CHAPTER III

COMMUNICATION IN
LIBRARY ORGANIZATION
1. To identify different functions in libraries.
2. To describe working groups in library organisation.
3. To analyse communication types in relation to different library functions.
4. To discuss early communication studies in library organisation.
5. To outline the statement of the problem of the present study.

This chapter is concerned with library functioning which is largely based on communication. In chapter 2 we have discussed in detail about communication, its types, dimensions, process etc. Now in the light of previous chapter we have discussed here how the dimensions of communication are employed in library organisation. Finally we focus on the problem of our actual study in the present work.
3.1. INTRODUCTION

Communication has a great role to play in the complex organization of modern library system. It is true that we have many varieties of libraries in modern times, viz., National Libraries, Academic Libraries - University, College, School Libraries; Special libraries; Public libraries - State Central Libraries, District Libraries, Sub-Divisional Libraries, Town Libraries, Rural Libraries; Institutional Libraries etc. Though libraries differ in many forms among themselves and their working environment, they have some common characteristics, they have formal structures and social organizations.

An organization may be successful if it survives and if it meets its objectives. It is an established fact that communication is important to managers as i) managers spend most of their time in communicating, ii) communication is needed for managerial effectiveness, and iii) communication leads to power (Glueck 1977).

Therefore, it is safe to argue that some of the theories of management are relevant to library operation and services. Again communication has now captured a key position in management as sound management is based on sound communication. So, in library management communication has a vital role also. For library operation, day-to-day functioning and services, communication has a great role and that will be discussed and analyzed in the following sections.
3.2. IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION TYPES IN THE LIGHT OF DIFFERENT LIBRARY FUNCTIONS

Irrespective of their type and environment there are some common functions of a library that may be identified as:

a) Administrative,
b) Personnel Management,
c) Public contact and loan,
d) Stock selection (including new book),
e) Technical (Manual and machine),
f) Stock control, and
g) Financial.

These are the broad categories of functioning of libraries, under these seven broad categories there are many pertinent task-areas existing in library organisation.

There are at least three group of people engaged to perform these functions of library organisation: i) Management group, ii) Supervisory group, and iii) Working group.

These groups comprise of the following categories of positions that are commonly associated with library organisation and their hierarchy has been schematically presented in Figure 3.1, given below.

1. Librarians
2. Deputy Librarians
3. Assistant Librarians
4. Professional Assistants/Senior Technical Assistants/Technical Assistants
5. Semi Professional Assistants/Senior Technical Assistants/Cataloguers

7. Office Staffs

Fig.3.1 : Schematic presentation of working groups in library organization
Although the scheme is self-explanatory, it needs a little clarification. It may be noted that in the above scheme, five categories of employees of library organisation i.e., Librarians, Deputy Librarians, Assistant Librarians, Professional Assistant and its equivalent ranks, and Semi Professional Assistant and its equivalent ranks have been included. One question may be asked, why certain categories have been included in two alternative groups? Study into the organisational chart of different libraries has led to the above scheme. The Librarian, Deputy Librarian and Assistant Librarians belong to management group. Professional Assistant and its equivalent ranks belong to supervisory group, and Semi Professional Assistant and its equivalent ranks belong to working group. These groupings are permanent in library organisation which are represented by line boxes.

Simultaneously, the operations are functioning of different libraries were studied where these groupings are flexible and conjoined different categories into the same group, which are represented by dotted boxes. In library organisations Assistant Librarians belong to management group as well as supervisory group, and Professional Assistant and its equivalent ranks belong to supervisory group as well as working group, depending upon the exact duties they are assigned with.

Actually, there are seven categories of personnel in library organisations. In the present study two categories of library personnel viz., Office Staffs and Library attendant,
peoa, etc. have been excluded. Reasons behind this exclusion are:

i) Office is the supporting wing to the library.

ii) Library communication and office communication are quite different.

iii) Library attendants and peons etc. are the last step in organizational hierarchy and they only carry out order and all the dimensions of communication, as mentioned earlier, do not apply to the rank.

iv) Communications may sometimes exclude this category of employees.

v) They are essential for library functioning but not in communication as the information through communication reach them in the most explicit and specific form often without any reciprocal generation of information.

We have included five categories of employees of library organisations in our study. The reasons behind this inclusion are:

i) The categories of staff included are actually library professionals having librarianship training.

ii) Each and every category is the active part of communication network.

iii) Information may be generated from and received and decoded in each category leading either to the generation of feedback information or to specific operational moves.
For library operation and day-to-day functioning each and every professional staff needs to communicate. We shall try to explain in the following section how the study of communication is most significant in the library organisation and obviously it assures different dimensions.

