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# UNIT 2 CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, ADVERTISING, PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC OPINION

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## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this Unit, we introduce you to the different concepts of Public Relations, Advertising, Publicity, Propaganda and Public Opinion.

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to :

- define advertising, publicity and public relations ;
- explain the role of advertising and publicity in Public Relations efforts ;
- list the similarities and differences between advertising and publicity;
- explain the factors involved in effective communication;
- describe what is needed to achieve publicity;
- define "public opinion".
- explain how propaganda is different from public relations;
- define and explain the role of social marketing in Public Relations; and

- list the techniques used to gauge public opinion.

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is a multi-faceted or multi-dimensional discipline. With growing complexities and competition in society, communication professionals have to face the challenges of making their messages reach to their target audiences more sharply-focused and appealing so as to achieve the desired response from them.

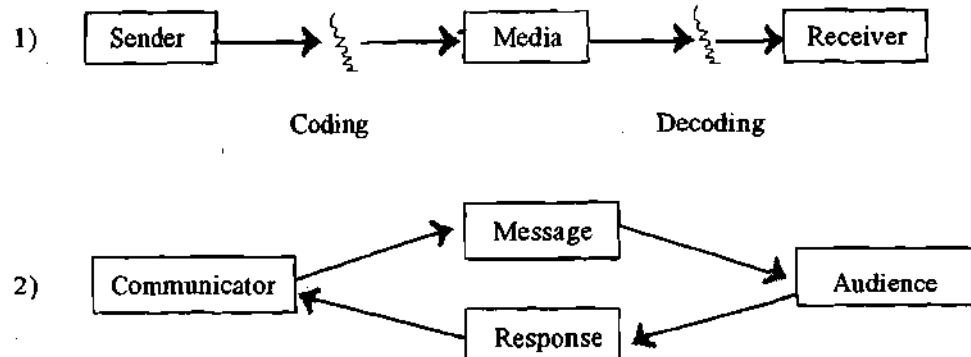
In the earlier Unit, you were introduced to the definitions of Public Relations, the use of various terms like “publicity”, “public affairs” and “corporate communications”. By now you must be familiar with the basics of Public Relations, the various ‘publics’ and Public Relations values. In this Unit, we shall study some terms like advertising, publicity and propaganda, and their roles in Public Relations. We shall first define each of these terms, followed by an explanation about their relationships.

A brief description of the exact role that advertising, publicity and public relations play in specified situations will help you to understand their similarities and differences. You will also be exposed to the role of advertising and publicity in the media, and the concept of corporate advertising.

Public opinion and its role in Public Relations is another area we shall introduce you to. This will help you in gauging Public opinion through the use of different tools of public opinion research. The concept of social marketing in Public Relations would also be explained to you.

## 2.2 DEFINITIONS

Advertising, publicity and public relations are three important aspects of communication. Different in concept, they are similar and interlinked in terms of their basic purpose. Their nature is the same — that is persuasive communication. They seek to disseminate information to target audience through mass media in a planned manner. Advertising, Publicity and Public Relations are defined differently by academicians and practitioners. The emphasis in the definitions separate them in form from each other, but in practice all these revolve around the well-known communication theory, the diagram of which is given below :



Model of Communication Process

Be it a product, service, an idea, a concept, or an issue, advertising, publicity and public relations inputs add value to it in the minds and hearts of the target group. They communicate relevant and appropriate information and benefits to bring about attitudinal and behavioural changes in them. It is a change which is desired and which is positive. Yet they are confused mistakenly and clubbed together as Public Relations which is not fair because Public Relations is neither publicity, nor propaganda, nor advertising. Each of these forms part of Public Relations but has its limitations. **Publicity** is concerned with dissemination of information about an organisation to attract attention or to publicise products or activities. The objective of publicity is to gain recognition, to build an image, and to win the approval of the target publics. **Advertising** is buying of space in print, time on AIR, or on billboards, to promote the sales of products, acceptance of ideas, or to earn goodwill. However, **Public Relations** has a much wider meaning and impact, and is more subtle and persuasive in nature. It uses both publicity and advertising techniques as we will observe further. We will examine each of these separately.

## 2.2.1 Advertising

A common definition of advertising found in the text books and quoted in professional articles and discussion is as follows:

"Advertising is communicating with and influencing someone to do something — usually to buy a product or service — and often something to think" about?

The **Encyclopaedia Britannica** defines advertisement as a form of paid announcement intended to promote the sale of commodity or service, to advance an idea or to bring about some other effect, desired by the advertiser.

The American Marketing Association has defined advertisement as 'any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor'. In other words, advertisement is the paid use of any channel of communication — radio, television, film, press, etc. to identify, explain or to urge the use of adoption of a product, service, or idea.

Advertising is a 'paid form' of communication intended to inform and influence a specific target group. The reasons for advertising are many and varied. An advertiser may be used to :

- urge and remind people to buy a product or service; or do something or think something
- announce a new product or service, or an idea / concept
- announce a modification (price, ingredient, feature, packaging, special offer, etc.)
- challenge competition (in terms of message or proposition)
- maintain sales; retrieve lost sales; enter new markets
- educate the public
- recruit staff
- announce a sponsorship

Advertising also helps to build and maintain the 'brand image' of a product or service, and adds to its values (as perceived by the customers).

Advertising can be mainly classified as :

- a) Product Advertising; b) Institutional Advertising or Public Relations Advertising.
- a) Product Advertising as the name itself suggests, is concerned with promoting sales of particular products; and
- b) Institutional Advertising is known by various other names also like 'Corporate Advertising', 'Public Advertising' or 'Prestige Advertising' etc. The main objective of institutional advertising is to create awareness and favourable attitude of particular publics towards the institution as a whole. Although it does not seek to promote sales directly, it does help the sales also indirectly by establishing a good image e.g. by building up a reputation for reliable quality products etc.

## 2.2.2 Publicity

Publicity, on the other hand, is a free-of-cost write-up, on the product or service, and issue, of an organisation and its activities, in the news columns or editorial columns of a newspaper and magazine, or the non-commercial time on television and radio. It is information generated and put across by journalists (media) on their own, or on a special request by the company / organisation's spokesman. Publicity messages are not paid for as advertising is. It is a result of significant "news" on the product or service, organisation, or an event concerning the product or organisation itself. It must be essentially interesting, new, informative and necessary for the readers or viewers of the media in the eyes of the reporter or editor.

