

# An analytical overview on meaning of message and catalytic nature of communication element like medium

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**Abstract**— This article stretches the radius of communication study beyond present explanations, theories, models by discussing catalytic behaviour of communication elements. Everybody knows the catalytic nature of some chemical substance. Without involving in chemical reaction simply their presence increases the rate of the chemical reaction. These catalytic natures of chemical substance are being mimicking by communication elements of communication process. It is essential to understand and analyse this catalytic nature of communication element like medium..

**Index Terms**— Catalytis, communication, communication elements, domond model, meaning of messae, medium. message,.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is playing a vital role in this 21<sup>st</sup> century irrespective of different discipline. "The term communication has many different meaning and definition, but the central idea is of a process of increased commonality or sharing between participant, on the basis of sending and receiving message". [1] "To generate communication we need five basic elements : source, message, channel, receiver and effect of message. Who says what. With what purpose. To whom. In what situation. By what means. With what effect." [2] Then in 1949 Shannon and Weaver introduced the concept of noise in the communication process. "In the process of transmission certain distortion are added to the signal which are not part of the message send by the source and we called this NOISE." [3] As communication deals with communality and participation another element that is feedback is also included in the communication model. Hence there are six (source, message, channel, receiver, feedback, effect and noise) most important elements in the communication process. Medium is one of the most important elements in the communication process. In the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century this medium became one of the talks of the town among all the communication scholars. Medium theorist Harold Innis and Marshal McLuhan gained popularity with their famous concept "The Bias of communication" and "Medium is the message" respectively. After all these above explanations to understand communication in the great detail one must think beyond this. One can discuss different behaviour of these communication elements, like catalytic behaviour of communication elements.

How these elements like medium act as catalyst by disseminating information more rapidly and increasing acceptability without changing the soul meaning of message.

## 2 MCLUHAN, MEDIUM, MESSAGE AND COMMUNICATION

### 2.1 McLuhan, Medium, Message

Before discuss about catalytic behaviour of communication elements lets start with medium concept of communication celebrity Herbert Marshall McLuhan. 'Beginning with Innis's idea about the impact of the printing press on information monopolies, McLuhan's medium theory states that any advanced society is shaped by the various media technologies that are available to it' [4]. New Media technologies like radio, TV, Internet play a great role in constructing and changing the shape and structure of society.

It doesn't matter what ever the content of the media message but media technologies play an inflectional role in human society. "For the "message" of any medium or technology is the change scale or pace or pattern that it introduce in to human affairs." (McLuhan 1946: 8)[5] The message contain in any medium cannot be separate from its medium and it's consequences on human society. "Therefore "the medium is the message" because the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action. The content or uses of such media are as diverse as they are ineffectual in shaping the form of human association.' (McLuhan 1946: 9) [6].

McLuhan called medium is the message because when message is associated with specific medium it has specific impact on society or receiver. Medium it self takes the shape of message. "This fact, characteristic of all media, means that the "content" of any medium is always another medium. The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content

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of print, and print is the content of the telegraph." (McLuhan 1946: 8)[7]

Medium influences the impact of message. Generally we know message is responsible for any effect on the receiver. But According to McLuhan medium or technology is responsible for any change in human society rather than message. We can't separate medium and message. The value or impact of message is less important than that of medium or technique. Therefore one can say medium as a message.

## 2.2 Medium, message and its catalytic behaviour

For Ironically we can say medium is the message because it plays a role of message to influence human society. Now Let us discuss the different perspective of medium, message and its catalytic behaviour.

Thought medium has impact on message it don't has greater role to change the meaning of a pure message. Even a message can be presented differently in different medium but its original meaning cannot be changed. If meaning of any message changes due to a particular medium we should consider that message as a different message. For example meaning of 'Gandhian Nonviolence' will be same irrespective of news paper, radio, TV transmission or in public speech.

As den Laughey says in his book 'key Theme in Media theory' on medium concept of McLuhan that:

*(The message contain in any medium are inseparable from the medium's human consequences that matter most. Therefore "The medium is the message")* [8]

Communication process consists of five important elements (source, message, channel, receiver, feedback). If we accept the above logic we can say, "The message associated with any communication elements (source, channel, receiver, feedback) are inseparable from their human consequences that matter most. Therefore "source, channel, receiver, feedback are the messages".

We can say like this because like McLuhan's medium all other elements are also can't be separated from message. All other elements are also play greater role in communication process to influence human society. All other elements also do the influential work of message. Then why only medium is the message? All other elements like source, receiver or feed back also Influence human society in associate with message in a communication process. Its impact may be different in different situation or condition.

Let's now discuss the nature of this communication element. Medium and all other element are simply speed up the process of communication and help to send the message to a large no of audience also help to influence more number of people in a great detail and intensity without changing original meaning of message. So rather we say medium is a message its better or more preferable to say it is a catalyst in the communication process.

