Chapter 4

RESEARCH SETTING

In order to study the different facets of communication within the organisation Kochi Refineries Limited, it is important to understand the background of the developmental aspects of the society in which it functions. Later the general background of the functioning of KRL as well as its socio-cultural milieu are discussed.

4.1 Public Sector in India

At the time of India’s independence in 1947, there were various problems confronting the country which needed to be tackled in a planned and systematic manner. India was basically an agrarian economy with a weak industrial base, low level of savings and investment and near absence of infrastructural facilities. There existed considerable inequalities in income, low level of employment opportunities, serious regional imbalances in economic attainments and lack of trained manpower in various fields of management. It was at this juncture that the Government of India decided to start public sector undertakings.

The major objectives of setting up the public enterprises, according to the Government of India can be broadly summarised to include: (a) to help in the rapid economic growth and industrialisation of the country and create the necessary infrastructure for economic development, (b) to earn return on
investment and thus generate resources for development, (c) to promote redistribution of income and wealth, (d) to create employment opportunities, (e) to promote balanced regional development, (f) to assist the development of small-scale and ancillary industries and (g) to promote import substitutions, save and earn foreign exchange for the economy.¹

There are 240 central public sector enterprises in the country under the control of Government of India in which 160 belong to manufacturing category, 75 rendering services, and 5 under construction.

The wide range of product and activities of central public sector enterprises include manufacturing of steel, mining of coal and minerals, extraction and refining of crude oil, manufacture of heavy machinery, machine tools, instruments, heavy machine building equipment, heavy electronic equipment for thermal and hydel stations, transportation equipment, telecommunication equipment, ships, sub-marines, fertilizers, drugs and pharmaceuticals, petro-chemicals, cement, textile, consumer items like bread, newsprint, paper, footwear and contraceptives, operation of air, sea, river and road transport, operation in national and international trade, consultancy, contract and construction services, inland and overseas telecommunication services, hotel and tourists services.²

These public sector undertakings of the Government of India are located in different states. In the state of Kerala there are a few enterprises run by the
Central Government. Kochi Refineries Limited is the largest among them in terms of turnover.

4.2 Kerala Scenario

The people of Kerala have placed high attention to education since the last century. Their commitment to discussion, argument and political debate is consistent with the proliferation of schools, from primary schools to institutions of higher education. According to Shrum and Ramanathaiyer (2000) while it seems likely that education in a progressive political environment can elevate the self-conceptions of the poorest to participate more fully in the developmental process, it also (1) increases the potential for labour militancy to the detriment of external investment; (2) increases expectations and decreases job satisfaction among the educated; (3) creates greater demand among both men and women for high-quality professional and management positions, which are still scarce in Kerala’s economy.3

The contrast between social and economic development is apparent in a variety of ways: poor economic growth with relatively high physical quality of life, retarded industrial development with a decent standard of living, low per-capita income combined with high levels of consumerism, states Sooryamoorthy (1997). Often this is expressed in terms of scores of indices of the well-being of the population. On such measures as the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI)
and the Human Development Index (HDI) Kerala ranks above all other Indian states, though it ranks among the middle in economic terms.  

Evidence of the poor growth performance from the assistance disbursed by all-India financial institutions in Kerala, which is only Rs.79 per capita as against Rs.2106 for Gujarat, Rs.468 for Andhra Pradesh, Rs.572 for Karnataka, Rs.391 for Tamil Nadu and Rs.468 for the country as a whole.

Kerala has a long history of trade unionism. The most striking feature of workers in Kerala is that they are highly organised. This is well reflected in the increase in the number of unions and the varying intensities of industrial disputes, usually resulting in work stoppages, that Kerala has been experiencing in the past.

According to Oommen (2000) "Kerala is like a beggar sitting on a bench of gold. A large part of the blame for poor performance and distorted performance will have to be born by the successive state governments, the coalition politics of the state and the numerous trade unions led by different political parties which compete for presence even in a single firm. An enterprise whose workers are divided into trade unions of different political parties is admittedly not a happy place for production."

That the era of economic reform since 1996 has failed to make any impact on Kerala is evident in the fact that out of a total national investment proposals made from August 1991 through December 1998, Kerala’s share was a measely
1.1 per cent (Kerala's population by contrast is 3.3 per cent) as against 18.7 per cent for Gujarat, 18 per cent for Maharashtra, 9.4 per cent for Uttar Pradesh, and 8.3 per cent for Andhra Pradesh.

