**Elements of Communication**

Let us analyse Joseph A Devito’s definition that ‘communication refers to the act by one or more persons, of sending and receiving messages distorted by noise, within a context, with some effect and with some opportunity for feedback’ to find out the essential elements of communication.

**According to his definition, communication has the following elements:**

a) Sender

b) Message

c) Channel

d) Receiver

e) Noise

f) Feedback

Discussion on each of these elements with examples will give us more insight into the entire process of communication.

**Sender**

Sender is the idea generating component in communication process. In human communication, sender may be a person or persons who create or formulate the message to be sent to the receiver. Being the primary source of the message, sender is also termed as source. In mass media, for example, news reporter is the sender or source as he/she constructs the message (news story). In a musical performance, the singer is the sender as his message is enjoyed by the audience.

**The source/sender has three functions:**

a) To decide what is to be communicated

b) Encoding (Put the idea in such a way that the receiver understands it)

c) Transmitting the message to the receiver

**Message**

The message is any verbal or non-verbal method that produces meaning in the mind of the receiver. Simply, it is the meaning transferred from sender’s mind to receiver’s mind. This happens mainly in two ways: verbal and non-verbal methods.

**Verbal** message means written or oral messages. They are composed of words. Example: A newspaper report or a lecture by a teacher.

**Non-verbal** messages are those communicated through our behaviour, movements, actions, clothes, style of conversation, pitch of the sound etc.

What is fundamental in message construction is the agreement between sender and receiver in the code used for it. If the receiver cannot identify the language or meaning of the message, the communication will be defective.

**Channel**

The channel means medium by which sender transmits the message to the receiver. Our five senses such hearing, touching, smelling , tasting , seeing are basic natural channels of human communication. Communication can be classified on the basis of five basic natural channels.

They are:

**Tactile communication:** Communication by touch or taste

**Olfactory communication:** communication by smell

**Audio communication:** Communication through sound waves

**Visual communication:** Communication through visual elements or properties.

We use any technically developed medium (like television, newspaper, books etc) with the help of one or more of these five senses. Similarly, sender uses one or more channels to maximize the communication effect. For example – multi-media class room where teacher uses projector, blackboard, lecture, gestures etc. simultaneously.

**Receiver**

Idea receiving end in communication process is called receiver. A person or thing may be at the receiving end. The receiver’s role is as important as a sender’s role. As in the case of a sender, receiver has also three roles to play:

**a) To receive the message**

**b) To decode the message**

Decoding is the process of extracting a message from a code and interprets it. For this, sender and receiver should have knowledge about the code (for example: language) used in communication.

c) To respond to the message through feedback

Receivers may be audience watching movies, persons listening to music, students hearing a lecture or a computer getting e-mail from a remote server. Communication fails or remains faulty when message is rejected or misinterpreted by the receiver.

**Feedback**

Information or message that is fed back to the source is called feedback. If you get clapping for your singing, clapping is the feedback. Questions raised by students in a class room for more information is another example for feedback.

Feedback originated either from the sources’ own message is called **self feedback.** Example: When you talk to somebody, you hear yourself and evaluate your tone, pitch etc.

Another type of feedback is that originated from the receiver. It may be in the form of questions, applauses, puzzled look etc.

Feedback may be negative or positive, immediate or delayed. Receiver’s indication to the sender that the message was not received well is called **negative feedback**. Eg. Looks of indifference, rejection or boredom may be considered as negative feedback.

Receiver’s favourable responses like acceptance, applauses etc are **positive feedback.**

Feedback at the time of the communication itself or just after it **is immediate feedback**. Eg. Applauses a singer gets during the performance.

Receiver’s response relatively much after the communication is **delayed feedback.** Eg. Letters to the Editor.

**Noise**

Noise or communication barrier is anything that distorts message. Noise may originate in any of the components of communication like source, message, channel, context, receiver etc. Noise is present when there is difference between the message sent and received. Communication is not possible without noise, but its effects may be reduced through various methods such as using good grammar, clear voice, simple language, quality signal etc.

Noise is of different types depending on the nature and reasons of the distortion.

**They are:**

**Psychological noise:** Any communication error due to the psychological reasons. Eg. A fearful audience can’t enjoy the musical programme. Depression, stress etc

**Linguistic noise :** Language related problems in communication. Eg. Poor grammar, complex sentence structure, rare vocabulary etc.

**Contextual noise:** If communication takes place in inappropriate time or place, message is not conveyed well. Eg. Wishing compliments during a funeral function. Or An outdoor meeting at noon in a hot summer.

**Channel noise :** Medium related communication barrier. Eg. Poor signal affecting picture clarity of television.

**Physical noise:** Vehicles noise, work tools, classroom disturbance

**Physiological noise:** tiredness, feeling of hunger, body discomfort

Message

(Encodes)

Transmission

(Signals)

Recipient

(Decodes)

Receiver

(Meaning)

Sender

(Ideas)

Feedback

**Communication Process (Diagram)**

**Characteristics of Communication**

1. **Involves two person**

Communication involves at least two persons:

a) Sender: who has a message to communicate?

b) Receiver: who gets the message and convert it into thoughts.

**2. Message**

A message is an information, idea, thought or feelings that are transmitted to the receiver. It drives communication, without it there will be no communication. For communication to be successful, receiver should first of all, understand the message. For this, sender should speak in a language that is known to the receiver.

**3: Two Way process**

One person is sending the message and other is receiving and also giving the feed back. For example in a class room, teacher is sending the message (Lecture) and class is receiving it. Also they can simultaneously ask question to the teacher face to face.

**4. Verbal and Non-verbal**

Communication can be done verbal and non-verbal. Verbal communication refers to written or spoken language or words. Non-verbal communication means facial expression, gestures, body movements, expressions etc. verbal and non-verbal communication can be happen individually or simultaneously depending on the situation.

**5. Formal and Informal**

Formal communication follows established channels while Informal communication does not follow the official channels. Formal communication respect and follows established hierarchy, informal communication allows any individual to convey information to anybody freely without having to bother about the hierarchy.

**6. Upward, Downward and Horizontal**

Upward communication starts from the lower level and is transmitted to the upper level of the organization.

Downward communication is opposite to upward communication

Horizontal communication occurs at the same level.