3.2.1. Line or Flow of Communication in Libraries:

Communication in libraries may come through downward, upward, lateral, diagonal or crosswise and outside.

3.2.1.1. Downward:

In each library functioning the communication flows from management group or supervisory group to working group, mainly on the task-areas goal and objective, policy making, purchase, recruitment, job specification and job allotment, management by objective, staff training, transfer, inter-library loan, publicity, supervision/checking of cataloguing and classification work, documentation work, preservation, stock verification supervision, write off, readers service and guidance, etc.

3.2.1.2. Upward:

There is a scope of upward communication in each library functioning specially on the task-areas planning and development, budget, annual and other reports, evaluation of library programmes, job evaluation, leave, staff welfare, readers service and guidance, book selection, accession, cataloguing, classification, shelf-list, reminder for non-received periodicals, overdue notices, verification report, etc.
3.2.1.3. *Lateral*

In respect of library functioning there are immense scope of lateral communication among the library personnel themselves. In the following task-areas this lateral communication may be used: planning and development, budget, annual and other reports, purchase, evaluation of library programme, staff-training, staff welfare, charging, discharging and reservation, readers service and guidance, accession, cataloguing, classification, shelf-list, filing and guiding of catalogue, documentation work, stocktaking, sorting damaged and mutilated documents, overtime, etc.

3.2.1.4. *Crosswise or Diagonal* :

Library professionals often communicate crosswise in respect of functions public contact and loan, mainly on task-areas registration of borrowers, charging, discharging and reservation, overdue notices and readers service and guidance. Sometimes management group asks working people directly and it causes crosswise or diagonal communication.

3.2.1.5. *Outward* :

In library organisation there are good scope for outward communication in respect of its functioning administrative, public contact and loan, etc., mainly on task-areas planning and development, purchase, staff training, staff welfare, registration of borrowers, charging, discharging and reservation, interlibrary loan, overdue notices, publicity, stock selection, vendor correspondence, ordering and receiving, bill preparation.
reminder for non-received periodicals, documentation work, preservation, ordering and receiving to and from binder, write off, etc.

3.2.2. Channel of Communication:

Communication as it is related to library organisation may be of two types in terms of its channel, viz., (i) Formal channel of communication and (ii) Informal channel of communication. In library organisations this clear identification of formal and informal channel of communication is possible.

3.2.2.1. Formal channel of communication:

In each and every functioning of library organisation the formal communication is used either orally or in written form and it follows the organisational hierarchy. Formal channels of library communication may be sketched thus (Fig.1.2):

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 1.2: Formal channel of library communication*
3.2.2.2. Informal channel of Communication:

It is used mainly on library functioning administrative and public contact and loan. The task-areas in which this type of communication is used are: goal and objective, planning and development, evaluation of library programmes, reader's service and guidance. In case of task-areas staff training, staff welfare, classification, cataloguing, documentation work, etc., the informal channel of communication is also used. It is generally used in oral form and it does not follow the organisational hierarchy. Informal channel of library communication may be shown in Fig. 3.3.

3.2.3. Processes of Communication:

In library organisation there are Normal Routine Communication Processes and Normal Oral and Written Communication Processes.

3.2.3.1. Normal routine communication process:

A large part of the library activity and functioning fall under the heading routine communication processes which includes the following task-areas of the library organisation: registration of borrowers, charging, discharging and reservation, overdue notices, vendor correspondence, ordering and receiving, bill preparation, maintenance of financial records, accession, maintenance of catalogue, registering periodicals, stock-taking, sorting damaged and mutilated documents, ordering and receiving to and from binder, stock withdrawal procedure, maintenance of general accounts, bill processing, overtime bills and records.
Figure 3.3: Informal channel of library communication
3.2.3.2. Normal oral and written communication process:

In library organisation the followings are the normal oral and written communication processes:

Oral communication processes in library organisation:
1) Seminars, lectures, conferences, 2) Conventions, 3) Face-to-face conversations, 4) Formal speeches, 5) Staff meetings, 6) Committee meetings, 7) Training programmes, 8) Phone conversations, 9) Readers request.

Written communication processes in library organisation:

3.2.4. Way of Communication:

In library organisation one way communication and two way communication are commonly used.

3.2.4.1. One way communication:

It is used in library functions of administrative, personnel management and financial nature and mainly on task-areas goal and objective, planning and development, policy making, purchase, recruitment, job-specification and job allotment, transfer, maintenance of financial records.

