CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
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*When I stop communicating, I shall be dead.* – **Don Rogers**

1.1 Prologue

Communication has become the most effective tool of modern businesses. With the information technology (IT) boom all over the world, corporate houses irrespective of their size and standing have realized the need to have a group of professionals dealing with their communication needs -- both internal and external.

With technology advancing and many next-generation gadgets making their way into the hands of the general public, the internal public (employees) in every organization has become extremely alert and aware to the happenings around. Corporate Communication teams have become integral parts of organizations the world over, though the degree of their acceptance has varied.

Aggressive journalists, demanding stake-holders, probing governments, alert investors, aggressive customers and restless employees are all important cogs in the wheel that a smart communication professional ought to keep in mind.

As Argenti (2003) puts it: “By Corporate Communication, we mean the corporation’s voice and the images it projects of itself on a world stage populated by its various audiences, or what we refer to as its constituencies. Ideally, Corporate Communication is an attitude toward communication or a set of habits that employees internalize. The result is good communication practices that permeate an organization and are present in all communication with constituencies.”

While many of the principles prescribed by modern Corporate Communication pundits are being smoothly implemented in private firms and multi-national companies (MNCs), the story is different in government departments. This researcher has decided to tread an unbeaten track by choosing a defence establishment as the case study, with the hope that, at the end of it all, the findings will become a benchmark for future studies. This researcher also wants the study to be an eye-opener.
for communication professionals contemplating a career in Indian defence establishments—most of whom are still not yet fully aware of the power of Corporate Communication.

This study analyses the entire gamut of Corporate Communication in Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). HAL is a Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU) completely owned by the Ministry of Defence, Government of India. This researcher has penetrated deep into the sensitive terrains of HAL to capture the “Impact of Corporate Communication on Internal Public” -- the focus of this study.

In this chapter, the researcher makes an attempt to scan the communication modes in Indian defence establishments, which are still close-guarded to some extent due to the sensitivities involved. The researcher also tracks the roots of Corporate Communication in HAL and gives a threadbare account of various elements that have gone into various communication modules.

Considering that HAL has never opened its doors to such kinds of studies before, the researcher seized the opportunity to take the survey to 1050 employees, spread across Bangalore, Hyderabad, Nasik, Lucknow, Koraput, Korwa, Barrackpore and New Delhi. The complete Corporate Communication Policy of HAL, scripted following the success of various communication exercises, is produced towards the end of the chapter.

1.2 Public Relations (PR)

Some of the modern tools in Corporate Communication can be tracked to the age-old concept of Public Relations (PR). Hence, it is important to make a stop-over at the strengths of PR, before we discuss the nuances of Corporate Communication.

According to Robert L. Heath, PR is a management function which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures and interests of an organization followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance. Edward L. Bernays describes PR as a set of management, supervisory, and technical functions that foster an organization's ability to strategically listen to, appreciate and respond to those persons whose mutually beneficial relationships with the organization are necessary if it is to achieve its missions.
Defining PR in terms of its evolution, Kendall argues that the maturity of practice in public relations is determined by the maturity of the definition accepted. According to him, a range of perceptions is evident today, as well as throughout the history of the field.

According to Hutton, PR has evolved through history from “the public be fooled” to “the public be damned” to “the public be manipulated” to “the public be informed” to “the public be involved or accommodated.” Other theorists who define public relations in terms of its evolution include Grunig and Hunt, who introduced four models to explain how PR has developed through history. These models also reflect the different ways in which PR is practiced even today.

Public Relations concept has existed for thousands of years. The Greeks called it semantikos (“to signify,” “to mean”). Semantikos is transliterated into English as “semantics,” which can be defined as how to get people to believe things and do things. That is not a bad definition of public relations.

In 50 BC, Julius Caesar wrote the first campaign biography, *Caesar’s Gallic Wars*. He publicized his military exploits to convince the Roman people that he would make the best head of state. Candidates for political office continue to publicize themselves with campaign biographies and accounts of military exploits to this day.

In 394 AD, St. Augustine was a professor of rhetoric in Milan, the capitol of the Western Roman Empire. He delivered the regular eulogies to the emperor and was almost a minister of propaganda for the imperial court. Thus, St. Augustine was one of the first people in charge of public relations. The modern equivalent would be the President’s press secretary or communication director.

In 1776, Thomas Paine wrote *The Crisis*, a pamphlet which convinced the soldiers of Washington’s army to stay and fight at a time when many were prepared to desert and escape the hardships of a winter campaign. In his autobiography, Benjamin Franklin wrote of his decision to forbear contradicting others’ statements, and rather make positive assertions of his own. In the 18th century, Franklin pioneered the rules for PR in an era before mass media had made possible a profession called "public relations."
Public relations became a profession in 1903 as Ivy Lee undertook to advise John D. Rockefeller on how to conduct his public relations. Rockefeller owned coal mines on the Pennsylvania Railroad in the United States. Miners were on strike and the railroad hushed up the facts when its trains were involved with accidents. Lee advised Rockefeller to visit the coal mines and talk to the miners. Rockefeller spent time listening to the complaints of the miners, improved their working conditions, danced with their wives, and became a hero to the miners.

After a railroad accident, Lee invited reporters to inspect the wreck and get the facts. The Pennsylvania Railroad then obtained favorable press coverage. Lee professionalized PR by following these principles: tell the truth, provide accurate facts and as a PR person have access to top management and be able to influence decisions.

With the post–World War II economic boom, which turned the United States into the wealthiest country on earth, public relations prospered as never before. New and old institutions of business, government, and not-for-profit enterprise had seen what public relations had done for the war effort, and they wanted to tap its evolving power for purposes of publicizing their products and services for the burgeoning consumer markets, both at home and abroad. In the 1930s and 1940s, several organizations were founded to represent the interests of public relations practitioners, culminating in 1948 in the formation of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

In 1950, PRSA enacted the first "Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations," a forerunner to the current Code of Ethics, last revised in 2000 to include six core values and six code provisions. The six core values are "Advocacy, Honesty, Expertise, Independence, Loyalty, and Fairness." The six code provisions are "Free Flow of Information, Competition, Disclosure of Information, Safeguarding Confidences, Conflicts of Interest, and Enhancing the Profession."

1.3 Evolution of PR in India

Public Relations concept is as old as human civilization. An ancient clay tablet, found in Iraq, told the Sumerian farmers how to grow better crops. That was over 4000 years ago. Arabian tales relate how the celebrated Sultan Haroon-Al-
Rashid used to wander about every night in disguise to see what the people felt about his administration.

