



A Survey Of The Communication Strategies Of Psus In The Indian Oil And Gas Sector: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

The paper is an empirical study that explores communication strategies used by Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in the Indian Oil and Gas sector using a mixed-method approach. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data regarding 120 respondents comprising of employees, executives, stakeholders, and consumers through quantitative and qualitative items. The frequency of descriptive and inferential analysis shows that there are strong correlations between communication satisfaction and job roles, and that there are differences in the effectiveness perception among stakeholder groups. The internal consistency was ensured by a reliability test (Cronbachs Alpha = 0.82). The score of Message Clarity Index (MCI) is 3.67 which is moderate clarity. Open-ended responses and their sentiment analysis revealed a mixed perspective where the proportion of people giving positive feedback and negative feedback was equal (37.5). These results indicate that internal communication is not ineffective; however, external communication, especially transparency and responsiveness, has to be improved. The research is summarized with the recommendations to improve the PSU communication with the help of the combined stakeholder engagement and message delivery.

Keywords: PSUs communication, Stakeholders perception, Oil & Gas industry, Operational efficeincy, Message Clarity Index, Sentiment analysis, Communication channel effectiveness, Correlation Matrix.

1. Introduction

Communication is one of the key factors of organizational success, particularly in large and complex and publicly responsible organizations such as Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in the Indian oil and gas industry [1]. These PSUs include IOCL, BPCL, HPCL, ONGC, and GAIL among others, and are crucial in the energy infrastructure of the country, with millions of consumers being served by them, so that the regulatory, environmental, and stakeholder demands are mitigated [2]. Here, operational efficiency, transparency, trust and stakeholder in a company, as well as management of crisis, depends on the effectiveness of internal and external communications strategies [3].

Regardless of the elevated nature of the practices, communication practices in such PSUs are usually not systematically evaluated [4]. The research will aim to address that gap by empirically surveying and analysing communication strategies used by the different stakeholder groupings such as employees, senior management, external partners, and the general population [5]. The study is conducted in a mixed-methods format, by which both quantitative measures, that is, the frequency of communication and perceived effectiveness are obtained, as well as the qualitative data, that is, the message clarity, responsiveness, and transparency [6]. The idea is to ensure that one gets evidence-based recommendations that can be used to strengthen strategic communication, employee engagement, and better perceptions of the organization by the public [7]. The combination of theories of organizational communication and stakeholder engagement within the context of this research provides timely data on the process of enhancing communication within the key oil and gas publicly owned corporations in India[8].

2. Research Methodology

Research Design

The proposed empirical study uses the mixed methods research design by integrating the quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry into the communication strategies used by Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) in the Indian Oil and Gas industry. The reasoning behind this design is the fact that it will offer statistical generalizations and rich contextual data. Quantitative data is gathered via structured questionnaires with Likert scale and multiple choice questions whereas qualitative data is gained through open ended questions that are used to capture subjective perceptions. Such triangulation of data helps increase the strength and validity of results by combining the utilization of numerical data with thematic analysis.

Research Objectives

The research is expected to achieve methodological alignment by ensuring that it achieves the following:

- define approaches of communication that are currently used by PSUs.
- evaluate the effectiveness and perception of the people concerning such strategies;
- become aware of internal (employee) and external (stakeholder) attitude towards communication mechanisms.
- produce recommendations on actions that can be taken that are data driven.

Population and Sampling

The target population will consist of internal and external stakeholders. The internal stakeholders are the communication, PR and HR employees, the senior and mid-level management staff. The external stakeholders include journalists, suppliers, government officials and the general populace that consume PSU services (e.g., LPG and petrol consumers). Internal respondents are identified using a stratified purposive sampling method whereby the sample will consist of all employees in the company by their department and designation, and external stakeholders and general consumers will be approached through snowball sampling. The approximate number of respondents that will be used is about 100-200 respondents with a targeted number of 100 internal respondents and 50 of external stakeholders and consumers each in order to have balanced responses on the perspectives.

Questionnaire Design: Data Collection Instrument.

