**Public Relations in Government**

The concept of public relations emerged in America at the beginning of the 20th century and the US became the House of Global Public Relations in the 21st Century – a model to all countries. Today, every organisation — be it public or private — practices public relations with a global perspective to reach out to domestic and international stakeholders.

The Indian government has a separate Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to inform, educate and motivate people. Also, state govt,s have Public Relations Departments. In countries like USA, government, without any centralised Ministry, has an independent and self-contained Public Affairs Unit in each ministry and every Federal department.

**Role of Public Relations in Government**

In a democracy like India, you will agree that popular support is required for the government to exist. The government therefore has to inform, motivate, change the attitude and finally seek support from the public to achieve its objectives. Let us find out why it is essential for the government to keep the public informed about its plans and programmes and how this is achieved.

The role of Public Relations is vital in improving government image. The positions of Public Relations Officers (PROs) were created in all Ministries which decided to send its Information Officers to various Ministries to act as the link between the Ministry and the public.

The main function of PROs in government institutions is to

1. Help articulate the government policy and to publicise the ministries' activities.
2. Essentially, a PRO should try to make his or her ministry more accountable to the public.
3. The role of a PRO is to channel out important information from the ministries to the public through the press and other forums,
4. make the ministries more accessible to the public and the press,
5. handle press queries and churn out publications giving a positive image of ministries.
6. Assisting in the preparation of ministerial speeches by polishing them ready for functions,
7. Issuing press releases
8. Providing adequate press coverage for the ministry in a positive and meaningful way
9. highlighting ministry activitie
10. advising senior management on relevant publicity programmes and creating rapport between senior management and junior staff.

Ministries and departments are. therefore, expected to maintain regular liaison through Public Relations Officers seconded to them to ensure the fullest possible publicity for any information they wish to communicate to the public through the media.

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

After Independence, in 1947, the Government of India set up the Ministry of

Information and Broadcasting, employing professionals to look after the function

of public relations.

There are specialised units in this Ministry which handle the public information of the government of India. They are called ‘media units’ and inform people about the plans and programmes of the government.

**Bureau of Outreach and Communication**

Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) was set up on 8th December, 2017 by integration of erstwhile Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP), Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) and Song & Drama Division (S&DD).

* The Bureau aims at providing a 360 degrees communication solutions to the Ministries/Departments/ Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)/autonomous bodies.
* It acts as an advisory body to Government on media strategy.
* With 23 Regional Outreach Bureaus (ROBs) and 148 Field Outreach Bureaus (FOBs)
* BOC is engaged in educating people, both rural and urban, about the Government’s policies and programmes to evoke their participation in developmental activities.
* This is ensured by the Bureau using different vehicles of communication viz. Print Media advertising, Audio Visual Campaigns, dissemination through Exhibitions, Outdoor Campaigns and New Media etc.
* Branding of the Government as prime facilitator of people’s empowerment and positioning of messages through Print, Audio-Visual, Outdoor, Digital Media to realize the same, is BOC’s mandate.
* The Policy guidelines have been adapted in sync with emerging media scenario in order to maximize the reach of information dissemination.
* Advertising and Visual communication Division (erstwhile DAVP) of BOC is the nodal division of BOC for dissemination of information about various schemes and policies of different Ministries & Departments of Government of India, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and autonomous body.
* It undertakes campaigns to inform and educate rural and urban people about the Government’s policies and programmes through available vehicles of communication viz. Print, Audio Visual, Outdoor, Digital and New Media.
* Folk Communication Division of BOC carries out inter-personal communication through live media utilizing wide range of performing arts such as Drama, Dance-Drama, Composite-Programme, Puppetry, Ballets, Operas, Folk and Traditional Recitals, Mythological Recital and other Local Folk & Traditional Forms maximizing outreach of Policies, Programmes and Schemes of the Government.
* The main function is to create awareness and ensure emotional receptivity with the sense of belongingness and ownership.
* Regional Outreach Bureau (ROBs) and Field Outreach Bureau (FOBs) accordingly seek to empower people through information to enable them to avail the benefits from such programmes/schemes. It organizes ground activation and outreach programmes.
* Special Outreach Programmes (SOPs) are organized with the support of various stakeholders viz. the State Government and local functionaries, society groups etc.
* As they are in the local language and at nearby venues, the impact of these communication programmes is more and it enables a greater understanding of the Government’s schemes among the masses.
* These efforts are complemented by use of traditional and folk media and other conventional and non-conventional methods
* [1. All India Radio (AIR)](http://www.allindiaradio.org/)
* [2. Doordarshan (DDN)](http://www.ddindia.gov.in/)
* [3. Press Information Bureau (PIB)](http://pib.nic.in/)
* [4. Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI)](http://rni.nic.in/)
* [5. Directorate of Film Festivals (DFF)](http://dff.nic.in/)
* Directorate of Field Publicity
* [7. Song & Drama Division (S&DD)](http://sdd.nic.in/)
* [8. Publications Division](http://www.publicationsdivision.nic.in/)
* [9. Research, Reference & Training Division (RR&TD)](http://www.rrtd.nic.in/)
* [10. Photo Division](http://photodivision.gov.in/)
* [11. Films Division](http://www.filmsdivision.org/)
* [12. Press Council of India](http://presscouncil.nic.in/)
* [13. Children's Film Society](http://cfsindia.org/)
* [14. National Film Development Corporation](http://www.nfdcindia.com/)
* [15. Broadcasting Engineering Consultant India Limited](http://www.becil.com/)

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4. Directorate of Film Festivals
5. Doordarshan
6. Film and Television Institute of India (FTII)
7. Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC)
8. National Film Archives of India (NFAI)
9. National Film Development Corporation (NFDC)
10. Publications Division
11. Press Information Bureau (PIB)
12. Registrar of Newspapers on India (RNI)
13. Children Film Society

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• Song and Drama Division

• Research and Reference Division

You must understand that the above media units specialize in the use of a particular means of communication to convey information to the public. To achieve this, a wide variety of media like the press, advertisements, performing arts, group discussions, books, television, radio and films are used.