In the *Ramayana*, there is a character called Bhadro, who used to report to Rama the feelings and perceptions of the people. Employing professional bards to sing about the glory of the king was an ancient custom in India. Much of what is known today about the ancient kings and civilizations is the result of scribes seeking to glorify the achievements of a royal patron. The *Rajtarangini* of Kalhana also belongs to the same genre.

The great religious teachers from Gautama Buddha and Sankaracharya to Nanak and Kabir were master communicators. They preached in an idiom which the common people easily understood. The rock inscriptions of Emperor Ashoka were written in local dialects for easy communication. He also sent his own children to Sri Lanka to spread the message of Buddhism. His daughter, Sanghamitra, can perhaps be described as the first female public-relations executive in history. Centuries of slavery under the Mughals and the British brought in their wake a new type of Public Relations on the part of the rulers. The rulers tried to put forth that they were working for the people of this country and that the people should cooperate in their continuance.

Besides adopting various administrative and political policies, they launched communication initiatives. William Augustus Hickey brought out the first newspaper in India in 1780 for catering to the interests of the European settlers in Calcutta. It was in no way a mirror of the nation. However, newspapers soon became a means of educating and enlightening the people. They also highlighted various socially-important issues.

In the present century, the outstanding example of a master communicator is that of Mahatma Gandhi. On 9th August 1942, he gave a call to the British rulers to quit India. This resulted in hundreds of thousands of citizens coming out for the Britishers to exit once and for all. Within five years, i.e., 15th August, 1947, centuries of slavery ended and India became independent.

A systematic and organised practice of public relations in India began with the Indian Railways. The Great Indian Peninsular (GIP) Railways, for example, carried
on a campaign in England in the 1920s to attract tourists to India. Within the country, its Publicity Bureau introduced a travelling cinema which held open air shows at fairs, festivals and other places. This Bureau also undertook extensive advertising in newspapers and journals besides participating in exhibitions abroad to popularise the Indian Railways and tourist traffic.

During the First World War (1914-1918), the Government of India set up a Central Publicity Board. This was the first organised PR/Information set-up of the Government of India. It was renamed as the Central Bureau of Information, afterwards renamed as the Bureau of Public Information, and functioned as a link between the Government and the Press. One of the items on its agenda was to find out where the action of the Government was criticised. In today’s parlance, we call this "feedback”.

For the first time, an Indian, namely, J. Natarajan of The Pioneer, Lucknow, was appointed as its Deputy Principal Information Officer. The Bureau also formulated a policy in 1938 for the release of government advertisements.

After Indian Independence (1947), the Government of India set up a full-fledged Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. This was a revolutionary measure in the reorganisation of the information and public relations setup of the Central Government. All the State Governments and Union Territories also have Departments of Information and Public Relations. The activities of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting can be broadly divided into three sectors: the Information Sector, the Broadcasting Sector and the Films Sector. The functions of these sectors are complementary to each other and cannot be strictly compartmentalised. Each of these sectors operates through specialised media units and their affiliated organisations.

In a developing country like India, communication of government programmes, achievements and expectations is, no doubt, important. However, equally important is communication from the economic sector, NGOs, public utilities, academic bodies, etc., seeking to inform, motivate, and persuade the public.

After Independence, multinational companies operating in India felt the need to communicate with the Indian people more meaningfully. In order to adjust their corporate policies to the democratic milieu, these companies increasingly turned to
public relations. Among the Indian giants, the Tatas had already set up a Public Relations Department in Mumbai in 1943 headed by Shri Minoo Masani.

The public sector also made a significant contribution to the growth of professionalism in public relations. Public relations, in its truest sense, started with PSUs like HMT, BHEL, Bhilai Steel Plant, followed by NTPC, Indian Oil, VSNL, NHPC, and ONGC, to name a few. Bodies like the Public Sector Public Relations Forum and SCOPE have played a notable role in bringing professionalism into the PR discipline.

The Public Relations Society of India (PRSI) was set up in Mumbai in 1958. The first public relations conference was held in New Delhi in 1968, where a code of ethics and other parameters of the PR profession were adopted. Since then, PR conferences have been held regularly to take stock of developments in the field and to enable PR practitioners to share their experiences.

1.4 The power of Corporate Communication

Corporate Communication can be defined as the method by which a corporate house or a company communicates either internally, externally or both. Today, Public Relations has become part of Corporate Communication, while components like investor relations, internal communication, branding, advertising, marketing communication and government relations play a pivotal role.

Is Corporate Communication simply the old wine of PR in a new bottle? Well, at the outset it might look so, but this researcher (by virtue of having exposure to both) is convinced that Corporate Communication has specific mission-oriented initiatives giving it a definite edge over PR.

The two strong pillars of the Corporate Communication concept are External and Internal Communication. External Communication describes the communication that a company has with external entities such as vendors, suppliers, bankers, agents, competitors, franchises, consultants and customers. In the case of HAL, a customer might be the Indian Air Force (IAF), the Indian Army, the Indian Navy, a foreign government, or foreign companies like Boeing, Embraer, or Rolls-Royce.
External communication involves building and maintaining a positive relationship with the media (television, print, web, etc). This includes drafting and dissemination of press releases, organizing press conferences and meetings with media professionals, and organizing events for the media as a group. External events could involve vendor, supplier, and distributor meets, channel partner meetings, or events related to product launches. It also involves managing the content of corporate websites and/or other external touch points and managing corporate publications.

Internal Communication deals with the communication with internal public such as employees and partners. It involves managing corporate publications for employees and partners and organizing internal events for employees. Internal Communication can be done effectively via publication of in-house newsletters, in-house magazines, mailers through intranet, open-house sessions, feed-back forums, informal get-togethers and in-house contests. For HAL, the internal public (employees) includes senior, middle and lower-management officers, engineers, pilots, designers and shop-floor workmen and technicians.

With globalization occurring in India during the past decade, the floodgates to Corporate Communication were opened. The concept of PR shrunk to government offices only, while corporates and MNCs embraced Corporate Communication with specialists and brand managers taking charge. Journalists with experience suddenly had another career option and many companies started hiring them as Corporate Communication managers. CorpCom was the buzzword all over.

Marketing and Human Resources teams saw a magical effect in the tools of Corporate Communication as the latter began to establish a strong bond between the management, employees and stakeholders. In particular, this study will throw open some interesting facets of Corporate Communication, as tried and tested in the unchartered terrain of HAL.

