

# 18

## Communication: Basic Concepts

### 18.1 Introduction

We all live together in this world with others, where we want to share our thoughts, feelings, ideas and beliefs with them. We exchange information with them through words, gestures, expressions, tone etc. This interaction is called communication. In this lesson you will learn about communication, its kinds and uses and also about how we can use communication effectively in our day to day life.

### 18.2 Objectives

After reading this lesson the learner will be able to:

- define communication and diagrammatic representation of the communication process;
- state characteristics of effective communication;
- differentiate between verbal and non-verbal communication;
- give examples of technological implication of communication.

### 18.3 What is Communication

Communication is a process of interaction with people and environment. Two or more individuals interact and influence the ideas, beliefs and attitudes of each other. They can exchange information through words, gestures, signs and symbols, expressions etc. Today language in its developed form is the most competent means of communication but it is not the only one. We make use of other means, too, for effective transmission of information. Look at the situation given here:

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You come to National Institute of Open Schooling for taking admission to class X. You need information regarding conditions and procedures for admission. So you approach the officer at the inquiry counter. The officer looks at you. His look seems to be asking “How can I help you?” (expression). You greet him and tell him that you have come for admission (words). The officer explains the procedures and gives you a printed form to fill in information about yourself. (written word). You fill in the form and give it back to him and say “Is it O.K.?” (words). He may say ‘Yes’ (words) or he may nod his head (gesture).

Thus you see that communication is a continuous process of giving and receiving information, of building up social relationships. We make use of speech, writing, printed and pictorial matter, gestures and expressions and also of technical media like telegraphy, radio, television, computer etc. for communication.

The word communication is derived from the word ‘communis’ which means common because commonness of understanding is an essential component of all kinds of communications. Let us define communication. It can be defined as “a process by which two or more people exchange ideas, facts, feelings or impressions in ways that each gains a common understanding of the message”.

## 18.4 Elements of Communication

The following are the key elements of communication :

- (i) **Communication is a two way process:** It involves a sender and receiver. The sender or receiver can be an individual or a group.
  - (ii) **There has to be a message :** The message can be an information, a directive, an enquiry, a feeling, an opinion, an idea or any other.
  - (iii) **Commonness of understanding:** Communication can occur only when there is commonness of understanding between the sender and the receiver. The commonness includes factors like common culture, common language and common environment. Words, phrases, idioms, proverbs, gestures and expressions are deeply culturised and possess high communicative potential for people from similar background.
  - (iv) **Modifying the behaviour of other individuals:** The information transmitted to the receiver evokes a response in the form of some change in his behaviour. For example, the information received at the information centre of NIOS satisfied your curiosity and encouraged you to take admission.
  - (v) **Method of giving information:** Information can be given through words or through other means like signs gestures, expressions etc.
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The five elements of the process of communication can be presented graphically

Sender - Message - Method - Receiver - Response of Receiver

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### INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.1

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1. Which one of the following statements is not correct?
  - a. Communication is a continuous process.
  - b. We can communicate through words.
  - c. We cannot communicate through gestures.
  - d. We cannot communicate through tone and expressions.
2. Put into correct graphic order the following elements of communication:

Message - Response of Receiver - Method - Sender - Receiver

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## 18.5 Types of Communication

Communication can be broadly divided into two categories. These are:

1. Verbal Communication
2. Non-verbal Communication

**Verbal Communication-** when words are used as tools of interaction between two or more individuals, it is known as verbal communication. It can be oral or written. Researchers have found that, on an average, a person spends 10 to 11 hours everyday in verbal communication i.e. speaking, listening, reading or writing. Some common forms of verbal communication are conversations, speeches, letters, newspapers, magazines, cassettes both audio and video, telephonic conversation etc.

**Non-Verbal Communication-** When the alarm clock rings in the morning, it communicates to you the message that it is time to wake up. Communication can also occur without words. Our senses- ears, eyes, touch and smell work as codes of communication. You look out of the window, your eyes tell you about the weather outside. When you hold your cup of tea in your hands, the touch tells you whether the tea is warm or not. The smell tells you what is cooking for breakfast. Pictures, images, models, gestures are also non-verbal means of communication. A simple nod of head can convey your 'yes' or 'no'. with a waive of hand you can show your disinterestedness. Eyes can transmit feelings like love, hate, anger, sorrow etc.