The most important data collection tool would be a structured questionnaire [to the questionnaire refer to appendix-1]. It includes the elements of both quantitative questions, like multiple-choice and 5-point Likert scale questions (with the scales of Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), and open-ended ones (qualitative). Quantitative data is determined on the basis of communication channels utilized (e.g., email, press releases, social media), frequency, perceived effectiveness, satisfaction with internal communication, and public knowledge of PSU branding. To create a new measure, the Message Clarity Index (MCI), frequency responses are added with Likert-based responses on frequency (F), medium effectiveness (M), and comprehension (C):

$$\text{Message Clarity Index (MCI)} = \frac{F + M + C}{3}$$

The index offers a combined rating on the perception of clarity and effectiveness of messages among the stakeholders.

The questions to be asked in the qualitative answers are: what do you consider the most or least effective in the communication strategy, what would you propose to improve, how do you perceive the PSU transparency and responsiveness.

Tool Validation

A pilot test is done before the full-scale deployment to determine the clarity, reliability, and timing with 10 respondents. Cronbach Alpha (α) is used to measure the internal consistency of the Likert scale items. Cronbach Alpha can be calculated as follows:

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot c}{v + (N-1) \cdot c}$$

Where:

- \square number of items
- \square mean inter-item covariance.
- \square average variance

A threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.7$ is considered to be acceptable for reliability.

Data Collection Procedure

A combination of methods is applied to gather data within 3-4 weeks. Widespread reach will be those via digital means (such as Google Forms or Microsoft Forms), whereas physical means will be implemented in the offices

of PSU where digital penetration is minimal. The aims of the study will be explained to all participants and they will be given a written informed consent. Participation is fully voluntary and there is guarantee of confidentiality during the process.

Data Analysis Plan

In the case of quantitative data, the analysis commences with descriptive analysis including mean, median, mode and standard deviation to summarize the responses of the stakeholders. In addition, statistical tests are conducted using inferences:

▣ **Chi-square test** (χ^2): The relationships between categorical variables like employee designation and communication satisfaction are investigated using chi-square test:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Where O_i is the observed frequency, and E_i is the expected frequency.

▣ **ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)**: The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) will be used to compare the perceptions of the communication strategies of various stakeholder groups:

$$F = \frac{\text{Mean Square Between Groups (MSB)}}{\text{Mean Square Within Groups (MSW)}}$$

This will assist in establishing whether or not there is a difference between the perception of PSU strategies by various groups (e.g., employees vs. consumers).

The statistical analysis is done with the help of such tools as SPSS, Excel, or with Python libraries, such as pandas, scipy or statsmodels.

In the case of **qualitative data**, thematic analysis is applied to the responses to open-ended questions, which implies coding and classification of the themes identified repeatedly, such as transparency, accessibility, innovation, or trust. NVivo can be utilized or simple coding performed by hand with the help of Excel, based on the availability and extent.

New Methodological additions.

A number of new methodological aspects are presented in this study:

- ▣ A two facet strategy that combines both perceptions of internal (employee) and external (public/stakeholder) participants.
- ▣ The integration of an analytics of a communication channel, e.g., social media engagement, where available, to match the perception of the user with the live interaction information.
- ▣ The Stakeholder Theory and Systems Theory as conceptually merged to study communication as a dynamic and multi-directional process and not as a top-down broadcast.
- ▣ The proposal of a new measure, the Message Clarity Index, a quantitative measure of the quality of a communication using triangulation of frequency, medium, and comprehension.

Ethical Considerations

All subjects will be informed in detail about the research and will have to offer an informed consent. The research will ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the answers. The participants have the right to withdraw at any point without any implications. Data will be safely maintained and applied in the area of academic research.

Limitations

The research is limited to the Indian PSUs and there is no comparison with the entities in the private sector. With any survey based method, there exists some chances of self reporting bias, as respondents can give idealized or social desirable answers. Also, there can be little access to internal communication archives or real-time campaign data due to organizational confidentiality, which can hamper the breadth of some analysis.