Internal Communication is a core component of Corporate Communication. Similar to the interaction between a person’s right and left hand, it complements some of the elements that propel External Communication. With workforce (employee) empowerment becoming the order of the day, the role of Internal Communication has changed drastically over the years.
As a Corporate Communication student and practitioner, this researcher always believed in the impact that Internal Communication could have on a large employee base. Though it takes different avatars (employee communication, employee engagement, employee relations, internal marketing, company communication, staff communication), what makes the concept of Internal Communication special is its ability to play the role of a change agent. Like the “nose for news” philosophy in Journalism, this researcher experienced ‘the pulse of the people,” in the due course of this study.

An Internal Communication exercise becomes an instant hit, if it gels well the pulse of the employees. A well-crafted message sent out at the right time, targeted at the right audience and launched through the right medium can be more effective than major strategies scripted apart from the ground-realities.

As companies increasingly compete based on their ability to express who they are and what they stand for, service brands need to depend on Internal Communication to empower employees to deliver on the brand promise. Companies that attach high importance to Internal Communication (by setting up a separate internal communication department) are known to have higher levels of employee engagement (Thomson and Hecker, 2000) and better reputations than companies which don’t.

In a modern office, an intranet is an effective link for Internal Communication. In this era of Twitter and Facebook, mailers via the intranet ensure greater feedback. Internal Communication has to be a two-way process and hence an option for feedback gains greater significance. In the case of HAL, with Internet connections rationed due to security reasons, the intranet has a great significance in facilitating Internal Communication.

Meaningful Internal Communication can accurately gauge the strengths and weaknesses of employees. It can assess their concerns and capture their aspirations. A better-informed employee is an asset and can act as an organization’s brand ambassador.

External Communication gains greater significance in the modern world – thanks to the advent of media, rights forums, and stringent company rules if the
company is listed in stock exchanges. While the public memory can be short, it is not the case with the media as whatever is communicated gets archived in some form or the other. It becomes reference material for the future. (The announcement of a company’s annual results is a classic example.)

The feedback to External Communication is rapid and can never be predicted. For instance, a press release on a merger can be looked at differently by different media groups, competitors, industry watchers and the government. All these agencies can collectively influence the thought process of employees, who are exposed to these external constituents.

Hence, the role of Corporate Communication professionals has become extremely important as they will have to weigh all the possibilities before sending out a message externally.

1.5 Role of Defence PSUs in emerging India

India’s military strength is determined by its economic might. It is the defence industry that gives India the confidence to face any adversity, including war. Over the years, the Indian defence industry has evolved, though we still depend heavily on the foreign market for our military hardware.

With India emerging as a serious economic power, the focus in the new millennium has been on home-grown (indigenous) defence programmes. This has put the onus on Indian Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSUs), which were left with no option but to raise their capabilities to the next level. Added to this was the opening up of the defence industry to the private sector, which further put the DPSUs on the razor’s edge as they had to now compete with the best in the business to bag orders.

All these challenges augmented well for Indian industry and even the DPSUs, under the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Today, there are eight DPSUs: Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML), Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL), Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE), Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI). However, HAL is the only
DPSU completely focusing its attention towards military aviation, thereby making it the biggest beneficiary of the booming aerospace industry.

In their 2009 report on Indian PSUs in *The Economic Times*, Pallavi Mulay and Krishna Kant stated: “Being the largest commercial enterprises in the country, PSUs provide a huge leverage to the government (their controlling shareholder) to intervene in the economy directly or indirectly to achieve the desired socio-economic objectives. At times, these objectives may be misplaced but at others especially in times of do-or-die situation such as in 2008 (economic slowdown), PSUs play a key role in steering the national economy in the right direction.”

The report goes on to quote a study from *The Economist* magazine on other emerging economies, which said: “It's difficult for an emerging economy with a small or non-existent public sector (such as The Philippines) to achieve sustainable economic growth. Though it’s anecdotal evidence, it should not be surprising. The government-owned commercial enterprises possess the unique ability to rise above the short-term commercial interest to invest in local assets and resources so as to maximise the long-term economic gains.”

The same *ET* report further cites the story of the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), one of the largest PSUs in India, which was probably the only large investor in the Indian equity market which stood up, when the rest of the large investors preferred to stay away, during the market turmoil of 2008. In the same way, Indian DPSUs also survived the economic slowdown, which literally shook industries the world over. It was only a coincidence that this study was initiated at HAL during this period.

1.6 Corporate Communication & PR in defence set-up

The world over, defence establishments adopted a very guarded approach when it came to information dissemination, both internally and externally. This approach was mainly due to strategic reasons and security concerns – both sensitive issues for any nation. It was during the First Gulf War, where possibly for the first time we saw regular military communication being issued internally and to the external world of the media. During this period of the early-mid 90s, it was interesting to see various releases from the war front--some genuine, some not, and many which
could not be authenticated. But what was important was the changing nature of military communication, which too was evolving as the war progressed.

This was a learning experience for defence establishments throughout the world. The communication scenario further took a huge turn during the Second Gulf War in 2003, with the phenomenon of “embedded journalism” taking birth. From then on, technology took the center stage and military communication became more sophisticated and more “visible.”

The United States Department of Defence (DoD) has constantly updated its Corporate Communication strategy to keep its various audiences informed. It has a very strong Internal Corporate Communication plan in place. The Defence Media Activity (DMA) gathers and reports defense news and information from all levels in the DoD to DoD personnel worldwide through a radio and television network, the Internet and printed publications. The DMA reports news about individual soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen and defense civilians to the American public through a hometown news service. The DMA also operates Stars and Stripes, a news and information organization, free of government editorial control and censorship for military audiences overseas.

Other sources of information related to the DoD are dispersed to the various audiences through news organizations, which in turn subscribe to DoD publications for news releases about individual military members and DoD civilian employees at no cost. Audio-visual products like film, videotapes, CD-ROMs, stock footage and still photographs are available to the public through a searchable inventory.

The information on DoD directives and instructions are made available at the Washington headquarters, while electronic access to various defense offices is provided through the websites for offices of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Central Command, European Command, Joint Forces Command, Strategic Command, etc.

To ensure better communication on defence related matters, a panel of speakers from the US Department of Defence is available to speak at public forums through prior request to the Director of Community Relations and Public Liaison.
Tours of the Pentagon and military bases are other avenues to disseminate information to the public.