4.3 Communication Scene

Shrum & Ramanathaiyer (2000) states that Kerala is a strategic place for the examination of capacity building in the context of demoratisation and sustainability concerns because of its developmental pre-occupation with knowledge, the way this has been translated into state action and popular organisation, and the contemporary need for retention and utilisation of knowledge workers for the economic betterment of Keralites.

The scientific capacity, according to Sooryamoorthy, (1997) begins with education and communication. Perhaps the most telling indicator of the latter and an important component of technological status, particularly with regard to Internet access an aspect of scientific capacity is the distribution of telephones. Kerala has more than four times as many telephones per square kilometer than India as a whole. While India as a whole has 1.05 telephones per square kilometre (5.06 telephones per 1000), Kerala has, on average, 4.5 telephones (or 7.1 telephones per 1000 persons). Six radio stations in Kerala reach 98 per cent of the population, of whom 70 per cent have access to television.

In the area of managing and disseminating knowledge Kerala had witnessed experiments conducted by a few voluntary non-governmental
organisations. The Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishad has been active in popularising scientific information among common people, using print and alternative communication channels. The library movement has been successful in managing libraries particularly in villages throughout the state. The Kerala Sahitya Pravartha Co-operative Society has been engaged in publishing books at low cost in the vernacular language. In the past the state had also witnessed an effective theatre movement particularly those carrying social and political messages. The exponential growth of the number of home computers, Internet cafés and Internet connections are indicators of the strong communication infrastructure of Kerala, all having a strong bearing on acquisition, processing, storage, and dissemination of information and knowledge. These are in addition to the growing popular mass media such as newspapers, magazines, feature films, radio and television.

4.4 Kochi Refineries Limited

Kochi Refineries Limited was incorporated as a public sector company in 1963 as one in a chain of refineries around the country to meet the country's objective of achieving self-sufficiency in the petroleum refining sector. The construction of the refinery was started in 1964 and was completed in 1966.

As on 31.3.2000, the authorised and paid up capital of the company was Rs.75 crores and Rs.69 crores respectively. The company's registered office and
the refining units are located at Ambalamugal, in Ernakulam district, Kerala State. The company has liaison offices in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai.

The stake of the Government of India in KRL is 55.04 per cent. While the Government of Kerala has an equity of 5.08 per cent, the Life Insurance Corporation has 13.45 per cent and the Unit Trust of India has 5.84 per cent stake in the company. The Indian public has 13.55 per cent shares and the rest is shared by insurance companies, nationalised banks, mutual funds, Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation, non-resident Indians, foreign-institutional investors, corporate bodies and others. About 600 employees of KRL are also share-holders of the company. Individual share-holders are about 45,000.10

4.4.1 The Vision and Mission

The vision statement of Kochi Refineries Limited is as follows: “A globally competitive integrated energy and petrochemical company focused towards achieving excellence in national priority areas with a strong conscience towards protection of environment and progress of society.”11

The declared mission of KRL is as follows:

◊ To strengthen the presence in petroleum refining and marketing of petroleum products and to grow into the energy and petrochemical sectors;

◊ To realign orientation of thinking and philosophies to become a market driven and customer friendly organisation with focus on total quality management;

◊ To enhance shareholder value and maximise return through the best use of resources;
To recognise employees as the most valuable asset of the organisation and foster a culture of participation and innovation for employee growth and contribution;

To achieve global standards of excellence through R&D efforts, technology up-gradation, safety management and environmental protection; and

To be a major contributor towards community development and welfare of society at large.

4.4.2 The Products

KRL is producing 24 different kinds of petroleum products which are consumed by individuals, households and industries. Diesel, petrol, cooking gas, aviation turbine fuel, kerosene, naphtha, benzene, toluene, bitumen and furnace oil, are some of the main products.

These products are transported to all parts of Kerala and some parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. While 39 per cent of the products are transported using rail, 20 per cent are carried out by tankers, 23 per cent by road, and 18 per cent by pipeline.

4.4.3 The Performance

KRL has been consistent in its performance. Ever since the company had started signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of India in 1991 it has been obtaining the grading of "excellent". During the financial years 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1998-99 it had attained a perfect 1.00 score and topped the list of the best performing public sector enterprises in India. Since its inception KRL has been making profit every year.
KRL has been a successful organisation in achieving envisaged production, capacity utilisation and profit making.