Artists use their art as a means of communication. A painting is a painter's medium, a photograph is a photographer's and dance performance is a dancer's non-verbal medium of communication. Silent thinking is also non-verbal interaction with oneself.

Communication between man and animal is mostly non-verbal. A dog wags his tail and

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licks his master's hand, a cat cuddles up to its master to show their love. Non verbal communication between man and his environment is a phenomenon you come across every day but after you don't notice it. In the summer season, a hot sun and warm wind pass on a feeling of discomfort to you, whereas a sky overcast with clouds transmits a mood of joy. This is communication between you and your environment in a non-verbal way.

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### INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.2

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Pick out the correct alternative to complete the sentences given below:

1. Communication between man and animals is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) Verbal
  - (b) Non-verbal
  - (c) Oral
  - (d) none of these.
  
2. In verbal communication, interaction takes place between \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) two or more individuals
  - (b) only between two groups
  - (c) only between one individual and one group
  - (d) only between two individuals.

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### 18.6 Effective Communication

So, you know, now that communication is the basic need of life. We cannot imagine a day without some kind of verbal or non-verbal communication. When we look at our surroundings or when we talk to people in person or on telephone, or when we write a letter or send an e-mail or when we read a book or listen to radio or watch a programme on T.V. we are communicating with the world in which we live. Thus communication is an integral part of our life. But, sometimes, it happens that the receiver of information does not receive



it as we want to send it. We are either misunderstood or understood incompletely. In both the cases the purpose of communication is defeated. So lets, now, look at some of the points that we need to take care of in order to make our communication effective.

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## Features of Effective Communication

**1. Common frame of reference-** The sender and the receiver should interact at a common level of understanding. You see when a mother talks to her small child, she comes down to his/her level of understanding, talks of only those things that the child can understand, and makes use of only those words which form the child's vocabulary. Thus she can communicate with the child easily. On the other hand, an agricultural scientist, who speaks to the farmers about new techniques of farming in a science loaded language, may not be understood due to the absence of common level of understanding. To ensure effective communication, information needs to be presented in such a manner that it may be easily received by the receiver.

**Mutual Interest-** Contents of Communication should be of mutual interest to the sender and the receiver. Communication is likely to breakdown with an unwilling receiver because the receiver's efforts to receive the information will be minimum. For example, if we discuss Indian Stock market with a farmer who is worried about lack of rain in his village, we will fail to make any headway. The farmer, who is the receiver in this case, has no interest in the ups and downs of the stock market. He will make no effort to receive the information. The communication, therefore, will collapse. Common interests, on the other hand, create common understanding. For example when you see your teacher coming towards the class, you simply shout to your class-mates "Teacher" and the class gets the message that you want to tell them that the teacher is coming and they should stop making a noise.

**Common language-** Language is the strongest means of verbal communication. Verbal interaction between the sender and the receiver is easy and effective if they speak a common language. The possibilities of incomplete communication are minimised because words, phrases, idioms, proverbs and their nuances are easily understood.

**Common environment-** Common environment promotes successful communication. People with a similar background receive the intended message without any hassels. Common environment would cover areas/activities like the following:

Common nationality, Common economic status, Common culture, Common social interests, Common age group, Common professions, etc.

You must have noticed that communication with boys and girls of your own age is very easy. This is so because you share common experiences. Similarly, 'Namastey', Good morning, Sat Sri Akal, or 'Adab' will convey to a person of the same community a feeling of respect, whereas it may make no sense to somebody who is not familiar with these words of greetings.

Thus commonness is an important element in communication. Common language, common interests, common environment, common experiences promote successful communication.

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Language is a powerful medium of communication and if used cleverly, it can drive the message home immediately. Think of the jingles (advertisements) you hear on radio or watch on T.V. to advertise various products. Not only the key lines of advertisements stay in your memory but you also begin to use them in your conversation. Shall I remind you of some? ‘Thanda Matlab Coca cola’ or ‘magic hai to mumkin hai’ or ‘dhundhate rah jaoge’. You can recall the rest on your own.

