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THE IMPORTANCE OF NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

What is Non-Verbal Communication? When most people hear the words “Non-Verbal Communication”, the first image that pops into their mind is a picture of a person who is deaf or someone who cannot speak and has learned to communicate through sign language or other non-verbal means of communication. It is found that only 7% of message is conveyed by words, rest 93% is conveyed by non-verbal codes. In this paper, we will make our young generation aware that words alone are not adequate to express our feelings and emotions. Non-verbal codes express true feelings in a more accurate manner than the spoken or the written language.

**Key words-** crucial, explicitly, optimum, stimulus, literature.

Introduction

Communication and its skills play a crucial role in all spheres of our life. Effective communication is all about the way we use words and sentences effectively. Effective use of language to convey the proper messages at the right time can help us deal with personal as well as professional crisis and motivate every one of us to work towards success.

Communication basically means the meaningful exchange of information, ideas, facts and emotions through verbal and non-verbal mode. We look at it as the means to convey information from one person to another person, but it is much more than that. How we communicate a particular message to other person decides its desired outcome. Hence, it is very important to know and select the right type of communication i.e verbal and non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication is often under-estimated with regards to its meaning being conveyed to others as it is not vocal. People often give more importance to verbal communication as it is used profoundly in our daily life.

So there is a dire need to explicitly make people, especially our young generation, aware of the appropriate and maximum use of non-verbal communication.

First of all, it is important to distinguish between verbal and non verbal communication. This would help us to make optimum use of both the mediums as the occasion demands.

Verbal communication

Verbal communication is a spoken communication. It includes words, spoken and written. Any literature we read or pen down is a form of verbal communication. Our telephonic conversations with our friends, chats with our relatives, official communication in the form of applications, reports, letters is a mode of verbal communication. With the progress in the world, apart from language, the technology has come to its

existence that enables us to communicate to one another, no matter what the physical distance is. For example, chatting with friends and video calling on face book, Skype etc.

We use verbal communication to impart knowledge and information clearly. It helps to solve misunderstandings and provides missing information. That means we can use verbal communication to rectify our mistakes. Verbal communication is also a means of persuading others. Verbal communication creates a chance for debate, stimulus thought and creativity, and stabilizes new relationships.

#### **Non-verbal communication**

Communication which is done without using words is 'Non-Verbal Communication'. In this type of communication, messages are conveyed mainly by non-verbal means like graphs, maps, charts, signs and symbols, body language, distance, time, objects and environment, facial expressions, eye-contact, gesture and posture, dress and appearance, touch, silence etc.

Non-verbal communication is the use of the body, environment, and personal attributes in order to communicate messages either consciously or unconsciously. Using clothing, facial expressions, and touch are just of a few ways non-verbal communication can be implemented. By reading somebody's non-verbal communication, it is possible to make many assumptions about the person. Whether these assumptions are correct or not often go unchecked. And just like a book, it may be best not to judge by appearances. However, much of society still focuses heavily on non-verbal communication failing to give people a chance before they even speak. Non-verbal communication is used daily in everybody's lives.

Non-verbal communication is a silent form of communication, which has a great influence over our social environment and the whole communication process. Non-verbal communication allows us to send messages to others conveying what we are feeling or thinking without verbal language. Non-verbal Communication has many different functions in the communication process. It regulates relationships and can support or even replace verbal communication in some situations. This is accomplished solely through the use of non-verbal communication

#### **Non-Verbal Codes-**

Non-Verbal Communication operates through certain well-defined codes. Let us get acquainted to them briefly.

**Proxemics** - Proxemics means right spacing or distancing during communication. In other words it means, communicating through maintaining a right distance between the sender and the receiver depending on the relationship they share with each other. For example, when we communicate with our dear friends, we tend to go very close to them physically but while communicating with elders, teachers and superiors, we maintain physical as well as psychological distance. Similarly, we keep distance from a person whom we do not like and come closer to the person we like.

The distance can be of four types-

- 1- Public-12 n more ft
- 2- Social-4-12 ft
- 3- Personal-2-4 ft
- 4- Intimate - 0-2 ft

**Chronemics-** It refers to the use of time. It is the time language that speaks about the person. It is manipulation of time. Time, punctuality, willingness to do a particular task, necessary speed for communication etc are important in communication as a non-verbal code. For example, two friends can talk for hours. The long duration of time they take while talking suggest that they are happy in each other's company. A long time spent in discussions shows lot of interest and concern and a brief duration shows lack of sympathy. Similarly, when the boss talks to his sub-ordinate, it is a very short speech full of orders and instructions. Also, we tend to delay meeting the person we don't like but rushes to meet our best friend before time. Looking at watch again and again shows lack of interest.

