markets in a global village.

Seitel (1997) has established public relations as a complex management function, necessary for any organization. It is defined as research and action oriented scientific discipline and its roots are lies in ancient periods. The book states that although the PR is a 20th century phenomenon, it has found as persuasive and informative effort even before 1800 B.C.

Seitel (1998) says that ‘Public relations affect almost everyone who contact with other human beings’ (P.4). Public relations is personal, practical and entirely human profession. Knowledge, experience and judgment of the individual or practitioners are there essential characters for successful public relations.

McNair (1998) offers a typology of political public relations activity, which is useful in that it utilizes terminology, which most students of public relations should be familiar with. He notes that political public relations involve four specific types of activity: media management (which he regards as something akin to issues management); image-management; internal communications; and information management.

Hendrix (1995) has elaborated the public relations as organizational communication practice with management perspective. With the help of different case studies he had established the functionality of the subject as a part of modern corporate practice.

Arya (1993) has tried to understand public relations as the point of view of a professional. Just after commence of liberalization in country public relations has been described by the author as corporate element with social accountability.

Grunig’s (1989) press agentry/publicity model is descriptive of the propaganda feel of PR, seeking media attention in almost any way possible. The basis of this approach is the amount of mass media coverage determines the relative importance of the. Grunig
suggests those who practice the press agentry model fully intend to persuade or manipulate publics. Grunig’s public information model is similar to the press agentry/publicity model. Practitioners of this model provide generally accurate information, but usually do not volunteer negative information. Both the press agentry/publicity and public information models are one-way they give information about the organization to the identified publics but do not actively seek information in return from the publics through research or informal means (Grunig, 1989).

Grunig’s two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models are more sophisticated, they include the element of research; however, only one of these models holds real promise toward attitudinal change. The two–way asymmetrical model uses research to identify messages most likely to produce support of the publics without having to change the behaviors of the organization. Practitioners of the public information model change public behaviors and opinions, even though that may not be their intent.

The fourth model defined by Grunig is the two-way symmetrical model. This model has effects that benefit both the organization and the public. Organizations practicing this model employ bargaining, negotiating and strategies of conflict resolution to bring changes in both the organization and the public. This model has one presupposition; communication leads to understanding among people and organizations. Grunig’s research and formulation of these four models serve as a map of the major stages of development in the PR field, providing clarification and serving as a basis for a classification system. Organizations practice several of the models together, with the press agentry model being the most popular. Grunig’s research suggests the two-way asymmetrical model is most popular in corporations.

Cutlip& Center (1985) have also identified its origin from Babylonian civilization (1800 B.C.). In their work they have elaborated the historical background of the PR in America and presented very valuable note on emergence of modern public relations. Their work has drawn an outline for the subject and mentioned it as an emerging profession in the modern world. Further they have defined public relations as management function and as a planned effort.
MuradBaig has mentioned public relations as action oriented process. In his view, mentioned in research oriented gold paper published by IFPR, imagery is very important attribute of public relations and is a key in successful PR efforts.

Public relations manager handles communications of organization with the objective of achieving or enhancing understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics. Its key function include management of problems and issues, helping management in dealing with public, helps them keep informed on responsive to public opinion and uses research and sound and ethical communication techniques as its principle tools (Harlow, 1976).

The mentioned studies show that public relations research in India can be broadly categorized into two streams professional and academic. Professional research has been established to fulfill industrial requirements. Professional PR research in India is mostly done to cater the needs of the customer. In-house public relations professionals are applying distinguished methods of research for evaluation, measurement of success, feedback, applicability of efforts that they want to use for their activities.

In academics also the practice of public relations has been an important subject of investigation since last so many years. Most of academic public research in India is aimed to evaluate the role of public relations, and to analyze the performance of professionals in a public setting or in the society. In the area of academic or higher educational public relations very less work has been done so far and it gives scope for scholars to explore the elements of public relations in higher education.

***