

## Qualities of Listeners as depicted in Nandi Sutra and their Relevance in Modern Managerial Communication

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**Abstract:** Eminent scholars have tried to find out the concepts of management in Vedas, Quraan, Bible, Upanishads, Gita etc. and have come out with beautiful results like concept of karmic evolution, Life management etc. Unfortunately Jain Literature has been ignored by modern researchers and scholars for the purpose. An effort has been made to interpret just one Gatha (verse) from one granth (great book), 'Nandi Sutra' out of many available in the treasure of ancient Jain literature. In this process the verse is being analysed to see if the concept of communication has been taken up thoroughly in Jain literature or not, because an effective communication is very important for a successful manager. According to Fred Luthans a manager spends 75 % of his working hours in communicating to various people, so the technique of effective communication is necessary for him/her to learn to get the work done through others. Getting people to listen to what you say, read or write, or look at what you show them is not easy. An attempt has been made to find the elements of successful strategic communication in Nandi Sutra and these elements have been compared to modern concepts of business and managerial communication. A major part of the research work is to elaborate the types of listeners for future as tools of improved communication in business.

**Keywords:** Communication skills, organizational communication, business communication, Ancient literature, Jain literature, Types of listeners, Nandi Sutra, Indian literature, Listening skills, sender, receiver, message, managerial communication.

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### I. Research Methodology

Secondary data on communication skills from ancient Jain literature and modern literature has been collected for the purpose of analysis. Nandi Sutra has been selected from Jain Literature and collection of views of modern scholars is considered for the study of modern managerial communication. In order to make the article catchy for the eyes of the management gurus is to draw upon well-known case studies and give new interpretations using Nandi Sutra tools which may result in influential HR techniques. The researcher has tried to correlate it with real management world. A few case studies have been taken and the author has tried to diagnose them with Nandi Sutra model and offer effective solutions.

### II. Objective of the Study

The study aims at finding out the concepts of good human resource management from ancient Indian Literature. Scope of the study is an ancient Jain book, 'Nandi Sutra'. Only one verse from the book has been studied and an analysis has been made if the types of listeners given in this verse are still relevant to the modern requirements of successful managerial communication. The author acknowledges that the idea of this study or innovation came from Nandi Sutra, only the interpretation is by her and so she becomes the author to that new version. The study brings in the issues of communication-deficit in the work environment.

### Contribution

In modern business world HR managers can make use of these types of listeners to improve organizational communication. Further scope of this study for various HR departments can be identifying the ways to recognize the types of listeners in workplace or in job interview etc. Even modern generation of management scholars feels that the examples given in ancient Jain literature are old fashioned, it is due to the exposure of those great thinkers who listed the examples from their life based on purely natural activities. Hence if these are not found in sync with current Management idioms, these can be replaced. The core idea is very much alive in the literature – Core idea is dravya (substance or example) while new idea is bhaav (the thought behind the example). That is how any dravya (substance) is expressed.

### What is communication?

Communication is transfer of message from the sender to the receiver. According to C B Gupta communication refers to the interchange of information, opinions and feelings for creating mutual understanding. It is a universal, ongoing and two way process. Whereas S.A. Sherelaker opines that communication is the best means by which people are linked together in an organization to achieve a common

objective or purpose. S A Sherelaker is of the view that communication is the sum of all the things a person does when he/she wants to create an understanding in the mind of other person . It is a bridge of meaning. It involves telling, listening and understanding.

### **The Communication Process (The transferring and understanding the meaning of message)**

A message sent by the sender arrives in Receiver's "sensory world" (all Receiver's senses can detect from the surrounding reality). Receiver's senses pick up the message, but also may pick up competing information from his sensory world. Sender's message is filtered through Receiver's unique mind and is given meaning. The meaning given may trigger a response, which

Receiver's unique mind forms. Receiver sends the message to Sender. It enters her sensory world, and a second cycle begins (numbers in parentheses), which is the same as the first cycle. From above explanation of communication process important factors of a communication process can be listed as Sender, Message (Robin and Decenzo opine that message is the actual physical product from the source. It is a purpose to be conveyed), Encoding – The conversion of a message into some symbolic form, Channel – is the medium through which the message travels, Receiver, Decoding – A receiver's translation of sender's message, Noise – These are the disturbances that interfere with the transmission of the message Anything that interferes with the understanding of the message is noise. It can be physical like the noise of machines, disturbances in the telephone lines or non physical like negative attitudes. Communication noise creates barriers to effective communication, Feedback – The degree to which carrying out the work activities required by a job results in the individual's obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his/her performance.

