



## Importance of communication in present society: Role and structure

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### Abstract

Communication is a process of exchanging verbal and non-verbal messages. It is a continuous process. Pre-requisite of communication is a message. This message must be conveyed through some medium to the recipient. It is essential that this message must be understood by the recipient in same terms as intended by the sender. He must respond within a time frame. Thus, communication is a two way process and is incomplete without a feedback from the recipient to the sender on how well the message is understood by him. Communication is a complex process wherein information is shared between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, and behaviour expressing feelings, ideas, views, opinions, etc. People communicate to satisfy needs. Communication is a process beginning with a sender who encodes the message and passes it through some channel to the receiver who decodes the message. Communication is fruitful if and only if the message sent by the sender is interpreted with same meaning by the receiver. If any kind of disturbance blocks any step of communication, the message will be destroyed. This paper discusses the role of communication in the present society.

**Keywords:** communication, digital media, society

### Introduction

Effective communication is an essential component of organizational success whether it is at the interpersonal or intergroup or organizational or even external level.

Communication may be understood as the Process of Exchanging Information and Understanding between People.

### This simple definition directs our attention to the three important issues:

1. Communication involves transmission and reception of messages
2. Communication involves people at least two – One to transmit the message and another to receive the message
3. Communication is a process because it is active, continuous, reciprocal and dynamic.

### Importance of Communication

Communication plays an important role in the success and failure of an organization. The art of expressing one's ideas and thoughts clearly is called as effective communication.

Individuals need to communicate effectively at the workplace for better transparency and clarity. Not only effective communication helps in correct transfer of information but also in decision making. The main purpose of communication is to help people feel good about themselves and about their friends, groups, and organizations. For the communication to succeed there must be a transmission of thoughts, ideas and feelings from one mind to another.

### Communication Process

Communication Process model is made up of eight parts

1. The Communication Source
2. Encoding
3. The Message
4. The Channel
5. Decoding
6. The Receiver
7. Feedback
8. Noise

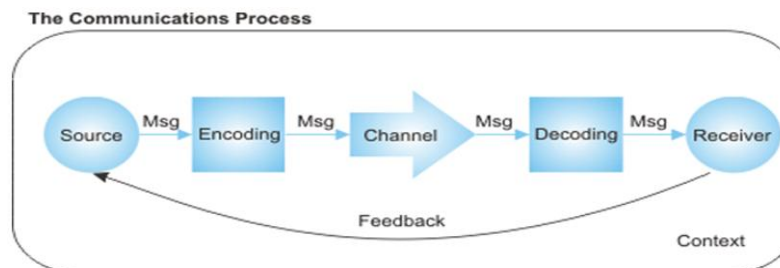


Fig 1

Context - Communication is affected by the context in which it takes place. This context may be physical, social, chronological or cultural. Every communication proceeds with context. The sender chooses the message to communicate within a context.

Sender / Encoder - Sender / Encoder is a person who sends the message. A sender makes use of symbols (words or graphic or visual aids) to convey the message and produce the required response. For instance - a training manager conducting training for new batch of employees. Sender may be an individual or a group or an organization. The views, background, approach, skills, competencies, and knowledge of the sender has a great impact on the message. The verbal and non verbal symbols chosen are essential in ascertaining interpretation of the message by the recipient in the same terms as intended by the sender.

1. **Message:** Message is a key idea that the sender wants to communicate. It is a sign that elicits the response of recipient. Communication process begins with deciding about the message to be conveyed. It must be ensured that the main objective of the message is clear.
2. **Medium:** Medium is a means used to exchange / transmit the message. The sender must choose an appropriate medium for transmitting the message else the message might not be conveyed to the desired recipients. The choice of appropriate medium of communication is essential for making the message effective and correctly interpreted by the recipient. This choice of communication medium varies depending upon the features of communication.
3. **Recipient / Decoder:** Recipient / Decoder is a person for whom the message is intended / aimed / targeted. The degree to which the decoder understands the message is dependent upon various factors such as knowledge of recipient, their responsiveness to the message, and the reliance of encoder on decoder.
4. **Feedback:** Feedback is the main component of communication process as it permits the sender to analyze the efficacy of the message. It helps the sender in confirming the correct interpretation of message by the decoder. Feedback may be verbal (through words) or non-verbal (in form of smiles, sighs, etc.). It may take written form also in form of memos, reports, etc.