## 3 CATALYST IN COMMUNICATION

### 3.1 Catalyst

Catalyst in chemistry, any substance that increases the rate of a reaction without itself being consumed.[9] Something that causes activity between two or more persons or forces without itself being affected. [10]

### 3.2 Communication Catalyst

These are the factors take part in the process of communication to improve the impact / effect of message and the rate of diffusion of message without diluting the meaning of the message.

Example: - Extra entertaining ingredients with information or message, time of transmission, medium (radio, tv, Print), graphic design, way of presentation, time of transmission, who speaks the message (sender), who receiving the message (receiver) etc. may act as a catalyst . Sometime source plays a greater role in impact of the message on receiver so here sender can be considered as catalyst.

Mass communication is defined as "the process by which a person, group of people, or large organization creates a message and transmits it through some type of medium to a large, anonymous, heterogenous audience." [11]

As this definition mass communication is possible only with the help of mass media which could transmit message to large, anonymous, heterogeneous audience. This transmission or dissemination potential of mass medium is the catalytic nature of mess media because without changing the meaning of the message it simple send the message to large number of people in a fraction of time.

To understand the catalytic nature of communication-element lets know its relation with message and meaning of message.

### 3.3 Nature of catalyst in communication

Nature of catalyst means how they behave or their role in the communication process. How they help in the communication process. Following are some of the catalytic nature of communication elements like important, acceptance, rate of dissemination, clarity of message etc.

1. **Importance:** - With the presence or help of particular element like sender or medium important of message may increase.
2. **Acceptance:** - Acceptance of message by audience also influence by communication element like medium and design of message or sender. Here acceptance is a catalytic nature of medium or sender.
3. **Clarity:** - Clarity of message is possible with proper medium selection and way of presentation. Clarity of message also develops based up on sender. For example any political statement made by party supreme or head will be consider more clear statement of that party in comparison to the statement of a normal party worker . So clarity of a message develops due to catalytic impact of communication element.

4. **Rate of dissemination:** - Rate of transmission or dissemination of is also influenced by catalytic agent like medium. With advancement of new communication technology it became easier to sent message more quickly without changing meaning of message.

ic nature one need to be explained communication with 10 most impotent factors of communication.

These are meaning, objective, sender, catalyst, message, medium, noise, receiver, effect and feedback.

## 4 MEANING AND OBJECTIVE OF MESSAGE IN COMMUNICATION

### 4.1 Meaning and message

Message is “usually a short communication transmitted by words, signals, or other means from one person, station or group to another.” [12] Meaning of a message is the soul of that message. When any activity, arrangement of symbol, photo, video clip has specific meaning we call it message. ‘Message is a set of codes that has its own meaning for communicator and receiver. The code could be verbal, nonverbal or written’ [13]

Before developing any message sender develops an idea or a meaning for message. That meaning then with the available signs and symbols is decoded into a message form. Message develops according to the available medium. Through medium then message get transmitted to the receiver. Then that transmitted message decoded into a meaning by receiver.

During this process of communication ‘meaning’ gets influenced by different elements like message, medium, coding and decoding factors. The ‘meaning’ of a message is controlled by all other elements of that communication process. Not only senders have the potentiality to influence the meaning of a message but also receiver, medium have the same.

#### 4.1 Objective of a communication process

1. Objective of communication is to reach the message to target audience or receiver. What is the number of receiver and their types are getting that message is also included in objective of communication process.
2. Sender always hopes that proper meaning of a message should reach to the brain of receiver. It means receiver should understand the meaning of a message as sender decides.
3. If the message reach to the audience with minimum disturbing impact on message then it will fulfil the predetermine objective if communication.

## PROCESS OF COMUNICATION WITH CATALYTIC NATURE

### 5.1 Elements of communication process with catalytic nature

To understand the communication process with the catalyt-

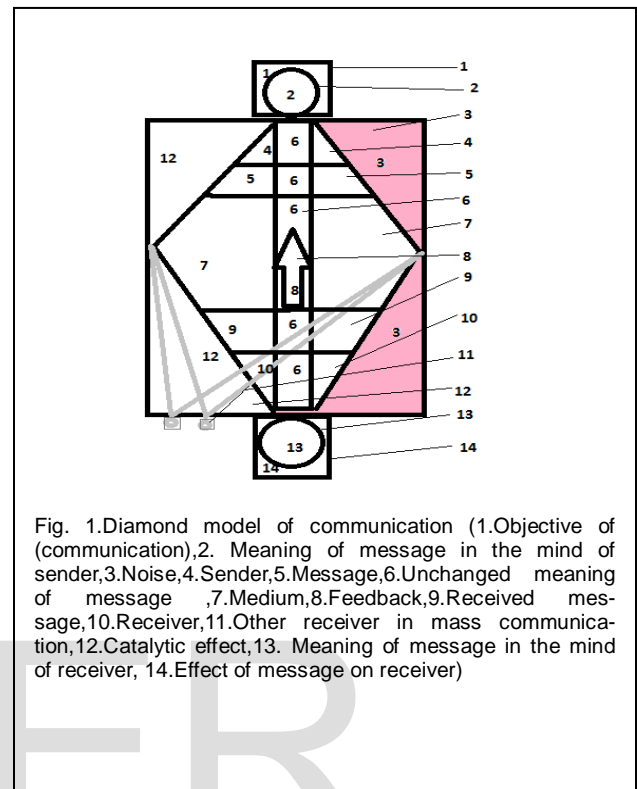


Fig. 1. Diamond model of communication (1.Objective of (communication),2. Meaning of message in the mind of sender,3.Noise,4.Sender,5.Message,6.Unchanged meaning of message ,7.Medium,8.Feedback,9.Received message,10.Receiver,11.Other receiver in mass communication,12.Catalytic effect,13. Meaning of message in the mind of receiver, 14.Effect of message on receiver)