Publicity is as essential as advertising in the communication objectives and process of an organisation. It is a tactical tool, with high degree of credibility, and one which lends itself to natural dramatisation. It is, therefore, used and taken due advantage of by the communicator or organisation behind it to achieve specific and timely communication goals. In the present

day high media cost situation, it is a practical tool, and very often used by Public Relations professionals with good results. Publicity is considered more credible than advertising because media is seen as the source of news. Hence the message has greater acceptability.

Handling publicity requires special skills. If handled well, it offers tremendous benefits, and if handled badly, it can do more damage than good. Besides just reading well it must be factual and truthful. It should not be an 'advertisement', but more a natural projection of the desired message and information meant for the target group.

### 2.2.3 Public Relations

**Public Relations** encompasses within it the skills of advertising, publicity, and other techniques of communication which require knowledge of psychology for effective persuasion.

The British Institute of Public Relations (IPR) defines public relations practice as :

"the planned effort to establish and improve the degree of mutual understanding between an organisation, or individual, and any group of persons or organisations, with the primary object of assisting that organisation or individual to deserve, acquire and retain a good reputation".

Typically the advertiser, or publicity man, usually wants to communicate with and persuade the largest group of potential buyers. He achieves this by "sending messages", generally in one direction (in the form of newspaper ads, television commercials, etc.). In contrast, the approach of public relations is much more selective, and it relies on information travelling to and from the publics in both directions *i.e.* sending messages and getting feedback. Feedback is vital for success of Public Relations.

In India, the public has become a force to be reckoned with. Even in a country where the majority is still to acquire the rudiments of literacy, people are conscious of their rights as citizens, as consumers, as shareholders or as employees. What is more, they are no longer like dumb driven cattle, but can make their voices heard. Mass media institutions make it possible for the common man to make his presence felt. If he has a grievance, he can write a letter to the editor of mass circulated daily or weekly. He can go up to his MLA or MP or his local councillor, and through him ventilate his grievances in a State Legislature or the Parliament or a Municipal Corporation, and no organisation can dare to ignore this warning. If the name of the organisation is frequently mentioned in the Parliament or State Legislature, the government will take notice, and may even initiate some steps against the organisation. Good examples of feedback can be found in the "consumers grievances" column of most of our major newspapers like Hindustan Times, Indian Express, Hindu and The Deccan Chronicle. Even an adverse editorial comment in a newspaper will probably be enough to stir the government to ask for an explanation from the erring department or take some sort of action.

Advertising and publicity are aimed at limited types of target groups, such as customers, distributors and retailers. They deal primarily with selling. They are part of marketing mix. But the aims of Public Relations are much wider, since a business is not merely concerned with selling. This is where confusion sets in. Surely, the primary objective of a business is to sell its products and services, and make a profit. But none of that can happen economically and efficiently unless every other facet of the business plays its part. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Public Relations can ensure that every link in the chain is strong.

#### Check Your Progress 1

Notes : (i) State whether the following statements are true or false.

(ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this Unit.

- a) Publicity does not involve use of media channels. ( )
- b) Advertising is done free of cost. ( )
- c) Publicity is considered more credible than advertising. ( )
- d) Public Relations is persuasive communication. ( )
- e) To get publicity, one must have something worthwhile to say. ( )
- f) Public Relation's aim is selling. ( )

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| g) The sponsor can be identified in advertising.                              | ( ) |
| h) Publicity is free of cost.   | ( ) |
| i) Advertising and publicity are the tools used for Public Relations efforts. | ( ) |

## 2.3 DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS, ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY

To illustrate the practical difference between Advertising, Publicity, and Public Relations, it would be best to take actual example of each of the three inter-linked communication techniques.

The basic differences, as one will see from these examples are :

- 1) the objectives of the communication,
- 2) physical nature/character of the message evolved, and
- 3) the end result. *i.e.* visibility and effect of the message.

The similarities are in

- 1) the media channels used, and
- 2) the elements in the creation of the message.

To highlight the differences and similarities, we have attempted to look at the examples under the commonly used headings in the teaching of Advertising and Public Relations : "What is to be communicated ?", "To whom?", "Where ?", and "How?".

### Advertising

We shall take an example of advertising and analyse the various elements in it.

A brand of premium toilet soap

#### Objectives

- 1) To sell the brand (Liril/Lux/Cinthol) to the target consumers.
- 2) To achieve repeat purchase.
- 3) To achieve specified and targeted sales of the brand and profit for the company.
- 4) To capture a hare in the market.

#### Message Communication : (What ?)

The message in advertising is about the brand (product or service). It creates awareness in the brand, puts across the plus points and special benefits to the user, and helps create brand loyalty. It is based on the consumer's needs and motivation, on the one hand, and competition in the market on the other hand.

#### Target Group : (To whom ?)

- 1) Women (or families / household) from the higher income groups in urban areas.
- 2) Modern, sophisticated and concerned on their own (or families) personal hygiene and complexion / skin.
- 3) To have purchasing power and want to buy/use products which are superior and of premium quality.

#### Communication Media : (Where ?)

- 1) The press — special women's magazines, general magazines, newspapers, etc.
- 2) The television — the national network.

- 3) The cinema — in target markets.
- 4) The radio — covering target markets.

In other words, this is to be done through the mass media.

**Timing of Activity : (When ?)**

Generally, all the year round, or in strategic bursts. The timing also depends on resources available and market situations, viz., usership of the product by the target consumer.

**Development of Message : (How ?)**

The diffusion of the advertising message to any specific area or areas is related to the existing and potential markets for the brand (and product category). This is based on experience or market research. This is also directly linked with the company's sales and market share objectives. Also the resources available to target the message in a specific geographical area and the desired indepth coverage in terms of the brand within the company's overall activities. The key deciding factor is the "potential of the market".

**Publicity**

Similar to the example of advertising, we shall analyse an example of Publicity. Read the item in the box.