Despite all the advancements in communication in defence organizations, most defence personnel don’t open their mouths for fear of being misquoted or rubbing their superiors the wrong way, even if the facts published are correct. In June 2010, U.S. President Barack Obama sacked his top commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, for his remarks on the U.S. administration in a magazine.

Former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat was removed by the Vajpayee Government in 1998 after he refused to accept the Cabinet Committee on Appointments’ decision to make Vice-Admiral Harinder Singh his deputy. His displeasure became an open debate and the media made merry out of the Admiral’s displeasure. In the end, the Admiral lost his job and title, and even the Supreme Court dismissed his plea.

According to I. Ramamohan Rao, former Principal Information Officer (PIO) at the Centre, the Service Chiefs will have to convey their views to the defence minister. “On general matters and issues of sensitivity, the Chiefs are generally not supposed to talk. Neither can they comment on the relationship with our neighbours. At times, credibility demands that the person in uniform explain the developments during war and other conflicts. It’s an exception and Kargil is an example, when the media was briefed regularly,” says Rao, who worked closely with four Prime Ministers. Rao, who turned 77 in 2011, is revered as the architect of Public Relations in the Indian defence set-up.

According to Sitanshu Kar, Additional Director General (Media & Communication), Ministry of Defence, policy guidelines clearly mention that the Services Chiefs should not speak to the media often. “However, in some rare cases, if the Chiefs need to interact, then the defence minister needs to be informed. I regularly brief the media on behalf of MoD,” says Kar, MoD Official Spokesperson.

The issue of Indian military heads communicating directly to the Media resulting in controversies was discussed well by Pranay Sharma in Outlook magazine (May 30, 2011). “The civilian-military relationship will continue to evolve as India’s
rise inevitably complicates its security challenges. Sure, the defence Chiefs must have a role in framing policies, but even they will admit to the necessity of not crossing certain red line. In a democracy, beyond a point, the General has got to say, Yes Sir,” the report concludes.

The Defence Technical Publicity Rules (DTPR), 1940, acts as the bluebook for interaction with the media. “This has undergone several changes over the years with the last being in 2004. This clearly specifies who can speak, under what circumstances, when, where and why,” adds Kar. The Kargil War and the technological advancements of Indian defence establishments forced the MoD to make amendments to the DTPR in 2004.

The researcher could track the roots of defence communication in India to the Directorate of Public Relations (DPR), which is the nodal agency for providing media support to the Ministry of Defence, the three Services and Inter-Service Organizations. The DPR has its headquarters in New Delhi with 24 offices across the country acting as the facilitator. It has a separate Photo Division that provides photographs of important defence-related events to the media. The Directorate coordinates preparation of the daily radio programme, Sainikon ke liye, a popular 40-minute programme broadcast over All India Radio (AIR) for the benefit of the armed forces personnel.

The Directorate brings out a fortnightly journal, Sainik Samachar, for the armed forces. It is published in 13 languages viz. Assamese, Bengali, English, Gorkhali, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Sainik Samachar had started as Fauji Akhbar, as a 16-page Urdu weekly on January 2, 1909. Its aim was to provide Army personnel with “a summary of news with a military bias.” During its chequered history, Fauji Akhbar travelled from Shimla, where its office was originally located, to Allahabad, to Lahore, back to Shimla and then to Delhi. Its popularity was at its peak during World War II when an overseas edition was also brought out from Cairo for the benefit of Indian troops deployed in far-off theatres of war. The print order of Fauji Akhbar and its special bi-weekly supplement Jang Ki Khabarein was in excess of three lakhs at that time. The publication of Fauji Akhbar was suspended temporarily immediately after Independence due to the sudden migration of staff and printers. However, it quickly
bounced back with renewed vigour. The magazine turned into a fortnightly on April 4, 1954, and was rechristened as *Sainik Samachar*.

The Public Relations Department (PRD) – now DPR – came into existence in June 1940 with Brigadier Ivor Stuart Jehu as its first Director. The PRD acted as a bridge-head between the public and armed forces through the media. A new PRD came into force post-Independence in November 1947, and in 1965, the DPR personnel become part of the Indian Information Service (IIS). In November 2007, the DPR chief’s rank was re-designated as Additional Director General (Media and Communication).

DPR today plays the role as the ‘gate keeper’ of information. It has become the authorized channel of communication for disseminating information about the programmes, policies and activities of the Ministry of Defence and all the establishments under it, including the armed forces. Despite that, the Corporate Communication and PR Departments in DPSUs don’t directly report to DPR.

However, the coordination is robust during major events like Aero India, Defence Expo and the visit of any Head of State to these DPSUs. Even in the case of HAL, the DPR seldom has any say in the functioning of the Company’s publicity activities.

1.7 HAL and its key products

A peek into history shows that HAL was formed by noted industrialist and visionary, Seth Walchand Hirachand, on December 23, 1940, and registered as Hindustan Aircraft Limited. Most of its initial activities hovered around Bangalore. On October 1, 1964, the Company officially became Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

Today, HAL is a premier aeronautical complex, with 19 production divisions and 10 R&D centres. With a 2010-2011 sales turnover of US $2.9 billion, HAL currently ranks 38th in the world among aerospace and defence companies (*Flight International*, PricewaterhouseCoopers 2010). HAL’s expertise encompasses design, production, repair, overhaul, and upgrade of aircraft, helicopters, aero-engines, accessories, avionics and systems. Using advanced tools, HAL today provides one-
stop solutions for all the design needs of aircraft & helicopters in airframes, airframe systems, avionics, mission systems, and combat systems. The 19 manufacturing divisions of HAL are equipped with modern facilities for the production of fighter aircraft, trainer aircraft, transport aircraft, and helicopters. The current workforce of this Navratna giant is around 34,000 with over 50% having more than a decade of aircraft industry experience. It has also diversified into the manufacture and repair/overhaul of industrial and marine gas turbine engines, and the manufacture of structures for aerospace vehicles.

The Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv is the star product of the Company. It is a modern, multi-role helicopter in the 5.5 ton weight class, indigenously designed and developed by HAL. With its twin Turbomeca TM 333 2B2 (Shakti) engine configuration, the Dhruv has superlative performance throughout its flight envelope. Because of its high-speed cruise capability, it can be rapidly deployed. The helicopter is produced in both skid and wheeled versions. In the wheeled version, options of fixed and retractable undercarriages are available. Despite the initial teething issues with the helicopter, HAL has found foreign customers for the Dhruv, in Ecuador and Nepal. In India, the Dhruv is in service with the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army.