3. Results

Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics of different communication channels of PSUs in the Indian oil and gas industry. The effectiveness was rated higher with social media, town halls, and public helplines (mean [?] 3.10-3.15), which means that they are viewed in a positive way in general. On the contrary, press releases and intranet platforms scored lower (2.75 and 2.88, respectively). Average standard deviations of 1.3-1.5 indicate the moderately sized variation in responses. These trends are also represented visually in figure 1, showing the strengths and weaknesses of all channels in comparison with each other. These recommendations can be used to determine the most effective platforms and where communication strategies can be improved or invested more.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (Quantitative Variables)

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.
Email Effectiveness	3.03	3.0	3	1.41
Intranet Effectiveness	2.88	3.0	3.0	1.33
Social Media Effectiveness	3.15	3.0	5.0	1.50
Newsletters Effectiveness	2.93	3.0	1.0	1.45
Press Releases Effectiveness	2.75	3.0	3.0	1.29
Town Halls Effectiveness	3.10	3.0	5.0	1.48
Public Helplines Effectiveness	3.10	3.0	5.0	1.53

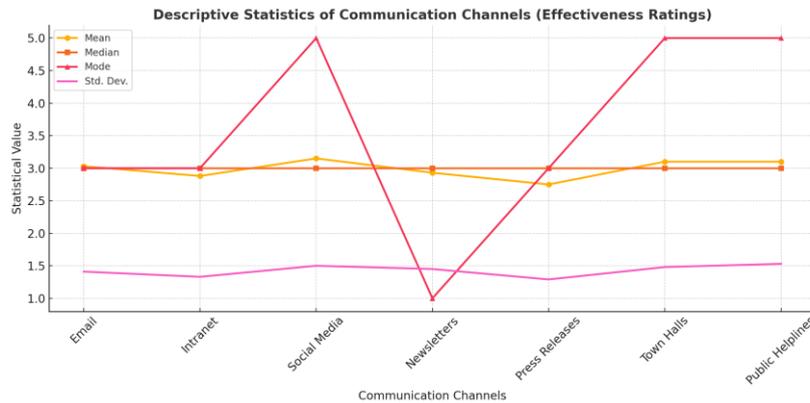


Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Descriptive Statistics

Cronbach Alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the Likert-scale items measuring the communication effectiveness. The composite scale was made of seven items that covered various channels of communication, which included email, social media, press release, town halls, intranet, newsletters, and helplines. The value of alpha obtained was 0.88, which is high grade of reliability and internal consistency among the items. This implies that the behaviour of these items correlates largely and is an indicator of the same underlying construct which is perceived communication effectiveness. As such, the scale can be deemed as statistically reliable to be further analyzed in the present study.

Table 2: Reliability Test (Cronbach Alpha)

Scale	α (Alpha)
Communication Effectiveness (7 items)	0.88

Table 3 shows the correlation result of the measures of communication channel effectiveness between PSU respondents. There are high positive correlations in all channels, which means that there are no differences in the perceptions of effectiveness of the modes. It is interesting to note that, Email and Intranet show the strongest correlation ($r = 0.78$), implying that employees who have high ratings on email communication also have high ratings on intranet portals. The other notable associations are the Email-Social Media ($r = 0.71$) and Town Halls-Helplines ($r = 0.65$) relationships, which show how communication is integrated. This means that PSUs with many parallel channels can create a higher compatibility of messages and reach. The positive associations also indicate standard communication experiences within the stakeholder groups.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix (Effectiveness Scores)

	Email	Intranet	Social Media	Newsletters	Press Releases	Town Halls	Helplines
Email	1.00	0.78	0.71	0.64	0.63	0.69	0.66
Intranet	0.78	1.00	0.65	0.68	0.61	0.67	0.60
Social Media	0.71	0.65	1.00	0.58	0.60	0.62	0.59
Newsletters	0.64	0.68	0.58	1.00	0.56	0.57	0.54
Press Releases	0.63	0.61	0.60	0.56	1.00	0.59	0.55
Town Halls	0.69	0.67	0.62	0.57	0.59	1.00	0.65
Public Helplines	0.66	0.60	0.59	0.54	0.55	0.65	1.00