3.2.4.2. Two way communication:

It is needed for library functioning in public contact and loan, technical, stock-selection, stock control and partly for
administrative and personnel management. In the major task-areas two ways of communication are used: readers service and guidance, publicity, overdue notices, stock-selection, vendor correspondence, ordering and receiving, supervision/checking of catalogue and classification work, reminder for non-received periodicals, documentation work, preservation, stock-verification supervision and report writing, ordering and receiving to and from binder, stock withdrawal procedure, write off, planning and development, budget, annual and other reports, evaluation of library programmes, management by objective.

3.2.5. Method of Communication:

During participation in job or task-areas in libraries, the method of communication may be words, pictures, action or non-verbal communication and body language.

3.2.5.1. Words:

Words are the main communication method used on job or task-areas in libraries. In each and every library functioning words are used.

3.2.5.2. Pictures:

To clarify word communication picture communications are used in library functioning such as administrative, personnel management, stock-control etc., and in the library task-areas vis., purchase of furniture and equipments, job-specification and job allotment chart, presentation etc.
3.2.3.3. Action of non-verbal communication:

A good librarian visits to any sub-system to the library and
watch silently the persons engaged in their jobs or tasks. He may
appreciate one's job only to smile and after some days he/she may
be allotted the task having a greater responsibility.

3.3. SOME VIEWS ON COMMUNICATION IN LIBRARY:

It is recognised that communication has a great role in
library management and operation. We can mention here some of the
works which discuss communication problem in library management.
Emery (1975) has produced a very useful manual which deals with
the problem of staff communication with a stress upon its
essential role in the organisations. Wilson (1977) has studied
communication problem in the context of organisational develop-
ment. Thomas and Ward (1976) have studied the problem in communi-
cation terms. Roberts (1979) in his study argued the issues of
communication in librarianship in the following way:

"In fact, library systems are very much
alive to the question of communication,
however much they lack an analytical
structure to apprise it". (p.102).

According to Roberts (1979), for communication studies in
library system, either in a broad or a narrow sense, there are
five principal areas in which attention should be focussed. The
five principal areas are as follows:

"1. Small group networks within the work team;
2. Communication flows within the library;
3. Hierarchy;
4. Communication practices and techniques; and
5. External communication (i.e., outside institutional or library boundaries). (p.106)

3.4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Before concluding this chapter, we may state the problem of our study in the field of communication in library management. To perform library operation and functioning library professionals are engaged in many tasks in a library. In order to work in these areas they need to communicate with at least five categories of library professionals. It is proposed to analyse the process of communication in several dimensions and try to highlight the nature of the channels and lines of communication in different categories of professionals or working groups in different library organizations.

The effectiveness of a library largely depends on how the different groups of library personnel and the various task-areas are structurally and functionally integrated. Such an integration must be the outcome of a neatly interwoven communication system which should include all the dimensions of communication and be based on a sound theoretical model.

Studies in communication in the perspective of library management are very meagre and stray which do not help us to get answers to all the relevant questions. As for example, should there be any predetermined optimum upward, downward and lateral communication for the most effective functioning of a library or it must be exclusively a situational affair? Many such similar
questions may be asked about the quantum of the flow of informa-
tion, the frequency, hierarchy and channel of communication with
specific reference to the different task-areas.

It is needless to mention that in a single study one cannot
justify to include all the related problems. Therefore, the present
study has considered the following aspects as shown in Table 3.1.
of library communication and has left other problems for subsequent
studies.

The major thrust of the work has been on the proportion of
communication within each dimension and comparison of such propor-
tions between different libraries. But some other pertinent factors
like the social interaction among the library personnel, organisa-
tional structure etc., have not been ignored. However, the exact
objective of the study will be more specifically and elaborately
discussed in the following chapter.
Table 3.1. Showing the factors that have been included in the present study

| Component related to library | Component related to communi-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Exact factors</th>
<th>cation</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Groups of Personnel</td>
<td>a) Managerial</td>
<td>1. Line or flow of communication</td>
<td>(a) Upward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Supervisory</td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Downward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Work group</td>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Lateral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Categories of personnel</td>
<td>a) Librarian</td>
<td>2. Structural Arrangement</td>
<td>(a) Formal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Deputy Librarian</td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Informal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Assistant Librarian</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d) Professional Assistant and its equivalent ranks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Semi Professional Assistant and its equivalent ranks</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Task-areas</td>
<td>Almost all the major task-areas of a big library</td>
<td>3. Process of communication</td>
<td>(a) Oral</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Written</td>
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