The Intermediate Jet Trainer (IJT) is a Stage-II trainer aircraft indigenously designed and developed by HAL. The aircraft is undergoing flight tests for certification. The IJT is a tandem-seat, all-metallic aircraft for training in general flying, formation flying, instrument and cloud flying, tactical flying, night flying, and basic air-to-ground and air-to-air armament training. The aircraft can fly at a maximum speed of 750 kmph with an altitude ceiling of 9 km. The specified maximum take-off weight is 5,100 kg, including 1,000 kg of armament at five hard points which can carry drop tanks as well. The IJT is yet to be inducted into the IAF and its initial operational clearance is expected in 2011.

The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas is yet another product of HAL, being co-developed with the Aeronautical Development Agency. The LCA is a single-engined, highly agile, multi-role supersonic fighter. It has a quadruplex digital fly-by-wire Flight Control System with associated advanced flight control laws. Extensive use of composites in the airframe gives a high strength-to-weight ratio, a low radar
signature, and long fatigue life. Production facilities have been already been set up at HAL, and it is planned that the LCA will achieve final operational clearance by 2012.

The Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) is the latest product of HAL. Its maiden flight occurred in May 2010. The LCH is of the 5.5 ton weight class, powered by two Shakti engines (higher-powered version of TM 333-2B2 engine). It inherits many technical features of the Advanced Light Helicopter (Dhruv). The features that are unique to the LCH are its sleek and narrow fuselage, tri-cycle crashworthy landing gear, tandem cockpit, crashworthy and self-sealing fuel tanks, stub wings for weapons, armor protection, Nuclear, Biological & Chemical (NBC) protection, and low-visibility characteristics. The LCH is lethal, agile, and survivable. Currently, two prototypes are flying, fulfilling various test parameters.

The Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) is a new helicopter which is under development. The full-scale mock-up of this platform was shown during Aero India 2011. It is a 3-ton helicopter which can be used for reconnaissance, surveillance, and transport roles. The helicopter will be capable of flying at 220 kmph.

In addition to the above indigenous programmes, HAL has developed expertise in aircraft upgrades with its successful upgrades of the MiG-27M, Jaguar, Sea Harrier, HS-748 (Avro), and Do-228. Integration of modern systems like a Multi-Mode Radar, Advanced Avionics Systems, Secure Communication System, Radio Altimeter, IFF equipment, Mission Computer, Modern Electronic-Warfare suite, Global Positioning System, etc., are carried out to enhance the capabilities of the aircraft, as per the user requirement. HAL also makes the Sukhoi Su-30 MKI under license at its Nasik plant, and the Hawk Mk. 132 Advanced Jet Trainer at its Aircraft Division in Bangalore.

1.8 HAL’s joint ventures (JVs)

- HAL has several joint ventures (JVs), and these arrangements are essential to share the strengths of various companies in developing major aerospace components. The major JV’s of HAL are:

- BAE-HAL Software Ltd for the development of aerospace and other dedicated software for domestic and export markets.
- Indo-Russian Aviation Ltd (IRAL) for providing product support to Russian-origin aviation equipment.
- Snecma-HAL Aerospace Pvt Ltd. for manufacturing engine spares and components.
- Samtel-HAL Display System Pvt Ltd. for developing and manufacturing avionics display systems.
- HALBIT Avionics Pvt. Ltd (HAL & Elbit Systems Ltd., Israel) for design, market, and support of simulators, avionics products, upgrades, and services.
- HAL-Edgewood Technologies Pvt Ltd for development and manufacture of high-technology electronic modules for aerospace applications.
- Infotech-HAL Ltd. for design-services work e.g., aero-thermo and mechanical design, structural stress, thermal and rotor-dynamic analysis.
- Tata-HAL Technologies Ltd. for design and engineering related airframes and aerostructures.
- HATSOFF, a Helicopter Simulator Training Centre in Bangalore, is a JV between HAL and CAE, Canada.

1.9 The future of HAL

HAL has entered into the global market with a diverse portfolio of products and services. With the emerging opportunities in the aviation sector and the scope in expanding HAL’s business spectrum, exports are expected to progressively reach new heights. HAL has established its credibility by the supply of high-precision structural work packages to aviation majors like Airbus and Boeing. Follow-on orders from Airbus and Boeing have confirmed their confidence in the quality and reliability of HAL’s products.

HAL has attained an international presence by winning contracts for the supply of Dhruv to Ecuador and Mauritius. HAL is in the process of setting up a maintenance centre for the Dhruv to provide after-sales logistics support for the entire Latin American region. HAL has been participating in outsourcing programmes of
renowned aerospace companies and is manufacturing structural & composite work packages of aircraft/ helicopters. HAL is also exporting rings, forgings, and castings for civil aircraft-engine programmes.

As an export initiative towards new market and product development, agreements have been concluded for the supply of various components of the Dornier DO-228-212 utility transport plane. These include the TPE 331-12 Garrett engines, structural components and assemblies, and critical engine-module components. Dedicated facilities are being set up to address these new project requirements. Also, HAL has been providing service support for the Jaguar, MiG variants, Do-228, HS-748, and Cheetah /Chetak helicopters already in service.

HAL today emerges as a major force seeking entry into the global market while significantly supporting India’s defence requirements. HAL’s thrust on R&D, co-development and co-production of aircraft, engines, and equipment with leading global aerospace companies will not only meet defence requirements but will also increase the exports of aerospace products.

Responding to India’s future requirements, HAL has conceptualized the indigenous development of a Basic Turbo-prop Trainer (HTT-40). HAL will be a partner in the Multi-role Transport Aircraft (MTA), Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA), and Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH) required for our Defence Services.

HAL is focusing its efforts on Technology Development and indigenization of systems through in-house development to increase self-reliance. Company-wide Enterprise Resource Planning has been implemented to improve productivity and the response-time to customer queries.

HAL’s Lean Management journey towards higher productivity will help in aligning its approach with that of global players in the aviation field. Against this backdrop, HAL is focusing on Human Resource Development to build a vibrant and value-based organization. HAL’s goal is to create a culture of technological and managerial excellence.
The Company achieved a sales turnover of US $2.5 billion in 2009-10, registering a growth of 10% over the previous year. By securing new orders for domestic and export projects, the total order book has reached approximately $15 billion by the end of 2009-10.