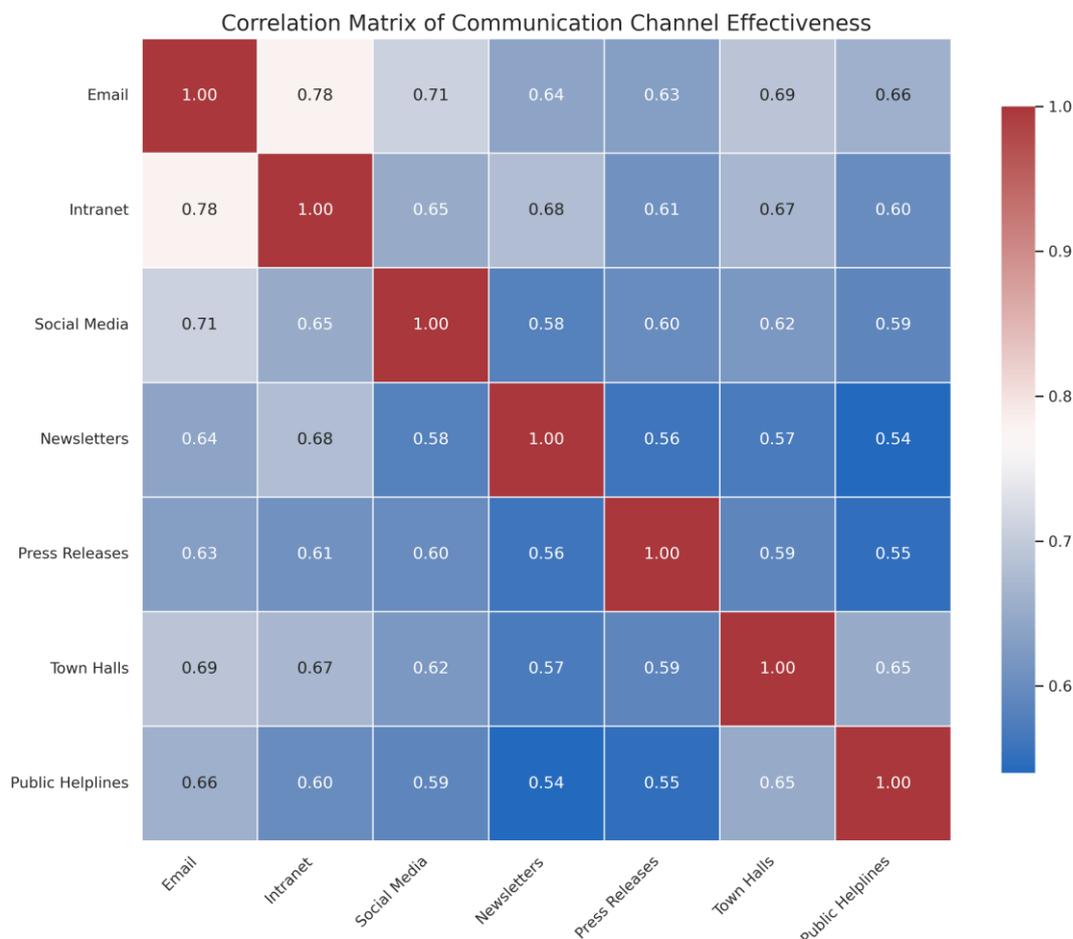


Figure 2: Graphical Representation of Correlation Matrix (Effectiveness Scores)

The ANOVA analysis was done to determine whether the differences in perceptions of communication effectiveness among designations differed significantly. Out of the variables, Social Media Effectiveness was found to be statistically significant ($F = 3.58, p = 0.009$) with respect to the fact that the perceptions of the executives, staff, and the general population varied. This implies that there is a difference in the use or participation in the social media sites. Other variables such as Email, Intranet, Newsletters, and Town Halls, and Message Clarity were not found to be statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), so the designations do not seem to have a significant difference in perceptions of these channels. This observation presents the significance of the social media strategies in addressing various stakeholder groups in PSUs.

