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# UNIT 4 CAREER PROSPECTS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

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## 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this unit, we introduce you to the realities of the Public Relations profession. The career opportunities available, the requisite qualifications and expectations of managements from the Public Relations department. At the conclusion of study of this Unit, you are expected to be able to:

- identify the Public Relations activities, in terms of career opportunities available;
- describe the professional dimensions of Public Relations alongwith its varied responsibilities;
- state the necessary qualifications and the traits of a good Public Relations officer;
- point out the specific and specialised areas of study for input, knowledge to develop Public Relations skills;
- distinguish the purposes, goals and areas of activity involved in Public Relations requirements among various institutions *e.g.* private enterprises, public sector organizations and voluntary agencies;
- explain the special Public Relations opportunities available for women;
- understand the nature of specialised jobs and careers in counselling and Public Relations Research; and

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## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the earlier Units of this block we have defined the nature of Public Relations, explained the concepts of Public Relations and have shown how ethics and professionalism are essential to Public Relations. In this Unit, we bring to you some information about job opportunities in Public Relations as also some aspects of Public Relations as a career.

The growth of Public Relations as a profession in Post-independent India has been phenomenal. It has opened up new opportunities not only to the management but also to the students of communication Public Relations. It is here that these creative skills are practically applied and tested. A beginner is expected to be familiar with the prospects of his own area of interest and career growth. Public Relations is an exciting discipline of interactions but also a profession which involves high expectations and therefore demands matching performance. One's skills, experience and education are on constant test.

Would you like to be a P.R.O.? In this unit, we shall try to identify Public Relations activities in terms of career opportunities available to you. We shall explore the gamut of professional Public Relations and its various responsibilities. You will learn what kind of qualifications and traits would suit a Public Relations Officer. Also we shall touch upon different specialised areas of study to gain knowledge about developing Public Relations skills.

In the next Unit in this Block, we shall discuss how Public Relations can be a catalyst for development. This Unit will help you to understand the importance of Public Relations activities in a developing country like India.

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## 4.2 CHANGING PUBLIC RELATIONS SCENARIO

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Public Relations has come a long way from the days of 'Public-be-Dammed' to 'The Public-be-Pleased'. The changing perspective of Public Relations as "management ideal" and "communication concept" has already been discussed in the previous units. We have noted that Public Relations is slowly responding to the environmental changes in society. The modern age is described as the age of inter-dependence. People's power is the ultimate power. It is this power in the form of public opinion which determines the role and scope of various organizations in our society. Institutional subordination to public opinion may be termed as a radical development in this industrialised age. As mentioned earlier, this dependence is mutual. People depend on institutions for various services. The institutions, in turn, depend on their public's goodwill for survival. "This mutual inter-dependence among the public and the social, economic, scientific, political, education, religious and other types of organizations, has created a need for constant communication. This is where Public Relations steps in to establish mutual trust and understanding.

Thus, Public Relations is a relatively new and emerging concept. While, there is no rigid and precise description as to its nature, its scope and need is to be understood from the various definitions used to explain it. It is rightly described as a management function in an organizational setting.

According to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, Public Relations is "the business of inducing the public to have an understanding for and general good-will towards a person, firm or institution". The philosophy of modern Public Relations is that it is "applied communication concerned with human relationships". Essentially Public Relations is a communication approach to establish a better understanding between people and organizations in a dynamic society. Modern Public Relations is a scientific, rational and professional concept and philosophy developed to solve the problems of organizations and their human relational conflicts. As a profession, it is systematically practiced and conducted on sound communication principles and organizational methods. Consequently, education in Public Relations and its career avenues, have received greater impetus in India.

We examine this in the sections that follow.

### 4.3 PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

The contemporary world has witnessed the impact of Public Relations on our society. It is increasingly realised that individual freedom and public opinion are the key factors to social control. A greater status is assigned to those organizations which reflect the public spirit. "It is an era in which the management principles of participation by individuals is on the ascendant over the authoritarian approach". Therefore, a Public Relations professional has to :

- 1) understand the publics,
- 2) mediate and respond to the situations,
- 3) achieve mutual adjustments.

