



Module 4: Chapter 6

COMMUNICATION, CO-ORDINATION AND CONTROL IN HEALTH



**Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine
Gujarat Chapter**

COMMUNICATION, CO-ORDINATION AND CONTROL IN HEALTH

Learning objectives: the participants are expected

1. To understand the importance of communication, co-ordination & control in health set up.
2. Perceive the barriers in effective communication
3. Know the principles in co-ordination & control

Communication is part of every managerial function. It connotes behaviour, gestures, spoken words, written instructions and skills of perceiving, listening, explaining etc. It is basically a two way process between people. Effective communication envisages lot of empathetic behaviour on the part of both sender and receiver. We not only communicate our words, ideas but also feelings. Effective communication takes place if the message intended is decoded accordingly. Often feedback is missing which causes confusion. In communication between an educated health worker and a villager often there is noise and distortion. The role of feedback is very crucial and significant in these situations. Within the organization you can have lateral communication between team members and bottom up and top down communication. The barriers to communication could be semantic, psychological conditions, ineffective message, channel, preparedness, and credibility of the source. To make communication effective one should:

- Keep message brief and to the point
- Practice listening attentively, listen for main ideas
- With hold value judgments
- Attend to behavioural cues as well
- Say enough but leave something unsaid
- Say what you mean or feel
- Seek feedback
- Clarify if you are in doubt.

Communicating and Counseling the Employees

Communicating the Employees

A lot of face to face communication occurs between supervisor and his subordinates or peers while planning, deciding, training or counseling. He may talk to them individually or in a group or during staff meetings or through notes, instructions and reports. In this process of communicating there are three key elements:

I) the sender

li) The receiver

lii) The medium

A) Factors Influencing the Sender

I) Purpose of Intent: Suppose supervisor has to communicate a bad message. He may say, "Prabha, have your seat. I have something to talk to you. We had recommended your promotion. There was a representation from Mr. Madhav to headquarters regarding fixing S.C. quota. Sorry! In that process the post has been earmarked as reserved." (You can see how supervisor tried to relax the individual before going into something that may be unpleasant.)

II) Image Control: The way sender wants to present himself personally. Typically desirable images of health care personnel are those of being intelligent, powerful, helpful etc. ANM tells, "You are safe in my hands. I have conducted quite a good number of such deliveries."

III) Emotions: Sender consciously and unconsciously sends his/her state of mind, sentiments, opinion too, "You can leave if you like. But I find that this N.G.O. offers good salary and working conditions better than government. It is a joy to work for them."

IV) Feelings: Often feelings surface in tone of our voice, choice of words, posture, and proximity/distance with the sender. A clam, well modulated voice expresses a feeling of confidence. The feelings of trust and respect are communicated by one's ability to encounter the worker in such a way.

b) Factors Influencing the Receiver

I) Message Perception: There is a problem between Head Nurse and Housekeeping people. M.S. (Medical Superintendent) tells to AMS (Assistant Medical Superintendent) "Please straighten it out before you go for lunch." M.S. is communicating within realm of normative reality. Exactly what does 'straight it out' means. How much authority does he as AMS has? Are there any guidelines to follow? The message implied that receiver knows what to do. But the sender perceives his/her role will determine how the situation will be straightened out.

II) Language: Language is used for both written and verbal communication. Language consists of words. Words may have different meaning for certain people. For health care professional the term O.B. has a different meaning than for a management specialist (obstetrics/organizational behavior). Such usage may cause misunderstanding.

III) Status: Status refers to the relative ranking of an individual in a group. Some individuals have a higher status than others and this affects the way in which people communicate with them.

Often one may talk frank about the problems of the department among peers but not with the Head. A supervisor should try to enable his workers to transact from Adult to Adult ego levels of each other rather than parent to child.

c) Media

The individual seeks to choose the most proper and expedient medium for sending the message. He can do so via self like-Role Model, pictures, written notes or reports, verbal messages or non-verbal mode like-gestures, eye contact, gait, body language etc. or the physical formal and informal channels.

d) Communication Flows

In health care organization there are four basic communication flows through which message can be passed: downward, upward, lateral and diagonal

Downward: from supervisors to subordinates-directives, face to face conversation, bulletin board.

Upward: from subordinate to immediate superior-feedback reports, presenting the subordinates problems to next senior.

Lateral and Diagonal: Lateral communication takes place among peers or people of the same level of hierarchy. It is largely used to promote job coordination or team-work. Chief Medical Officer-I directly talking to Deputy Chief Medical Officer II rather than through Block Medical Officer. Diagonal communication occurs between people who are neither in same unit nor on the same level of hierarchy. Head nurse is well known to Medical Superintendent. To save time she calls on the latter and asks for some assistance. These methods of cutting across the boundaries of units are not only time-saving but are in complete accord with effective management practices. However, they can be dangerous as they work against the time of command. This type of communication should be supported so long as one:

- Obtains permission from his/her direct supervisor.
- Informs the supervisor of any significant result of the cross communications.

e) Effective Communication

As per supervisor to make your communication effective you must practice to:

I) Attending: In attending the greatest problem before a manager is of message compilation-a phonic call, memos to be read, reports to be screened and listening to subordinates who need assistance.