**Artefacts** - The art reflecting a fact is called Artefacts. It deals with the use of objects and environment in communication. Communication through artifacts means communicating through our clothes, accessories, interior of the house which shows our interest, hobbies, professional status, life-style etc. A person's office or

home, its furnishing, the way it is decorated conveys a great deal about the person. Most of the time outside environment indicates the inside administration.

For example, When anyone enters into the temple, it is found that the outside surrounding is very religious. Also, the serious atmosphere during exams indicate that a serious activity is being conducted.

**Kinesics-aspects of body language-** Kinesics refers to communicating through facial expressions and eye-contact, gesture and posture.

**Facial Expressions** – Face is the mirror of mind. Facial expressions display our emotions like anger, fear, joy, sorrow etc. The facial organs such as forehead, eye-brows, eyes, mouth, chin, nose, lips, ear, teeth, tongue etc indicate facially expressive messages to the receiver. For example, a smile expresses friendliness and affection while raising an eye-brow conveys surprise and a frown conveys dislike or suspicion.

These are the effectively and commonly used tools in a conversation. Each organ has a special use and reflection of message. Therefore, they should be used properly in a communication otherwise it may reflect wrong message to the receiver.

**Eye-contact**-Eyes are the windows of our mind. Eye-contact is an effective means of establishing rapport with the audience. While talking it is necessary to maintain eye-contact. A good teacher uses it to teach the students to maintain silence and discipline. In conversation and speeches, eye-contact draws attention of the audience.

Proper eye-contact symbolises courage, confidence and concern whereas avoiding eye-contact symbolises lack of interest, confidence and courage. Eye-contact is a driving force to keep the audience attentive and alert.

**Gesture**-Gesture is the movements of limbs (fingers) especially hands which add meaning to what we say.

For example-

- 1-Shaking hands indicate friendship, warmth.
- 2-Waving hands to draw attention or bid goodbye.
- 3- Thumb up to wish best of luck, thumb down to show failure.
- 4- Putting palm on the head to show tension, worry, disappointment.
- 5- Tapping feet showing enjoyment of music.

**Posture** - Posture means "position/angle of the body". The way we sit or stand, walk in or walk out tells a lot about our personality. The position of human body reflects the attitude, awareness and interest of the listener. For example, a confident person always walks, stands, and sits erect keeping his chin up and chest out whereas a sad, under-confident person puts his head down, shoulders lowered and spine bowed. Similarly, we appear relaxed if we are sitting with our back rested whereas our drooping shoulders show our inner depression and worries.

**Vocalics/Paralanguage** - Vocalics refer to voice modulation in which the speaker's tone, stress, pause, volume, intonation, pattern of pronunciation etc are observed. For example, The stress on words may change the meaning of word or a sentence. A sad person has very low voice which reflects his emotional state. Question and answers have rising and falling tone respectively. Similarly when we suffer from a severe pain, we grunt and when we are in joyful mood, we hum. Loud voice expresses superiority, anger and authority whereas soft voice is a symbol of love and affection.

**Dress and Appearance**- Dress is also a form of non-verbal communication. A good dress code for the occasion speaks well of a person. Casual dress is not meant for official functions. Up-to-date dress indicates our systematic thought process. For example, a student wearing a complete uniform reflects his discipline and sincerity of purpose. An untidy, unclean dress gives negative impression.

Appearance plays a very important role in the image of the person. A confident physical appearance of a person will always appeal the audience. It's not just the dress of a person but also the attitude and the social status which enhances the personality. It is important to project oneself in the most assertive and confident manner. Our appearance communicates a lot about our education, family background etc.

**Haptics**-It is the study of non-verbal communication through touch. It includes handshake, holding hands, claps, pat on the back, pulling ears, comforting someone with a warm touch etc. A touch can convey various shades of meaning from care, concern, hatred, violence, anger, affection, love etc.

For eg-

1-Sympathy-Loving touch and warm affection.

2-Respect-Touching feet of elders.

3-Care & Concern-To hug someone.

4-Friendship-Shaking hands.

