

**Intrapersonal communication as the basis of communication
and its spiritual significance**

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ABSTRACT

Communication is the basic function of human beings, which makes him a social being and the whole development story of human civilization and culture possible. Human communication has different aspects – interpersonal communication being the most common – the basis of our day-to-day life. Then comes group and mass communication; the later being mostly used in media. Transpersonal communication covers the spiritual domain of communication. Intrapersonal communication is the basis of all communication, and also perhaps the most neglected and the least discussed or thought out aspect of communication in our daily life as well as in academic field.

This research paper is a humble attempt to explore this important but mostly a neglected aspect of communication. Its meaning, dimensions and importance as an aspect of communication in daily life will be discussed. Also the Spiritual significance and applications of intrapersonal communication will be highlighted. It will be elaborated from Indian perspective in the light of Vedic Spiritual tradition.

The barriers in intrapersonal communication and the strategies to improve it will also be highlighted from worldly as well as spiritual angle. As such this paper is an attempt to explore this much neglected area of intrapersonal communication in a comprehensive way.

Key Words – Intrapersonal Communication, Basis of Communication, Spiritual Significance, Spiritual Communication, Indian perspective.

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Background of Study

Communication as studied in academics is mostly a Western Concept. And communication being a Cultural Context subject, it needs to be studied from the context of different cultures. As such there is a need to study and explore Communication from Indian perspective. This research is an effort to explore Intrapersonal aspect of Communication in general as well from Vedic Spiritual Tradition perspective.

Work so far on this topic

There is no work so far on this topic to my understanding. Intrapersonal communication has been explored in a general way but its Spiritual dimension has yet to be explored. This work a humble maiden effort in this direction

Communication & its Process

In general Communication is the process of sharing information, ideas, feelings and experiences between two or more persons. Word communication is derived from Latin word *communis*, which means 'to share' or 'to transmit' or 'to make common'. Thus communication is a two-way process in which participants not only exchange ideas and information but also share mutual understanding.ⁱIn the words of Keval J. Kumar, "Interaction, interchange, transaction, dialogue, sharing, communion and commonness are ideas that crop up in any attempt to define the term 'communication.'"ⁱⁱAnd the process of communication can be seen as: Sender – Receiver – Message – Channel – Feedback – Noise.

In Indian context it is *Sanchar*, made of the word *char*, which means to move from one place to other. It can happen at different levels. In fact the ubiquity of communication is more than just words, it is a fundamental part of our existence. We engage in it continuously, often without fully realizing its depth. It isn't just about words, it encompasses a spectrum of elements – biological, psychological, social, and indeed, spiritual.ⁱⁱⁱ

Thus human communication is more than media and message, information and persuasion; it also meets a deeper need and serves a higher purpose. It is in short the essential human connection.^{iv}

WimalDissanayake draws on the Vedas, the Upanishads and non-philosophical tradition to build on Indian model of communication. In Indian tradition he argues, 'communication is an inward search for meaning – a process leading to self-awareness, then to freedom, and finally to truth.' Thus it transcends language and meaning and is interpretation or reception-oriented, not expression oriented like the Western models. The intrapersonal dimension is of greater importance than the interpersonal in Indian approach, for individualism and manipulation have no place in it.^v

It would not be exaggeration to term intrapersonal approach to be the basic character of Indian communication system rooted in its spiritual tradition.

Communication & its different types –

Human communication has different aspects – interpersonal communication being the most common – the basis of our day-to-day life. Then comes group and mass communication; the latter being mostly used in media. Transpersonal communication covers the spiritual domain of communication. Intrapersonal communication, the basis of all communication is perhaps the most neglected and the least discussed or thought out aspect of communication in our daily life as well as in the academic field. Thus types of communication are -

1. Inter-personal Communication
2. Group Communication
3. Mass Communication (Print, Electronic & New Media (Digital or Web)
4. Intra-personal Communication

5. Trans-personal Communication (Spiritual Communication)

This paper is going to discuss intrapersonal communication as basis of communication and its spiritual significance.

Intra-Personal Communication

Intrapersonal Communication is the most basic level of communication which refers to communication within the self. This is how we think and assign meaning to all the messages and events that surround our lives. It can be positive or negative and directly influences how you perceive and react to situations and communication with others. For example, daydreaming, thinking about what to wear to work, etc.^{vi}

Intrapersonal communication can be defined as communication with one's self, and that may include self-talk, acts of imagination and visualization, and even recall and memory.^{vii}

In intrapersonal communication all the interaction occurs within the individual. We communicate with ourselves through intrapersonal communication from planning to problem-solving, internal conflict resolution, and evaluations and judgments of self and others. Entire interaction occurs in the mind without externalization, and all of it relies on previous interaction with the external world.^{viii}

Intrapersonal Communication is a result of Cognition and external influences on this thinking. This communication can be an individual reflection, contemplation, and meditation.^{ix} Examples of intrapersonal communication are - talking to your-self, reading aloud, writing, thinking, meditating, singing, and analyzing for instance.^x Intrapersonal communication is basically an inward- looking exercise.^{xi} It involves self-concept, self-talk, Self-motivation, Self-management and self-reflection.^{xii}

Importance of Intra-Personal Communication in Daily life

- Improve Self Awareness, better understand ourselves, clarity of life goal
- Improve understanding of human nature and thus better relationships
- Application in Stress management, Conflict resolution, Problem solving, facing life Challenges
- Self-motivation & increase Productivity
- Enhanced Creativity, Leadership skills,
- Increased Success & Life satisfaction
- Achieve greater Happiness and Fulfillment

In this way Intrapersonal Communication plays vital role in our day to day life. In worldly affairs we use it to get rid of negative self talk, replacing it with positive self talk or self-motivation.

