

## **The Sadharanikaran Model of Communication within the Indigenous Knowledge System: An Appraisal**

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### **Abstract**

Communication is a very wide and dynamic process involving many more elements than the information exchange like environment, mood, the satisfaction derived, and mutuality. Among Eastern Communication theories and models, the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication by Nirmala Mani Adhikary (2003) is a model based on Hindu communication perspectives. This paper focuses on understanding and reviewing communication from the perspectives of Sadharanikaran Model of Communication. For this, a systematic review has been conducted, including articles, research papers, and book chapters to reflect the information from fundamentals to contemporary scenarios of works concerning Sadharanikaran and Sadharanikaran Model of Communication. This study concludes that SMC must be studied from other angles like its application in different fields and contexts other than the comparative analysis. This model of communication shall be considered as the evergreen model of communication due to its

emphasis on the inclusion of non-cognition elements in communication.

*Keywords:* communication, Bhartiya knowledge system, sadharanikaran model, Hindu communication

## **Introduction**

Communication is a broad and dynamic process involving many more elements than just the exchange of information, such as environment, mood, the satisfaction derived, and mutuality. It is considered effective when it is two-way, which means it includes feedback in the process. Mutuality—also referred to by terms such as commonness, oneness, and commonality—is of utmost importance for communication to occur effectively. Communication is a central part of the lives of all living beings. It is not just an urge but a need. If communication is to be defined and understood from the very basics, it refers to the process that increases the factor of commonality between those who communicate. The word that defines "communication" in the Bharatavarshiya context and language is *Sadharanikaran*. This word is derived from *Sadharan*, a Sanskrit word. *Sanchar* also relates to communication when translated into words of Sanskrit origin (Adhikary, 2014a).

In the context of human communication, effective communication has the power to overcome various boundaries such as culture and geography. Although these factors affect message delivery, interpretation, understanding, and feedback, they can be mitigated through effective communication. In countries like India, these factors tend to impact communication more significantly due to diversity across various grounds such as language, dialect, culture, region, and religious and social practices, in addition to physical, psychological, and technological factors. Among various types and forms of communication, transpersonal communication is of utmost importance at the

individual level. It is equally important to connect and communicate with oneself and the higher self to be guided on the right path and attain moksha, which is considered one of the highest goals.

Communication has undergone various changes. The existence of technology, its advancements, and the increasing use of social media are some of the elements responsible for easing and transforming the landscape of the communication process. The growing use of the internet and social media tools for communication has also resulted in increased cross-cultural communication. Communication without feedback and confirmation is considered incomplete and ineffective. Technology has made the communication process more effective through the inclusion of quick feedback and real-time interaction on a wide scale and at a fast pace. Communication studies have reoriented different fields, including academics, and have been influenced by existing technologies over time.

Communication models and theories provide a base and framework for understanding the process and elements of communication. In this context, it is due to the efforts of various scholars and theorists from different perspectives and fields that defining and understanding communication as a term, concept, process, and element has become easier, even though it remains one of the most dynamic and complex processes. Initial credit for the study of communication from an intercultural context is given to E. T. Hall (Acharya, 2011).

Explaining Western and Eastern perspectives of communication is important to better identify key elements for meaningful communication, broader understanding, and contributions to the communication field. One of the main points to be noted among communication models and theories is their Western roots. This perspective considers

communication as an external concept with an individualistic approach and focuses on the sender as active and the receiver as passive, emphasizing the former's dominance or persuasion for communication to be considered effective. In contrast, Eastern communication works have focused on cultural identity consciousness, considering communication an internal concept involving equal exchange of emotions, understanding, and respect between both the sender and the receiver.

Western works are attributed to Aristotle for introducing a linear, one-way communication model focused on the principle of rhetoric. Western communication theories and models have originated in and dominated the communication arena. However, the concepts presented in Western works related to communication are also present in Hindu society, its practices, and the Bhartiya (Indian) Knowledge System. Among Eastern communication theories and models, Indian communication approaches are drawn from Hindu philosophies and perspectives, Indian culture, Indian texts, aesthetic traditions, and the *Sadharanikaran* concept. The *Sadharanikaran Model of Communication*, proposed by Nirmala Mani Adhikary (2003), is one such model based on Hindu communication perspectives. The communication model studied is referred to as SMC throughout this study.