### **Purpose and Objectives of Communication**

1. Conveying the right message
2. To coordinate the efforts of the people involved
3. To develop managerial skill
4. To create good industrial relations
5. To make effective policies
6. To boost morale

### **Functions of communication**

1. Essentials for the smooth running of the enterprise
2. Basis of managerial functions.
  - i) Planning
  - ii) Organisation
  - iii) Direction & Leadership
  - iv) Motivation
  - v) Co-ordination

vi) Control

3. Maximum production at minimum cost
  - i) Internal communication system
  - ii) External communication system
4. Prompt decision and its implementations
5. Building good human relations
6. Job satisfaction and good morale
7. Avoids illusion

### **Verbal and Non Verbal Communication**

**Verbal communication:** The transmission of messages using words either written or spoken. Verbal communication is a type of communication where the information flows through verbal medium like words, speeches, presentations etc. In verbal communication the sender shares his/her thoughts in the form of words.

**Written communication:** may take the following forms such as reports, circulars, manuals, memoranda s, pictures, diagrams, graphs, rules and procedures books, newsletter employee handbooks, letters, E-mails, Organizational periodicals etc. Written communication ensures that everyone concerned has the same information. It provides a permanent record of communication for future reference. To be effective, written communication should be clear, concise, correct and complete.

**Oral communication** is that type of transmission in which the spoken word is a common system of communications. In this both parties exchange their ideas through oral words either in face to face situations or in groups or through any mechanical device such as telephone, intercom etc. The important feature of oral communication is that real meaning is conveyed by manner or tone of the voice or the facial expressions of the communicator.

### **Non verbal communication**

**Non verbal communication** is the transmission of messages without the use of words. (E.g. gestures, facial expressions etc). Sometimes called the "Silent Language", nonverbal communication can be defined as "non word human responses and the perceived characteristics of the environment through which the human verbal and non verbal messages are transmitted". Any communication made between two people without words and simply through facial movements, gestures or hand movements is called as non verbal communication. In other words, it is a speechless communication where content is not put into words but simply expressed through expressions. Imagine yourself in a situation, where you can't speak but have to communicate urgent information to the other person or for that matter, you are sitting in an important meeting and you want to express your displeasure or pleasure to your colleague without uttering even a word. Here non verbal mode of communication comes into picture.

Facial expressions, gestures, hand and hair movements, body postures all constitute non verbal communication. If one has a headache, one would put his hand on his forehead to communicate his discomfort - a form of non verbal communication. Non verbal communications are vital in offices, meetings and even in romantic chats.

**There are many forms non verbal communications probably the most recognised are:**

- i) **Body Language:** Body language refers to gestures, facial expressions, facial configurations and other movements of the body. *Some of the features are:*
1. Facial Expressions: A smile, frown, raised eyebrow, yawn and sneer all convey information.
  2. Physical Contact: Shaking hands, touching, holding, pushing, or patting on the back all convey messages.
  3. Gestures
  4. Eye Contact
  5. Posture
  6. Kinesics
    - Forward and Backward movements
    - Vertical movements
    - Side to side movements
    - Tactile communication
    - Style of Dress
    - The Environment Space
- ii) **Para Language:** It refers to the tone of the voice, pitch, and quality of voice and rate of speaking. Para language focuses on the power of the voice (verbal + non verbal) in interpersonal communication. The emphasis is on the way we interpret a speaker's voice in terms of accent, pronunciation, emotions, honesty, charisma, uniqueness, lifestyle and geographic origin etc.

**Direction of Communication**

In an organization, communication flows in 5 main directions-

- Downward
- Upward
- Lateral
- Diagonal
- External

**Downward Flow of Communication**

Communication that flows from a higher level in an organization to a lower level is a downward communication. In other words, communication from superiors to subordinates in a chain of command is a downward communication. This communication flow is used by the managers to transmit work-related information to the employees at lower levels. Employees require this information for performing their jobs and for meeting the expectations of their managers. Downward communication is used by the managers for the following purposes - Providing feedback on employees performance Giving job instructions Providing a complete understanding of the employees job as well as to communicate them how their job is related to other jobs in the organization. Organizational publications, circulars, letter to employees, group meetings etc are all examples of downward communication. In order to have effective and error-free downward communication, managers must:

- Specify communication objective
- Ensure that the message is accurate, specific and unambiguous.
- Utilize the best communication technique to convey the message to the receiver in right form

**Upward Flow of Communication**

Communication that flows to a higher level in an organization is called upward communication. It provides feedback on how well the organization is functioning. The subordinates use upward communication to convey their problems and performances to their superiors. The subordinates also use upward communication to tell how well they have understood the downward communication. It can also be used by the employees to share their views and ideas and to participate in the decision-making process. Upward communication leads to a more committed and loyal workforce in an organization because the employees are given a chance to raise and speak dissatisfaction issues to the higher levels. The managers get to know about the employees feelings towards their jobs, peers, supervisor and organization in general.