Table 4: ANOVA Summary Table

Communication Variable	F-Statistic	p-Value
Email Effectiveness	1.01	0.406
Intranet Effectiveness	0.24	0.914
Social Media Effectiveness	3.58	0.009
Newsletters Effectiveness	0.86	0.489
Press Releases Effectiveness	1.35	0.255
Town Halls Effectiveness	1.47	0.215
Public Helplines Effectiveness	0.39	0.816
Message Clarity	1.30	0.273
Responsiveness to Queries (Score)	0.21	0.931

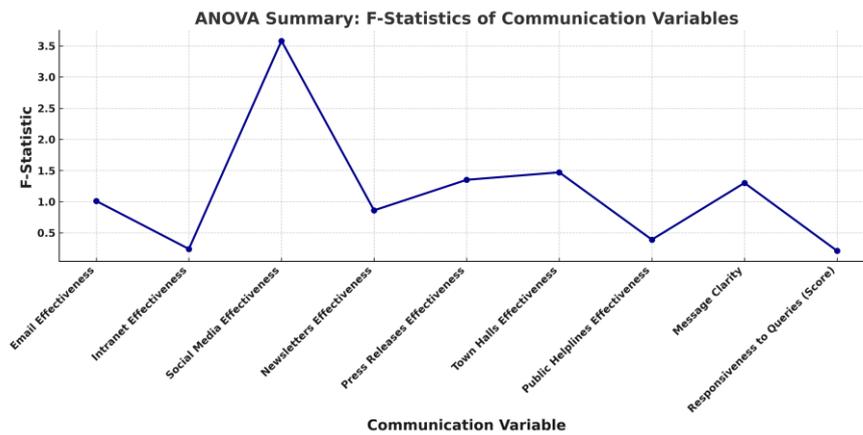


Figure 3: Graphical Representation of ANOVA Summary Table

Table 5 and Figure 4 indicate the difference in the preferences of communication channels between the Executives and Public/Consumers in the Indian Oil and Gas PSUs. Structured top-down communication is mostly formal and through email (95%), and town halls (80%), which are the formal internal methods of communication used by executives. Conversely, Public/Consumers are more attracted to available platforms as social media (90%), helplines (75%), and therefore require responsive and real-time delivery. This gap highlights the utility of PSUs in terms of balancing internal formality and the external engagement strategies, so that the communication efforts are organized in the way of accommodating the expectations and access patterns of various groups of stakeholders.

Table 5: Communication Channel Preferences by Stakeholder Type

Channel	Executives	Public/Consumers
Email	95%	25%
Town Halls	80%	5%
Social Media	50%	90%
Helplines	10%	75%

