

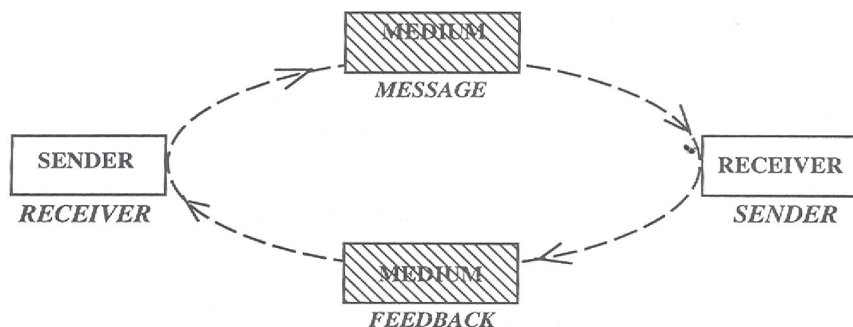
# 1.4 What is Communication?

## Aim

- To understand the components of Communication.

## Procedure

- Invite three volunteers to come forward. Lets assume that each volunteer will be named A, B and C. A will be assigned the duty of creating a message, B the responsibility of transferring the message to C and C of receiving and replying to the message of A through B.
- After this exercise, explain the following: What you have just seen before you is an exchange of information between two business executives via a messenger. However, there are other ways that A can communicate with C. Can you give examples? Put down the examples on the board.
- Challenge the participants to identify the important elements of the communication between A and C.
- Once the diagram given below is drawn and explained on the board, invite the students to try defining the word communication. Put these attempts on the board and consolidate with the one given below.



## Input

### Definitions of Communication

There are at least twenty possible definitions of communication. The common strand running through each is the principle of social interaction through messages.

- “Communication is the art of transmitting information, ideas and attitudes from one person to another.”
- “Communication means literally to ‘make common’ - that is, to create in a receiver’s mind an idea or image similar to the one in the mind of the sender”
- “Communication is the process of conducting the attention of another person for the purpose of replicating memories.”
- “We shall define communication as the act of sharing symbols.”
- “Communication is man’s most important activity...the one he indulges in most, the one he cannot exist without, the one that ensures his personal and collective progress.”
- “Communication is sharing meaning.”
- “Communication involves the conveyance of something to someone else - our ideas, our aims, our wants, our values, our very personalities.”
- “Human Communication is any form of human interaction”
- “Communication means getting a message from my mind to yours.”
- “Communication is an act of co-creation. It is the mating of two or more consciousness, something that never before was and now is, is invented, created and held in common.”
- “Communication is a process by which senders and receivers of messages interact in given social contexts.”
- “...the mechanism by which all human relations exists and develops all the symbols of the mind together with the means of conveying them through space and preserving them in time.”
- Communication is the process by which a message is transmitted from a sender to a receiver through a medium with the intention of getting feedback.

## Materials Required

- Three volunteer students

## Components of Communication

1. *Message Sender*: The sender composes the intended message. The sender could be a writer, speaker or a person who sends a nonverbal message through gestures and body language. It could also be a single person or a group of persons.
2. *Actual Message*: The actual message may be written, oral or nonverbal, or it may combine two or more types of communication. It may or may not be the message the sender intended. The message could also be a lot and complex.
3. *Message Transmission*: The message can be sent or delivered in a variety of ways. Written messages can be sent in the form of letters, memorandums, and reports. Written messages could also be sent electronically using fax machines or electronic mail (e-mail). Oral messages can be delivered through face-to-face conversations, meetings, presentations and through telephone conversations and voice mail. Nonverbal messages include gestures, body language and facial expressions. However, the primary medium is the body.
4. *Message Receiver*: The receiver takes in, or receives, the message. The receiver's knowledge, interest, and emotional state will affect how the message is received.
5. *Message Interpretation*: The receiver interprets the message. The interpretation may be different from the intended message or the actual message.
6. *Feedback*: All human communication desires to be effective in as much as it intends a feedback from the receiver. The more effective the communication, the more visible and immediate the feedback. The sender and the receiver respond to each other in writing, orally, nonverbally, or in a combination of these ways. Feedback may include a written response, verbal questions and nonverbal gestures such as body language and facial expressions.

## Review

1. There are at least 20 definitions of communication. The common strand running through each is the principle of social interaction through messages.
2. The main components of communication are: the message sender, the message, message transmission, message receiver, message interpretation and feedback
3. Communication is the process by which a message is transmitted from a sender to a receiver through a medium with the intention of getting feedback.

## Reflection

1. Think of a situation whereby a message transmitted hit home. What aspect of the communication model enabled you to receive the message powerfully? In what ways can we adjust the components of communication so that messages are received just as they are intended?

## Relevant Skills

1. Listen to a minimum of 10 TV or radio conversations and identify the goal of communication in each. Notice how the different definitions of communication come into play. NB: vary the type of programs whose conversations you listen to for variety.

## Resources

BOSCOM-INDIA. 'SHEPHERDS' FOR AN INFORMATION AGE. Matunga: Tej Prasarini, 2000.

## References

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