Table 4.1
Financial Performance of KRL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>4374.15</td>
<td>4170.91</td>
<td>5768.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Profit</td>
<td>333.88</td>
<td>546.58</td>
<td>322.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit after tax</td>
<td>220.41</td>
<td>338.23</td>
<td>235.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The capacity utilisation of the company during the past one decade has been more than 100 per cent. During the financial year 1999-2000 the capacity utilisation was 107 per cent. This means that the company produced 7 percent more than its install capacity of 7.5 million metric tonnes per annum. During that year the profit before tax was Rs.322.49 crores, and the turnover was Rs.5768.33 crores (Table 4.1).

KRL has completed all its major projects within the cost approved by the Government of India and ahead of the targeted date of completion. The projects were in aromatic expansion, captive power generation, refining capacity expansion, and the diesel hydro-desulphurisation.

The company has invested substantially in automated safety and process control systems to ensure safe working conditions for protecting men and
materials, as it is engaged in operation of a hazardous chemical plant. Employees have been regularly trained in practising safety at work place. It has won several awards from regional, national and international professional bodies in maintaining safety at the work place.

Similarly KRL has been paying high attention to environmental care and protection. Extensive anti-pollution measures have been incorporated in the design of the units itself. KRL was the first industrial unit in Kerala which was permitted by the Kerala State Pollution Control Board to discharge the treated effluent water into the inland rivers. To reduce particulate matter emission, an electrostatic precipitator was commissioned in 1985 to become the first refinery in India to install this facility. KRL has received the ISO (International Standard Organisation) 14001 Energy Management System Certification in 1999 from the Bureau Veritas Quality International, London. KRL had installed sulphur recovery units to minimise sulphur dioxide emissions and a fully automatic, on-line and computerised ambient air quality monitoring stations for regular monitoring of ambient air quality. The diesel hydro-desulphurisation plant, installed recently, is helping the company to reduce the sulphur content in diesel from 1.0 per cent to 0.25 per cent and thereby minimising the emissions from vehicle exhausts. In recognition of the various environmental protection measures KRL had received a number of awards.
4.4.4 The Departments

There are 16 departments in KRL. As shown in the Table 4.2 there is wide disparity in the number of employees working in different departments. Out of the total number of 1988 employees in the organisation 338 are working in manufacturing department, 296 in the stock and oil department and 275 in maintenance department all of which are handling technical functions. Some non-technical departments are small in terms of manpower strength like vigilance and oil economics departments.

Table 4.2
Departments in KRL and respective manpower strength

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Department</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock and Oil Movement</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical services</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Management</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Accounts</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Development</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power and Utilities</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Planning</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretarial</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit and Management Information</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil Economics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigilance</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1988</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kochi Refineries Limited: Database of HRM Department.
KRL has a pool of highly skilled, young and achievement-oriented employees. The task of grooming and generating highly motivated professionals - a talent pool which can put the monetary and physical resources available to optimum use to achieve the corporate goal - is a continuous one.\textsuperscript{13}

4.4.5 Demographic Profile

To understand the cultural dimensions of the communication process within KRL, a study of the demographic profile of the whole employees would be useful. A number of unpublished data sources like computer data-base, departmental notes particularly from the personnel section under the human resources management department of KRL were consulted. The details are given below.

KRL has an employee strength of 1988 representing 14 Indian states, namely: Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Maharashtra, Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Assam and Lakshadweep, which is a union territory.

Though majority of employees are from Kerala state there are a large number of people from many other states working in KRL. The majority are from Kerala (1747) which is followed by Tamil Nadu (157), Andra Pradesh (40) and Maharashtra (7).

KRL has an officer strength of 534 out of the total work force of 1988. Of which 353 are professionals recruited directly through a nation-wide
selection process using newspaper advertisements. Normally they are first class graduates in their respective fields and they are selected after a keenly contested written test and later an interview. Rest of the officers (190) have been promoted from work-men category after putting in long service in the technical and non-technical functions. There are nine grades in the officers’ cadre, from grade ‘A’ to ‘I’

Table 4.3
Details of Grades of Officers in KRL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Officer/Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Senior Officer/Senior Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Deputy Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Chief Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Deputy General Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kochi Refineries Limited: Data collected from the computer database of the personnel section of HRM department.