**Odyssey Video entering market today**

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU**

BANGALORE - Odyssey Video Communications Limited (OVCL) is entering the capital market on July 4 with an issue of 21.7 lakh equity shares of Rs. 10 at par aggregating Rs. 2.17 crore. The issue will part finance the company's ambitious Rs. 3.35 crore project to install state-of-the-art editing facilities as well as to develop programmes for domestic, foreign and satellite TV. The promoters, the Rs. 58 crore MAA Bozell Group, and their associates will provide the remaining Rs. 1.18 crore.

OVCL recently entered into an alliance with Noel Gay TV of UK with an eye on the global market. As of now the company has an order book position of approximately Rs. 3.5 crore of domestic programming at pilot approval state, Rs. 1 crore of foreign programming and Rs. 50 lakh in corporate work. Its corporate clients include blue chip companies such as Coats Viyella, Citibank Cards, Titan Watches, ABB, ITC, Britannia Industries, Brook Bond and Canara Bank.

**Example of publicity for a public issue**

Source : Indian Express, July 4th, 1994.

A Financial issue of a company

**Objectives :**

- 1) to announce the special features of the financial issue.
- 2) to generate awareness and response to it.
- 3) to give out details and facts specific to the issue.
- 4) to suggest action needed to be taken by potential investors.
- 5) to build company image.

**Message Communication : (What ?)**

The message in a publicity effort for a Financial Issue is basically information on the issue. However, it should be put across in a hard-hitting manner and with supportive facts. It must motivate the potential investors to respond quickly. And this should be as if the press (or media) person is suggesting that.

The message must contain fact about the company's history, track record, growth plans, and

financial soundness.

- 1) Potential investors.
- 2) Present shareholders and investors.
- 3) Company employees.
- 4) Government.
- 5) Media (specially the financial press)
- 6) Financial analysts

**Communication Media : (How ?)**

Business news on television is yet another outlet. Publicity about the issue can be done in the business and financial columns newspapers and magazines. Techniques used for achieving publicity include :

- 1) Press relations / hand-outs and press conferences,
- 2) Direct mail shots / folders,
- 3) Investor conferences,
- 4) Video films,
- 5) Annual reports and AGM material.

**Time of activity : (When ?)**

Obviously, the emphasis will be prior to the Issue, and also after the public announcement of the Issue in the respective media.

Prior to the Issue, companies generally run a corporate advertising campaign. If resources do not permit this, the image building is built into the financial Issue announcement ads.

During the Issue, a number of press releases are issued to magazines and newspapers. This is the publicity thrust, which we are referring to in this example. And this publicity activity is more than just a one-shot effort, specially when it comes to big issues and big companies.

**Development of message : (Where ?)**

The publicity effort in terms of the press handouts, press conferences and other means to get the media coverage will depend on the nature (subject) of the issue, *i.e.*, its news-value or news-worthiness. Creativity in communicating the facts will be the essence of its success in getting coverage in the media. This requires talent and experience. To successfully do this, one would need the help of creative people in the AD agencies, or a Public Relations consultancy, or available expertise in the Public Relations/Advertising Department within the company.

In the publicity effort, the press (media) relations plays a vital role in the effectiveness of a publicity effort. This has to be nurtured over a period of time.

**Public Relations**

We shall analyse how the Public Relations expertise in a factory may help in solving a crisis (a strike).

**Objectives:**

- 1) to resolve differences through communication, and facilitate negotiation between the management and the workers.
- 2) to bring the strike to an end.

**Message Communication : (What ?)**

The message in such a Public Relations situation is one that builds mutual confidence between the workers and the management. It projects that it is in the interest and benefit of both

parties to come together and talk to resolve matters.

The worker's demand and the management's offer / intention must be clearly understood in developing the message, and a meeting point should be kept in sight for the desired results.

One needs to remember that we are dealing with human beings and not machines. This attitude will help greatly in evolving good and effective relations.

**Target group : "To Whom ?"**

- Workers.
- Union leaders.
- Other employees (including the management).
- Outsiders (the customers, the suppliers, the press etc.)

**Communication Media : (How ?)**

- Personal meetings — between the Union leaders and the Management representatives.
- Exchange of letters and facts with regard to the issue
- Notice on notice boards
- House journal
- News sheets, posters and banners
- Video magazines.
- Press releases (if the situation demands communication to the external target groups as well).

**Time of Activity : (When ?)**

In the case of a strike at the factory, the communication exercise must begin as soon as it happens. It must be continued right through the negotiations, and even for the period after the strike is over to retain/maintain the confidence of the parties concerned, other employees, and the external target groups, if any.

The right response at the right time with proper Public Relations is crucial in case of strike, and in the case of any Public Relations activity.

**Development of Message : (Where ?)**

The Public Relations message must match the objectives defined and the media in which it is going to be projected, especially in its tone of voice, words and facts and figures. The Public Relations person has to work in coordination with the labour office, the management and also with the aggrieved worker.

The Public Relations effort has to be a multi-faceted one to make an impact. It must make use of all the media possible in a cohesive and planned manner, because the issue of the strike (as all such Public Relations issues) is very delicate, and can have far-reaching consequences, if not handled well, and even if handled well.

The Public Relations effort, whatever it may be, must be open and honest in every respect and help to bridge the communication gap among various sections within the organisation as also between the organisation and other external publics.

**Check Your Progress 2**

**Note :** i) Answer the following questions briefly in the given space.

ii) Check your answers with the ones provided at the end of this Unit.

1) Define advertising.

.....



2) What are similarities between Public Relations, Publicity and Advertising ?