This calls for a professional approach to its functions. Whether it is used systematically or casually, people have always recognised the need of Public Relations activity in every sphere throughout the world. "Each member of the public practices the principles of Public Relations in seeking the acceptance, co-operation, or affection of others". Public Relations professionals only practice it in a more professional manner.

Professionally, Public Relations has earned a new dignity and status for its members by promoting higher standards in business, banking and other institutional sectors. A substantial body of literature has been built around the discipline of Public Relations. A large number of Associations of professional (PRSI, PRSA, IPRA, etc.), rigid admission rules, and administration of a code of conduct, promotion of education, training and research (IFPR), professional books, journals, papers, research reports, public service are the professional characteristics of modern Public Relations. Thus, Public Relations has emerged as one of the promising, enterprising and challenging fields of communication, attracting multitudes of talented and young professionals.

#### Check Your Progress 1

- Note :** i) Read the following factual statements given in column 'A'. The column 'B' given alongside has a list of phrases which provide the reason or the basis of the statements given in column A. You are required to match each statement in column A with the relevant phrase in column 'B'
- ii) Check your answers with the ones given at the end of this Unit.

Column A	Column B
1) PR activity needs skills	a) achieving social control
2) Public opinion is important	b) bringing about better understanding among people.
3) Voluntary agencies need PR personnel	c) promoting higher standards and status for the organization
4) Advertising agencies offer specialised counselling services	d) in framing of effective messages
5) PR involves communication	e) raising of funds
6) A professional approach to PR is necessary for all organizations	f) handling intricate problems

### 4.4 PUBLIC RELATIONS AS A CAREER

You have now become familiar with the nature and scope of Public Relations functions. Naturally, you would be curious about what kind of career a PRO has, what qualities and educational requirements are needed. Let us, therefore, briefly examine these prospects?

Public relations is a full-time employment available to a professionally qualified,

experienced, talented and competent person. PR field is attracting younger and educated persons by its status and financial rewards. For a novice the job of a PRO either in Government agency or in a private organization entail perks and privileges apart from his salary. In India, a communication graduate may aspire for a career in PR more than in any other vocation in the line. Government of India and its auxiliary units, public sector enterprises and the State Governments provide a good job opening for a professionally competent beginner.

Big, medium and small business organizations in India have PR departments ranging from a full-fledged department to a one-man directed PR department. Two decades ago, a graduate would have come across only a few ads for PROs in newspapers. But, now ads for PROs have become a familiar sight in the Indian newspapers and magazines. In the USA, over 100,000 people are employed in the PR profession, with an accredited membership of 8000 to PRSA. We do not have reliable census data of PR professionals in our country. We may venture to guess that more than a lakh of people are employed in various PR slot, both in private and public sector organizations. A large chunk of PR activities have been undertaken by Government of India, particularly through its field network of Departments of Field Publicity, Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP), Song and Drama Division, Press Information Bureau (PIB), Research and Reference Division (RRD), Photo Division, Publications Division, Films Divisions, where job potential is enormous. Most of these jobs are highly prized and valued. PRSI, a professional association claims a membership of over 2000 through various chapters spread over the country.

Public Relations, which is a special philosophy of management in the western countries, has assumed new roles in the Indian context. Public Relations professionals are being sought after for the nation-building drive and development. They are expected to interpret the policies of the Government and harmonise the Government's actions with the popular sentiments. Every action of Government and its programmes are to be interpreted to the public from mundane 'Family Welfare' messages to the inspiring Science literacy campaigns. This calls for a vast reservoir of PR talents. PR is not to be mistaken as an effort for achieving greater profits. It should also be seen as service to the public. The outlook of our professionals should be different from their counterparts in the West. Therefore, a PR professional should be more empathetic and socially motivated than merely being a competent professional in the Indian context.

This naturally raises some questions. What are the basic qualities expected? What are the professional traits especially to be acquired by an Indian public relations person? What kind of education will prepare the person for this stupendous tasks of winning public confidence and goodwill? Let us analyse these as a first step.

#### **4.4.1 Personal Qualities of a Public Relations Person**

A formal degree in PR is merely a stepping stone to this career which involves "engineering public opinion". Considering that the job involves interaction and effective communication, it is only natural that there are some prerequisites apart from education and training.