### **SMC: Variations and Applications**

The Bharatavarshiya Knowledge System is a storehouse of knowledge across all disciplines (Adhikary, 2014a). Among various literature reviews, one prominent angle is the comparative study or analysis of SMC with other communication models such as Aristotle's model, David Berlo's SMCR model, the Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model of Communication, and James W. Carey's Ritual Model of Communication. Comparative

studies of communication theories and models are important not only for understanding communication more deeply but also for improving, progressing, and updating the communication discipline. Since communication as a concept and field has been largely developed from Western perspectives, it has continued to flow in that direction. However, it is equally important to understand it from non-Western perspectives to enable broader understanding and further contribute to the communication field.

### **SMC in Comparative Framework**

Communication, along with its patterns and practices, varies among nations based on several factors, including socioeconomic, political, and cultural influences. Shaw (2019) conducted a comparative study between SMC and the Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication, which is considered a mathematical model, to explore differences in communication patterns with a special focus on social media and its relevance in technological communication.

Describing both models individually, the researcher noted that *doshas*, referred to as "noise" in the Shannon-Weaver Model, hamper the effectiveness of communication. A similar concept exists in Hindu poetics as *rasa-bhanga*, which refers to the disruption in receiving, decoding, and interpreting a message. The Shannon-Weaver Model is known as the Mathematical Model of Communication. Among its seven elements—sender, receiver, message, channel, etc.—*noise* is the invented element, along with *destination*, which is different from the receiver. According to this model, the receiver is not the person who ultimately receives the message, but rather the transmitter that converts the signal into a message. The destination is the actual receiver of the message.

The researcher drew comparisons based on the aim of communication, linearity, communication type, context,

and feedback. Regarding SMC, non-linearity leading to two-way communication, as well as inter- and intrapersonal communication, has been highlighted. Both the sender and receiver are taken into consideration, with a focus on their ability to mutually understand each other. The Shannon-Weaver Model focuses on communication from a mechanical context, controlled by the sender.

The researcher noted that SMC also emphasizes the importance of emotions, referred to as *bhavas*, while sending the message, and that *sandharbha* (context) becomes the foundation for initiating communication. Prior knowledge of the topic is also considered important. According to SMC, the accomplishment of *sahridayata* leads to successful and effective communication. This model emphasizes emotional involvement—elements that are absent in the Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication.

In practice, feedback becomes important to determine whether the receiver(s) has received and correctly understood the message. Interpersonal communication typically involves two people and allows for instant feedback. Referring to the relevance of the studied communication models in technological contexts—particularly in relation to social media—the researcher mentioned that interpersonal communication now occurs in real time due to technology, the internet, and various applications.

Pun (2023) conducted a comparative analysis of the SMC and SMCR models of communication, developed by Adhikary and Berlo respectively, to examine their differences and similarities by referring to the elements, structure, and scope of the studied models. Both models were described individually, wherein the researcher identified eight elements in SMC and five in SMCR. According to the study's observations, SMC has a non-linear

structure, whereas SMCR follows a linear structure. SMCR emphasizes conceptual improvement of communication skills.

In terms of structure, SMC focuses on achieving *sahridayata*, which refers to an equal and mutual exchange of understanding between the sender and the receiver. In contrast, SMCR focuses on fidelity or the accuracy of the communicated message. While SMCR is a general model applicable in various situations and fields, SMC can be considered, to some extent, a model specific to cultural contexts due to the inclusion of *sahridayata*. The latter has a comparatively broader scope than the former, as it can be applied to communication ranging from interpersonal to intrapersonal, transpersonal, and even spiritual levels.

The SMCR model considers intentional influence by the sender toward the receiver to elicit the desired response and feedback. In contrast, SMC, while recognizing asymmetry in human relationships and communication, still emphasizes shared understanding and emotional connection (*sahridayata*) between individuals.

Acharya (2011) conducted a comparative study between SMC and the Ritual Model of Communication, developed by Adhikary and Carey respectively, based on their scope, structure, communication goals, human relationships, and implications. Both models exhibit unique similarities and individual characteristics. Holistically, the two models are similar, but when examined individually, they differ in significant ways.

In the context of the structure of the studied communication models, although both models are non-linear—leading to two-way communication—only SMC has explained the complex concepts in a diagrammatic format. Both models emphasize commonness between communicating parties; however, the difference lies in the

placement of this element. While the Ritual Model places commonness at the beginning of the communication process, SMC considers it the successful outcome achieved from communication.