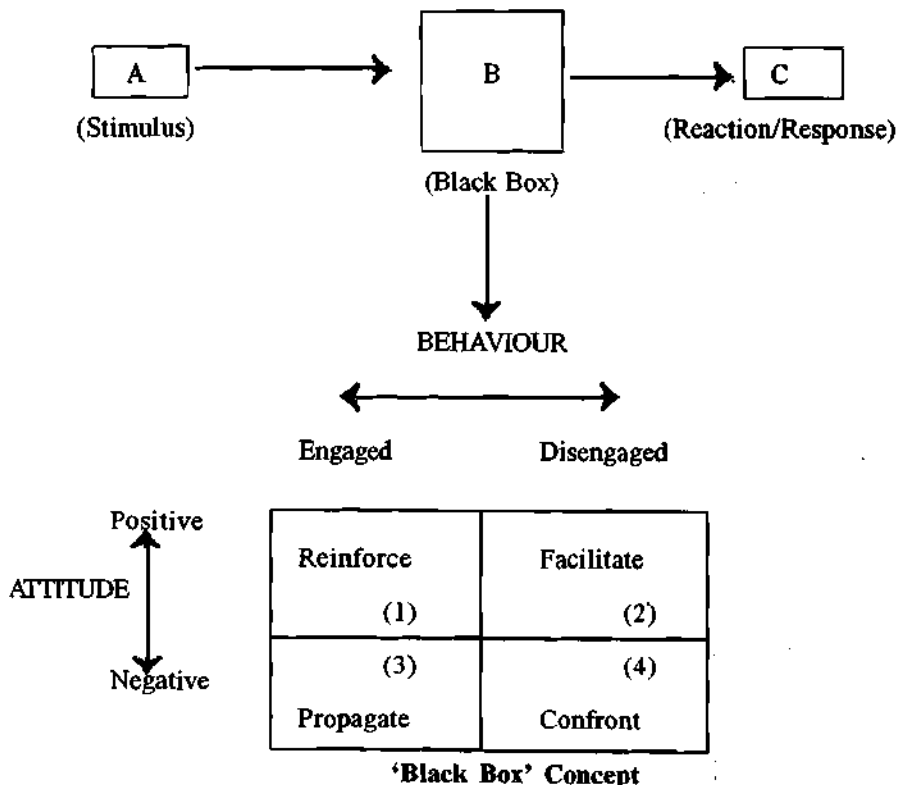
3) What are the differences between publicity and advertising ?

## 2.4 TWO NEW CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING

The present-day communications in business are expected to be more effective be it through advertising, publicity, or public relations. To make them so it is worthwhile to understand the two new concepts in communication :

- The Black Box Concept, and
- The SRIF Formula,

The Black Box concept diagrammatically represented looks as follows :



According to this communication concept, what takes places in the "B" box, or black box, is

**Definition, Nature, Ethics and Scope of Public Relations**

crucial for the right response among the target group. The black box is in fact the human brain. The stimulus must make an impact on the brain for the desired reaction or response from the target group. The aim is always to gain a positive attitude and an engaged form of behaviour (i.e. Box No. 1). In other words, the situation should be such that your communication has to try and do a **reinforcement job**, and further build on the positive attitude and engage behaviour. In such a situation the target group will respond as you desire, vis-a-vis your objective.

But this ideal situation may not always exist. The target group may be in one or different state of mind and / or situation and, therefore, different strategies and actions may be required to move the target group from where they are into the positive and engaged situation. For instance :

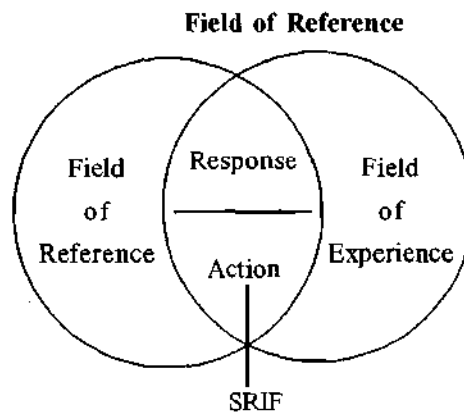
Situation	Action needed
1) Positive but Disengaged (Box No. 2)	Facilitation of understanding in the target group (with facts).
2) Negative but Engaged (Box No. 3)	Propagation or education of the target group.
3) Negative but Disengaged (Box No. 4)	Confrontation of the problem and the target group.

The desired shift within the four sections of the complete black box will be ultimately determined by, besides the nature of the message, the sharp focus of words and pictures of the message in the media selected.

**The SRIF Concept**

The second concept, SRIF Formula, stands for the “**Strongest Relevant Influence Factor**” in the communications of the advertiser or Public Relations man. It is the strength of this ‘factor’ which results in achieving the desired change in attitude and behaviour of the target group.

The SRIF Formula is depicted in the form of two overlapping circles :



One circle represents the target group’s field of reference, and the other the field of experience. It is the overlap of these two circles that is important, and it is believed to result in the target groups response, or action, to our message / communication. The greater the overlap, the stronger the SRIF, and more positive is expected to be the response. Both the frame of reference and the actual experience of the target group are important in realising the communication objectives— be it in Advertising, Publicity or Public Relations. If there is no significant and positive overlap of the circles (i.e., the frame of reference and the frame of experience), then no communication, however creative or well designed, will work. In fact, it will result in disappointment in the target group, and possibly also have a negative effect.

## 2.5 OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY

Like all activities, successful advertising and publicity in Public Relations are goal-oriented or activities based on objectives.

The objectives of advertising are twofold, i) as a marketing tool; ii) as a means of persuasion.

**As a tool of marketing,** advertising is used to sell ideas, products and services of identified sponsor. This is achieved through communication of the product (or service) features, pricing, benefits to the customers, and the image (brand image) among other things. Apart from dissemination of information about products, advertising is also used as a mass persuader — whether for creating popularity, whether used in election or in education, advertising seeks to bring about a change in attitude and behaviour. This is why advertising is also defined as “controlled, identifiable information and persuasion by means of mass media. Advertising is thus tailored and executed towards achieving one or more of the objectives, depending on the product or service, the market for it, its customers, and the marketing organisation behind it. The execution, and its implementation in media to achieve the objectives is a science and an art in itself, requiring special skills.

The **objectives of publicity** are concerned with imparting information, through specific media to the specific target group. The information has to be intrinsically newsworthy, honest and credible, but made to be more authentic by the nature of the media in which coverage is obtained. The information is put across in such a way that it seems as if it is the media which are giving it out to the readers or viewers, rather than the advertiser or Public Relations man in an organisation. To be able to do this successfully requires good knowledge of mass media, its editorial needs and policies, the audience and the operation process. It requires planning, effective writing, and extremely good media relations to ensure that news releases receive favourable consideration.

The **objectives of Public Relations** comprise a subtle combination of advertising and publicity. Public Relations is concerned with achieving a shift in knowledge, perception, image and behaviour. Each Public Relations programme, therefore, can have different objectives depending on the situation, the target group (the “publics” it is meant for) and the timing. For instance, the objectives of a programme directed to motivate the employees of a company will be different for each internal situation, its timing, the structure and the organisation. Similarly, the objectives of Public Relations with the media (*i.e.*, of the media relations) will vary from situation to situation, and company to company. Handling a crisis will demand one type of objective, whereas the launching of a new production unit will demand another type of objective when dealing with the media as a specific “public”.