With the goal of spiritual realisation, we use spiritual motivation, asserting our spiritual convictions.

Barriers in Intra-personal communication

- Self-perception & Self-concept - Self-doubt, Low Self-esteem
- Negative Self-talk
- Laziness
- Lack of self-discipline
- Lack of Self-awareness, Clarity of life goal
- Too much self-talk, little or no Action) (Day dreaming)
- Low EQ and Psychological instability – Fear, guilt, stress etc.
- Lack of Intellectual Honesty

Spiritual Significance of Intra-Personal Communication

Apart from the worldly dimension, intrapersonal communication has its spiritual dimension, as the beginning or the foundation or the core of Spiritual communication.

Spiritual communication can be defined as the Dynamic process of communication (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal and Transpersonal) leading to the Answers to the Ultimate questions of Life and Existence, like – Who am I? The source of True Happiness, Success, Satisfaction & Abiding Peace? And finally the answer to the questions of Death, Uncertainty of Life-Human Relations and Meaningful Life.

Communication being a culture context issue, this topic can be discussed from all cultural contexts, but researcher here is presenting it with special reference to Indian or its Vedic spiritual tradition.^{xiii}

Vedic Spiritual Tradition –

Spiritual life is the true genius of India. Those who make the greatest appeal to the Indian mind are not the military conquerors, not the rich merchants or the great diplomats, but the holy sages, the *rsis* who embody spirituality at its finest and purest.^{xiv} The cultural heritage of India is to be found primarily in her philosophy and religion; and the source of her philosophical ideas and religious beliefs lie in the Vedas and the Upanishads.^{xv} The Upanishads declare, that science is the greatest which makes man know That which never changes and by knowing which everything is known. It was this science, the science of the soul, that became the national characteristics, the vitality of the race.^{xvi}

In search of the ultimate Truth of life, existence, this world and the universe, they gave some fundamental revelations of eternal value and universal significance.

Goal of life in Indian tradition –

In Indian spiritual tradition prime goal of human life is Self-knowledge resulting from Self-realization, *Atma-Bodha*, God realization, Samadhi etc. In Modern psychology the nearest terms used is Self-actualization. The complete scheme of life, they confined within four ideal, called as *Purushartha - Dharma, artha, kama, moksha*.^{xvii} *Moksha* as the ultimate Goal and *Dharma* as the means and the way; *Artha* and *Kama* as the basis of the worldly life. It was the royal path leading its followers on the path of self-realization and a meaningful life.

Gradual qualification to the ultimate state was formulated through four stages - *Brahmcharya, grihastha, vanprastha & sanyasa*, with the gradual evolution of consciousness. So the Indian view of life as conceived in Vedas is essentially spiritual. It has a spiritual end designed as *moksha* or Liberation. Material enjoyments, which are necessary and legitimate at certain period of life, should be so regulated that in the end they may lead men to the attainment of the Highest Good. The various divisions of individual and social life as described in the *Vedas* and the *Puranas* bear out the ideal of man's spiritual destiny.

It was clear conviction of Vedic sages that, of all knowledge Self-knowledge is the highest. This is the only royal road to true happiness and peace.¹ All other forms of knowledge are of secondary importance; for a man's action, feeling, reasoning and thinking are dependent upon his idea of Self.²

The way to Self-realization was through listening (*Shravan*), contemplation (*Manan*) and deep meditation. (*Nididhyasan*)³ We can here see the role of Intrapersonal and transpersonal communication in self-realization. Communication between the Lower self and the Higher self was the way^{xviii}. At Peak of Self-Realization, the following Mahavakyas were the Truth revealed to the Sages, *Rishis – Ayamatra Brahm, Soham, Shivoham, Sacchidanandoham, Tatvmasi etc.*

Other ways to this realization as per the temperament of the aspirants are - Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga & Raja Yoga. The eight-fold path of Patanjali Yoga Sutra is – 1. Yama, 2. Niyama, 3. Asana, 4. Pranayama, 5. Pratyahar, 6. Dharna, 7. Dhyana and 8. Samadhi.