Regarding cultural communication, both models emphasize its inclusion, but only SMC provides an explicit explanation. On one hand, the Ritual Model focuses on the physical aspect of communication, whereas SMC addresses both physical and spiritual aspects.

In terms of communication goals, the researcher identified significant differences between the models. The Ritual Model aims to achieve and maintain equilibrium and commonness. In contrast, SMC identifies three levels of goals: at the worldly level—harmony even in asymmetrical relationships; at the mental level—*bhavas* or mutual sympathy among communicators; and at the spiritual level—the attainment of *moksha*.

All communication models and theories have originated from Aristotle's communication model. To understand the conceptual differences between SMC and Aristotle's model—particularly in terms of goals, scope, structure, and human relationships in the communication process—Adhikary (2008) conducted a comparative analysis of the two models. The models were purposefully selected to represent Eastern and Western perspectives. The researcher explored communication from Hindu perspectives and emphasized that theories from Eastern traditions are rooted in cultural identity consciousness, owing to their focus on intercultural communication. Exploration of communication from Hindu perspectives requires a broader outlook, as it is closely connected to religion and philosophy. Various sources within the Vedic Hindu tradition are available to theorize and develop models in the field of communication.



In terms of structure, Aristotle's model of communication presents a linear format wherein only the sender of the message, referred to as the speaker, is considered an active participant. In contrast, SMC offers two-way communication due to its non-linear structure. Regarding scope, the former model is well-suited for public speaking scenarios that require persuasive power over passive receivers or audiences. The latter model, however, possesses an integrated approach applicable to various contexts—from human to spiritual communication—and ranges from interpersonal to transpersonal levels. In relation to human interactions within the communication process, Aristotle's model emphasizes the persuasive power of the sender. In contrast, SMC focuses on *Sahridayata* between the sender and receiver, which leads to satisfaction and effectiveness in communication, even within asymmetrical relationships. In terms of goals, the former aims at influencing passive receivers and treats communication as a static event. The latter, however, regards communication as a dynamic process involving all elements present in any social setting, ultimately aiming for shared understanding and emotional connection, referred to as *bhāvas*, along with worldly, mental, and spiritual goals.

### **SMC Application in Health and Behavior**

The communication tradition in the Eastern world is credited to the *Natyashastra* of Bharat Muni. In every aspect of the social context where human communication takes place, *Sadharanikaran* is applicable, as it provides a base for examining and evoking emotions from the receiver(s). To empirically test the Indian communication theory for behavior change, Kapadia (2014) studied the SMC in the context of social and health behavior change by applying its concepts and constructs in a community intervention activity. The study focused on promoting handwashing after

defecation among rural women in the Maharashtra state of India.

The following elements were applied:

*Sadharanikaran*—simplification, universalization, emotional response (*rasa*), and asymmetrical human relations—where children were involved to educate and inform rural women. The researcher discussed the uniqueness of the *Sadharanikaran* model in terms of placing non-cognitive elements at the center of behavior change, offering a new perspective beyond the rationality emphasized by other theories. Emotional responses play a vital role in promoting behavior change. The study also mentioned the successful application of *Sadharanikaran* in other programs, including the counseling of nurses on HIV/AIDS and the development of a strategy for health communication by the National Rural Health Mission in the Uttar Pradesh state of India.

The study mentioned the connection between *Sadharanikaran* and *Rasa* theories based on their elements. On one side, *Rasa* theory includes the elements—*bhavas* (emotions), *rasa* (mood), *sadharanikaran*, and *sahridayata* (mutual rapport and compassion). *Sadharanikaran* is based on simplification, universalization, asymmetry in relationships, arousal of emotions (*rasa utpatti*), and mutual compassion among the people who communicate.

Khadka (2024) studied the application of SMC in health communication. The author mentioned that this field often struggles to engage diverse populations due to cultural differences and varying levels of health literacy. In such cases, the *sahridayata* element of SMC plays a practical role, as it presents a viable and culturally attuned framework for improving communication in health settings. Through the simplification of complex medical information and its alignment with the cultural values and experiences of

patients, health practitioners can foster more meaningful interactions that promote adherence to health recommendations. Promoting patient-centeredness and community engagement can lead to enhanced health literacy, better patient satisfaction, and improved public health outcomes.