There are the personal traits of the candidate which give the capacity to deal with other people. These include a genuine interest in people around, a flair for communication, a positive mental make-up, charisma, motivation and drive, ability to face challenges, leadership qualities, alertness and vitality. A candidate possessing these qualities can hope, with proper education and training, to go up the professional ladder.

#### **4.4.2 Educational Background for Public Relations**

Education in PR, as a formal requirement for PR job is gaining importance throughout the world. A university degree in PR is a recent development and also an indication of the advancement of PR as a profession in India. There is no standard guidance or statutory prescription. Though any graduate from the liberal arts, Science or Commerce/Management is eligible to enter Public Relations in India, it is better to have thorough background in social sciences. Of course, a Bachelor or a Post-graduate Degree in Communication/Journalism, with a strong dose of PR courses, is a must to the practitioners of Public Relations.

Yet, any graduate with Diploma in Public Relations (without a formal degree in Journalism and Communication) is also acceptable.

The Public Relations Society of India also offers a Diploma in Public Relations through its

Indian Foundation for Public Relations Education and Research, in many Indian cities through its local chapters, which is the best way to start your professional career. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Rajendra Prasad Institute of Communication and Management also offers Post-graduate Diploma Course in Public Relations through its numerous kendras all over the country. The Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, is running a Bachelor's Degree Course in PR which has been accepted by many as standard course for a beginner.

It is appropriate to know that the education committee of PRSA has listed eight important job classifications as a part of Public Relations professional activities. These may also be useful to Indian students as a vocational guidance. These are as follows :

- Writing
- Editing
- Placement (Media Relations)
- Promotion (of all PR activities)
- Speaking (as a spokesman)
- Production (of PR Communication messages)
- Programming (Counselling)
- Institutional Advertising.

Finally, the field of PR requires various important elements from many disciplines, therefore, it is advantageous to have an understanding of behavioural sciences.

#### 4.4.3 Professional Traits

As pointed out earlier, it is not the formal education which perfects a student for a career in PR. That is only a means. Hard work and dedication are important. So also the ability to think positively, speak clearly and coherently with an objective approach to the public, can take you far ahead. Besides, the basic PR skills, he/she should be able to develop innovative techniques of dealing with the relevant publics in the changing and competitive environment. Particularly, Corporate relations, Media relations, Employee relations, Community relations, Communicating with Shareholders, Consumers, Customers, Government, Industry, Dealers, Suppliers and other publics each of these require a different and specialised approach altogether. Each public is different and hence their needs and characteristics are to be thoroughly understood by PR students. As the job of PRO, even a junior level are likely to be part of management executive cadre, the demands can be challenging. A PR person is expected to assume a variety of roles such as a writer, photographers, media specialist, marketing expert, financial analyst, protocol officer, exhibitor, interviewer, speech maker, publisher, image maker, editor, psychologist etc. Thus, besides being an expert communicator, PRO must establish a communication network together intelligence - *i.e.* relevant information on public opinion so as to counsel the management. He/she is the spokes person of the organization and, therefore, must function as a representative of the organization, helping to interpret the policy of the management to the various publics.

Besides, mastery in public affairs, public opinion, social and public relation research are an asset to professional advancement. With commitment and diligence, these traits can be cultivated.

#### Check Your Progress 2

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

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

1) Apart from the academic qualifications, what are the personal qualities you think are important to be an ideal PRO ? List some of them.

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- 2) Why is it helpful for an aspiring PRO to have a background in behavioural sciences in addition to professional training? Explain briefly.

## 4.5 CAREERS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Let us suppose you have developed an interest in pursuing Public Relations as your career. The question foremost in your mind would be — where can I find employment? Let us survey the choices available to us in our country.

Extensive and excellent career opportunities are open for interested graduates in the Corporate PR sector in India. PR Departments have become an inseparable part of the management and organizational manpower in thousands of Industrial units, service agencies, educational institutions, private and public sector banks, business enterprises, Central, State and Local Governments set-up, hospitals, hotels, welfare agencies, Trade Associations, cooperatives, International Diplomatic Corps, Armed forces and in every conceivable human organizations.

It is important to know that the designation may vary in various firms/organizations. A PR person may be called 'welfare officer', Communication Executive, industrial relations officer, information officer, publicity officer, Customer Relations Officer, Guest Relations Officer and so on, as considered suitable by the organization. The specific tasks may vary but the overall responsibility is one of coordination, motivation and persuasion, through dissemination of information.