In this study 'Receiver' is the main focus of the researcher as she tries to explore the qualities of worthy and unworthy receivers in managerial communication. These receivers can be employees as well as employers. The term listener is also used for the receiver here. It is an important aspect of communication as (James O'Rourke, Anubha Singh) listening demonstrates acceptance, promotes problem solving abilities, increases the speaker's receptiveness to the thoughts and idea of others, increases the self esteem of the other person, helps the receiver to overcome self consciousness and self centeredness, can help to prevent Head – on Emotional Collisions.

### **Nandi Sutra: An Introduction**

Jainism is the oldest living religion. Nandi Sutra is a rich literary legacy of the age of Agamas (Jaina scriptures) as well as the age of logic. It contains portions dealing with philosophical problems. Focus of this particular 'Agama' is on the ways to accumulate five types of knowledge and be pure by obtaining supreme knowledge. The verse that the author has chosen to study is in context of second type of knowledge 'shruta gyaan' which is learned with the help of external resources. The book is a blend of prose and poetry the number of such sutras is around 700. The types of listeners discussed in this paper describes the kind of qualities different people may have based on which, the knowledge is obtained. All these details are available in Gyan Bindu Prakaran – Chapter three- Drop of knowledge of Shri Nandi Sutra.

### **Managerial Communication**

Manager is an individual who is in charge of a certain group of tasks, or a certain subset of a company. A manager often has a staff of people who report to him or her through proper channels of communication.. Effective managerial communication is ( James A Stoner) is important to managers for three primary reasons :

1. Communication provides a common thread for the management processes of planning, organizing, leading and controlling.
2. Effective communication skills can enable managers to draw on the vast array of talents available in the multicultural world of organizations.
3. Managerial time is spent largely in face to face , electronic or telephonic communication.

These three statements echo Fred Luthan's calculation of time spent on communication in a manager's daily routine. To summarise, Business needs and rewards people who can communicate, for communication is vital to business operations, but good communicators are

The beginning of the Nandi Sutra gives a beautiful explanation of communication effectiveness. It explains the qualities of receivers which make the communication successful or a failure. The verse 51 from Nandi Sutra which is the focus of analysis is given in original script below:

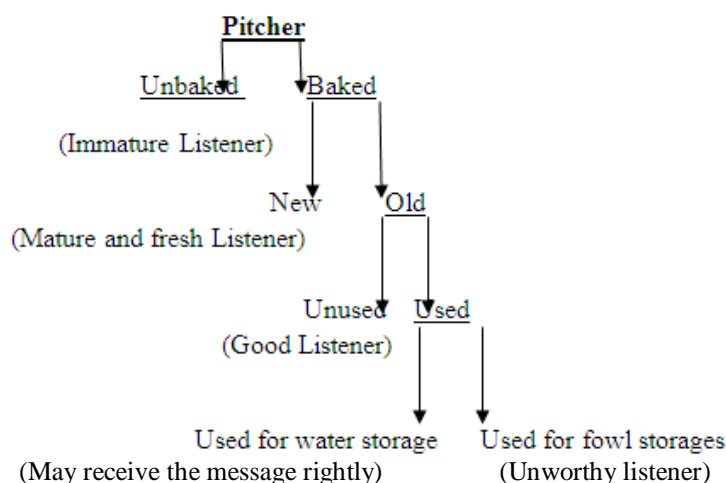
“ सेल घण कुडग चालिणि,  
परिपुन्नग हंस महिस मेसे य ]  
मसग जलूग विराली जाहग गो भेरि अभीरी ] ]”

