

# FOR FY B.Sc. STUDENTS

## SUBJECT : BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

### UNIT - 1

- **BUSINESS COMMUNICATION :**

- **What is communication?**

How do we define the communication? “Communication is something so simple and difficult that we can never put it in simple words,” says T. S. Matthews. But we do need a definition to understand the term. In his book *Communication in Business*, Peter Little defines communication as follows:

“Communication is the process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/or organizations so that an understanding response results”.

- *The process of communication involves exchanging facts, ideas, opinions or emotion between two or more persons.*
- *Feedback is an essential aspect of communication.*
- *The main purpose of communication is to inform, or to bring round to a certain point of view, or to elicit action.*

- **The Communication Situation :**

The communication situation is said to exist when

- (1) There is a person (sender or transmitter) desirous of passing on some information;
- (2) There is another person (receiver) to whom the information is to be passed only.
- (3) The receiver partly or wholly understands the message passed on to him;
- (4) The receiver responds to the message, i.e., there is some kind of feedback.

The communication situation cannot exist in the absence of any of these four components. Two gentlemen greeting each other with folded hands constitute a communication situation, for (a) there is a person desirous of sending message (greeting); (b) there is another person to receive this message; (c) when the first person folds his hands, the second one understands that he is being greeted; and (d) the second person immediately responds back by folding his own hands.

But if a Hindi-speaking person addresses a Tamil-speaking person in Hindi, the communication situation does not exist, for though there is a person desirous of sending message, the message is not understood and consequently there is no feedback.

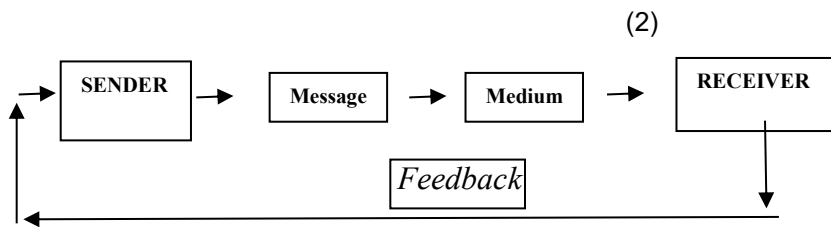
- **The Communication Cycle:**

The transmission of the sender's ideas to the receiver and the receiver's feedback or reaction to the sender constitute the communication cycle. The main steps of this cycle are as follows:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| (1) Input    | : the information or ideas the sender wants to give the receiver |
| (2) Channel  | : letter, fax, phone, call, electronic mail, etc.                |
| (3) Message  | : the actual message that is sent                                |
| (4) Output   | : the information the receiver gets                              |
| (5) Feedback | : the receiver's response (or non-response) to the message       |

### **The Process of Communication:**

Definitions of communication are countless. We need not bother ourselves with too many definitions. Rather we have to view the process of communication in a slightly different way. Generally, this **process is described in terms of what the sender desires to convey and what is actually received by the receiver**. In fact, the situation is more complex as several other factors enter the circuit which processes meaning. The following figure highlights these factors.



1. *Sender:*

The process of communication starts with a sender, the person who has an idea and wants to convey it to the receiver. In other words, we can say that the person with ideas to share is called sender. So communication process begins with the sender.

2. *Message:*

A piece of information spoken or written, to be passed from one person to another. It consists of a set of verbal and non-verbal cues sent by the speaker. Cues include – words, figures, gestures, movements, vocal techniques, etc. The message may consist of facts, ideas, opinions, attitudes, feelings or course of action.

3. *Medium:*

The way or the medium of sending the message is called channel. The choice of the medium is influenced by the inter relationship between sender and receiver. It also depends upon the urgency of the message. Medium or channel can be oral, written or it can be non verbal.

4. *Receiver:*

The receiver is the person who notices or attaches meaning to the conveyed message. In the best way, if it reaches to the receiver then there is no problem to the receiver to understand the message properly. In other words, we can say that the receiver is the other party who receives the message of the sender.