Intra-personal communication as Spiritual practice

Spiritual aspiration is the 1st step as a seeker, disciple or Yoga sadhak. (*Jigyasu, Mumukshu* or *Shishya*). It is the foundation. Then comes listening to the spiritual truth given from Guru (*Diksha*); thinking & contemplating over it. (Meditation) This gives spiritual insight or the holistic and in-depth understanding of life. It further leads to spiritual life style, which is a life of self-discipline. It includes a well regulated routine and disciplined thoughts, emotions, behavior, conduct, ensuring minimum inner as well inter-personal harmony.

Self-introspection and diary writing or maintaining a spiritual journal at the end of the day are its essential aspects, tracking spiritual progress. It all leads to greater Self-awareness, Self-

¹ Acharya S.S. (2001) *Meri Vasiyataur Virasat*, Mathura, Jan Jagran Press, p.4

² Nikhilananda, S. (1947) *Self-Knowledge*, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna math, p.22

³ *Brihadaranyak Upanisads*, 4-5

knowledge and Self-realisation, giving answers to the Ultimate questions of life and Existence in installments.

Helping Aids

- Importance of *Swa-dharma* – Life goal as per one's inner nature, taste, temperament and interest.
- Wandering in the lap of nature. It gives instant healing touch & activates creative impulses.
- Then comes the importance of Holy places (*Teerthasevan*) and Holy Company or *satsang*.
- Listening to the Inner voice, the voice of God within. Neglecting it is in Ayurveda - *pragyapradh*, the cause of so many psychological disorders.
- Selfless service to needy without any expectation of return.
- *Satwik* food – light, digestive and suitable food (to body & mind).
- *Naamjapa* – Remembering & reciting the Divine Name as per one's spiritual tradition.
- Role of Guru. It plays key role in Self-realization through spiritual communication at all stages.

Challenges associated

- Communication with the Self is a Challenge, because Finding faults with the Self & taming the restless Mind is the most daring & adventurous activity.
- Tamas and Rajas Gunas.
- Lack of spiritual aspirations.
- Polluted mind, bad Habits & Negative Sanskaras.
- Lack of Spiritual Conviction.
- Lack of Self-discipline, living leisurely in comfort zone

Conclusion & Call for ACTION.

So Intra-personal communication is the basis of communication & the foundation (core) of spiritual life. It enhances the quality of life – worldly as well spiritual. To make it part of life one should get up early in the morning, have a minimum fitness schedule with morning walk, regular meditation and reflection over the meaning of this Life and Existence and ponder over its vital questions.

Along with it work hard, be Honest and follow your Duty sincerely. Be in optimum harmony with yourself and others. And critically review daily life at the end of the day, maintaining spiritual journal, learn from the experiences of the day, outgrow human limitations and evolve as the Best Version of Self on daily basis. And see the wonderful role of Intra-personal communication. It can be a game changer as far as the Quality of life is concerned with increased Peace, Happiness, Fulfillment & a sense of Freedom.

ⁱ<https://selfstudy365.com/qa/which-of-the-following-is-the-stage-of-intrapersonal-communication-5ed13851f60d5d601c1b8a80>, retrieved on 06/11/2023

ⁱⁱ Kumar, Keval J. (2010). Mass communication in India, Mumbai: Jaico publishing house, p.8.

ⁱⁱⁱ<https://everybodymind.com/spiritual-communication/>, retrieved on 06/11/2023

^{iv} Montagu, A. and F. Matson (1979). The Human connection, New York: McGraw-Hill.

^v Dissanayake, Wimal (1983). Asian theory of Communication, in Media Development

^{vi}<https://selfstudy365.com/qa/which-of-the-following-is-the-stage-of-intrapersonal-communication-5ed13851f60d5d601c1b8a80>, retrieved on 06/11/2023

^{vii} McLean, S. (2005), The basics of interpersonal communication, Boston: Allyn & Bacon

^{viii} <https://www.speakingtree.in/blog/communication-with-self-as-spiritual-practice>, retrieved on 06/11/2023

^{ix} <https://studymasscommunication.wordpress.com/2019/08/26/forms-of-communication/> retrieved on 06/11/2023

^x <https://www.rampfesthudson.com/what-are-examples-of-intrapersonal-skills/> retrieved on 18/04/2022

^{xi} <https://www.newsgram.com/why-is-intrapersonal-communication-important-heres-how-talking-to-self-is-fruitful/> retrieved on 18/04/2022

^{xii} <https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/businesswriting/chapter/intrapersonal-communication/> retrieved on 22/04/2022

^{xiii} Spiritual communication research paper presented during Associate ship spell, April 2022, IIAS, SHIMLA

^{xiv} RKMIC (1982a). The Cultural heritage of India, Vol. I, India and spiritual life, Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, p. xxiii

^{xv} RKMIC (1982a). The Cultural heritage of India, Vol. I, India and spiritual life, Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, p. 163

^{xvi} RKMIC (1982a). The Cultural heritage of India, Vol. I, India and spiritual life, Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, p. xi

^{xvii} Nikhilananda, S. (1947) Self-Knowledge, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna math, p.22

^{xviii} *Brihadaranyak Upanisads*, 4-5 and *Mundaka Upanisads*, 3.1.1,2