The above verse provides fourteen types of listeners and familiarizes the speakers with the utility of his speech to the listeners and take decision who should be an efficient target of the message. The verse means ,

“According to the variations in quality, different types of listeners are like 1. Smooth rock (शैल - shaila) unaffected by Clouds (घन- ghan) 2. Earthen pitcher (कुटक- kutak) 3. Sieve (चालनी- chhalni) 4. Filter (परिपूर्णक- paripoornak) 5. Swan ( हंस- hansa) 6. Buffalo (महिष- mahisha)7. Ram(मेष= mesha) 8. Mosquito(मशक- mashaka) 9. Leech (जलौक- jalauka) 10. Cat (बिल्ली- billie) 11. Rat(जावक- jaawaka) 12.cow (गो- go) 13.Trumpet (भेरी- bheree) and 14. Milkman and the wife (अहीर दंपत्ति – aheer dampatti)”. This is to be kept in mind that these examples are from natural environment to which these religious philosophers were exposed during their self exploration phase. Giving such an example to modern management students may be a little odd hence the author has tried to give similar examples from modern life while describing various types of listeners. Such a study is useful in managerial communication because knowledge should be imparted to a worthy listener, not unworthy, or a manager wastes precious time of the organization. What type of listeners should s/he focus on? For the answer let us try to analysis types of listeners given in the above verse: In fact this verse is the first verse that follows the details on acquiring this knowledge. Further verses explain types of groups of listeners which may be a further scope of study.

- 1. Smooth Rock (Stubborn listener) :** A listener who is like ‘smooth rock’ does not get affected and wet even by the heavy rains. Remains unaffected even if soaked in water for years. A listener having attributes like this rock may never receive the message (rightly) even if the speaker puts in all his efforts. A manager should not waste his valuable time on these listeners. This example is not out of date even today because we are reminded of rock like qualities of a stubborn listener from time to time. It is meant for stone like attitude of a listener in a communication, where he neither pays attention , nor is much hope for future listening by him.A modern example for such a listener can be compared with a hard drive on which you cannot store data.Such listeners are poor receivers and the communication fails even if the sender is trying his best.
- 2. Earthen pitcher (Growing maturity or changing capacity of absorbing content of the message):** Such listeners can be converted into absorbing listeners. The result may though vary from listener to listener depending on their inner qualities. Those listeners who have the capacity of retaining some knowledge or message with them are kept under this category. Four types of pitchers described in Nandi Sutra are again four classifications of listeners.The following table describes the types of pitchers and the listeners:

**Table 1: Types of Listeners (Compared to pitchers)**



The author has given us a logical simile to understand the types of listeners.

**An unbaked pitcher – (Untrained employee)** is like an immature listener who does not have a strong base to keep the message or knowledge with him.

**A newly baked fresh pitcher (trained but fresher)** - is considered to be the best for storing drinking water because the water in it remains cool and clean. Similarly a mature reader without any prejudice or preconditioning of mind is the best receiver of message.

**An old pitcher (Atrained and experienced employee)** which was used for storing water previously- can again be used this year to store water, it will still keep the water cool and clean but to a lower degree, similarly this type of listener who have thorough learning, absorbed virtues and not vices are still worthy of receiving message.

**An old pitcher which was earlier used for liquor storage or oil storage - (An employee whose experience is from different field )** starts stinking and spoils the water if you try to store fresh water in it. Same way the employee who does not follow the instructions of his boss in the changed environment is absolutely inappropriate listener. But such a pitcher if cleaned properly and kept in sun for a few days may become free of its fowl smells, can be used for water storage, similarly if the listener frees himself from prejudice and misconceptions he is capable of receiving message after this purification.