During the financial results announced for the Year 2010-11, HAL achieved a sales turn-over of Rs 13,061 crore ($2.9 b) – a 14% increase over the previous year. The Company’s profit before tax (PBT) stood at Rs 2,718 crore ($604 m), while the order-book soared by Rs 8,524 crore ($1.9 b).

1.10 Roots of PR in HAL

HAL’s Public Relations Department came into existence during the 1960s. (No records are available to pinpoint the exact day and year.) While capturing the impact of Corporate Communication on internal public in HAL, it was interesting to map the history of PR in HAL. This researcher spent considerable time with two retired Public Relation Officers (PROs) of HAL in pursuit of information from the past. With no written publications available that referred specifically to HAL’s PR activities, the researcher had to adopt the interview method.

Papanna Selvaraj was HAL’s Chief of Public Relations till 1999. He resigned at the age of 59, one year before retirement. He was appointed as Manager (PR) in 1985 and today at the age of 71, he is the General Manager (PR) of Maini Global Aerospace. “During our times, the PR man’s job was to take care of VIP visits. The computers hadn’t come like today and there wasn’t any coordination with other Divisions of HAL, especially those outside Bangalore. We had a magazine called HAL Mag, which was started in early 1970s. It was a bi-monthly and carried many reports about HAL’s activities. I was the editing this magazine and beyond this, we had very little role to play. The media too weren’t aggressive like today and not much on defence was known to the outside world. Even during any mishaps of HAL-built fighters, we weren’t permitted to interact with the media,” says Selvaraj.

According to Selvaraj, the formation of PR could be in 1965, two years after he joined HAL as an Accounts Manager. “Since I worked in HAL’s London office and had a bit of exposure in networking with outside agencies, the management
thought I will be the right person and posted me from Accounts to PR in 1985. Today, I am amused how much of changes have come in place in the Communication Department with specialization coming in,” says Selvaraj.

In 1996, HAL appointed a retired Navy Commander as its PR Head. Cdr (Retd) Munipella Nirmal (69), worked with the Indian Navy till 1988 and later joined HAL and got posted in the Customer Services department. He is now the Resident Correspondent (Bangalore) for the Delhi-based defence magazine, Vayu. “There wasn’t much focus on Internal Communication the way it has been perceived today. It wasn’t a thump-rule to keep the people within the Company informed and I must admit that communication levels internally, were very low-key. We had magazines like Vimana Samachar and HAL Mag coming out of Bangalore. In 1997, we got a new Chairman in Dr. Krishnadas Nair, who backed PR and publicity campaigns. To me, it was the beginning of a new era,” says Cdr (Retd) Nirmal.

He further went on to add that the setting up of Learning Centers at every Division was the beginning of a new era in HAL. “Employees had a chance to upgrade their general knowledge levels by visiting these centers. The media started getting access slow and steadily and HAL started to participate in air shows abroad. But communication--both internally and externally--remained on what is being termed in military parlance as a need-to-know-basis. It was very much the scene till I retired in 2003. There was, however, a strong feeling among the top management that HAL must get on to more branding during this period,” says Cdr (Retd) Nirmal.

1.11 Corporate Communication initiatives in HAL

India took a huge step towards military self-reliance in the beginning of the millennium, when the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas took to the skies for the first time on January 4, 2001. Though still the world’s largest importer of defence equipment, the confidence of the nation rose with Tejas’ maiden sortie.

Despite the landmark sortie, the Indian media remained critical of the progress being made by India’s defence establishments, including Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), the focus of this study. Reports focused on the delays and cost overruns of various programmes, without appreciation for the meager budgets, lack of
international cooperation, and limited infrastructure that Indian scientists had to contend with, as various corruption scandals tainted the image of the military and the government. Most prominent among them was the ‘Tehelka Tapes’ episode in 2001, which led to the resignation of India’s then Defence Minister George Fernandes.

Negative publicity and the sagging employee morale resulting from the crash of HAL’s flagship product -- Dhruv -- prompted HAL to revamp its communication practices in 2005. The first Dhruv helicopter to be handed over to a customer (the Jharkhand state government) crashed on the Godavari river belt on route to being delivered. HAL’s competitors, the world media, and the anti-India lobby in the defence and aviation fraternity wasted no time in going after the Company. Amidst all this mess, HAL was clueless in combating the growing chorus of criticism, until the Management decided to set up the Corporate Communication Department in 2005.

This step to open HAL’s communication channels – both internal and external -- had its share of problems. Internally, it took some time for the employees spread across India to believe that there was now much interest in them and their achievements. Their hitherto uncarred for success stories were suddenly in demand.

HAL chose to launch the Corporate Communication concept through a group of journalists who were recruited straight from different media houses. With many of its products going global, HAL was forced to look at some aggressive branding campaigns. The pre-2005 stand of sticking to age-old Public Relations practices was not fetching any dividends for the Company’s image. Finally, in June 2006, HAL Management formally announced the formation of Corporate Communication Department.

In 2006, the Corporate Communication team launched many external and internal communication exercises using available resources. All of the communication modules were new to HAL. For instance, it took HAL almost 65 years to have a catch-line. The phrase -- Propels Your Dreams -- was coined by the Corporate Communication Team in September 2005. The following are the major initiatives of the Corporate Communication Team ever since its inception.

**National Media Campaigns (NMCs):** As part of the NMCs, a string of branding exercises was launched. This included the release of advertisements in national
weeklies/ magazines on special occasions like Republic Day, Independence Day and during the World Cup Football campaign in 2006. Special programmes for school children under the banner “Goal -‘o’-Goal” were held at HAL Heritage Centre and Aerospace Museum in Bangalore to spread football awareness at the grassroots. In addition, hoardings depicting various HAL products and milestones were erected across HAL’s premises. What was unique was that the persons featured in these advertisement campaigns were employees of HAL—rather than professional models—thereby creating a strong sense of bonding among the employees.

**Minsk Square Matters (MSM) -- HAL’s Newspaper:** In order to keep the employees of various divisions of HAL abreast with the happenings in the company, the Corporate Communication Department launched a newspaper, *Minsk Square Matters (MSM)*. The first issue came out on September 1, 2006 and was released by Pallavi Jha, CMD of Dale Carnegie Training India and the granddaughter of Walchand Hirachand – the founder of HAL. The employees were delighted to see Pallavi Jha – a strong reconnection to a forgotten past. The tabloid-size *MSM* was a weekly to start with and later it was converted into a bi-weekly. *MSM* become an instant hit amongst the HAL fraternity as well as outsiders.