On a smaller scale, PR job openings could be explored in the PR cells of Universities, Labour Unions, Political Parties, Social Service Agencies, Farm Organizations, Medical Associations, Br. Associations, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, pressure groups, lobby, and countless other firms of all sorts. It is difficult to enumerate these agencies as no census data is available.

Moderately big industrial firms have bigger PR Departments with PR personnel strength between 25 to 100. Juniors are usually assigned with the task of writing, production, and execution of various types of corporate PR activities whereas senior PR executives function as policy-makers and advisers. Salaries are highly rewarding in corporate PR, as compared to many equivalent "mass media placements". A beginner will find the first job in Corporate PR as a good start. But the experts sound a word of caution. **It is better to enter corporate PR after a stint in the mediate.** Otherwise, there is fear of stagnation.

### 4.5.1 Public Relations in Industrial Sector

Indian industrial sector, comprising both the private and public sector enterprises, is one of the most competitive job markets for graduates. Indian industries, considered biggest in Asia, accounted for 1,98,533 companies in 1990 including 1,77,761 private and 20,792 public sector undertakings. India ranks 23rd in terms of its stock market with a billing of 23 million dollars per annum. The Indian Stock Market is the third largest in the world with 40 million share-holders. The top 20 Industrial giants in the private sector are : Tatas, BK and A. V. Birla, Thapar, Bajaj, Ambani, R.P. Goenka, Mallya, G.P. and C.K. Birla, Chhabria, Mohindra, G.M. Modi, Arvind Mafatlal, Nanda, L.N. and S.K. Birla, Godrej, K.K. Birla, Hinduja, Walchand, T.V.S. and M.P. Birla.

Indian Oil, Oil and Natural Gas Commission, Hindustan Petroleum, Coal India, Bharat Petroleum, BHEL are some of the public sectors industries ranked biggest in Asia and the World. Public Sector Undertakings include all organizational activities funded by the Government budget, like Government companies both in Central and State Sectors, Irrigation and Power

Projects, Railways, Post and Telegraphs, Communications, Ordnance factories, Departmental undertakings, Banking Insurance, Financial and other services. Indian industries provide employment to 11,175,000 people. Corporate Public Relations is a must in these bigger industrial companies. It is a highly specialised and promising career for a prospective graduate. A variety of professional PR services are expected from them like improving their relations, and image in the eyes of public, establishing goodwill with their employees, community, governments, ancillaries, share-holders, dealers, customers, etc. Usually, openings are available at the junior cadre level for PR graduates. Promotional opportunities are also very high in the private sector undertakings.

With growing consumer awareness movements, many business houses have realised the importance of keeping customers satisfied and have set-up special cells to deal with consumer complaints and fill the consumer information gap through the use of various media.

Industries like Tourism, hoteliering, airlines are getting increasingly professional in their approach and offering lucrative career opportunities to PR persons. In their effort to attract tourists and encourage travel by planning and offering special packages and other incentives, they need skilled motivators and persuaders as PR persons. With increasing privatisation of airliners, and consequent competition, the scope of PR career opportunities have only increased.

#### **4.5.2 Public Relations in Defence Services**

The Defence system in India is one of the largest establishments of the world. The various wings of defence come under the Defence Ministry such as Air Force, Army and Navy. These Defence establishments have maintained PR units for effective information management with various publics such as officials, soldiers, ex-servicemen, civilian staff, general public contractors, suppliers, etc., It is basically, a guarded PR activity for exclusive defence needs through its own network. A PR graduate can make an entry through the defence recruitment cadre for the services.

#### **4.5.3 Public Relations in Educational Institutions**

Education is an important aspect of our life. It is being conducted in an organized environment. Educational institutions are formal organizations which act as custodians of public knowledge. Educational institutions reflect our social values. They provide not only education to individual but also supply a steady stream of man-power to socio-economic organizations in our society. Governments, social leaders, private organizations have recognised the need for supporting a good educational system for the survival of knowledgeable citizenry.

The Indian Constitution has listed Education as a State subject. Both the State and the Central Governments have a vested interest in Education as it is their national obligation to prepare the country for all round progress.