5. *Feedback:*

This is the last part of communication process. After receiving the message, the receiver reacts or responds to the sender. The response can be based on the perfect understanding of the message or it can be based on the misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the message. This reply from receiver to sender is called feedback. Feedback has its own importance as the success or failure of communication is decided by feedback only.

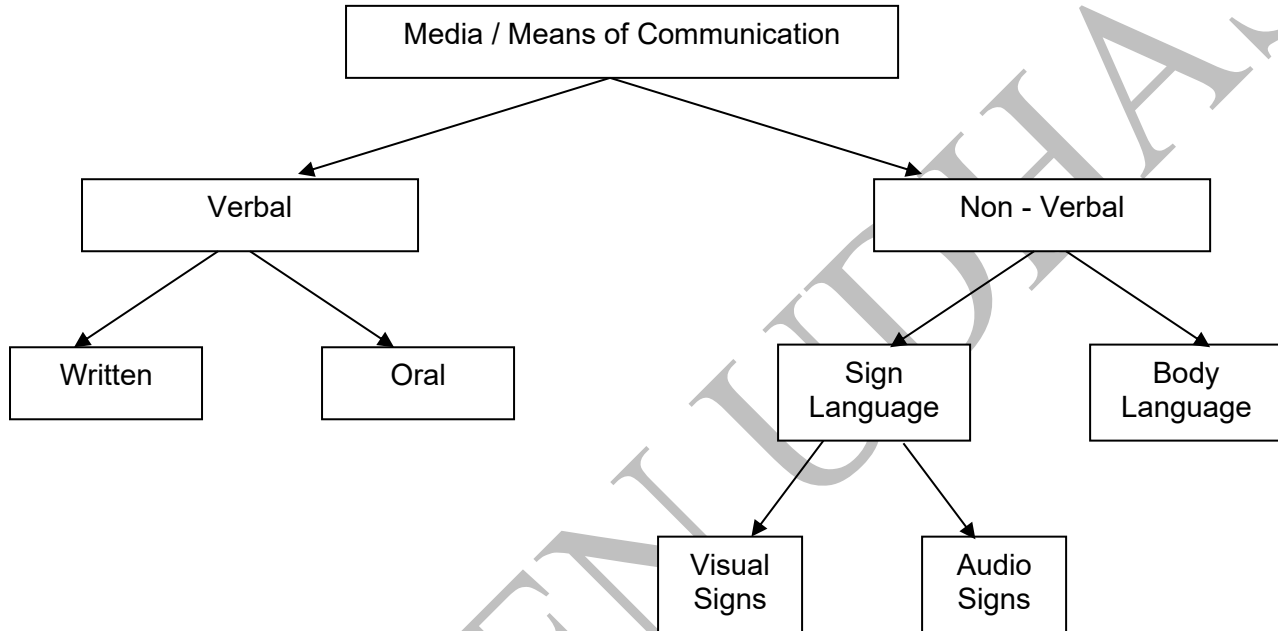
6. *Noise:*

Noise is defined as unnoticed and unidentified interference in the communication process, which causes hindrance in the transmission or reception of the message. It distorts interpretation or the decoding part of the communication process.

- **MEDIA / FORMS OF COMMUNICATION:**

- **Introduction:**

These days communication is possible through a vast variety of media. The Managing Director desirous of communicating with the sales manager can summon him to his room, talk to him over the telephone, or send him a memo. If he wants to consult all the departmental heads, he would most probably convene a meeting. If information is to be transmitted to all the employees, a notice may be put on the notice board or a peon may circulate it among them, a senior officer may announce it over the public address system, or it may be printed in the office bulletin. Posters may be used to issue warnings. Communication with Government departments and other agencies is mostly conducted through written letters. General public can be reached through advertisements on the radio, the television, the cinema screen, or in the newspapers and popular journals. For communication to be effective, the communicators has to be very careful and judicious in the choice of media, which will depend on various factors like the urgency of the message, the time available, the expenditure involved and the intellectual and emotional level of the receivers. We can describe the basic forms of communication in the following way:



Communication done by words is called verbal communication. It is divided into two parts. (1) Written communication and (2) Written communication. Communication where words are not used is called non-verbal communication. Again non-verbal communication is divided into two parts: (1) Sign language and (2) Body language. Here Sign Language is again divided into two parts, (1) Visual signs and (2) Audio signs.