5-Appreciation-Pat on the back.

### **Importance of Non-verbal communication**

#### **1. Emotions-**

Firstly, we can say that non-verbal communication is important in expressing our emotions. Emotions such as happiness, satisfaction, confidence, surprise, eagerness, tiredness, stress, sadness, excitement, wonder etc. These are almost all expressed through different body gestures and facial expressions. We are able to understand each other up on judging each other's expression. For example if someone cries, it indicates that something has happened to him or her and others will be able to help it. Non-verbal gestures are what our recipients see in the first place, even before a single word is heard. These figurative messages can be a visual sign of feeling, but our words convey a different message. Using non-verbal cues help in expressing meaning, to navigate complicated state of affairs and build strong relationship for us at home or work. Thus, expression of the face becomes basic mode of non-verbal communication among people.

#### **2. Inter-personal Relationships-**

Secondly, it plays vital role in communicating inter-personal relationships. Through inter-personal communication, we can establish trust in relationships and help determine a person's fidelity. And this is possible only through using verbal and non-verbal communication mode. Inter-personal communication includes communications that occurs with our words and through our tone of voice, posture and facial expressions. It is also found by many researchers that non-verbal interpersonal communication like body language may communicate 93 percent of our attitudes and beliefs. We use language in verbal communication to communicate precise messages. Non-verbal communication involves any other information that we send and receive from others including our body language, eye contact or how we say a particular message. So, this also indicates that non-verbal communication is as equally important as verbal communication in our daily life.

#### **3. Aid to Verbal Communication-**

Thirdly, non-verbal communication is main supporter of verbal interaction. Infact they supplement each other and convey complete and exact meaning. Since, non-verbal communication can repeat the spoken message: contradict the message that individual is trying to convey; emphasize the message, substitute or complement meaning to make it understand clearly, it is in a way mandatory to verbal communication.. For example, when the class teacher comes across his student with a frowning face seeking permission to take rest, he would immediately grant permission because he saw how much the student was suffering not only by hearing the reason, but more by judging student's facial expression. This confirms equal importance of non-verbal communication to verbal communication.

#### **4. Reflection of Individual's Personality-**

Fourthly, non-verbal communication reflects individual's personality. "Personality is the entire mental organization of a human being at any stage of his development. It embraces every phase of human character: intellect, temperament, skill, morality, and every attitude that has been built up in the course of one's life." . So according to the above definition, personality concerns the most vital, obvious parts of an individual's psychological life: it concerns whether a person is sad or happy, lethargic or active, brainy or tedious. And these are all aspects of non-verbal communication because we are able to define person's personality through judging their facially expressed emotions and behaviours.

#### **5. Greetings & Goodbyes-**

Lastly, nonverbal communication plays greater role in performing rituals such as greetings and goodbyes. The smile on our face as soon as we see someone we recognize from distance itself tells a

lot about importance of non-verbal communication. Similarly, waving our hand indicating good bye is another example of non-verbal communication. Nonetheless, nodding or shaking our head indicates accepting or refusing when others tell something or offer something. These are some of the details about how non-verbal communication interacts with verbal communication through the process of reinforcement, contradiction, and substitution, complementing or emphasizing.

Moreover, body language symbols and signs possess more than one meaning. These different meaning can be applied accordingly to the context and culture of different society. Non-verbal communication is not easily understandable and it is quite confusing because it is not exact and universal in every society. But body language plays pivotal role and it essential.

Non-verbal gestures and signs-use occur early in life. Before speaking our first words, we convey our specific needs to our parents through gestures, postures, facial expressions, eye-contact etc. As we grow older, our facial expressions, gestures, eye contact and even or voice tone helps us transfer messages to the recipient. So, by going through all this , we can conclude that non-verbal communication shares equal importance with verbal communication.

### Conclusion

So, upon knowing the facts and reasons about the importance of non-verbal communication, we should take consideration both verbal and non-verbal equally while communicating in our daily life. Our every day success depends upon our capability to communicate effectively, both verbally and non-verbally. Verbal and non-verbal communication actually defines our interactions and our relationships with others, and portrays physical and psychological well-being of a person. Therefore, understanding the different forms and aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication, and its vitality in playing roles during any kind of daily interactions is the first step to enhancing positive communication and nurturing relationships. To sum up, these statistics indicate that non-verbal communication is also equally important to verbal communication in this real world.

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