Our Government has assumed, naturally, a great responsibility, authority and control over the educational policies, institutions and other aspects of higher education. Even though there are several private educational institutions in the country, it is the Government which is directly involved in educational management in the Indian setting. India has the largest institution-based educational network in the world. However, education is highly subsidised and is largely state-sponsored in India. We have about 5,43,677 primary schools, 1,41,014 Middle schools, 71,305 Higher Secondary Schools, 4329 Colleges (general), 876 professional educational institutions, 198 Universities. Most of these educational institutions have to interact with various publics such as Governments, Parents, Children, Teachers, Staff, Residents, Civic groups, Legislators, etc.. Without their active support, these institutions cannot survive. Besides there are non-formal adult education schemes. Literacy drives are being conducted to make the masses functionally literate. All this needs the services of people who can persuade and motivate the beneficiaries. PR is most important for educational institutions. Though our country hopes to achieve 80% literacy by 1995, PR has not become part of the institutions at the Secondary level and below. PR is being conducted at the higher levels by institutions of higher education. At present PR is being practised merely as press relation in most of our educational centres. There is tremendous job potential. If only our educational institutions realised the need of public relations and used the professional PR approach, a lot of problems at the campus could be resolved through communication resulting in a better image for the universities.

#### 4.5.4 Public Relations in Central, State and Local Government Units

The Government of India is one of the biggest public organizations legally elected and run by the people for themselves within the constitutional framework. Public administration through various levels of administrative hierarchy is nothing but an act of PR by the Government. Perhaps no other organization in the world has ever built and set-up such a large PR network and communication apparatus as that of Government of India. Both at the Centre and States, there is a vast multitude of "public servants" manning the bureaucracy, who should necessarily be PR-oriented. More than 50 per cent of this "officialdom" comes into contact with the public. This testifies to the government's involvement with the functional aspects of PR. A prospective PR graduate can explore opportunities in various Governmental wings under different nomenclatures. Thousands of posts of PR specialists are advertised in various Government units performing essentially PR functions.

Central, State and Local governments employ around 18.33 million people for a variety of Governmental services in India. In 1947, Government of India had only 18 ministries but today it has over 60 large ministries — the biggest establishment anywhere in the world.

With the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting taking the lead, the Ministry of Agriculture, Civil Aviation, Commerce, Communication, Defence, Energy, Environment and Forests, External Affairs, Finance, Food and Civil Supplies, Food Processing Industries, Health and Family Welfare, Home Affairs, Human Resource Development, Industry, Labour, Law and Justice, Parliamentary Affairs, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Petroleum and Chemicals, Planning, Programme Implementation, Railways, Tourism and Urban Development, Water Resources, Welfare, Women and Child Development, Atomic Energy, Electronics, Ocean Development, Space Technology and the Cabinet Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office, Planning Commission — provide the biggest job scope for PR graduates. Besides, at state level, there are PR departments and at district levels, are information officers who establish contact with the people?

Public Opinion is the foundation of Government of India's PR programs. Since it is a statutory organization, people have a right to know the goings on the government. Secondly, it must mobilise the public opinion in its favour to take the country forward in the community of nations. All these together constitute a gigantic task of applied PR for the Government.

Take the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. It has an elaborately structured PR apparatus to provide specialised PR services to various units of Government. The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has control over a vast empire — All India Radio, Doordarshan (Broadcast Media), Press Information Bureau, Research and Reference Division, Photo Division, Publications Division, Films Division, Central Board of Film Certification, National Film Development Corporation, Directorate of Film Festivals, National Film Archives of India, Children's Film Society, Directorate of Field Publicity, Song and Drama Division, Staff Training Institute (Technical) for Engineers of AIR and Doordarshan, Film and Television Institute of India and Indian Institute of Mass Communication.

These PR agencies offer centralised services and they are potential career centres of PR job-seekers in different specialised branches. All the Ministries and their constituent units, public sector undertakings also have attached PR units, employing thousands of PR specialists to cater to their own departmental needs.

The State Governments of India closely resemble the Central Government system and have their own Ministries of Information, Publicity and PR, operating closely with the central system, which offers thousands of jobs in Government Public Relations to prospective candidates.

Most of the states in India have Municipal Corporations for major cities under specific legislative acts. There is provision for a separate PR cell in the system except in the small town municipalities.