Normally fresh recruitments are made to grade ‘A’ positions in the officer category. In exceptional cases recruitments are made directly to senior positions if internal candidates who are qualified and experienced are not
available to fill up the positions. While an ‘A’ grade officer working in a department like manufacturing, maintenance, projects, stock and oil movements is known as ‘engineer’, the one working in the non-technical function is called ‘officer’. The name of the officer’s designation has his functional departments also. Hence an officer of materials department is known as ‘materials officer’ and the one in the personnel function is called ‘personnel officer’. However, from the position of deputy managers and above there is no such differentiation.

4.4.6 Educational Profile

An analysis of the educational profile of the employees in KRL shows a concentration of technically qualified personnel. There are 972 employees having a diploma in engineering or a certificate in industrial training. The diploma holders are from branches like chemical, electrical, instrumentation and mechanical disciplines. The certificate holders (Industrial Training Certificate) are also from technical trades like electrician, plumber, instrument mechanic, and automobile mechanic.

There are 231 graduate engineers in KRL with Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech.) or Bachelor of Science in Engineering (B.Sc. Engineering) degrees. They are mainly from the branches of chemical, mechanical, electrical, instrumentation, and civil engineering. Most of the engineering graduates are from chemical and mechanical engineering disciplines.
The number of masters degree holders in management like the master of Business Administration (MBA) is 45. In addition to them there are also other MBA degree holders who are basically graduates in engineering having an additional MBA degree qualification which they had acquired after joining KRL, done as evening programme at the Cochin University of Science and Technology and the one conducted by Indira Gandhi National Open University.

There are 23 employees having a qualification in cost accounting and finance like the ICWA (Membership of the Institute of Costing and Works Accounting) and ACA (Membership of Association of Chartered Accountants). There are five medical doctors with qualifications like MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) and MD (Master of Medicine). The number of post graduates in arts, science and commerce with degrees like MA (Master of Arts), MSc (Master of Science) and M.Com (Master of Commerce) are 198. Most of them are working in the administrative and non-technical functions or research and development or laboratory functions. Also there are 5 doctoral degree holders - all in the areas of chemical engineering or chemistry, and none in social sciences, humanities, or management.

In addition to these there are 229 graduates in arts, science and commerce with B.Sc., B.A., and B.Com. degrees. They are mostly working in administrative functions as typists, stenographers, personal assistants, clerks and office assistants.
During the initial stages of the operations of the refinery a large number of personnel were recruited in lower grades who were not possessing technical qualifications. Most of them were merely matriculates with SSLC (Secondary School Leaving Certificate) as the qualification. They had been well-trained and now they are performing well in technical and operating areas alongside freshers with little experience but having high technical qualifications. There are 221 employees in this category. At that time, a few persons had joined in lower positions such as drivers and helpers even without SSLC qualification. They are working in technical areas in responsible positions now. Such employees also are working in technical areas.

4.4.7 Age Profile

The average age of the employees in KRL is 36 years. The details of age structure in relation to officers and workmen are given in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4
Age Profile of Employees in KRL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Workmen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-30</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>1419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kochi Refineries Limited: Database of human resource management department.
4.4.8 Women Employees

The strength of women employees in KRL is only 64. One main reason of this low percentage of women in KRL is statutory restriction in deploying women in night shifts. Being a continuous chemical process industry the refinery works on round-the-clock shifts all through the year. The employees there work on three-hour rotating shifts of eight-hour duration each. However women are employed in administrative functions which are in the general shifts, during day time.

Table 4.5
Social Profile of Employees in KRL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Workmen</th>
<th>Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Caste</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Tribe</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically Handicapped</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-service Personnel</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1419</td>
<td>1569</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kochi Refineries Limited: Database of human resource management department.

4.4.9 Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes

Being a Government of India Company KRL is duty-bound to comply with the governmental guidelines and instructions on the recruitment and welfare of members belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe.
categories, with relaxed norms in the cases of qualifying marks, age, and experience. There are 208 workers and 101 officers belonging to SC/ST communities as shown in Table 4.5.

In addition to the SC/ST members there are 38 employees in the category of physically handicapped. Of them three are in the officers’ category.