- **VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

- **Written communication – Merits and Limitations:**

**Merits:**

**(1) It is accurate and precise:** Written communication is usually formulated with great care. The very prospect of writing makes a person conscious. He gives a serious thought to his ideas and tries to organise them. Since written communication is open to verification, and its authenticity can be easily challenged, the communicators has to be accurate and factual. Therefore, in written communication, there is an insistence on greater accuracy and precision.

**(2) It can be repeatedly referred to:** The receiver of a written communication can go over the message again and again. He can read and re-read it till he thinks he has properly understood it. Besides, there is less danger to losing any part of the message. An oral message is given just once. Even if it is not properly understood, the receiver does not request for its repetition, for he is afraid that it might adversely reflect upon his own competence. It is also possible that some vital part of the message may be missed through oversight. In written communication, these possibilities are more or less eliminated.

**(3) It is permanent record:** Written communication becomes a permanent record of the organisation and can prove very useful for future reference. Old orders and decision can serve as precedents for fresh decisions. Previous years' reports are found beneficial for formulating new policies and fixing current targets.

**(4) It is legal document:** Written communication is acceptable as a legal document. That is why some executives think that even if some messages have been transmitted orally, they should later be confirmed in writing.

**(5) It facilitates the assignation of responsibilities:** If communications are preserve in writing, it is much easier to assign responsibilities. In case a mistake is committed as a result of oral communication, it is very difficult to

ascertain whether the mistake has been committed at the communicator's end or the receiver's. Managers may sometimes have a tendency to shift the responsibility for a mistake to the lower staff. That is why the lower staff feels more secure when it receives orders in writing.

**(6) It has a wide access:** Communication media having become very fast, written communication enjoys a wide access. If the communicator and the receiver are far removed from each other, written communication sent through post is the cheapest and may be the only available means of communication between them.

### Limitations:

**(1) It is time-consuming:** One of the major limitations of written communication is that it is time-consuming. A letter may take two or even three to four days to reach its destination, whereas in oral communication through mechanical devices like the telephone not only is the message instantly transmitted but even the response is received immediately.

**(2) It is costly:** Writing letters is a costly process, not because of postage expenses, which are only nominal, but because a number of people are involved in sending out a letter from an organisation, and their time is definitely valuable.

**(3) Quick clarification is not possible:** In case the receiver of a written communication has certain doubts or questions about the message, he cannot seek immediate clarification, as is possible in oral messages. He has to write back and wait for the reply, but he may not be able to afford the time required for this lengthy process.

### Written communication:

#### Merits

- Accurate
- Precise
- Permanent record
- Legal document
- Can reach a large number of people simultaneously
- Helps to fix responsibility

#### Limitations

- Time consuming
- Expensive not in terms of postage but of the time of so many people
- Quick clarification not possible

### • Oral communication – Merits and Limitations:

#### Merits:

(1) *Oral communication saves time.* In a number of cases where action is required to be taken immediately, it is best to transmit a message orally. When the work load builds up, the harassed executives stop writing, they reach for the telephone or call a snap conference, or just walk down the corridor and give oral instructions to somebody. It helps them to expedite work. Within half an hour their load is off their head, and their equanimity and poise are restored.

(2) In most cases (e.g., when it is within the organisation) *oral communication saves money also.*

(3) *Speech is a more powerful means of persuasion and control.* Therefore executives often prefer to transmit messages orally.

(4) With the help of variations in the tone, pitch and intensity of voice, *the speaker can convey shades of meaning*, which he would not be able to do through written communication. This factor also contributes to the efficacy of oral communication.

(5) *The speaker can get immediate feedback* on whether it is creating a favourable impression on the receiver or antagonising him, whether the receiver will acquiesce or protest, or whether the receiver has clearly understood his meaning or is feeling perplexed or baffled, and he can mould and adjust his message accordingly.