Above figure explains position and function of different element of communication. This communication model can be named as diamond model of communication because it looks like a diamond. This model informs about various elements of communication and their role in communication process. **Meaning** of a message, **objective** of message and **catalytic behaviour** in communication can be considered as important component in this model.

- a. Beginning of any communication process an idea, concept or a “*meaning*” about a message generated in the mind of a sender before constructing any message. Meaning means ‘something that one wishes to convey, especially by language’ [14] Sender always designs a plan or a blue print about message. He/she will decide what he/she want to convey through a message.
- b. With the ‘meaning’ side by side objective of message also decided by sender. Based on present requirements “*objective*” of message will develop in the mind of sender. It means sender will think about who will be the receiver and what will be the number of receiver. What will be the impact of message on receiver? Objective of message determines

the structure of message and through which medium the message is to be transmitted.

- c. Then according to the meaning and objective of message "sender" will develop a "message". Sender also develops his/her message based on available coding element and medium for communication. So meaning and objective of message influence in the development of original message which to be transmitted or send to receiver. In this situation sender may act as a catalyst by increasing the importance of message. For example when any important person (Gandhi or government spoke person) or important organisation (prominent news agency or information department) plays a role of sender its importance will be more in comparison to sender like a common man. Here sender plays a catalytic role to increase the importance of message without changing its meaning.
- d. Then that message will reach to receiver through a channel or a "medium". Catalytic nature of medium is to transmit the message in more rapidly to large number of people without changing its original meaning. For the catalytic nature of print, radio, TV and new communication medium they play a central role in the field of communication. As they help to transmit message in lightning speed around the globe and increase its importance and impact of message on audience.
- e. Then receiver gets a coded message from "channel". That coded message gets decoded by receiver into a specific meaning. Sometimes receiver also acts as catalyst to increase the importance of message. When a prime minister or king listing some thing from a school student about their problem or idea/opinion about *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* (Campaign Clean India is a national level campaign by the Government of India covering 4041 statutory towns to clean the streets, roads and infrastructure of the country. This campaign was officially launched on 2 October 2014 at Rajghat, New Delhi) that will attract the news maker for news.
- f. In the process of communication message get influenced by so many catalysts at different stage of communication. Catalytic impact of different communication element act differently in different situation. Finally the message gets decoded by receiver to a meaning which put impact or "effect" on receiver.
- g. Then based on receivers understanding

(meaning) receiver will send reverse message to sender that is known as "feedback". Some time feedback also acts as a catalyst. Which episode of TV program gets more feedback or SMS that episode is considered as most important episode or success full episode.

- h. Any distraction occur to the meaning of message in the process of communication is known as "noise". Also one can say 'In the process of transmission certain distractions are added to signal which are not part of the message send by the source and we called this noise.' [15] The diamond model shows how noise is generated by different communication elements at different stages of communication. Those noise influence, bend or change original meaning of message.
- i. Medium, sender, receiver or any treatment given to the message are known as "catalyst". Because they are the factor which take part in the process of communication to improve the impact / effect of message and the rate of diffusion of message without diluting the meaning of message.
- j. The cutting edge of diamond shows how value of initial idea or meaning & objective of message get influenced by different catalyst and noise.

## 6 CRITICISM AND EXPLANATION

**Criticism 1:** How we can say meaning of a message cannot be change by medium? Because when we see some message in television we give more importance to that message .We accepts television lesions gladly then that of our parent.

**Explanation 1:** Whether any messages we get from television or from our parent meaning of message is same but have different impact because here television act a catalyst. Television or internet can sent a message to large number of people in faster rate and having greater impact upon them.

**Criticism 2:** The cutting edge of the diamond model shows how meaning of message gets influence by different catalyst. Then how we can say meaning cannot be changed?

**Explanation 2:** The original meaning of a message for sender is always same. When sender losses control over other elements of communication, when sender could not encode properly his message, when he/she can't control the noise, when receiver could not decode message properly then the meaning of message will be different from original message of sender. Then we can define this type of communication as a

wrong or defected communication because we get different message. This type of communication can't develop commonality between sender and receiver. This process is represented in the cutting edge of the diamond model.

## 7 CONCLUSION

There is no doubt about the importance of communication in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. To understand communication in a great detail it is essential to study further catalytic behaviour of communication element. Also how meaning of a message and objective of communication get influence by various catalyst of communication will attract communication scholar to understand it.

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