**Lateral / Horizontal Communication**

Communication that takes place at same levels of hierarchy in an organization is called lateral communication, i.e., communication between peers, between managers at same levels or between any horizontally equivalent organizational member. The advantages of horizontal communication are as follows:

- It is time saving.
- It facilitates co-ordination of the task.
- It facilitates co-operation among team members.
- It provides emotional and social assistance to the organizational members.
- It helps in solving various organizational problems.
- It is a means of information sharing.
- It can also be used for resolving conflicts of a department with other department or conflicts within a department.

**Diagonal Communication**

Communication that takes place between a manager and employees of other workgroups is called diagonal communication. It generally does not appear on organizational chart. For instance - To design a training module a training manager interacts with Operation personnel to enquire about the way they perform their task.

**Communication in Our Society**

Generally communication performs the following functions in our society. These are as follows. These are general functions.

1. It fulfills our information needs effectively.
2. It performs the entertainment function. That is it provides entertainment for passing of time and to release tension.
3. It provides instruction to people.
4. It also persuades people on a number of areas.

**Specific Functions**

- In our country, communication is used as a tool of growth and development.
- It provides an input into the developmental plans launched by govt from time to time.
- It also acts as a vehicle in spreading messages of family planning.

- We know about various adult education programmers only through the communication media. Thus, they serve a very important function of spreading adult education to people.
- The concept of health for all is spread among more number by communication media most effectively.
- Communication also aids in national integration theme.
- It also promotes communal harmony among people.
- In terms of rural development, communication has a pivotal role to play.
- Communication promotes the public sector enterprises in India also.
- Communication gets about many changes among people on certain social practices and cultural ethos such as untouchability, casteism, etc.
- Communication promotes mother and child welfare in India.
- Communication promotes India's tourism industry within and outside the country.
- It also promotes the image of the country in other foreign countries.
- Lastly communication fulfills the link between state and central government. And helps in the functioning of administration.

These are the major functions performed by communication. Even though there are more functions to perform for communication, these are the major functions discharged by the communication media in our country. Communication is applied in all the fields and sectors of our economy. The function to be discharged varies from one context to the other and depending upon the conditions in which communication is applied. We can say that no area of activity in our country is left out without the uses of communication. Communication plays a crucial role in modern organizations in the country and today we can securely say that no organization can carry on without the use of communication.

### **Role of Communication in 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Communication is a vibrant field which has included the knowledge from several branches of social sciences and humanities. For example, the influence of sociology and social science research methods in communication is far too strong to ignore. While it assimilates the knowledge from several branches of study, of the borrowed perspectives. The success of doing so is still not fully achieved and the effort is going on for developing its own knowledge and perspectives. This will be the tendency of communication study and research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Communication has numerous branch disciplines such as mass communication, advertising, public relations. Inter personal communication, organizational communication, development communication and so on. All these will have a deep influence and our thinking and behavior in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Major role of communication in 21<sup>st</sup> century are:**

1. Communication will need the essential needs of providing information, education, and entertainment to the people.
2. Communication will become a means of development planning. That is to say it will be used in communicating about development plans to people with the hope of obtaining their co-operation.
3. Communication will be used as an instrument of nation

building as well.

4. Communication is an inevitable in getting people view from various parts of the country and passing it on to the policy makers.
5. Communication will become a vital part of programmes like family planning, adult education and primary of health care in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
6. Communication can be used to pool public opinion for social evils and can front the people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and how best solutions can be found to these evils.
7. Communication will be utilized by nongovernmental and international organizations to secure the cooperation from public for variety of its scheme.
8. Lastly communication will be used by all these concerned with the improvement of science and technology and departure on the benefits of science and technology to the people concerned.

### **The Role of Development Communication in India**

In India, the mass media provide information, entertainment, education and clarification to the people. These are the functions of mass media and they perform this role effectively. When there is a problem in media's function, it is taken up in public forums like parliament and legislature for discussion. Apart from these functions, media are expected to support towards the development process of this country. When communication is diverted towards development, this came to be called as development communication. To a under developed country like India, development communication is a significant field of discussion and debate.

### **Conclusion**

Communication aids social progress of a nation. This can be viewed from the cases of developed western nation which have benefitted enormously from the use of communication media and programmes. In every walk of life of a country, there is a dominant role for communication to play. Communication has become an inevitability in modern day organization and institutions. It is applied in various areas of the economy as well, be it in agriculture, education industry or health sector of the country. Thus communication will continued to be a most important area of problem solving as looked up by the policy makers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The role of communication in national development would be somewhat from that of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the sense that people would face a different set of problem, they anticipate a different set of responses from the communication media, namely radio, TV, newspapers, magazines and films etc. than those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But one thing is quite clear communication will continue to be a key source of inspiration to the people in the century that is ahead. A novel set of expectations lie in-front of the practioners of communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It remains to be seen how communication will meet these responsibilities. But we can say that it is and will continue to aid the procedure of development and healthy contribution to the nation, particularly a country such as India in the days to come.

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