(6) Although the employees feel more secure when in possession of written messages, they find the oral messages more reliable, for they *get an opportunity for feedback and clarification.*

(7) *The informal plane* on which oral communication is mostly carried out *helps to promote friendly relations* between the parties communicating with each other.

(8) Oral communication is extremely *useful while communicating with groups* at assemblies, meetings, etc.

#### Limitations:

(1) Oral communication *is not possible if the communicator and the receiver are far removed* from each other and no mechanical devices are available to connect them.

(2) *Lengthy messages are not suitable for oral transmission*, for there is every likelihood of something of vital importance being missed.

(5)

(3) Oral messages *cannot be retained for a long time*. In about a month's time, not more than twenty percent of the original message may have been retained. Since these messages are nowhere to be found in the record books, we cannot refer back to them in future.

(4) Oral messages *to not have any legal validity* unless they are taped and made a part of permanent record.

(5) Although oral messages offer a greater opportunity for clarification, there are also inherent in them greater chances of misunderstanding. The speaker often gives the messages without having properly organised it earlier. So it is quite possible that he may not be able to make himself quite clear. Or the receiver may miss the message on account of his inattentiveness.

(6) In oral messages, responsibilities for mistakes, if any, cannot be specifically assigned.

**Oral communication:**

**Merits**

- *Saves time*
- *Saves money*
- *More forceful*
- *Conveys shades of meaning*
- *Immediate feedback*
- *Immediate clarification*
- *Can be informal*
- *More effective with groups*

**Limitations**

- *Not possible for distant people in the absence of mechanical devices*
- *Unsuitable for lengthy messages*
- *Messages cannot be retained for long*
- *No legal validity*
- *Greater chances of misunderstanding*
- *No easy to fix responsibility in case of misunderstanding*

• **Essential of effective oral communication:**

**(1) Clear pronunciation:** The first important prerequisite of effective oral communication is that words should be pronounced clearly and correctly. Oral messages are often misunderstood because the speaker does not talk distinctly. Inability to use the jaws freely, to speak with a limber tongue and limber lips, and to speak slowly often makes for poor oral transmission. If a person tries to talk as fast as he thinks, his words will run together and get rammed into one another, so that when he tends asking 'what did you have?' he will succeed only in saying 'wajuhave?'

**(2) Brevity:** People take pleasure in talking, so oral communication tends to suffer from over-communication. But if a speaker keeps on talking for long, his message will get lost in a sea of verbosity and distraction. It is important to keep the message as brief as possible without appearing abrupt and discourteous.

**(3) Precision:** Precision can make oral communication very effective. Instead of saying 'total these invoices as early as possible', it is preferable to specify the time and say 'could you kindly total these invoices and bring them back to me in half an hour's time'. 'Come to the office early tomorrow' is not as good as 'could you reach the office tomorrow by 8 o'clock since all these letters have to be despatched by the first mail.'

**(4) Conviction:** A person communicating orally must have conviction in what he says. Lack of conviction causes lack of confidence so that he is not able to impress the receiver with the message. Conviction comes from sincerity of approach and careful thinking and planning. Careful analysis and objective evaluation of the message while formulating it also promote the speaker's conviction in it.

**(5) Logical sequence:** If the speaker has given a proper thought to his message, he will be able to arrange the various ideas contained in it in their logical sequence. Jumbled ideas create confusion, while logically arranged ideas make the message forceful.

**(6) Appropriate word choice:** Words have different meanings for different people. So it is important to be careful in the choice of words. The speaker, while speaking something, knows what he means, so he presumes that his listener also does so, which may be a wrong presumption. In oral communication it is more important to use the terms familiar to the listener rather than the terms that are familiar to the speaker.

**(7) Avoiding hackneyed phrases and clichés.** Speakers often when they are grouping for words, make use of hackneyed phrases like 'what I mean', 'do you follow', 'isn't it', 'I see', etc. Such words and phrases interrupt the flow of their speech and impede quick grasp of meaning. They are used unconsciously, but the speakers should take deliberate pains to exclude them from their speech.