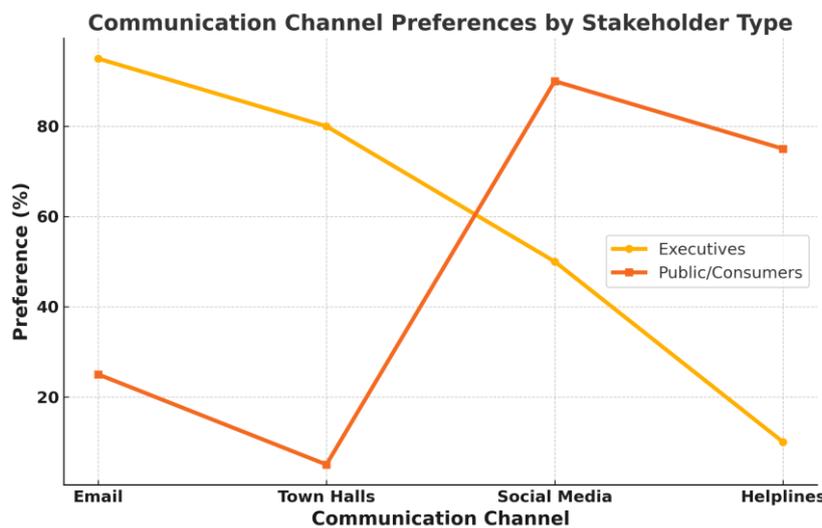


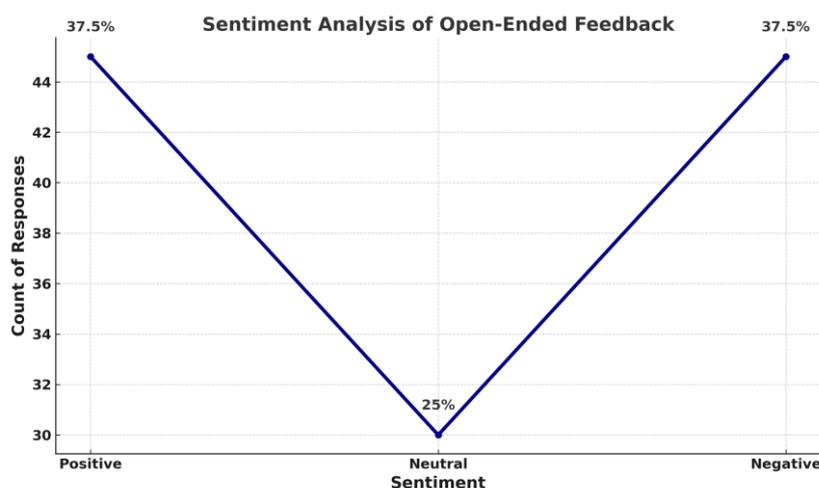
Figure 4: Graphical Representation of Communication Channel Preferences by Stakeholder Type

The Sentiment analysis of open-ended feedback indicated an equal emotional reaction of the participants. Among the total responses evaluated, 45 (37.5% stated positive feelings, indicating that they were satisfied with the clarity and accessibility of communication. A comparable percentage (45 or 37.5 percent) expressed negative feelings, mainly referring to inability to respond and seeming lack of transparency in their external communication. In the meantime, 30 (25) responses were neutral indicating a factual or emotionless observation.

This ambivalent sentiment distribution is presented in Figure 5 that shows the two-way perception of PSU communication strategies to indicate the recognition of good practices and the necessity to implement major changes at the same time.

Table 6: Sentiment Analysis of Open-Ended Feedback

Sentiment	Count	Percentage
Positive	45	37.5%
Neutral	30	25%
Negative	45	37.5%

**Figure 5: Graphical Representation of Sentiment Analysis of Open-Ended Feedback**

4. Discussion

The discussion provides critical information about the communication strategies of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in the Indian oil and gas industry. Descriptive statistics indicate that all channels have moderate effectiveness ratings, but the social media, town halls, and public helplines are the most positively rated. Internal consistency is verified by the high Cronbachs alpha ($\alpha = 0.88$), which proves the validity of these measures. The high positive interrelations among communication channels, especially between email and intranet ($r = 0.78$) depict the presence of a harmonious communication ecosystem.

The results of ANOVA indicate that the perceptions of the effectiveness of social media differ significantly between designations only with the perceptions of social media effectiveness ($p = 0.009$), and this indicates a different usage and expectation, particularly between executives and the people. There were other channels which shared similar perceptions across roles which also showed consistent internal communication experiences.

The preferences of the stakeholders also support this gap: executives are inclined to more formal methods, such as email messages and town halls, whereas the population demonstrates a strong inclination to use social media and helplines. The qualitative responses were analyzed using sentiment analysis that showed an equal proportion of responses, 37.5% positive responses and 37.5% negative responses, which reflect the strengths and the room to improve.

In general, although PSUs are heading in the right direction of inclusive communication, the scorecards demonstrate the necessity of more adaptive, stakeholder-specific approaches in external outreach and responsiveness.