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### **INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.3**

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1. Fill in the blanks choosing appropriate words from the list given below. Two words are extra:

Common interests, common height, common language, common environment, common colour, common level of understanding.

Important features of effective communication are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Choose the correct alternative.  
Common environment means \_\_\_\_\_
- (a) common air
  - (b) common water
  - (c) common social and cultural practices
  - (d) none of these.
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### **18.7 Non-verbal Communication in Indian Context**

Man has always lived close to nature which provides him with the essentials of life. Air, water, fire, sky and the earth are nature’s gifts to us. We express our gratitude to nature through ritual like offering worship to trees, rivers, mountains, the sun and the moon. The worship is a promise that we will take care of the objects which are the primary sources of food, water and other essentials. We treat the earth as our mother. A farmer bows to the earth that he tills to communicate his prayer to the mother earth for a good crop. Rivers are respected and worshipped in India. It is an expression of our thanks to them for giving us water without which life is not possible. Thus nature expresses her love for man in the form of her bounties and man conveys his thanks to nature through gestures and rituals. This is a non-verbal communication between man (Purush) and nature (Prakriti).

Men and animals, too, live together. The cattle in the village households are treated as members of the family. Animals like horses, camels, oxen work for man. In return, man takes care of them. The pets wag their tails and lick their master’s hand to communicate their feelings for him. Man expresses his love and care for them by patting and caressing them. Thus gestures and expressions serve as means of communications between the

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two. In our ancient books, there are references which show that man, animals and nature work together and communicate with each other non-verbally. Man has always turned to his environment to seek answer to the questions which confuse him.

Thus non-verbal communication between man and his environment helps man to understand human life. It also creates conditions for self- development.

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### INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.4

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Choose the correct alternative.

1. We call the earth our mother because \_\_\_\_\_.
    - (a) both mother and the earth are of feminine gender.
    - (b) we love the earth
    - (c) the earth is big
    - (d) the earth takes care of us like a mother.
  
  2. Environment means \_\_\_\_\_.
    - (a) only the immediate surroundings of man i.e. his garden
    - (b) only the earth and the sky
    - (c) only animals
    - (d) everything like air, water, nature, animals, the total surroundings of man.
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### 18.8 Propaganda and Rumour

Chamber's dictionary defines propaganda as "the organised spreading of doctrine, true or false, information, opinions etc. to bring about change". Another meaning calls it a patent weapon for evil if used without thought for truth".

We can broadly say that propaganda is :

- an organised effort
- its purpose is to spread a set of information.
- the set of information may be true or false.
- the purpose is to bring about a change.

Propaganda has been practised since the earliest days to spread religious or social doctrines. The advancement of mass media like radio, television, newspaper etc. has made it much easier to spread propaganda.

Propaganda can be used to spread both truth and untruth. Political propaganda is in widespread use these days. Political parties use it as a weapon of verbal assaults on rival parties. Propaganda can also be used to stir positive response in public for a socially beneficial cause. For examples national propaganda against illiteracy or medical propaganda

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against polio or AIDS. Propaganda has a mass base which helps it to spread quickly and since it is a planned effort, it works as a strong means of shaping people's opinion. Propaganda is also put to commercial use. Information is spread about the advantages of buying credit cards or taking loans from banks. You must have seen in the newspapers or watched on T.V. propaganda about various schemes launched by various companies. Whether propaganda is used to spread truth or untruth, it is a masterly weapon of changing people's opinion. It is characteristically, a planned spread of information and works on the principle of mass-psychology.

### Rumour

Rumour, too, like propaganda is a mass-spread of information. It may be planned in some cases but it generally takes wings on its own. The dictionary meaning of rumour is "common talk, a current story or statement passing from one person to another without any known authority for truth of it."

Rumour spreads through gossip. Therefore, the information spread around is not controlled as it is in propaganda. As the story passes from one mouth to another, it picks up new details which make it more spicy and colourful. Rumour is a rapid means of spreading information because people are willing receivers. Since rumour is an individualized projection of information, it rules out careful monitoring. Hence it often gets out of hand and rolls on mischievously.