4.4.10 Employee Welfare

All the employees in KRL are paid well and most of them are income tax-payers. (Appendix 2). While the lowest monthly salary is around Rs.8000/- the highest is around Rs. 40,000. The salary bill for the financial year 1999-2000 was Rs. 40.46 crores. Besides salary they are given a host of perquisites like conveyance allowance, educational assistance and leave travel benefits. Employees and their family members are eligible for a life long medical treatment benefit at the company’s expense, for undergoing treatment in any hospital in the country. They are also eligible for a high amount of loan for owning house and purchasing automobiles at a nominal interest. Hence more than 99 per cent of employees own at least one vehicle. Majority of the employees have own their own houses. For others the company reimburses the housing rentals. The company has also provided free bus transportation to report for duty and going back home. Other benefits include a highly subsidised canteen, club house, recreational facilities, housing colony, school for free
education of children, in the company-run high school, and a medical centre manned by doctors and paramedical staff functioning round-the-clock.

4.4.11 Recruitment Pattern

A unique recruitment policy of KRL is the policy of maintaining a high qualification even for the lowest entry level position. The lowest position in the company is called “janitor/gardener”. Minimum educational qualification for such a post is SSLC plus a first class industrial training certificate in any trade like plumber, electrician, automobile technician, electronics and instrumentation. Candidates having highest marks are called for a written test and interview. After qualifying the test they are called for interview. If the candidates pass this they are sent for medical examination. Once they are found medically fit, they are recruited as “janitors/gardeners”. In this job they are given tasks like washing, cleaning and sweeping the floors, walls, ceilings and toilets, and other house-keeping assignments including planting in the garden.

The idea behind having technically qualified personnel in such a non-technical function is mainly to ensure flexibility and productivity in individual working. They could aspire for higher positions in the ladder of hierarchy, once they perform the presently assigned tasks well. Another purpose is to instill the culture of multi-skilling of jobs in which employees are encouraged to learn, study and practise subjects which they might not have studied as part of their curriculum in their training schools or educational institutions. This system
orients the newly recruited employees to the concept of acquiring new knowledge and skills and adapting themselves to new work-situations where they do not have any past training, experience or exposure.

Another recruitment policy of KRL is that close relations of employees are banned for recruitment in the company. This is to ensure that nepotism and favouritism are not giving way for the quality of the intake.

Yet another feature is that most of the junior-level functionaries in the technical cadre (blue collar) who are on the shop-floor, are working in the field inside the plant and near the installations and workshops. The non-technical personnel as well as senior officials in all disciplines are mostly working in the offices (white-collar).

Another unique culture of KRL is the absence of peons and attenders in the organisation. Files and other papers are delivered in person by the officer or by the office staff. The system has been going on well in KRL. In the communication angle it is an important factor which is facilitating face-to-face communication at the work place.

4.4.12 The Social Groups

In KRL, it is found that there exists a few social groups who are having different cultures, behavioural patterns, habits and beliefs. This is based on the conclusions derived from observation as a participant. They can be broadly classified as: (a) ex-military employees, who had joined the company after years
of service in the defence (b) workmen, who belong to both blue-collar and white-collar categories, and (c) officers, who are supervisory employees. There are other small cultural groups like that of SC/ST, handicapped persons, women and linguistic groups. But their cultural identities are not visibly segregated and hence not powerful as a social group.

**Ex-Service Personnel.** KRL has a sizeable number of ex-service personnel with experience in defence like army, navy and air force. Though most of them were initially recruited as sergeants in the security department, which is a low position in the organisational hierarchy, they used to get themselves transferred to other departments after responding to internal vacancy advertisements. This again trains them in multiskilling. Of the total number of 312 ex-service personnel 12 are in the category of officers.

The ex-military employees had joined the company in its security department. Though most of them had initially joined as sergeants in the security departments of the company they used to get themselves transferred to other departments after responding to vacancy advertisements periodically published within the organisation exclusively for existing employees.

Wherever these ex-service personnel are working, irrespective of their department of posting and the nature of tasks they performed, they had certain common characteristics. Some of the conspicuous features derived from months of moving within the various sections of employees are given below.
Ex-service personnel who are working in KRL are found to be generally rough and forthright in oral communication, as also in their inter-personal interactions. Compared to their positions in the organisational hierarchy their age is higher than that of others. They are found to be highly sensitive and over-reactive in nature. They often believe in immediate action and immediate results. It was found that they seemed to lack a philosophic orientation as well as deep understanding of the social reality. The ex-service personnel in KRL show respect for officers and have task-orientation. Most of them have the habit of drinking alcoholic beverages after office-hours. Though they are not good at writing they have powerful oral communication skills not only in inter-personal but also in group communication situations. They are assertive, and often observed to have a higher voice pitch. Many of these traits could have been acquired by them in their long years of service in the defence.