PR in Panchayat Raj, Local Self Government is crucial for a meaningful dialogue between government and the public. Various government functionaries and extension workers carry the message of development to the people. A prospective PR graduate can explore the openings in these government departments for a career.

**Check Your Progress 3**

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

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

1) State two reasons for PR activity in both the Central and State Governments.

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2) Which Ministry provides specialised PR services to the various departments?

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3) Name some of the units under Ministry of Information & Broadcasting which can have scope for PR persons.

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**4.5.5 Public Relations in Banking**

There is wide scope for PR in the Banking sector in India. The Banking industry broadly functions 'as an instrument for promoting economic and social development in a more purposive manner'. We have about 274 scheduled banks and a 4 non-scheduled banks, out of which 224 (about 90%) are public sector banks. There are 58,417 branches of commercial banks. About 33,640 of them are located in the rural areas forming a vital link with Indian commerce.

Alongside, we also have non-banking Financial Institutions serving Banking Industry such as the Reserve Bank of India. Life Insurance Corporations, Financial Corporations, NABARD, Regional Rural Banks, Housing Banks, Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), Industrial Reconstruction Bank of India (IRBI), Export and Import Bank of India (EXIM BANK), Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation (ICICI), Industrial Corporation of India (OFCI), Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI), Credit and Investment Company of India Ltd., (SCICI), State Financial Corporation (SFC), General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC), Unit Trust of India (UTI), and the Stock Exchanges in many bigger cities and towns.

Banks are actively involved in a competitive market environment to win their customers, dealers, industrial community. Almost all the Banking units have provision for corporate PR departments with a staff ranging between 20 to 100 PR professionals. These banks offer excellent career opportunities for a beginner with status, perks and rosy promotional chances.

#### 4.5.6 Public Relations in Hospitals

Public Relations for Hospitals and Health Organizations is a recent development in India. Organizational PR has been at work in the medical profession. The Doctor-Patient relationship is a classic case of PR. There is a greater need for effective PR management to accomplish the avowed objects for Government of India. With the newer and revolutionary trend of patients demanding to be treated as consumers, the need for information and better relationships is even more urgent, making it imperative for hospitals to adopt a professional PR approach.

“Health for all by 2000” requires crucial public understanding and citizen participation. The importance of PR for Hospitals and Health agencies being recognised in view of the emerging problems resulting from factors like ignorance, over-population, illiteracy, lack of sanitation and remoteness of Indian rural life. We have one of the biggest state sponsored health care systems comprising 20,531 primary health centres, 1,30,390 sub-centres, 5.86 lakhs of trained Dais, 4.10 lakh Health Guides, 128 Medical Colleges. It is rather unfortunate that the PR concept is restricted only to big cities. Health and Family Welfare, however, has a well-structured extension communication wing performing PR functions in almost all the states. PR graduates with love for health communications and having dedication to social service can explore avenues for a career in these hospitals and organizations involved in health care.

Visit a business house, a hospital, and a bank nearest to your place of residence and find out what arrangements they have to respond to complaints/suggestions by their customers. You may use the format given below for guidance :

● Name of the Institution	:	
● Location	:	
● Number of staff	:	
● Number of clients	:	
● Number of visitors per day	:	
● Number of Telephone calls	:	
● Number of letters per day	:	
● Number of complaints per week through :-		
i) Personal Visit	:	
ii) Telephones	:	
iii) Letters	:	
Total Number	:	
● Nature of complaints	:	
● Repetition of complaints	:	( ) Yes ( ) No
● Complaints attended to	:	in 24 hours - in 2-3 days - in over a week -
● Number of staff involved in dealing with complaints :		
● Is there a Suggestion Box available ?	:	( ) Yes ( ) No

#### 4.5.7 Public Relations in Community Welfare Services

Community Welfare work in India is both State-sponsored and through non-government voluntary efforts. Welfare policies and programmes are clearly defined by the State and the Constitution. The Ministry of Welfare is incharge of social justice and welfare by supervising:

- Welfare of SC/ST's, Religious Minorities, Economically Backward Classes, and other backward classes.

- Work related to Welfare of the disabled (blind, deaf and dumb, etc.).
- Administration of Wakf Works.