Given below is a table that lists the differences between propaganda and rumour:

<b>Propaganda</b>	<b>Rumour</b>
1. It is a planned set of information.	1. It is unplanned- it is any gossip or story arising out of common talk.
2. It has a well identified objective.	2. It has no objective as such.
3. People have to be convinced.	3. People are willing receivers.
4. It follows an organised method of spreading information.	4. It follows no method.
5. It is a controlled and monitored activity.	5. It is uncontrolled. People interpret the story in their own way and add new details.
6. The concluding results can be both positive or negative.	6. conclusion is mostly negative.

### INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.5

1. Say whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F):
  - (i) Propaganda is no more used as a method of spreading information
  - (ii) Propaganda gives only negative results.
  - (iii) Propaganda is a planned activity.

- (iv) Propaganda can be used to spread both truth or untruth.
- (v) Propaganda is different from rumour.

2. Choose the correct alternative to complete the sentence given below:

A rumour spreads fast because \_\_\_\_\_.

- (i) People receive it willingly and pass it on.
  - (ii) It has no plan or method.
  - (iii) It is oral information
  - (iv) It is not true.
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### 18.9 Technology and Communication

Human being invented machine as an extension to do what s/he can do more rapidly and more easily. The scientific and technological advancement has given many new machines which have widened the scope of communication and multiplied its dimensions. With the invention of machines like telephone, tape recorder, microphone, printing machine, radio, T.V. and computer, communication is no more limited to individuals, it has become global.

Quick sources of sending information like phone, fax, e-mail have brought the world together. It is said that the world is now a global village. News from one corner of the world takes no time to travel to the rest of the people. The technological developments in the field of communication have put knowledge at the service of mankind. For example, the possibilities of saving life have increased with the instant access to medical information. Spread of education is wider and faster. NIOS which you have joined to study for class X is also using technology (radio, T.V.) to reach you in the far off corners of the country. You get audio cassettes for self learning. You also receive lessons on T.V. Communication has taken a leap forward with the development of conferencing facility. The one way transmission of information is now a two-way communication. The receiver can instantly convey his responses to the sender.

Thus technology has given a boost to communication by enlarging its scope to the entire world. But we must remember that machine should remain a tool in the hands of human. It should not be allowed to be his master.

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### INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.6

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1. You want to send a written message to your friend who stays in Singapore which three ways can you use? Name them.

2. Choose the correct alternative to complete the following sentence:

Technology has widened the scope of communication by \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) making it easier to pass on and receive information.
  - (b) reducing the workload of man.
  - (c) giving man more time to communicate.
  - (d) doing man's work for him.
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### **18.10 What you have learnt**

- Communication is a process of interaction with people and environment.
- communication is a continuous process of giving and receiving information, of building up social relationships.
- Communication can be broadly divided into two categories. These are: 1. Verbal Communication 2. Non-verbal Communication
- We express our gratitude to nature through ritual like offering worship to trees, rivers, mountains, the sun and the moon.
- This is a non-verbal communication between man (Purush) and nature (Prakriti).
- The scientific and technological advancement has given many new machines which have widened the scope of communication and multiplied its dimensions.
- Thus technology has given a boost to communication by enlarging its scope to the entire world. But we must remember that machine should remain a tool in the hands of human. It should not be allowed to be his master.

### **18.11 Terminal Exercise**

1. Discuss the role of communication in our life.
  2. List the key elements of communication and explain one in brief.
  3. Write a short note on non-verbal communication.
  4. Differentiate between propaganda and rumour.
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## Key to Intext Questions

### 18.1

1. c. We cannot communicate through gestures.
2. Sender- message-method-receiver- response of receiver.

### 18.2

1. b. non-verbal.
2. a. two or more individuals.

### 18.3

1. Common interests, common language, common environment, common level of understanding.
2. c

### 18.4

1. d. the earth takes care of us like a mother.
2. d. everything like air, water, nature, animals- the total surrounding of man.

### 18.5

1. 1. F    2. F    3. T    4. T    5. T
2. A rumour spreads fast because people receive it willingly and pass it on.

### 18.6

1. letter, fax, e-mail
  2. a- by making it easier to pass on and receive information.
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