II) Understanding: It's always desirable to ask the subordinates to paraphrase or verbalize what has been discussed and manager should later summarize.

III) Accepting: Acceptance takes place when a receiver is willing to go along the message. When an employee refuses or denies to comply with, the manager must

recognize it and deal accordingly. He should neither coerce nor bury the issue rather explore further.

Acting: action implies that receivers follow up and do what has been requested. It is not so simple as someone is requested to write a report. He may start doing so and finds that some of the key data is not available. This is where the feedback part of the communication process comes in. Remember that sender's responsibility does not end until the desired action is completed.

IV) Use simpler language: language should be simple and easily understandable.

V) Employing empathy: empathy means deep understanding of others identifying with their thought, feelings, and sharing their joy, their pain and indeed empathetic communicators know each other so well that they can predict the responses to their messages.

VI) Learning to receive and give feedback: for effective communication two way feedbacks is essential.

Example of receiving feedback:

Manager: you have given me something to think over. I would welcome any other idea you might have. I think the proposed reorganization is fine. What do you think? I see.....right. Go on.....

Example of giving feedback:

Manager: I do not approve of your behavior in yesterday's meeting. Please try to be polite to your junior colleagues as well.

VIII) developing effective listening habits: try to complete the gap between your listening and thinking. Evaluate the relevance of ideas, opinions expressed and listen for the intended meaning. Be and giving feedback in the form of facial expression, smile, body language etc.

Steps of effective communication: a good supervisor in order to communicate effectively should be following rules of the four step process:

i) Planning for communication

- 1) Clarify your ideas before communicating.
- 2) Examine the true purpose of communication.
- 3) Take the environment and audience into consideration.
- 4) Plan your communiqué, take advice from others too if required

ii) Messages

- 1) Be aware of the basic content and overtones of the message.
- 2) Convey meaningful information in unthreatening way.
- 3) Communicate with the future as well as present in the mind. Think of both long run and short run consequences.

iii) Feedback

Follow –up the communication. Receive feedback and give feedback.

iv) Action

- 1) Support your words with deeds. Never send order for others to follow which you yourself disregard. See that people act on what they are communicated.
- 2) Become a good listener.

CO-ORDINATION

Implementation is actually doing the work. Implementation is what happens between planning and evaluation. Good managers always focus on implementation.

In implementation, coordination is very much necessary. Coordination as a verb means to bring into proper order or relation. Coordination means an orderly arrangement of group effort to provide unity of action in pursuit of a common objective. There is need in certain activities to bring together more than 2 or 3 persons and guide direct them to divided responsibilities and work with team spirit for a common objective. Coordination is thus overall management function that integrates planning, organizing, directing, controlling into a unified action.

Principles of Coordination

Coordination is a management function. Top management has to create the right conditions to make effective coordination possible, and then managers and supervisors all have the responsibility of ensuring that it works. The following are some of the consideration involved in creating the right conditions for effective coordination.

1. An effective organization structure with established systems and procedures.
2. Planned objectives translated into programmes for implementation.
3. The assignments of responsibilities to persons for carrying out the programme with accountability for performance.
4. Correct and adequate information on the programmes.
5. Periodic progress reports in an agreed format.

Eg. At a primary health coordination is required in many situations. For example, a number of staff doing different jobs in the OPD clinic are working for the common goal of delivering health care to those who come to the clinic. Staff activities need to be coordination so that the work goes on smoothly and patients receive proper treatment. The doctor is the person responsible for coordinating the activities of the staff in the OPD.

If he coordinates with other departments he will be able to get better support for the health programme. For example good nutrition means coordinating with the agricultural department. School health services require training the teachers, which means coordinating with the BDO and DEO.

Medical officers often feel shy about going to another department seeking help. The attitude must change. Medical officer should not feel too proud to seek help, because, as mentioned already.

Medical officer to coordinate with voluntary organizations, private practitioners, and others who can contribute to the health programmes. Lions, Rotary village health committee, Mahila Mandals, Youth clubs, etc., which with proper training and motivation can take responsibility for health problems and their solution.

Intersector Coordination

No sector involved in socio-economic development can function properly in isolation.

CONTROL

The aim of control is to assure that the results of the operation conforms as closely as possible to the established goals.

Control consists in verifying whether everything occurs in conformity with the plans adopted, the instructions issued & principles established.

Control Process:

- A. Establishment of Health Standards: IPHS, NABH, Health Centre/population, Health personnel/population.
- B. Measurement of performance: measurement against standards. Measurements must be objective.
- C. Compare between performance & Goals: Eg: MDG, Five Year Plans
- D. Determination of Reasons for differences: - personnel related, financial related, procedural, structural, etc.
- E. Correction: based on cause necessary corrections needs to be done.

More on Control process will be given to you in your Last module on Monitoring & Evaluation.