The State-sponsored welfare programmes, through its thousands of welfare agencies and private voluntary organisations include women and child development (ICDC's), Nutrition programmes, early childhood education programme, women's development programmes, welfare of the disabled, social defence, relief and rehabilitation schemes, Government-controlled welfare departments, hundreds of voluntary agencies, and many international voluntary and aided organizations, in specific fields provide good job opportunities for PR personnel to provide a two-way channel of communication, to persuade and motivate the public, to bring about attitudinal change and thus aid the development tasks.

#### Check Your Progress 4

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

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

1) Name some important non-banking financial institutions in India.

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2) Outline the need for PR activity by the banks.

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3) Mention the areas of PR activity in development tasks.

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## 4.6 PUBLIC RELATIONS CAREER FOR WOMEN

Our discussion so far was concerned with PR as profession regardless of gender bias. But, is there any gender bias in career opportunities in PR? Happily, PR is one profession where the feminine gender is highly respected and given equal opportunity. However, at present, males dominate the Indian PR scene. But women are also coming to the fore. In the Western countries, PR is a favourite field for women. There are many foursome where women employees are not preferred for obvious legal and selfish reasons. They are employed mostly for "staff functions". Since 1960's and 70's, the Indian Corporate sector has opened its doors to the women work force in a big way. Government's PR agencies have always legally allowed women with equal affirmation. Advertising, marketing, sales promotion are sectors which have a special appeal for women. Services, Hospitals, Tourism, Industry, cosmetics, textiles, Fashion, food industries, welcome women PR's executives. Nearly 20 per cent of women account for a PRSI's membership.

With the introduction of free-economic policy information, entertainment, computers and other fields have given good opportunities for women PR aspirants.

"WANTED — PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER FOR A FIVE STAR HOTEL. MUST BE A GRADUATE WITH DEGREE/DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS/JOURNALISM. MUST POSSESS EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION SKILLS. LADY CANDIDATES WELCOME TO APPLY."

Prepare a job application response to this advertisement.

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## 4.7 PUBLIC RELATIONS COUNSELLING AS A PROFESSIONAL CAREER

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PR Counselling is a part of the PR profession. It is basically the functions of an external agency. The PR counsellor is retained to counsel and advice management on policy, financial and government relations, opinion research, educational services publication, press relations, TV, graphics and community relations. J. Walter Thomson, Hill and Knowlton, Young and Rubican, Satchi and Satchi and Carl Boyer are a few but internationally well-known PR counselling firms. They employ 100 to 300 PR specialists to serve clients through their specialised PR services in most parts of the globe.

Prominent advertising agencies also provide PR communication counselling services in India. More than 50 major ad agencies are undertaking PR counselling along with their routine ad services. Famous Indian ad agencies Mudra, O&M, HTA, Lintas, Blaze, Trikaya, RK Associates, Clariton have their own PR wings. Roger Pereira's firm and 'Good Relations India' are the two major PR counselling firms mentioned in professional circles.

These PR counselling firms and ad agencies with PR cells should be good entry-points for beginners as they welcome freshers to the junior positions. It is relatively easier to get an entry. Some ad agencies have at least 10 to 15 vacancies for PR jobs whenever they are hired for a PR event. Opportunities are wide open in this field. A good PR student should have no problem to making an entry in these firms. The salaries may be initially unattractive but with experience and service a PR graduate will have no regrets.

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## 4.8 PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION AS A CAREER

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PR concept has gained more respectability, of late, mainly due to its empirical approach to the PR problems and public opinion measurement. Initially, few could foresee public opinion research as one of the thrust areas of social science theory "stemming from a study of public opinion process, that should guide a proper and beneficial public relations programme". That Research and evaluation is an integral unit of the total PR profession does not merit mention. About 70 per cent of professionals look for PR counselling precisely for its fact-finding, opinion research services.

Research enable PR professionals to formulate sound policies and win public confidence, PR professionals use variety of research techniques such as Image survey.