Another difference with regard to Public Relations objectives, when compared with advertising of publicity, is that in Public Relations the target group or the “publics” may often be more than one in a given situation — for instance, the employees, the press, the shareholders, and the government can be the target group in the case of a new project launch, or even a crisis. In advertising and publicity, the target group is generally one specific and large group — for instance, the housewives in the case of a consumer product, or the shareholders in the case of a financial crisis, or the government in the case of an industry issue.

### 2.5.1 Public Relations Advertising in the Press

Now we shall discuss Advertising as a tool of Public Relations. Advertising for Public Relations is more commonly referred to as ‘institutional advertising’, and this is an important instrument for achieving Public Relations objectives.

Public Relations advertising has been distinguished from the more commonly used product advertising. The latter is part of the marketing-mix of the organisation. It is intended to further sales of the company’s products, either of a single product or a range of products. Institutional advertising seeks to build an image of the organisation as a whole, the corporate image. Product advertising may also be sometimes concerned with image building, but that will be to build up a brand image. Institutional advertising does not directly promote sales, or even help to popularise a brand, but by building the corporate image it creates goodwill for the organisation, makes for better relations with the publics such as government, the parliament and the press, and thus ultimately helps to improve the company’s profitability by creating the

climate in which its business operations can proceed in a congenial atmosphere.

Some of the objectives of Public Relations advertising may include :

- a) improving the image of the company among specific publics
- b) to bring about a change in attitude of audience towards the company or its products
- c) to enhance the company's image by making known its achievements e.g. increased production targets, export awards etc.
- d) educating the audience on company's various aspects etc. its future plan, prices etc.
- e) establishing the organisation's reputation as a responsible corporate citizen and its concern for the community.
- f) establishing itself as a good company to work for in order to attract more talent.
- g) providing a unified marketing approach for all its products.

In deciding what to highlight in an institutional advertising campaign, one has to consider the public towards which the campaign is mainly directed. Is it the government or the parliament, is it the press, is it the shareholders, the capital market, or the employees of the organisation? The answers to these questions should be adopted for the campaign.

As in the case of all advertising, Public Relations advertising should be simple, and the message should be clear. Ideally, only one concept should be put across in one advertisement for the best effect. If more than one idea is to be conveyed, one could plan a series of advertisements tying up together into a total corporate message to the public or the publics concerned. In institutional advertising, one must avoid complex messages and detailed explanation. Instead a brochure or pamphlet or even a book may serve the purpose of Public Relations better depending on the amount of material that has to be incorporated. However, where it is felt that a series of advertisements will be able to project the message, there should be some kind of inter-connecting link between them, so that the impact of the first is reinforced by each succeeding advertisement in the series. (See Illustration).

**LEFT TO RIGHT : AMBASSADORS TO FRANCE, GREAT BRITAIN,  
THE U.S. AND 2 OTHER COUNTRIES.**

We see our cabin crews as India's ambassadors abroad - no less

They are taught to be so. Because on every flight they meet some of the world's most important people. You.

They know that their smiles, the namaste, that smooth efficiency is not just part of their training but comes from the depths of our rich heritage and culture to create world class standards of hospitality.

We are proud of all our people — the Air Indians.

AIR-INDIA

Over Sixty years in Flying colours

AIR INDIANS. TAKING ON THE WORLD

**An example of Institutional Advertising**

Institutional advertising, is however, very expensive and the one should use it judiciously.

### **2.5.2 Public Relations Advertising on the TV**

The introduction of sponsored programmes and the TV serials over the various channels of Doordarshan and Cable network has provided an opportunity to the public relation practitioners as never before.

It place at their disposal a very powerful medium, which has now a wide reach throughout the country. Institutional advertising is used for purposes of image building, bringing about changes in attitudes, helping to mould the public option and popularising new concepts. As far as the

marketers are concerned, the television medium also gives them a powerful tool to develop the brand image and to sell their products and services through 'spots' as well as through sponsored programmes.

### 2.5.3 The Radio and Public Relations Advertising

For most purpose, it is the commercial channel of Vividh Bharati which will have to be the main outlet for Public Relations purposes. Sponsored programme put across this channel, and, if intelligently produced, can evoke a high interest among listeners. Such programmes can be used for popularising brand products as well as for image building. Entertainment programmes, popular film based programmes and sports programmes command a high listenership and can be effectively used, for Public Relations advertising.

### 2.5.4 Publicity : Public Relation's Active Arm

Public Relations is a complex task, performed best by skilled professionals.

Most of the activity in Public Relations consists of publicity, with some promotion. Publicity material include new releases pictures, articles and background material. It is important to prepare publicity messages keeping in mind the channels of mass media to be used — whether newspaper, trade magazines, specialised magazines, radio or television broadcast etc. Indiscriminate mailing of publicity material is a sheer waste of resources. Hence it is important to have a good knowledge of mass media, their audience and editorial policies, besides keeping good media relations with the media personnel.

Publicity and promotion are highly creative fields. There should be no limitations set on the practitioners, innovativeness other than the ethical ones. The media is flooded with publicity messages. Hence the publicity messages compete for attention. Editors have no choice but to reject mediocre material and use only such news releases which are worthwhile. It is here that the work of creative, skilled people will stand out. The best attention-getter is the targeted quality work.

It is important to remember that even the most creative work is only effective if it is in line with the organisation's strategy. Bright ideas that do not communicate the organisation's message to the proper audience are not worth publicising. Good publicity ideas come with experience and a Public Relations person must make good use of both publicity and advertising to achieve the Public Relations goals.

#### Check Your Progress 3

- Notes : i) Answer the following questions briefly in the space provided.  
ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of the Unit.

1) It is not easy to get publicity — Why ?

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2) State three objectives of institutional advertising.

