

## ROLE OF LISTENING IN COMMUNICATION

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### ABSTRACT

Communication simply means exchange of Ideas, thoughts and emotions. It can be verbal and non verbal. In this process both speaking and listening skills are Important if the communication is verbal and oral. Here, I am focusing on listening skills and its importance. If the message is not listened properly, it can be interpreted wrongly and can be distorted completely and sometimes it has contrary ramifications. So there are some barriers which can occur during communication and can mar the whole meaning of the message or idea, but we can remove those barriers and can make our listening effective and can be a better understood person by the other person or people or organization. Next the Importance of listening can't be under-estimated in this fast world. It is important in personal as well as professional life. A good listener take right discussion at right time and thus can be more successful in life. So in a way listening skill is directly linked to our success in life.

Key-Words, Communication, listening, barriers, effective, measures

### INTRODUCTION--

Communication is an art which people use for mutual understanding. It is an aspect of human nature, whatever we are, wherever we may be, if two persons are present, a sort of understanding begins to develop between them. Even if nothing is communicated verbally there is an exchange at the pre-speech level. This communication might be pleasant or unpleasant or indifferent but more proximity encourages communication and it alms at understanding.

Communication in its barest primeval form seems to come so naturally even to a child that there seems to be no need to study and cultivate it as a skill. Nature and instinct teach an infant how to attract its mother's attention when it is feeding time; it cries, throws its tiny arms about, pedals its feet and sometimes pulls at her dress. These sounds and gestures can be called the basic primitive means of communication but as we grow our requirements become more subtle and complex and we require more developed means and forms of communication. The evolution of communication skills from infancy to man can be taken as an allegory of the gradual development of the several technique of communication in a rapidly changing world.

## **MEANING AND DEFINITIONS--**

The word communication has been derived from Latin words "COMMUNICARE" which indicates 'sharing' and "COMMUNUS" which means "common", so both of these words mean to make something common by sharing. So sharing of ideas, views, opinions, feelings and attitudes, is called communication. So for a layman, exchange of ideas and feeling among two or more than two persons is communication. But this definition is limited and superficial. Just exchanging of ideas and opinions and feeling and attitudes can not be said communication at all. For communication, it is must that it should be received and understood in the same sense and spirit in which the speaker or the communicator intends to. So communication is much wider and deeper term than it seems to be.

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary communication means "exchange of information, news and ideas."

If we analyse this definition, we see that feelings are conspicuous by their absence Exchange of feelings and emotions can not be discarded from communication rather it is an essential part of communication Anger, disappointment etc. are a must part of communication.

## **NATURE OF COMMUNICATION--**

The nature of communication is social, collective, extrovert, dynamic and multidimensional. It involves impression as well as expression. If it is used competently, communication can be very productive and delightful if it is used awkwardly, it can spoil the whole business. Communication can be enlightening as well as misleading in accordance with one's skill and proficiency.

## **PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION---**

Communication is a process, It includes a speaker or a sender who has an idea to send or communicate. He uses certain medium to express that idea that medium can be language or gesture. He uses some channel to send his message or idea. On the other end, there is a receiver who receives that message and derives some meaning out of that. It can be shown by a diagram.

idea                      channel                      receiver  
{sender}-----{medium}-----{understanding}-----{decision}

## **TYPES OF COMMUNICATION---**

Communication can be divided in following types.

1. Verbal communication
2. Nonverbal communication
3. Written communication
4. Oral communication
5. Formal communication
6. Informal communication

But my point of focus is oral communication. Speaking and listening both activities play vital role. My talk is focused on listening skills.

### **MEANING OF LISTENING--**

We should not confuse 'hearing with listening. Hearing is only a physical activity in which our ears are involved. That is, any sound that falls on our ears, we hear. But we can not use the word 'listening' for that. Listening involves some effort on the part of the listener. In other words, it is not solely a physical activity. It is a mental activity as well, because we use our mental powers to understand the message we are hearing, that's why it is different from hearing.

### **NEEDS OF LISTENING--**

As everybody knows that communication is a two-way process. So listening is an all important part of the communication process in oral communication the Importance of listening can not be undermined.

Firstly objectives of communication cannot be achieved without proper listening. The plans cannot be put to execution.

Secondly, communication process is Incomplete without it because it needs two things, speaking and listening.

Thirdly, progress of work is affected because listening properly means to take right and appropriate decision which are valuable for the progress of the enterprises.

Fourthly, without effective listening communication process is ineffective and there is a wastage of time, money and energy.

Fifthly, it gives rise to problems like non-co-operation, sub ordination and indiscipline. It results in misunderstanding between the employees and the management which further gives rise to disputes leading to loss to the enterprise.

Sixthly, administration becomes ineffective in absence of proper listening.

### **CAUSES OF POOR LISTENING-**

There can be various causes of poor listening. These can be physical as well as emotional. Nowadays one can find that listening being badly affected by not physical but psychological and emotional reasons. As the pace of life is fast, so-we have become choosy in our listening habits. We are always from the morning to night trying to save time as much as we can. Or you can say to do much work in less span of time. In doing so, we have to Ignore many things which we think are unimportant or trivial according to our personal preferences and priorities. So mechanical and environmental problems are less harmful than the psychological and personal ones are. These can be called the barriers or impediments to listening.