**(8) Natural voice.** Some speakers deliberately cultivate an affected style under the impression that it would make them look more sophisticated. Nothing is farther from truth, and nothing impresses so much as the natural way of speech. One of the manuals for office employees in an American firm says, "The most effective speech is that which is correct and at the same time natural and unaffected. Try to tone down an unusual accent and discard all affectations of speech. Try to cultivate a pleasing voice and speak clearly and distinctly."

**(9) Finding the right register:** B. Maude in his book Practical Communication for Managers says that people belonging to different social, cultural and educational levels, use different kinds of language. If educated groups need

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five words to understand an idea, uneducated groups may need ten. Educated people use more nouns, uneducated ones, more verbs. An efficient communicator senses distinctions of this type and adjusts his speech according to the needs of his listeners. This is finding the right register. According to him, an efficient oral communicator “tunes in to the listener’s wavelength by subtly, and perhaps unconsciously, adjusting his vocabulary, loudness, speed of delivery and accent. The good oral communicator is almost multilingual”.

• **According to Francis J. Bergin, a person engaged in oral communication must remember seven C’s. He ought to be**

- |                     |                    |                      |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| (1) <i>Candid</i>   | (2) <i>Clear</i>   | (3) <i>Complete</i>  | (4) <i>Concise</i> |
| (5) <i>Concrete</i> | (6) <i>Correct</i> | (7) <i>Courteous</i> |                    |

• **Face-to-face communication:**

Face-to-face communication may, at the first thought, appear to be identical with oral communication. However, it is possible to visualise certain situation in which the two get distinguished. Telephonic conversation is oral but we cannot call it face-to-face communication. The Presidents of two countries greeting each other with a smile and warmly shaking each other’s hand are engaged in face-to-face communication, although, for want of a common language, their communication cannot be described as oral. In most of the situations, however, all face-to-face communications are oral also.

**Merits:**

(1) *Facial expression and gestures help to communicate better.* As a already explained, oral communication is better than the written on in one respect: the message is reinforced with the help of the tone, pitch and intensity of the speaker’s voice. Face-to-face communication enjoys yet another distinct advantage: the message being communicated also gets the assistance of facial expressions and gestures. Thus the communication is almost perfect.

(2) *Particularly suitable for discussion.* Face-to-face communication is particularly suitable for discussions, for there is immediate feedback from the total personality of the listener including the vibrations being emitted by it and not just in terms of words which may often be hollow and meaningless. Somebody may accept you review because he is convinced, or he may accept it because being your subordinate, he has to. Conviction looks different from surrender or resignation, and you will immediately know. Face-to-face communication provides the speaker with a much better opportunity for adjustment. A puzzled look indicates lack of understanding: explain yourself better. A blank face with head turned sideways suggests lack of interest: either make your listener interested in what you are saying or stop. A twists of the lips, a frown on the forehead, a contraction of the facial muscles point out that your message is not welcome: change your tone and make yourself sound and look more considerate and sympathetic. These adjustments are possible only in face-to-face communication.

**Limitations::**

(1) *Difficult to practice in large-sized organisations:* Face-to-face communication is extremely difficult to practice in modern large0sized organisations particularly if their various units or departments are situated at different places.

(2) *Not effective in large gatherings.* It is very difficult to get a message across to large gatherings. Even though the speaker is addressing them face to face, the vital personal touch is missing. In the absence of a satisfactory feedback, his speech lapses into a monologue.

(3) *Ineffective if the listener is not attentive.* A limitation which the face-to-face communication shares with oral communication is that its effectiveness is closely inked with the listener’s attentiveness. Since human beings can listen to and grasp messages faster than the sped at which they are delivered, they will easily get delivered, thus making communication ineffective.