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## 2.6 EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS, ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY

All communications — big or small in terms of size and effort in Advertising, Publicity and Public Relations — involve significant financial and manpower resources. Both are, today, not only scarce, but expensive. Hence, advertising, publicity, and Public Relations must be effective to the core. This requires professional planning in the following seven areas :

- 1) **Objective orientation** : All advertising, publicity, and Public Relations programmes must have pre-defined short-term and long-term objectives as a pre-requisite. These must be agreed to and accepted by the management.
- 2) **Target group orientation** : For any campaign (or even single but important activity), the target group to be reached must be clearly identified. There should be no ambiguity or vagueness in this. The definition of the target group should be in demographic and psychographic terms.
- 3) **Message selection** : The message to be communicated must be directly linked with and focused upon the objectives to be achieved (awareness, image, announcement, shift in attitude, behaviour, etc.) in respect of the target group and the media in which it is going to be transmitted. There must be a perfect match between the two to achieve the desired results.
- 4) **Media selection** : The media to be used must be those which reach the right target group, at the right time, and at the minimum cost. Waste in reach must be minimal — and this is today easily possible with the detailed data and planning at the disposal of a professional. The right media have a significant role to play in publicity and Public Relations, where the communication is largely situation-led and the messages are broad-based and different, unlike advertising.
- 5) **Creativity and innovations** : This step needs no elaboration as such. The more creative and innovative you can be (within the professional guidelines), the better your message will be noticed and the better will be the chance of your being able to achieve your goals. Creativity and innovation should be an objective on its own, in all forms of business communication, today and in the future.
- 6) **Adequate resources** : One of the biggest shortcomings in advertising and Public Relations is that companies tend to economise on the financial outlay?. This often results in unsustained or sporadic communications. To be effective, and to make the desired impact, advertising, publicity and Public Relations programmes must be sustained and backed with adequate financial resources in creating the message as well as sending it out through the media.

It is often recommended that if you do not have adequate resources, it may be better that you do not undertake the programme, rather than do a half-hearted and low-impact job. Obviously, in this you have to weigh the consequences viz-a-viz your own particular situation and organisation.

- 7) **Manpower back-up** : Whatever your objectives and financial resources, the professional manpower support in advertising, publicity and Public Relations is most essential for the planning and execution of programmes and campaigns.

There is a dire need for professionally trained and effective people in all the three communication fields. Training and development, therefore, is an essential requirement at most organisations. Something is being done today about this, but much needs to be done still. The communicators to be successful have to be professional in attitude and approach in the cluttered communication situation that prevails today in the market.

### Check Your Progress 4

**Note :** (i) Answer the following questions in the space provided.

(ii) Compare your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

(iii) Briefly state the various factors involved in advertising and public communication.

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### ACTIVITY 1

Go through some issues of magazines and newspapers and identify at least five different institutional advertisements. Study the message design and layout. How effective do you find them? Use the space given below for your activity findings.

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## 2.7 PUBLIC OPINION

A 'public', from the standpoint of public opinion, is a group of people with similar interests, who have a common opinion on a controversial subject. Kuppuswamy defines public as "a spontaneous collection of people in response to a certain kind of situation". To clarify the concept to you further, it is issue / controversy that holds the public together. You must however note that the members of the 'public' are heterogeneous and are not one composite group. 'Public' is not limited by size or enclosed within some geographical boundaries.

Let us now examine what the term 'opinion' means and its various shades.

Opinion, according to Webster's *Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, is "a view, judgement, or appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter". An opinion is stronger than an impression and weaker than positive knowledge. It implies a conclusion thought out, yet open to dispute. A more or less settled opinion is a 'sentiment' and, if held firmly, a 'conviction'. A 'view' is an opinion more or less coloured by bias.

We will now take a look at the concept called public opinion.

### 2.7.1 Definition of Public Opinion

**Public Opinion** is an expression of a belief held in common by members of a group of public on a controversial issue of general importance. The public opinion-formed process emanates from the expressed individual opinions of members of a group. Whose views are subject to the influences exerted by the group.

The **Dictionary of Mass Communications** defines public opinion as the expression of all members of a group, who are giving attention to a given issue. The process starts with an interaction of individual attitudes, mind-sets, and beliefs concerning an issue.

Public opinion is usually expressed after controversy, dispute and debate over some controversial question, which concern the welfare, doctrines, and value system of a group. Public opinion is aroused, whenever a contemporary issue or question of some concern arises about which the member of the group are likely to have disagreement. An issue is a situation or occurrence which threatens to disturb the prevailing values, beliefs and attitudes of a group, creating more or less of a crisis, and arousing discussion and the expression of public opinion.

ion. Reservations for the backward classes and the question of merit is one such issue. Which has begun to confront the Indian public. The testing of nuclear materials causing environmental pollution is an international issue, which causes people throughout the world to take affirmative or negative positions on the question. Similarly the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and India's stand on it and the GATT accord have also generated much heat.

Public opinion is not simply the opinion of the majority of a group. On each issue, the interested public will divide itself into two or more differing points of view, which will not necessarily be contradictory or mutually exclusive. The attitudes and previous experiences of the individuals making up the public as well as the complexity of the issue determine the cause of public opinion. The opinion must be representative of the group as a whole. Thus, public opinion is the complex of beliefs expressed by a significant number of persons on an issue of general importance. Public opinion is a potent force to reckon with particularly for a public relations functionary.

### **2.7.2 Opinion Formation**

The basic objective of public relations is to measure, analyse, and influence public opinion which develops from the attitudes of individuals comprising the public. Therefore, it is important to understand the meaning of attitudes, why people hold the attitudes they do, and their role in the opinion-forming process.

**Attitudes** are the feelings or moods of a person for or against some person, organisation, issue, or object. They represent the **predisposition** of an individual to evaluate controversial questions in a favourable or unfavourable manner. Simply stated, an attitude is a way of looking at situations. *An expressed attitude is an opinion.*

Change in attitude may occur under various conditions e.g. the existing attitude no longer provides us the satisfaction or if our aspirations get raised. Changes in attitude can be brought about through communications by creating new beliefs, or by appealing to the emotions to arouse favourable or unfavourable attitudes. Appeals to the physical, social and economic needs of people are considered to be effective in changing their attitude e.g. the ads for insuring life, property etc., have considerable acceptance and response by general public.

### **2.7.3 How is Public Opinion Formed ?**

Attitudes and their expression in the form of opinions are the psychological phenomena of an individual. A group is not capable of forming an opinion. Since a group cannot form an opinion, how is public opinion formulated ?