The Workmen. The next category is the workmen, also called 'workers' who are all non-supervisory employees. There are 1419 workmen in the company. Within this group itself there are sub-groups of blue-collar workers who are working in the plant and workshops mainly performing manual, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled tasks. There are white collar workmen who perform administrative jobs like typing and clerical assistance, sitting inside the buildings all in air-conditioned well furnished rooms. There is a difference in the educational qualifications between the two groups. While the blue collar
workmen are mostly having a two-year industrial training certificate, after their matriculation or a three-year diploma from a polytechnic, the white collar workmen are graduates mostly in commerce, science or arts subjects. Most of them have a first-class degree with a certificate in type-writing or stenography. After joining as a typist at an age of around 20 years they used to become an officer by the time they are 30 or 35 years. In general, it is observed that the white collar workmen are good at written communication and more polite and polished in oral communication, than their blue-collar counterparts. The white-collar ones are having more of information and knowledge-base and more powerful in getting things done within the organisation, whereas the blue-collar workers are more forthright and plain in their interpersonal dealings. It is observed that most of the blue-collar workmen are generally speaking louder than their white collar counterparts. This could be due to their habit of talking to each other in a loud voice to make themselves heard in the noisy environment where a number of motors and machines are running. But there is a homogeneity in terms of salary, perquisites and allowances for workers of all kinds, including those ex-servicemen in the security areas. Both the white-collar and blue-collar workers are wearing the same uniform though the latter has to wear 'boiler suites' made-up of thick cotton fabric, personal protective equipment like helmet and safety shoes while working in the plant.
The Officers. The officers are generally considered as a part of the management. The officer community in KRL is perceived by workmen as a privileged category with a host of superior benefits like better salary, allowances and perquisites. The workmen sincerely aspire to become officers in the shortest time. The officer community, within itself, has two sub-groups — promotee officers who are from the lower ranks elevated mainly based on their experience, and the direct recruits who are appointed as officers directly based on national level selection. Within the promotee officers themselves there are both technical personnel from the blue-collar category and from the white-collar category. The promotee officers are having long experience in working in the field as technicians and operators, or as clerks or typists, and they know the problems at the grass root level particularly in the limited area of their direct acquaintance.

However, the direct-recruit officers are younger than their promotee counterparts, and have higher educational qualifications like degrees in various branches of engineering, finance, and other branches of management. Most of them are fresh from their colleges or persons with a couple of years of experience. Normally they are recruited as management trainees. After one year of training they are appointed in the junior-most position in officer’s cadre. All the appointments below the board-level, i.e., up to the level of general managers, are done by the company management. The selections to the director-level
positions are done by the Government of India, through its Public Enterprises
Selection Board, based in New Delhi.

4.4.13 HRM Department

The communication activities within KRL are initiated and co-ordinated
by the department of Human Resource Management, though the responsibility
for implementation might be with officers in the different departments of the
organisation. The HRM department had a total staff strength of 36 officers and
90 workmen. The head of the department is a mechanical engineer who has also
a masters degree in business administration. He had served in the organisation
for more than 30 years in different departments. Earlier he had headed the
departments in the operational areas. There are four functional areas or sections
in the HRM department. Three of these are headed by deputy general managers
and one by a chief manager. The functional areas are as follows: (a) personnel
matters like recruitment, promotion, compensation and benefits, sports and
games, guest house services (b) industrial relations, contract labour, disciplinary
action, wage negotiations, industrial disputes, medical services (c) administration
matters like employee travel, house-keeping, cleaning, communications systems
like telephone, telex, fax, Internet, internal mail, allotment of employee quarters,
scholarships to employees’ children, public relations and corporate
communications and (d) training and legal matters.
The public relations and corporate communications group consists of four officers - two professionals recruited directly and two promotee officers from clerical categories. To assist them there are four workmen. The functions of the section include: employee communication through media channels like the monthly house-magazine, social interaction programme, discover refinery programme, external communication using mass media like radio, television, newspapers and Internet; community developmental activities for the welfare of people around; guest relations and government relations. The deputy general manager in charge of communication in TRL is also heading the communication infrastructure matters also.

The next chapter deals with the infrastructure facilities in organisational communications available in KRL.

References


2. Ibid., pp.4-5.


11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.