It even caught the attention of former Indian President, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. “*MSM* is an initiative that will take HAL a long way. This is information era and it’s the primary duty of a giant Company like HAL to keep its family informed about all the happenings. *MSM* must focus on people and bring out their stories. I want you to publish more shop-floor reports which will encourage the backroom boys of HAL. The heart of HAL lies in the shop floor and *MSM* must ensure that the success stories of those toiling hard, day in and day out are published regularly. I have very fond memories of HAL,” Kalam was quoted as saying in the *MSM*.

Close to 90 issues of *MSM* were brought out between September 2006 and February 2011 -- clearly indicating the popularity of the publication. In every HAL division, *MSM* had its own correspondents, who covered events regularly. These correspondents were highly-qualified engineers and designers, who devoted their spare time for a unique communication mission.

The *MSM* imprint line was a strong pointer to HAL Corporate Communication team’s commitment towards bold communication initiatives and it read: “Minsk
Square Matters is an in-house publication from the stables of HAL Corporate Communication. The news and views expressed in this newspaper need not be solely that of the management. Treat this publication as an effective channel for communication."

**The Plane**: In December 2006, the Corporate Communication team launched HAL’s official mouthpiece, *The Plane*. A quarterly magazine, it had a mix of technical aerospace articles, human-interest reports, and stunning photographs. *The Plane* stood apart on all counts: in 2009, Rotary International judged it as the third-best magazine in India (in both the public and private sectors). Many senior officers have acknowledged that the technical content in the magazine was useful during the interviews for their promotions.

**MSM Relief Fund**: In October 2006, the Corporate Communication Department instituted the MSM Relief Fund for providing assistance to the needy families of HAL. Spearheaded from the HAL Headquarters in Bangalore, the fund-collection drive was monitored by the Company’s Director of Human Resources and the Director of Finance. The response from the employees spread across various divisions all over India was tremendous. The Corporate Communication Team launched two such campaigns thus far, raising close to Rs. 11 lakh for needy families. This drive has brought the Corporate Communication Department closer to the thousands of HAL families. For obvious reasons, the families’ emotional connections to the Company grew significantly stronger.

**Delhi unit**: With New Delhi being the nerve centre for the Ministry of Defence’s activities and publicity campaigns, the Corporate Communication Department opened an office there during the 2006-2007 period. This was the first office of HAL to be enabled with wireless Internet access.

**MSM Sports Award**: The Corporate Communication Department kept a low profile in terms of branding itself; instead, it used the *MSM* banner to launch many new initiatives. The MSM Sports Award was one such initiative, specifically for the security personnel of the Company. This award became a much sought-after recognition during the Republic Day celebrations.
Media visits to facilities: Indian defence and aerospace journalists often complained regarding the lack of authentic information and access to facilities. Most of the time, the media was denied access, citing security and strategic reasons. This was the standard practice at all defence establishments. In February 2007, ahead of the Aero India expo in Bangalore, the Corporate Communication Team, after formal approvals, gave access to the national and international media to selected HAL facilities. These conducted media tours gave the Company great visibility, directly increasing the morale of employees. HAL management noted this, and began to allow media visits on a regular basis.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): On many occasions, the Corporate Communication Department went beyond its brief and undertook new projects. Though CSR was an activity entrusted to the HR Department, the Corporate Communication Team would often provide leadership for this segment. As a result, many positive activities ensued: events for differently-abled children, computers for charitable organizations, and promotion of hand-made products developed by various self-help groups.

Breaking the hierarchy: One of the banes of India’s defence establishments was the stiff hierarchical set-up. Despite the changing times, HAL hadn’t bothered to give a fresh look at some of the systems it had followed over the years. Realizing its possible ill-effects on the young recruits of HAL, the Corporate Communication Team launched an intense campaign aimed at reducing the impact of hierarchy. Though it was a difficult task, the mission had the backing of many top management officials who were part of recruiting youngsters from the IITs, IIMs and engineering colleges. As a result, employees, regardless of their Grades (designation for officers) or Scales (designation for workers), had an opportunity to directly email HAL’s chairman and directors.

Internship programme: The Corporate Communication Team launched an Internship programme for the benefit of Communication and Mass Media students. The interns had multiple opportunities to hone their skills, including interviewing employees, conducting media interviews, and picking up threads of the Corporate Communication concept.
**HAL Day:** Until 2008, HAL never observed its Formation Day. The Corporate Communication Team took the initiative to start a new beginning. After a series of deliberations, the HAL management gave the go-ahead to officially celebrate December 23 as HAL Day. Ironically, the first HAL Day celebrations were held 68 years after the Company’s formation and Divisions all over India held various events to mark this day. A special film directed by the HAL Corporate Communication team entitled *Propel Your Dreams* was shot during HAL Day celebrations.

**HAL Nite:** This is one event that stays fresh in the minds of HAL employees at its Headquarters on Cubbon Road in Bangalore. Called HAL Nite, this was yet another unique event conducted by the Corporate Communication Department with an eye to break the hierarchy. Gardeners, drivers, cooks, office staff, designers, technicians, security officials, senior management members, and the Chairman all rubbed shoulders with little fuss about protocol and designations. This event marked the beginning of a new chapter at HAL HQ and is hence rated even now as one of the most pro-active steps taken by the Corporate Communication Department.

This event was special in many ways for HAL employees as they, for the first time, had the company of HAL’s first employee, M.S. Gurappa. (Mr. Gurappa typed the Company formation documents in the late 1940s.)

**Going digital:** In an effort to go paper-less, the Corporate Communication Department digitized its operations. A digital library was set up for the first time. Employees were encouraged to use computers as a mode of communication with the department, rather than the traditional manual ways. All senior-management officers were emailed their daily dose of scanned paper cuttings covering news on HAL and the Company’s interests.

**Catch-line for HAL:** As part of standardizing the visiting cards for employees, a new catch-line for the Company was coined: *Propel Your Dreams*. This was an instant hit among the employees. That catch-line became a regular feature on logos, advertisements, presentations and even greetings cards.

While the researcher had access to many tools of Corporate Communication in HAL for this study, it was the Company’s newspaper, *Minsk Square Matters (MSM)*, which caught the imagination of a majority of employees. Former President of India
and leading missile scientist, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, too followed HAL’s bi-weekly newspaper *MSM* regularly. “The heart and soul of HAL lies in the shop floor and I want *MSM* to publish their reports. I want *MSM* to bring out the success stories of those unsung heroes of HAL,” Dr. Kalam was quoted as saying in one of the issues of *MSM*. He was a regular recipient of *MSM* at Rashtrapati Bhavan during his Presidentship days and later too.