Public opinion is formed by individuals composing a group, who express their own opinion on a controversial issue. Public opinion is a composite opinion resulting from the interaction of the individual opinions of the members of a group. The transformation of individual opinion into public opinion, by group stimuli, is a distinctive characteristic of the public opinion process. This metamorphosis is sometimes referred to as the 'group mind', which is the combined opinions of individuals in the group. This is what we call public opinion.

Public opinion involves a transformation of individual opinion into group opinion, brought about by the influence exerted by the members of a group on an individual's opinion. The opinions of people in a group are influenced by what they hear from opinion leaders, other members of the group, or persons outside the group; what they read in newspapers, magazines, and books; what they see in life about them or on television. Apart from group pressures, individual opinions are influenced by their needs, emotions, experience, heredity, culture, economic status and education. Out of the interaction of individual attitudes, opinions, and the opinions of the group emerges public opinion.

### **2.7.4 Propaganda, Public Opinion and Public Relations**

You have just learnt how public opinion is formed and how Public Relations efforts can help mould it. There is, however, another aspect to moulding of public opinion based on propaganda. It is important for Public Relations students to learn to distinguish Public Relations from propaganda and not confuse the two, as they operate at different levels and have different motives. Public Relations is not propaganda. So let us briefly look into this art also to make ourselves clearer.

Propaganda is defined as an expression of opinion by individuals and groups which is deliber-



ately designed to influence opinion or action by other individuals or groups with reference to pre-determined end. Although in its broadest sense, propaganda intends to advance a cause e.g. a religious faith, and hence can be considered as legitimate persuasion, it has come to acquire a negative image because it has been used to unleash hatred and fear during wars. It is still being used by suppressing facts. Propaganda has therefore gained notoriety as brainwashing and barbarity. It is characterised by the one or more of the following :

- use of words with double meanings
- appeals to prejudices of people and arousal of negative emotions like fear, hatred etc.
- evasion of truth, suppression of facts, distortion
- provocation, playing up trivia
- presentation of only one sided arguments
- repetition

Critics of Public Relations sometimes refer to it as propaganda to imply that this also manipulates public opinion. However, even though Public Relations attempts to influence public opinion, it is vastly different from propaganda. Public Relations is an honest, straight forward, long term effort to create favourable image based on facts and performance. It has no malicious, short term selfish gains to make by suppressing fact to mislead people. Unlike propaganda, it is based on an open two-way communication.

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## 2.8 PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH IN COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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The importance of sound and significant Public Relations research to the management of all organisations is greater today than it has been in the past. Top executives are spending many hours studying how public attitudes towards their industries may affect their future operations, or turn into opportunities in terms of the market place and their growth.

The focus of opinion research and Public Relations research has been changing from the study of traditional publics to a greater attention to the study of "issues", and how best to make an impact on public attitudes for their benefit. The tools of public relation research may not have undergone much change in the past decade. But there is an all round effort to bring timely and actionable processed data into the hands of decision-makers quickly and effectively.

Public Relations research serves these three functions :

- 1) Most frequently, it may simply confirm assumptions and hunches about the state of public opinion on an issue, or a company. This is a highly useful kind of back-up function, in many ways analogous to the use of quality control systems in the manufacturing end of a business.
- 2) A second role of research is to clarify questions on which limited information is available, or on which apparently contradictory data are to be found. Research can help sort out what people really mean and when they say they like or dislike an organisation — the reasons they cite for these feelings, and even the origin of the feelings.
- 3) Research re-orientes our thinking and conceptualisation on Public Relations problems. It helps us to define and focus on our objectives and target group, and in assigning priorities to Public Relations problems and Public Relations actions.

There are many research techniques available for conducting Public Relations and public opinion research.

A very old and still useful method is to carry a content analysis of how an issue or a problem is treated in the press, published data, and the like. Such desk research gives a pretty fair measure of the saliency of the problem and often useful hints as to which aspect of it seem to be arousing the greatest public interest.

**Definition, Nature, Ethics and Scope of Public Relations**

For many people, Public Relations research is synonymous with public opinion surveys, and their various market research and survey techniques, each of which has its merits and its limitations. Properly used, these different techniques can complement one another and produce a mosaic of data giving new insights into long - standing problems.

Another form of opinion research, which is a useful tool for Public Relations professionals is depth survey. This is nothing more than an effort to let the public tell the researcher how it views the Public Relations programmes. In these surveys the researcher carefully avoids imposing his point of view on the respondent. Depth studies are useful in the earlier stages of programme in giving clues to the perimeters of a problem. They can also provide some really valuable themes for the Public Relations campaign.

Good research takes time. And if undertaken must not be unnecessarily hurried, even if the findings are required in a hurry. It must take its own course with all the procedures completed fully and the analysis of data done properly to throw up the required leads to evolve the Public Relations strategy and programme.

**Managing Effectiveness**

The secret of managing effectiveness lies in “how to do it”, or the methodology of doing things. Success in communication results out of managing four important steps :

- 1) Right selection
- 2) Right motivation
- 3) Right evaluation
- 4) Training and development.

Selecting the right message, the right target group, and the right media is the first step. Motivating your target group to perceive and then act as you want them to is the next. Having done that, evaluating what has been achieved, what has not been achieved, and what needs to be done further is vital. This may be part of the programme undertaken, but must be planned beforehand. Feedback in communication is crucial — there should be one-way communication if one needs success.

With all this, admen, publicity men, and Public Relations men (and in all three cases women too) must be constantly trained to be professionals in the techniques, think - inputs and the final execution of programmes and campaigns. Training should be an ongoing process, and not something which is done only when the going is tough, or when there is an acute need for qualified people. Because of the link of advertising with marketing, a number of training programmes - in-company and external are available to advertising people. But in the field of publicity and Public Relations, there exists a big vacuum, which must be filled up in the coming years — especially when Public Relations is becoming more and more important in business and industry.

**Check Your Progress 5**

Note : i) State if the following statements are True or False.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this Unit.

- a) Members of a public are homogeneous. ( )
- b) It is an issue that holds public together. ( )
- c) Group pressure helps to transform individual opinion into group opinion. ( )
- d) Propaganda appeals to prejudices of people. ( )
- e) Opinion leaders play a significant part in the public opinion formation. ( )
- f) Public opinion is the opinion of the majority. ( )

**2.9 SOCIAL MARKETING IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Public Relations professionals in increasing numbers have begun to realise that social causes can benefit tremendously from the Public Relations way of marketing, thinking the planning.

