

LESSON 14

COMMUNICATION

SUMMARY

Communication, just like food and shelter, is an important means of survival. We only have to look around us to realize that there are various means of communication used for reaching large number of people. We exchange information through words, gestures, symbols, tones, music, etc.

Understanding the meaning of communication

Communication is a process of interaction with people and the environment. When we interact with others, we use language to transmit information, ideas and attitudes from one person to the other.

Communication is a personal process which occurs between people and brings about a change in behaviour, and, allows us to express our thoughts and emotions. It is an important tool for controlling and motivating people by providing information to facilitate decision making.

Elements of Communication

1. **Communication is a two-way process:** It involves a sender and a receiver.
2. **There has to be a message:** The information has to be in the

form of a message, a directive, an idea, a feeling or an opinion.

3. **Commonness of understanding:** Communication can occur only when there is commonness of understanding between sender and receiver. The basis of commonness can be culture, language, and environment.
4. **Modifying the behaviour of other people:** The information transmitted to the receiver brings forth a response in the form of some change in his/her behaviour.
5. **Method of giving information:** Information is provided with the help of words or through gestures, expressions and the like.

Types of Communication

Verbal communication - When words are used as tools of interaction between two or more individuals, it is called verbal communication. It can be oral or written. It provides us with meaningful interaction, information and direction. It is a fundamental requirement for life. Some common forms of verbal communication are conversations, speeches, letters, newspapers, magazines, telephonic conversations, etc.

Non-Verbal Communication - It accounts for more than 70 percent

of our communication while words account for just about 10 percent. Gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, posture and body orientation, distance are some of the non-verbal ways of communicating. It is influenced by culture.

Kinesics or body language deals with physical movement, while **gaze** or eye contact deals with the eyes.

Proxemics - the study of interpersonal spatial behaviour. Proxemics is concerned with territoriality, interpersonal distance, spatial arrangements, crowding, and other aspects of the physical environment that affect behaviour.

Haptics refers to touch as another channel of communication.

Effective communication

It becomes essential that we communicate effectively to others for progress in academics, professional domains as well as to improve our interpersonal relationships.

Difficulties that hinder effective communication:

Message distortion

Selective perception

Limited capacity to process

Information overload

Emotions

Language

Features of effective communication

Common frame of reference – The sender and the receiver should interact at a common level of understanding.

Mutual interest – Contents of the communication must be of mutual interest to the sender and receiver.

Common Language – Language is the strongest means of verbal communication. A common language ensures effective communication.

Common environment – People from similar backgrounds understand the message without much problem.

Verbal and non-verbal communication together provides a powerful medium of communication. If used properly and carefully, effective communication can convey the message immediately.

It is said that spoken language is about 7 to 35 % of our communication. The majority of our communication is through nonverbal means. Thus, when verbal language seems to be unclear, we search for nonverbal cues to provide us with more information.

Non-verbal communication In Indian context

Non-verbal communication gives us information about our relationships with others, with

regard to liking, status, age, gender and it is appropriate for conveying our emotions also. In the Indian context certain non-verbal cues are distinct.

In the Indian setting, couples are not expected to show affectionate or intimate gestures towards each other, particularly if they are in a public place or in the presence of the family. Holding of hands or even looking at one's husband is frowned upon.

Handshakes are common, but more so between men or between women. Handshake between a man and woman are generally avoided. In cities like Delhi and Mumbai handshakes between men and women in the corporate world is quite common. Hence the context will determine the appropriate non-verbal communication.

Social factors in non-verbal communication – Indians have high power-distance index, which indicates that cultural factors, such as hierarchy, authority, and age (elders), play a definitive role in communications. Interpersonal relations, position of authority, age and gender determine the distance to be maintained between two people.

Indians value their personal space, usually one and a half to two meters is the norm. Yet there is little physical distance with family and close friends. Public affection, holding hands, hugging, amongst

family and close friends is quite common.

Role and Impact of Media

Children and teenagers are heavily influenced by media information regarding fashion, ideal body type, ideal image of beauty, urban lifestyles etc. Media influences in both positive and negative manner.

Positive influences	Negative influences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It educates and enriches our lives •It collects and distributes information to the public •It transmits social and cultural values •informs public about government policies •Address problems and maintain democracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Misused to spread wrong information leading to violence in communities •Spread of rumors and false propaganda •breach of privacy •circulation of vulgar material

Responsibilities and obligations of Media:

It must maintain **ethical standards** whereby it provides objective, balanced and accurate information to the masses.

It should avoid inciting the masses towards crime, violence and hatred. **Community building and national integration** must be one of its objectives.

It should reflect the **pluralistic nature** of India and provide a voice to all members of the nation.

Do you know?

Eye contact

- Direct eye contact indicates confidence

- Looking downwards shows respect, listening carefully, or guilty
- Single raised eyebrow indicates doubting
- Both raised eye brows indicate admiration.

Posture – Standing erect, but not rigid, and leaning slightly forward indicates that one is approachable, receptive and friendly.

Facing each other –indicates interpersonal closeness.

Facial Expression – Smile is a powerful cue that indicates happiness, friendliness, warmth, liking and affiliation.

Extend Your Horizon

Ways to effective verbal communication:

- Improve language by reading and listening
- Work on voice modulation, tone and pronunciation
- Think and then speak
- Do not speak fast or too loudly
- Learn about culturally sensitive words, signs and contexts for different cultures.

Ways to effective non-verbal communication:

- Keep the appropriate distance, particularly with reference to culture, gender and authority figures.
- Touch only if required, or necessary.

- Maintain eye contact in an interview situation, and be sensitive if such a communication is frowned upon by a culture.
- Look presentable and confident

Evaluate yourself

1. List the effective features of communication.
2. Discuss any two positive and two negative influences of media on society.
3. Discuss the elements of communication.