#### **1. MECHANICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPEDIMENTS--**

Sometimes we can not comprehend what is being told because of some mechanical and environmental impediments. These can be found in the form of some disturbing sounds and the failure of the instruments being used for communication. The presence of the source of noise; such as the machine - functioning with a loud sound near the place of conversation distorts the signals received and distrupts the progress of sound waves. It is because of such obstacles that we have to strain our system of comprehension more whan we talk to a fellow passenger in an old, ill maintained Haryana Roadways Bus. The noise is the most common and big obstacle in the listening. If an enterprise/institution is near the Railway track or some air port then the noise of passing trains and aeroplanes can become a massive cause of poor listening.

When communication is carried on via some mechanical electronic device into which the speaker speaks his/her message or through which the message is recieved by the listener the impediments may appear in the form of sound problem with the device. It might distort the voice, develop some unwanted sounds or lower the volume too much.

## **2. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PERSONAL BARRIERS-**

Listening sometimes becomes problematic because of certain personal and psychological factors that characterise a bad listener. A bad listener is one that is not temperamentally suited well to listen to the best. Such listeners are not able to grasp the true meaning of the words spoken to them because of their wilfulness, their intellectual incapacity, their over excitement, their lack of interest, their prejudices, premature evaluation, their disliking to the speaker and several other attitudes of this kind.

When the listener is too eager to get something, he is likely to miss the warning signals communicated to him by the speaker himself. The over excitement of the listener does not just allow him to listen to that unpleasant part of the communication.

Sometimes the listener is not only impatient but aggressive also. He starts anticipating the new words spoken to him. Instead of waiting for his turn to speak such listener tries to play the speaker as well as the listener at the same time. On seeing his expressions, the speaker might feel discouraged to carry on. So this produces negative effect on the speaker and is equally harmful for the listener.

If a listener is totally unaware of the context, or the terminology of the message, the comprehension is out of the question. So the listener will become disinterested, late comers fall in this category.

A prejudiced listener is an indifferent one. He draws a blank and ends as ignorant as he was in the beginning of the meeting.

Some speakers affect politeness by speaking in a low voice. Half message remains inaudible. A good listener knows to deal with such speakers.

## **3. LANGUAGE BARRIER-**

This barrier arises on the part of the speaker. The terminology used by him is not in accordance with the intellectual capacity of the listener. So confusion in the mind of the listener is the result of such listening. He hardly makes out anything out of that message.

Use of lengthy sentences and paragraphs also invites bad listening. The manner of speaking also affects the listening. It is very difficult for Indians to understand the English spoken by the Americans or some native Britishers because of their particular accent as everybody has of his own area. Even in India or take up the example of Haryana, after every fifty kilometres, the accent changes even in the local dialect. So this produces a difficulty for a new listener who is not accustomed to that particular accent.

## **HOW TO OVERCOME THESE BARRIERS- STEP-1**

Keeping in view the Importance of listening, It is mandatory that one should be a good listener. In order to be so, one has to remove the obstacles discussed above.

As far as mechanical and environmental disturbances and snags are concerned, these can be avoided simply by choosing a proper venue for communication and by using the best equipment. It should be pre-checked. However, it is not possible when the conversation is not pre-planned. Noises can be stopped or the speaker can pause for sometime if the noise is temporary and passing. Some electric gadgets like heater or A.C can be used to make the atmosphere congenial to listening. The barrier of distance can be surmounted by using a mike or speaking loudly by the speaker.

## **STEP-2**

Second part of the barrier is totally listener-oriented. Only listener can remove all the obstacles if he is willing to. He can follow the following steps in this direction;

1. Show a talker that you want to listen-listen to understand than to oppose.
2. Stop talking, you can not listen while you are talking, nature has given two ears but one tongue, so listen more and speak less.
3. Put the talker at ease. Help him to feel free to talk.
4. Be patient. Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt a talker.
5. Hold your temper; an angry or excited person derives wrong meaning out of the words
6. Remove distractions. It will be quieter if you shut the door or close the running tap.
7. Empathise with the speaker. This is the most important part of listening. Try to empathise with the speaker, listen not only the words but penetrate into the feelings of the speaker. See the point of view of the speaker. Imagine yourself in the place of the speaker. This will surely make you a good listener.
8. Ask questions; this encourages a talker and show that you are listening and interested in the speech. It helps to develop point further.
9. Do not do pre-mature evaluation. Have patience, pre-judgement is fatal to good and effective listening.
10. Forget your biases and prejudices for sometime.
11. Take some medicine if you are not physically well because a person with aches and pains can not concentrate.

### STEP-3

Though the language barrier is concerned mainly with the speaker, use of right terminology, short sentences and paragraph keeping in view the mental level of the listeners etc but a listener can cope with these problems by putting a lot of practice in listening. This needs a constant and intelligent practice on the part of the listener. While the written comprehension involves the training of the eye, the listening comprehension involves a training of the ear.

The organs that mainly take part in oral communication are

1. Tongue, Lips
2. Ear

A systematic exercise of the organs of the speech particularly of the lips and tongue is essential for attaining proficiency in pronunciation. Similarly a proper exercise of the ear is required for attaining skill in listening.

One can test his listening and improve it by using a simple method. He should listen to a passage then, he should take notes, prepare a precis of the passage of answer questions based on it. He can now return to the original passage and check for himself how well he could listen and grasp on the first occasion

Today the language laboratories using latest scientific techniques to train and accelerate comprehension are being developed. Some of these are using mechanical aids to facilitate ear training.

### CONCLUSION---

Go by keeping in mind certain things and by observing some precautions, we can become good listener's. Thus we play active role in communication and take better decisions and benefit our organisation.

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