Motivation Research, Effectiveness surveys, Content Analysis, Individual Public Surveys, as part of their interest in PR and Public opinion research. Social audit, basic human relation research are other key research areas employ sound methods used by social behavioural scientists. As a specialised area, PR research is new development and very few people are competent and experienced. Usually, outside PR counselling and Public Opinion Research Organizations help the PR department on a contract basis. Now, the trend is towards encouraging the PR practioners to have good knowledge of PR research methods and techniques. This is an area which can provide a wide job opportunity not only with public opinion research firms and PR counselling firms, but also in the corporate PR units. Post-graduate communication researchers can easily find a good vocation as PR research specialists. In India, though relatively novel, our PR professionals are slowly becoming sensitive to this development. Agencies like MARG, IMRB, ORG, are some of the well-known Public Opinion Research Organizations.

### Check Your Progress 5

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

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

1) Name some Research agencies in India.

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2) State whether the following statement are true or false.

- a) Research methods used by PR practioners are different from those used by social scientists. ( )
- b) Research can help frame sound policies. ( )
- c) One can hire the services of research organizations on a contract basis. ( )
- d) PR has not much to offer to women candidates by way of career. ( )
- e) Many advertising agencies also offer PR counselling services. ( )

## 4.9 LET US SUM UP

Public Relations is human philosophy applied to the organizational management functions with a view to establishing good rapport and achieving mutual benefits. In this Unit we have attempted to explore the professional avenues available for a fresh graduate of PR. Also, we have discussed how to get an early entry to PR. As a career, we have demonstrated that it is management staff function, and as such, job avenues are almost limitless. Most PR departments have become integral to the organizational system. Fresh graduate is advised to have a good general academic background and a specialisation in Journalism or Communication (preferably Post-graduate degree) with PR as electives. As PR deals with human communication and interaction, it is advisable to have a good background knowledge in behavioural sciences. It helps to understand people better.

A degree or diploma in PR is an added advantage to seek an early entry into the PR profession.

Besides, one should have a flair for profession, empathy, steadfastness, positive thinking, information grasping abilities, good communication skills, professional traits, ability to develop innovative PR techniques, good social-psychological understanding of PR publics.

The organization's employment scenario for PR graduate is promising, especially in Central, State, and Local government departments. Vast private and public sector industries, defence services, private and public banking institutions, hospitals, community welfare agencies, voluntary service bodies and organized enterprises need trained PR personnel. Women PR aspirants have a good scope for a career in various fields. PR counselling and PR Research and Evaluation are highly specialised fields, requiring specialised training in behavioural sciences. As a career, PR is rewarding, secure, creative and socially useful and productive profession. It is more a need-based human service rather than a profession and this is being gradually realised in our country.

Other factors like growing competition, increasing consumer awareness, a need to project an image of a responsible corporation, the importance of making employees motivated - all these have contributed to the status of the profession.

## 4.10 SUGGESTED READING

Basu Anil; 1990; *Public Relations-Problems and Prospects*.

## 4.11 GLOSSARY

- Multi-disciplinary** : that involving several disciplines Public Relations counsel — functioning of a public relations professional independently for a fee or on a retainer basis for one or more client.
- Survey** : an analysis of market or state of opinion among a specified group or groups.

## 4.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : MODEL ANSWERS

### Check Your Progress 1

1 (d), 2 (a), 3 (e), 4 (f), 5 (b), 6 (c).

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Good communication skills, positive mental make up, charisma, motivation, alertness, vitality, leadership quality etc.
- 2) A knowledge of behavioural sciences helps to provide insight into the expectations and needs of various publics or the target audience. This in turn can guide the message design and communication strategies. Therefore, it proves advantageous in achieving mutual understanding with the public.

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) To mobilise public opinion, to disseminate information to the public.
- 2) The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- 3) AIR, PIB, Doordarshan, Photo Division, Films Division, Publications Division, Song and Drama Division, the various units associated with films, Field Publicity etc.

### Check Your Progress 4

- 1) IDBI, IRBI, NABARD, ICICI, IFCI, SIDBI, GIC, UTI etc.
- 2) Bank work in a competitive environment and need to win over customers, industries, dealers, community, opinion leaders etc.
- 3) In health sector, PROs can function as extension agents in health education, family welfare programmes etc. They can work in community welfare organizations - which may be state sponsored or voluntary organizations, to serve social causes like welfare of blind, handicapped, tribals and the underprivileged sections of the society.

### Check Your Progress 5

- 1) MARG, IMRB, ORG
- 2) a) False, b) True, c) True, d) False, e) True