### **SMC and Spatial-Temporal Communication**

Adhikary (2015) studied space and time from the perspective of Hindu philosophy. The author described Hinduism as a vast and complex yet precise and unified entity. It considers three dimensions of life and four goals as interconnected: life in physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions, and the four goals of *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (material prosperity), *kama* (desire), and *moksa* (liberation). The concepts of time and space were related to communication, as both elements affect the content and context of any communication. The study mentions that, according to Hinduism, the concepts of time and space are cyclical, which leads to non-linear communication. Efforts in communication studies must include existing knowledge systems like Hinduism, along with an understanding of these concepts from different cultural perspectives.

### **SMC and Cultural Communication**

Bharadwaj and Singh (2024) studied the application of the *sahridayata* element of the Sadharanikaran communication model by referring to Hanumanji—a Hindu god. Respect and empathy lead to trust and understanding between communicating parties. Hanuman has been regarded as an exemplary messenger and communicator. The studied interaction of Hanumanji with Lord Rama and Sita showcases his ability to transcend hierarchical boundaries and foster trust, highlighting the qualities of clarity, respect, and empathy within his dialogues. These interactions exemplify the essence of *sahridayata*,

emphasizing its role in effective communication. The study stresses the relevance of *sahridayata* in fostering inclusive dialogues in contemporary multicultural contexts.

Culture plays a crucial role in maintaining community cohesion and identity. In this context, Shakya (2024) explored the intricacies of Mataya—a Buddhist festival—as a communication medium. The study applied the Sadharanikaran communication model and its elements, along with the sign and signifier concepts of Ferdinand de Saussure. It noted that the festival exemplified the power of cultural events as communicative practices that reinforce social bonds and shared values. Recognizing and revitalizing traditional festivals is important, as they are vital components of cultural communication, which is essential for fostering social harmony in a diverse and evolving cultural landscape.

Das (2024) contextualized the communication of Gandhiji by referring to selected publications from *Young India*, highlighting the application of the Sadharanikaran communication model (SMC). The strategies employed by Gandhiji in communicating with the masses were deeply embedded in the cultural and moral values of Indian society. Incorporating cultural references and nuances, respecting diverse perspectives, fostering participative dialogue, and encouraging reciprocal engagement with the public were identified as fundamental aspects of Gandhiji's communication strategy. The findings suggest that Gandhiji's communication methods resonate well with contemporary communication challenges. By embracing his ethos of understanding and empathy, communicators can work toward establishing more inclusive and effective dialogues in an increasingly diverse society where cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence are paramount. Das concluded that Gandhi's methods serve as a timeless

reminder of the importance of mutual respect, cultural sensitivity, and emotional resonance in effective communication.

### **SMC and Indigenous Knowledge System**

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is defined through various elements—philosophies, *vidya* (knowledge), *kala* (arts), epics, festivals, traditions, culture, language, dialect, cuisine, and more. In essence, it encompasses all those components that foster a sense of connection with one's rooted self and the knowledge system originating in India. These elements hold significance in nurturing community identity, social values, and the continuity of knowledge across generations in contemporary society. The reviewed studies, along with the Sadharanikaran model of communication, reflect and incorporate various aspects of the Indian Knowledge System by integrating traditional philosophies, cultural practices, and communication theories. The application of IKS principles in contemporary communication scenarios holds great importance in facilitating cross-cultural communication while upholding the Indian values of respect and empathy.

### **Conclusion**

Ancient sanskrit literature has approached communication as a holistic rather than an isolated concept. The discipline of communication continues to evolve by broadening its scope to include non-Western perspectives. Exploring and describing both Western and Eastern perspectives of communication is essential to derive insights for meaningful dialogue, enhanced understanding, and the enrichment of the communication field. Comparative studies of communication theories and models are crucial not only for comprehension but also for the advancement and refinement of the discipline.

In the context of this study, it is equally important to examine the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) from multiple dimensions, including its application across various fields and contexts. Aristotle is often regarded as the father of communication, while the Shannon-Weaver model is considered the mother of all communication models. In this framework, the SMC may be regarded as the evergreen model of communication due to its emphasis on the inclusion of non-cognitive elements, which are of critical importance when communication is viewed in practical terms. As society evolves through technological advancements, the principles of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) ensure that communication remains grounded, offering guidance for navigating contemporary complexities while honoring traditional values.

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