It was also interesting to see how India’s first man in space and former HAL employee, Wg Cdr (Retd) Rakesh Sharma, felt regarding the changes the Corporate Communication Department had initiated. “I wish to congratulate you and, through you, the entire Corporate Communication team of HAL, for the change that’s being brought about. It is heart-warming to note that, HAL now has an Official Mouthpiece that gives an inkling of things to come. In time, people’s perceptions will also be favorably altered; it is bound to happen. I want your team to know that ex-HAL guys like me feel really proud to see such high quality stuff coming out from HAL! Keep up the good work--well begun is half done,” Rakesh Sharma stated in an issue of *The Plane*.

1.12 Corporate Communication Policy (2007) for HAL

The template of the Corporate Communication concept in HAL was made out of two detailed Approach Papers, which listed a long-term plan for the Company. After a series of internal deliberations, HAL decided to amend its Public Relations rules. It issued a formal circular on September 6, 2007 (*Comprehensive Media, Branding and Advertisement Policy, 2007*). The full features of the Policy are listed below.

1. **The Mission**

To create the Brand HAL image through vibrant, planned, and sustained campaigns.

2. **Media Management**

   a. The Media will be briefed every quarter.
   
   b. Only designated Directors will speak to the Press.
c. The Company’s major achievements will be announced to the Press in the form of periodic press releases.

d. The Chief of Media Communication (CMC) will coordinate all Media activities and interact regularly with the Media under the capacity of Official Spokesperson.

e. Rejoinders will be issued on top priority and on the same day.

f. Quotes for print media and sound bites for electronic media will be given by Chairman\designated Director, depending on the nature of the query.

g. Media queries will be addressed on priority with the same intensity at which Parliament Questions are answered. The Planning Department will prepare answers to media queries, while Corporate Communication will liaise with the Media House.

h. Planned Media visits to Divisions will be conducted on a rotation basis.

3. Public Relations

a. Corporate Communication Department will also take up CSR events periodically.

b. Events in partnership with government.

c. Aviation events for schoolchildren with HAL’s Heritage Centre as the base.

d. To partner with every city’s civic initiatives where we have a presence.

4. Publicity

a) Hoarding contents will be changed periodically and similar hoarding will be erected across all Divisions.

b) Campaigns in leading magazines.

c) TV advertisements, scrolls, radio talk shows.

e) Sponsoring events at IITs, IIMs, engineering colleges.
5. Branding
   a) Emphasis on Sports teams as they act as brand ambassadors.
   b) Sponsoring National and International events.
   c) HAL National Innovation Award.
   d) HAL Aviation Quiz contest.
   e) HAL Nights and Concerts.

6. Advertisement Policy
   a) All advertisement requests to be handled by Corporate Communication Department.
   b) All advertisements will have a common Corporate Identity.
   c) Value for money and visibility will be key parameters while issuing advertisements.
   d) Advertising Monitoring Panel comprising Directors at HQ to filter advertisement requests regularly.

7. PR units at all Divisions
   a. All Divisions will have Corporate Communication PR representatives in addition to MSM Correspondent volunteers.
   b. All existing PR units will work on a common Company agenda and will liaise with the Corporate Communication Department.
   c. Will track all the events at the different Divisions and will highlight various achievements.
   d. Will help enable the Corporate Communication Department to maintain a digital library.

8. Information Team at HQ
   a. The Team will consist of one representative from the Chairman’s Office, Planning, Projects, Finance, Marketing, HR, and Corporate Communication.
   b. This team will make press releases more informative.
c. This team will assist the Corporate Communication Department in fine-tuning contributions to *The Plane* and *MSM*.

d. The Information Team will assist the Chairman and Directors during periodic press conferences.

9. **Internal Exercises**

   a) HAL Day will be celebrated every year at all Divisions.

   b) Family get-together.

   c) A day out with the Chairman/Directors.

   d) Debates, contests and other programmes for youngsters.

   e) Cultural programmes for youngsters.
1.13 HAL Corporate organisation structure
1.14 HAL logo

HAL logos underwent many changes over the years and the current one came into existence in the early 2000s. However, the catchline behind the logo ‘Propel your dreams’ was included in 2005 after the formal setting up of the Corporate Communication Department. This was used extensively during 2005-2009, when HAL launched a series of branding and recruitment campaigns.

1.15 Significance of the study

Most defence establishments in India traditionally had Public Relations Departments, which worked on a tongue-tied policy. With changing times and needs, corporations the world over invested in adopting best PR and Corporate Communication practices and India too was up to the challenge. However, the scene in defence establishments was different; most of them had a different set of rules binding their thought processes.

This study is an attempt to capture the innovative Corporate Communication practices that were being implemented in HAL. It will also bring out the social and cultural changes that were visibly seen in HAL during the course of an active Corporate Communication movement. The study can be helpful to government establishments in India, who are waiting in the wings to adopt Corporate Communication. It will also guide prospective Corporate Communication professionals to understand the challenge in making people accept a new idea.

Most of the Corporate Communication tools used in HAL were not ones borrowed from textbooks. Rather, they were tailor-made to suit the needs of the aerospace community in HAL. It is important for employers to constantly capture the pulse of their employees. This study gives an example as to how the power of communication bound people of different cultures and creeds into a single unit.
Corporate Communication thrives on the involvement of everyone and every feedback or response from an employee acts as a pointer to the communicator. The HAL Corporate Communication team was seen often using the catch-line “Together, we shall...” at the end of every message. This created a sense of belonging among HAL’s internal public. Similarly, it was after the inception of Corporate Communication in HAL that the 70-year-old Company had a catch-line “Propel your dreams” – often being used along with its official logo. This again was a strong pointer to the internal public. It could even be seen as a call to the external public, to come and join the Company.

The study is significant as the researcher found that some of the Corporate Communication exercises in HAL were directly aimed at breaking hierarchy. It also analyses whether the gap between the employee and management has narrowed due to Corporate Communication.

There are very limited studies that ventured into the unknown territories of a defence set-up in India. Hence, the findings of this study could inspire future researchers.

1.16 Summary

Finally, the researcher hopes that this research -- The Impact of Corporate Communication on Internal Public: A Case Study of HAL – will set benchmarks for further studies in communication. It was done not just to fulfil the principles of a doctoral study, but to inspire both communication professionals and top management brains, who are exploring the possibilities of Corporate Communication.