3. **Sieve (unwilling/Incapable listener- unqualified staff):** The way a sieve does not have the capacity of storing water, some listeners are not willing/capable of storing the message or knowledge with them, hence the sender should be aware of this limitation of his message receiver. In business communication if an employee does not pay attention to manager's instructions or forgets important communication with his seniors or subordinates can be considered a suitable example of this type of listener. Such listeners need frequent reminders before completing the task and are not of much use in real organizational tasks and are not liked by the management. Example of a sieve is relevant even today as it conveys the meaning of an unwilling or incapable listener well. Such a listener may receive unnecessary content of the message but leave the important part and hence his actions may go in a direction that may go against the goal of the organization.
4. **Filter (Choosy/selective listener- moody staff members) :** A filter is incapable of retaining good things, it has the capacity of retaining dirt only, so this type of listener will never be able to get true meaning of the message, hence a manager should never waste his efforts and time on such receivers. These listeners may have a wonderful capacity of twisting the message which is sent by the sender to the extent of completely changed meaning of the message while decoding it. This type is very common in all types of communications today. The senior management is an interesting example of this type. The boss is very selective in receiving the messages from his subordinates. For example a subordinate approaches his senior with a communication which can be divided into two parts :1. a complaint of defect in machine that he is using in manufacturing process 2. An application for two days leave. There is a great possibility that the first part of the communication is decoded correctly and second part is just ignored by the senior.
5. **Swan (A listener who is looking for quality content in speech- rational listener) :** is the type of bird who has the capacity of differentiating between milk and water. He is called neera ksheera vivekee – the one who can separate water and milk from the same pot with the help of his beak. Similarly those listeners, who opt to absorb the right virtues of the message and reject vices are worth giving instructions and discussing organizational problems. If we have swan like listeners in the top management then chances of wastage of time by management in listening to all unworthy messages are very less. Such listeners are highly required at top level because when they interact with the lowest levels of management they need this intelligence to catch actual problem/suggestion in the message and ignore irrelevant contents of the message.
6. **Buffalo (Poor receiver of a message – An untrained or unqualified employee) :** A listener having the attitude of a buffalo may spoil the message even after decoding..Such type denotes the listeners who either create noise in the process of communication or decode the message wrongly. This may happen due to inability to comprehend the content of the message correctly. In organizational communication, this type of listeners is dangerous at all levels- whether top, middle or supervisory level. If the top level does not understand the problems and complaints of his employees, then human resource management may fail in the organization and output may be affected. Same way if the middle and lower management fails to decode the instructional messages well, then the implementation of instructions may go fatal. This simile may be compared with a robot of modern world which has been programmed to understand a 'yes' as a 'No' or a '100' as a '1000'. Untrained, new or inefficient employees fall under this category. Such listeners have a tendency to disturb others in one to many communication.
7. **Ram(receives the essence of the message correctly – Appropriately programmed robot) :** This type is of a slightly better type of listener whose qualities resemble the attributes of ram. A ram drinks water from the pond, but does not spoil water and sips it from the surface only. Such a listener absorbs the essence of the message, does not create noise in the process of communication, hence worthy of communication. Such a listener is like a robot which has been programmed for correct decoding.
8. **Mosquito (A rude listener- Irritated respondents of marketing telecalls) :** An impolite listener who inflicts pain to the sender in the process of communication is compared to a mosquito. Such indecent listeners are unworthy of communication because they end up humiliating the sender of the message and also do not hesitate in harmful actions as a result of decoding of message. If the top level management organization has this type of listeners this is really dangerous because such listeners after knowing the faults or weaknesses of a particular employee may harm them in terms of insulting remarks or demotion etc. In modern era we can see that marketing calls by tele-callers are being attended by mosquito type of listeners because if the receiver is irritated, s/he does not hesitate in being rude to the caller. In such cases, the tele-

caller should make sure that the receiver is in a comfortable situation to attend his call and removes the possibility of irritation to the receiver.