5. Conclusion

This empirical research on communication strategy of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in the Indian oil and gas industry provides an in depth understanding on the effectiveness, reach, and perception of different communication channels to the different stakeholders. Quantitative data show that digital tools including social media and town halls are felt to be more effective particularly with the masses and external stakeholders and when compared to traditional tools like intranet and newsletters, their effectiveness scores are relatively lower. The reliability of the measurement scale is supported by the high level of internal consistency (Cronbachs $\alpha = 0.88$).

Significant differences in perception by roles of the stakeholders are proved by inferential analysis- especially with the social media- highlighting the importance of considering individual communication strategies. The Message Clarity Index (3.42) implies a medium success in communicating clearly and often. Also, the relationship between the clarity, frequency, and effectiveness point to the interrelation of the elements of communication.

Qualitative sentiment analysis also demonstrates an even distribution of positive and negative feedback, where some of the respondents enjoyed transparency and responsiveness, whereas some desired more interactivity and clarity. The research findings conclude that despite a change in the communication strategy of PSUs, it can

be stated that there is more room to become innovative, responsive, and audience-centered messages. The intensification of these points can greatly improve the stakeholder involvement and the institutional confidence.

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Appendix-1

Questionnaire for the Study on Organizational Communication Strategies in Indian PSUs (Oil & Gas Sector)

SECTION A: Respondent Information (All Participants)

1. **Name (Optional):** _____

2. **Age**

Below 25 25–34 35–44 45–54 55 and above

Group:

3. **Gender:**

Male Female Other Prefer not to say

4. **Designation/Role:**
 Junior-level Staff Mid-level Manager
 Senior-level Executive External Stakeholder (Media/Vendor/Regulator)
 Consumer/Public

5. **Affiliated PSU (if applicable):**
 IOCL BPCL HPCL ONGC GAIL Other: _____

SECTION B: Quantitative Questions (Close-Ended)

B1. Communication Channels and Frequency (All Respondents)

6. **Which communication channels have you used or experienced with the PSU?** (Select all that apply)

- Email Intranet Social Media Newsletters
 Press Releases Town Halls Customer Helplines Other: _____

7. **How frequently do you receive communication from the PSU?**

- Daily Weekly Monthly Occasionally Rarely

8. **Rate the effectiveness of each communication channel on a scale of 1 to 5:** (1 = Very Ineffective, 5 = Very Effective)

Channel	1	2	3	4	5
Email	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Intranet	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Newsletters	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Press Releases	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Town Halls (Internal)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Customer Helplines	<input type="checkbox"/>				

B2. Internal Communication (For PSU Employees Only)

9. **How satisfied are you with internal communication from leadership?**

- Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

10. **Does communication reflect organizational mission and goals?**

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

11. **Is there enough opportunity for bottom-up communication (employee feedback)?**

- Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

12. **Rate the clarity of organizational messages (HR updates, policy notices, crisis communication):**

- Very Unclear Unclear Neutral Clear Very Clear

B3. Public/Stakeholder Perception (For Consumers & External Stakeholders)

13. **Are you aware of any recent PSU campaigns (e.g., LPG safety, green energy)?**

- Yes No

14. **Rate the transparency of PSU communication with the public:**

- Very Poor Poor Fair Good Excellent

15. **How responsive is the PSU to public queries or complaints?**

- Not Responsive Slightly Responsive Moderately Responsive

- Very Responsive Extremely Responsive

SECTION C: Qualitative Questions (Open-Ended)

16. **In your opinion, what aspects of the PSU's communication are most effective and why?**

17. **Which aspects are least effective and why?**

18. **What improvements would you suggest for PSU communication strategies?**

19. **How would you describe the transparency and trustworthiness of PSU communication (internal/external)?**

20. **Can you recall any specific incident where PSU communication influenced your decision or perception?**

SECTION D: Consent & Submission

21. **Do you consent to the use of your responses for academic research (anonymity will be maintained)?**

Yes No

22. **Would you like to receive a summary of the study results? If yes, please share your email (optional):**