This is known as 'social marketing'.

The term 'social marketing' has been defined as the 'design, implementation and control of programmes, calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, packaging, communication, distribution and marketing research'. In short, it means 'the application of marketing techniques in moulding public opinion for or against a social issue, or 'selling' an idea to serve a social cause, or wherever specific public or social programmes and campaigns require significant changes in the attitudes and behaviour on the part of the relevant "publics"'.

The most successful example of employing marketing techniques for popularising a public programme in India has been the Nirodh commercial distribution, drawing on the marketing skills of a number of large consumer goods companies. Similarly, there have been several social advertisement campaigns, like the Bombay Municipal Corporation campaign on water conservation, or Indian Oil's "Save Oil" campaign, or Hyderabad Municipal Corporation's "Keep Your City Beautiful" campaign.

Let us take a practical example. Business houses design products and services in terms of the needs and wants of target groups of consumers. Similarly, in social marketing, target audiences must be studied and appropriate "products or services" designed by the organisation, so that the target audiences find it desirable to accept the product or service. Thus, if the National Savings Organisation wants income-earners to save by buying Saving Certificates, which in the long run will help to curb inflation in the country, many types of "schemes" can be designed to contribute to this social objective. For instance, instead of cash incentives for buying consumer products, wholesalers, dealers and even retailers may be given Savings Certificates, or coupons — for buying a certain volume of a product or products, a Savings Certificate worth a fixed sum is given to the buyer. Many such "products" can be designed to achieve the social objective of developing the saving habit.

Thus in social marketing, the Public Relations men can view it as a marketing problem requiring the designing of the "right product or service", offered at the "right place", at the "right price or effort" to the "right consumer or target audience" with the support of the "right promotion". However, it must be added that such an approach may not guarantee total success, but it does offer a systematic framework for planning the social efforts.

**Activity 2**

Newspapers often report news events which trigger off public opinion — whether local, regional, national or international. Go through the newspapers of the past fortnights, and identify at least two cases of public opinion generated by some event. List the arguments of parties involved and say whether it led to any action. You may use the space below to write down your findings.

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**2.10 LET US SUM UP**

This Unit has been designed to familiarise you with the concepts of advertising and publicity to enable you to see their relationship with public relations.

Publicity and advertising are two vital tools used by Public Relations practitioners for achieving overall Public Relations goals, although by themselves publicity and advertising cannot be called Public Relations.

We began by defining advertising, publicity and Public Relations and explained the defini-

tions to make the concept clear. We also identified how all these aspects of persuasive communication have certain basic similarities, like use of mass media channels, identification of target audience and designing of message etc. We also analysed the underlying differences between these concepts to enable you to understand the nature, scope, limitations and functions of these concepts.

In an effort to relate Public Relations advertising and publicity to their persuasive roles, you were exposed to two other concepts the newspapers of the Black Box concept and the SRIF formula. The Black Box concept explained that in order to get the right response, a communication message must make an impact on the 'Black Box' which is infact the human brain that affects the behaviour of the receiver. In that SRIF formula, the Strongest Relevant Influencing Factors was identified on whose strength, desired change in attitude of target group can be achieved. We also examined the seven factors involved in effective communication.

In order to clarify certain misconceptions that people tend to harbour about public relations being akin to propaganda, we discussed aspects of propaganda thoroughly to establish that Public Relations is not propaganda although both are used to influence public opinion, we also discussed the importance of public opinion, defined its nature and characteristics, and tried to understand the complex ways in which public opinion gets formed. The different techniques to gauge public opinion was also explained.

We also discussed "social marketing". This was defined as the use of marketing techniques to support Public Relations efforts in mobilising people or public opinion. Examples of social marketing were also presented to make you understand this concept better.

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## 2.11 SUGGESTED READING

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1) *Public Relations — Principles, Cases and Problems.*

Surjeet Publications, New Delhi - 1985.

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## 2.12 GLOSSARY

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<b>Prejudice</b>	:	an attitude that is not open to rational discussions
<b>Opinion Leader</b>	:	Someone who is able to influence informally other individual's attitudes. Opinion leadership is earned by individual's technical competence sociability etc.
<b>Message</b>	:	That which an act or work of communication is about.
<b>Respondent</b>	:	The person to whom questions are asked in a survey.
<b>Policy</b>	:	The basic tenets of an organisation that determine its activities.
<b>Prestige</b>	:	The reputation and standing of a person, institution or group.
<b>Promotion</b>	:	Special activities designed to stimulate interest in a person, product, institution or cause.

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## 2.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : MODEL ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- a) False    b) False    c) True    d) True  
e) True    f) False    g) True    h) True  
i) True

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Advertising is a paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas,

goods and services by an identified sponsor.

- 2) All the three are planned efforts in persuasive communication. They make use of mass media channels. They are aimed at a specific target audience and have pre-determined objectives of favourably influencing attitudes.
- 3) Advertising is a paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor. It is chiefly concerned with making sales. Advertising can be controlled both for timing and message.

Publicity is not paid for and can be obtained by cultivating good media relations. However, the message and timing cannot be controlled as it is the discretion of the editors. Publicity messages are considered more credible when the source is not identified directly and the published message appear to have the endorsement of media.

#### **Check Your Progress 3**

- 1) Although publicity is free of cost, it is not attained by mere mailing of publicity material. To receive favourable consideration, the material must be newsworthy, creatively prepared, keeping in mind the audience and the media selected. Besides, good relations with the media must also be cultivated.
- 2) Improving the image of the company and its products, making known its achievements, educating the public on various aspects of the company, establishing reputation as a good company to work for and as a responsible corporate citizen, for providing or unified marketing approach for its various products.

#### **Check Your Progress 4**

- 1) The communication objectives should be predefined. Target groups must be clearly identified. Media should be selected to reach the desired audience. Message should be prepared carefully to suit target groups and media. Creativity in message designing, adequate resources for sustained campaign, and professional manpower for planning and executing communication tasks are also important.

#### **Check Your Progress 5**

- a) False    b) True    c) True    d) True  
e) True    f) False