9. **Leech (listeners with capability of decoding a message with wrong content also correctly- Parent like listeners):** A leech sucks out contaminated blood from the wound. Listeners under this category derive correct meaning of the message and remove all chances of misinterpretation of the content of the message. These listeners are always your well wishers. In an office, if a colleague decodes your wrong message rightly then you can trust on him/her. Such trust worthy relationships usually tend to be healthy relationships and improve the work culture of the organization. Such type of listeners are very scarce because they have to be first of all intelligent, secondly rational in their approach, thirdly possessed with leadership qualities. Such listeners are usually emotionally bonded with the sender. They do not let any harm come to the sender of the message. Parents in our families are this type of listeners. They ignore unnecessary or wrong content from the message given by their children and understand their basic requirement/problem. Great leaders also fall under this category as they try to understand the problem of masses in one to mass communication.
10. **Cat (A complicated listener – Timid employees):** A cat spills the milk and then drinks it. Listeners under this category do not try to get the message directly from the sender. Such employees in the organization do not believe in receiving the message directly from the management but they listen from others and absorb right and wrong both. Such a listener relies on second hand information and in an organization, second hand information may be incomplete, twisted or distorted, manipulated etc. at the same time. Timid students or subordinates in a school or in an office are an example of this type of listener. Such listeners do not face the sender of the message directly, instead they take the instructions from their colleagues in terms of what was said in the lecture or meeting. Another quality of such a listener may be that s/he prefers polluted message only just like a cat drinks spilled milk. Such employees may not be able to follow the instructions of their bosses appropriately and may bring the level of output down for the company.
11. **Rat (Worthy listener – Intelligent students in lecture rooms) :** A rat when approaches a pot full of food, eats attentively and does not spoil the food, infact it eats the food on the walls of the pot also. Such an approach from a listener makes him worthy of managerial guidance because he can extract the maximum from the message sent to him by the manager. Such a listener collects knowledge as per his capacity and approaches the manager to remove doubts etc. All good students and disciples should try to follow a rat's approach in their lecture rooms. Those students/subordinates who are interactive in classrooms/meetings and participate actively in all discussions, they ultimately come to know more than what is said. Their efficiency makes them worthy listeners. A supervisor or boss should also have this quality of listener so that he can absorb all the complaints also which come with reports and suggestions from subordinates.
12. **Cow (Selective receiver in terms of sender and message- Computers of a secured network):** A cow gives milk only if the milkman feeds her properly and takes proper care also. If not so, the cow gives very less milk insufficient for his family and sale or may die also in absence of food and care which stops the supply of milk at all. In the same way an employee who never cares to follow the instructions of the manager is unworthy of managerial guidance from time to time. The one who only tries to extract knowledge from the message as per his own perception is unworthy. In modern era, secured computer networks are a good example to understand this type of receiver in a communication, computers which send and receive data from their own network only, they reject the data from other networks, just like the cow rejects new milkman.
13. **Trumpet (receiver with no selfish motive to twist the facts/contents of the message- Great philosophers and leaders):** This metaphor is of a special type of divine trumpet which is gifted by the celestial beings to the King Krishna. The trumpet has healing qualities and was to be blown after every six months. Who ever listens to its divine sound will be free from all bodily ailments. The reason of this divinity was a special type of sandal wood used in the trumpet. Unfortunately the wood due to its healing qualities became a source of income for the guard who started replacing small pieces of special sandalwood with ordinary sandal to sell the special sandal to rich sick people. Ultimately all the healing wood was stolen and sold and the trumpet lost its significance of healing the people. The crux behind this story is that the listener who does not selfishly misuses the message and avoids breaking the codes wrongly is a worthy listener. This example hints on a 'secret in office'. Suppose a new product is to be launched by a company and the product development or modification is going on, at this stage if there is any leakage of this news to the competitor then the company is at loss of heavy profits which were expected at the launch of new product. Such listeners have a tendency of directing the message to a wrong listener further or distort the message before proceeding it to the next receiver.
14. **Milkman and the wife – Such listeners are found in many to many communication mainly (Steven Convey's 9010 principle):** This is an age old story of two couples who go to the city to sell butter but unfortunately the pot of butter falls down and the butter is spilled all over. One couple ends up in a fight and

loss of sale and their valuables, while the other couple facing the same problem, collects the butter, refines it and makes it ready for sale. At the end of the day first couple has nothing in hand while the second couple has a plenty of maney and peace of mind with them.