**Face-to-face communication:**

**Merits**

- *Expression and gestures make communication very effective*
- *Very suitable for discussions*

**Limitations**

- *Unsuitable for large organisations*
- *Unsuitable for large gatherings*
- *Ineffective if the listener is inattentive*

• **NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS**

- **Facial; expressions and gestures:**

While written communication is expressed in terms of words alone, oral communication involves verbal as well as non-verbal elements. The non-verbal elements include the pitch and tone of the voice as well as facial expressions and gestures. George Terry describes them as 'body language'. Rolling, shrinking, winking and twinkling of the eyes, frowning, twisting the lips, wobbling the head, staring in the vacuum with blank, listless eyes, fidgeting in the seat, fumbling the pockets, biting the nails, clattering the teeth, raising the fist and thumping the table, grinning and grimacing, pacing up and down in the room, sawing the air with violent movement of the arms are some of the expressions and actions that constitute body language. Nervousness, anger, fear, scorn, determination, horror, sympathy, pity, lack of understanding, disinterestedness, resentment can be much better expressed through body language than through words. Therefore, it would be a serious mistake to overlook the contribution of the body language to the communication process. Would you believe a person who says 'glad to meet you' unless his face glows with warmth and his voice quivers with a thrill of happiness?

Successful communications make a very effective use of facial expressions and gestures. A good boss, while scolding a subordinate for some serious mistake, will not show anger on his face; instead his face will register a feeling of concern for the employee so that the latter goes with the impression that the scolding was directed at improving him and making him more efficient in his work. The foremen's rebuke to a worker delivered in a sarcastic tone is sure to demoralise him and he is certain to repeat the mistake that earlier earned him the rebuke. But a rebuke accompanied with a pat on the back assumes an altogether different meaning and the worker goes back to his job determined not to provide the foreman with another opportunity for admonishing him.

- *Face-to-face communication becomes more effective if accompanied with appropriate body language.*

**(1) Body language:**

We convey our feelings, message not through our speech, but by using various parts of our body. We have our arms and fingers, stand straight, smile, stare at something, wrinkle our forehead. Our face also plays a very vital role in communicating. We show our happiness, liking, disliking, fear, anger, sadness on our face. Our body gestures also convey many things. Movement of our legs, hands, torso and head convey a lot. Experts have been doing lot of work on body language. A candidate is known the moment he enters the interview office. He is measured constantly by the way he walks and talks. 55% of the communication consists of body language. Body language is made up of gesture, posture and facial expressions. Let us study some common gesture and facial expressions and its possible meanings:

No.	GESTURE	POSSIBLE MEANING
1.	Mouth Covering-	-Person may be lying, -Person may be unsure of what he is saying -Person may wants to suppress feelings.
2	Putting object in the mouth	Person is under pressure and taking his time.
3	Touching the Lip	It may indicate boredom, excitement, fear, horror or uncertainty
4	Scratching the Neck	Searching memory for something, Psychological discomfort
5	Rubbing the eyes	When a person is in doubt or telling a lie.
6	Putting the hand on the chick	It indicates deep thinking.
7	Head in hand	It can specify despair, loss, prolonged thinking of boredom
8	Hands on hips	Shows aggressiveness or readiness and the ability to do a job.
9	Hands behind the head	Indicates confidence, dominance or superiority about something
10	Palms covering chick	Indicates patience, helplessness.
11	Rubbing hands	Indicates anticipation
12	Sitting with legs apart	Open, Relaxed

#### (4) Paralanguage:

Paralanguage is not language, but it is like language. Speaker's voice plays a vital role in this language. You may say that, what is said is import, but her how it is said is more important than what is said. Words are delivered in such a fashion that the receiver can be hurt or made happy. For example how you pronounce the following sentence convey the different meaning, even though the sentences is same:

Have you seen my new **book**?  
 Have you seen my **new** book?  
 Have you seen **my** new book?  
 Have you **seen** my new book?  
 Have **you** seen my new book?

Through paralanguage we can know the education and regional background the speaker. We can also the speaker's place in the organisation. However, we cannot totally rely on paralanguage. Sometimes, unnecessary prejudices may come in the way of understanding the right meaning.

#### (5) Other types of non-verbal communication:

Colour, lay-outs and designs, surrounds also play an important roles in non-verbal communication. Different colours are associated with different behaviour patterns, attitudes and cultures. Pink colour is considered to be healthy and happy colour. Black and grey colours are associated with negative feelings. Different cultures have different meaning for the same colours. E.G. South Indian perhaps consider black omen. Fixed furniture, carpeting, size, location and decoration all convey the likings and dislikings of the owner of that place.