The story throws light on two sets of listeners – one of them enters into an argument with his senior or a peer over some mistake, wastes his own as well as others time. The only set of listeners who has the capacity to tolerate is worthy. In a formal group discussion the group that is not trapped in an argument reaches at a conclusion or a useful statement by the end of the discussion while the other set of listeners discusses the topic in hand intelligently and tries to reach at a conclusion. Such a set of listeners in an organizations can prove helpful in brainstorming exercises or discussions and interactive sessions with seniors. This concept can be easily correlated with Steven Convey's 9010 principle

### **III. Communication in Nandi Sutra and Modern Management Literature: A Comparison**

**1. (Robins and Decenzo) Management scholars** Robins and Decenzo provide us with Ten Commandments of Good Communication. We shall try to analyse if these commandments lead to the qualities of a worthy receiver, if so then relevance of this 2500 years old verse is automatically established in modern management world too. First of these ten commandments is to listen carefully and plan ahead. They also advise the listener to avoid stereotyping and distinguish among facts, references and conclusions and withhold value judgments about context or delivery. They advocate the importance of good listening which is the keynote of this verse under study. The quality to avoid stereotyping is reflected in the type of pitcher and rat. The type Swan has the capacity of distinguishing among facts, references and conclusions. The example of milkmen couple advocates the significance of behavioral aspect in managerial communication as well as language or diction.

**2. (Griffin)** Griffin talks about individual barriers which may disrupt effective communication. While listing individual barriers to business communication (Conflicting or inconsistent cues, lack of credibility, reluctance to communicate, poor listening skills, predispositions about the subject at hand) he emphasizes poor listening skills and similar traits of an unworthy listener as given in verse 51, Nandi Sutra are seen. ( He writes, "Some people are poor listeners. When someone is talking to them, they may be day dreaming, reading or listening to other conversations ( shail ghan ), because they are not concentrating on what is being said, they may not comprehend part or all of the message. They may even think that they really are paying attention only to realize later that they cannot remember parts of the conversation (sieve) Receivers may also bring certain predispositions to the communication process. They may already have their mind sets made up (buffalo). " The example of premature evaluation can be compared with unbaked earthen pitcher whereas channel distorters can be compared to mosquito and leech type of listeners.

### **IV. Limitations**

The study is an attempt of correlating the statements given by Jain scholars 2500 years ago and modern thinkers' which can be at the most not more than hundred years old. Hence cultural, environmental, social, technical differences have to be kept in mind while establishing the relation.

Prejudice/Favoritism towards religious literature or modern management books can generate preconceived perception towards both or one of them which may stop the reader from reaching at an independent conclusion.

Though the author is a management faculty and practitioner but her being too Jain friendly may have brought some jain effects also to the management facts found in Nandi Sutra and as such it may not appeal non-Jain management gurus. But there is always a further scope of research of synchronizing the historical verses with modern management idioms. The author has just tried to bring forth the management facts in our spiritual literature.

We should learn from the experience of our ancestors but one needs to be contextual and contemporary not textual and in the past.

### **V. Conclusion**

The study has tried to analyze psychological barriers in communication, because communication is not merely sending and receiving the message but also retrieve correct message out of set of words received by the receiver. The types and qualities of listeners discussed in Nandi Sutra minutely analyse these psychological barriers. Even individual mind – sets including prejudice and stereotype, can affect what we understand and how we react to others. The research paper can work as a guide as to how the HR person can make use of the types of listeners explained in Nandi Sutra and what are the ways of identifying them in work place or in a job interview etc. Also case studies from real life experiences can bring in the issues of communication-deficit in the work environment, if correlated with the stated verse of Nandi Sutra can offer effective solutions to such problems.

This study encourages the idea of listeners explained in Nandi Sutra and uses this method for further classification accordingly. This is to be kept in mind that age old examples of animal etc. can be replaced with modern examples. The idea is the usage of different language and idiom form to time, the idiom changes. As depicted in the verse we may need to redo the 'bhaav'(inner feeling behind a communication) part with the corporate communication and make it better between employees and managers and so we may need to talk in a language called lingua franca or acceptable idiom.

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